

appears frequently in my copy of *A Mythic Journey*.

If Diller had known where to stop, if he had honored Oskar's Goethe more than Oskar's Rasputin, I believe that he could have produced a major article on a major novel—say, an article showing how or to what extent Campbell's monomyth is manifested in *The Tin Drum* and how the Great Mother and the Black Cook oppose but ultimately complement one another. As Diller's offering now stands, a reader must make a painful effort to separate the existing handful or two of grain from the bushels of chaff.

Daniel P. Deneau

## JOAQUÍN ROY

*Julio Cortázar ante su sociedad*

Barcelona: Ediciones Península,  
1974. Pp. 279.

"The natural condition of the Argentine," Joaquín Roy informs us in this book by, for, and about Argentines, "is nothing less than solitary confinement" (p. 74). Given that starting point for the study of an author whose alienation of spirit in his home country has become physical by means of voluntary exile in France, we might expect to have our viewpoint on the universality of Cortázar's literary production at least slightly altered, since we have come to think of him as a rather extroverted writer. And so it is. One is accustomed to hearing from Latin American authors that the more truly they reflect and speak to the situations in their own nations, the more fully they communicate with men at large. Even an intensely personal work such as Cabrera Infante's *Tres tristes tigres* has received a good deal of attention in countries outside Cuba, much to the author's surprise. But we had come to think of Cortázar as such an international figure, one whose works deal mainly with Paris and the world.

What Roy's book sets in perspective is that Cortázar's best characters, wherever they might be at the moment, are still

profoundly Argentine, and his literary preoccupations are those of the Argentine spirit. In *Todos los fuegos el fuego*, Roy remind us, Cortázar's "concern is threefold: America, Argentina and mankind" (p. 209).

Those Argentine literary preoccupations, according to Roy, are mainly the solitude and lack of human communication which previous essayists have dealt with so exhaustively—authors such as Ezequiel Martínez Estrada and Eduardo Mallea. There is a rather lengthy survey of these themes and those related to them at the outset of the book—a bit too lengthy, one is inclined to feel. Also, the reader could wish for more material on the Argentine novelists who preceded Cortázar in dealing with such themes, men such as Roberto Arlt and Eduardo Mallea, this time considered as novelist as well as essayist.

There is a well thought out analysis of each of the pertinent works of Cortázar and the way it deals with specifically Argentine concerns. The highly complex theme of the double is dealt with in a provocative manner, in that Roy ties it in with the Argentine's partial solution to his solitude problem, the so-called "cult of friendship" (p. 56). The double, he seems to be saying, represents an attempt by the character to project a part of himself outward so that he can communicate with it, yet without really moving outside himself. Thus Oliveira and Traveler in *Rayuela* would represent more of a schizoid personality problem than a close interpersonal relationship.

Cortázar's insistence on his reader's participation with him in the act of creation is well known: he considers his reader his "protagonist and victim" (p. 218). Roy makes another worthy point when he links this concern with the solitude-communication problem. Cortázar feels that a work of literature does not even exist until someone reads it, and Roy states: "The only justification he sees for his works is that attempt at communication with himself and with 'an exterior and alien reality which is the reader'" (pp. 217-18). This is a fascinating idea: two modern men standing apart until one of them presents what amounts to a potential book for the other to take and make real as he experiences it and thus finishes creating it. Literature as communion and creation.

Roy states at the beginning: "It is not the conscious creation of the author which interests me, but rather his literary 'demons.' To gain a vision of how these hidden bacteria relate to his Argentine bogeymen, and to the religious exercise which constitutes everyday life in Argentina and Buenos Aires, is the aim of this study" (p. 59). He accomplishes his aim in a respectable manner, and includes a very usable selective bibliography into the bargain.

William L. Siemens

### GEORGE STADE, ED.

#### *Six Modern British Novelists*

New York: Columbia University Press, 1974. Pp. 294. \$10.95.

This volume gathers together six essays—on Arnold Bennett, Evelyn Waugh, Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf, and E. M. Forster—all of which first appeared as separate pamphlets in the Columbia Essays on Modern Writers series from 1965 to 1972. There is a brief, suggestive introduction by the editor, and a useful, selected bibliography, which lists the principal works of each author along with important critical works. The essays are written by six distinguished critics who provide excellent introductions to the life and the works of each author. It is a daunting task to attempt to present, in about thirty pages, not only the life and character of the author, but also a critical assessment of his work, and to show where he stands in the tradition of the novel, but these essays accomplish this task well. They are written by men who have a sympathy for their author, who understand their themes and their techniques, and who write clearly and refreshingly—without the clogging impediment of scholarly jargon. The book as a whole gives a good spectrum of the richness and variety of modern British fiction.

The first essay by John Wain on Arnold Bennett serves as a foil for the essays on the other five novelists: Bennett the realist stands in sharp contrast to his more ex-

perimental contemporaries. Wain describes Bennett's techniques and purpose as a writer of realistic fiction, and, by setting him in the context of his predecessors and his contemporaries, defines his essential contribution. He pays special attention to his portrayal of religion, and, focusing on this aspect of *The Pretty Lady*, he gives an insightful analysis of this rather neglected work.

David Lodge finds that Evelyn Waugh eschews "the verbal imitation of a disorderly universe" which characterizes many modern artists, and presents his "vision of comic anarchy" with "classical detachment, lucidity, and poise" (p. 45). Some readers might quarrel with his assertion that Waugh's view is informed by "a dogmatic Christian antihumanism" (p. 52), but his survey of Waugh's work is perceptive, appreciative, and illuminating.

Grover Smith's essay on Ford Madox Ford manages to achieve a sense of the enormous and varied literary production and of the life, loves, and friendships of this writer. He concentrates his attention on a critique of *The Good Soldier*, stressing the innovative techniques but rather neglecting the comedic side. There is a helpful commentary on Ford's historical fiction, especially *Ladies Whose Bright Eyes*, but the remarks on *Parade's End* are disappointingly brief.

Robert S. Ryf begins his study of Joseph Conrad by describing the dramatic element in his works, the role of Marlow, the style, and the recurring themes of isolation, illusion, irrationality, guilt, betrayal, and so on. He then gives a brief critique, chronologically, of each of the major works, and ends by examining the themes of egocentricity versus commitment, and by showing how Conrad uses the environment of his various novels to symbolize the inner landscape of his characters' souls.

Carl Woodring shows how Virginia Woolf's insistence on Life runs through her career, beginning in her literary reviews and culminating in her great novels. He defines her accomplishment well, by placing it in the context of other writers like Joyce, T. S. Eliot, and Proust, and by showing how she struggles to make her readers sense the actual quality of living by