The primary laws of fictional narrative are requirements imposed on the creator, whether he be Borges or one of his characters—for the characters, too, are creators. These laws are isolation, inspiration, and idealization; that is, distraction and concentration, the free play of memory and ideas, and controlled "dreaming." Borges's characters, who are not people but merely proper names, are isolated in prisons, hotels, hospitals, houses, sickbeds, towers. Inspiration (heady, abstract thought) comes to them as dizziness, fever, or delirium, often produced by alcohol. Idealization, or the turning of the "world" into words, comes as action. To take an example out of its context is to do it a disservice, but here is one: Emma Zunz ("Emma Zunz," *El Aleph*, 1949) wants to kill Loewenthal, who framed her father. In order to kill him with "justice" she first gets herself sexually deflowered by a nameless sailor. A real-life reason is implied, but it is weak. Emma, as "author" of her own "story," is obeying the laws of narrative, and the reader of a narrative has the right to suppose that what immediately precedes an event also justifies it. The sexual outrage justifies the murder, and it does not matter that the perpetrator of the outrage and the murder victim are not the same man. In fact, we might add, they *are* Platonically the same one; Emma has suffered outrage at the hands of both and can subsume them under one heading.

There is critical resistance to the meticulous interpretation of symbols and images, particularly if it shows Borges to be guilty of bilingual and etymological puns, tiny linguistic tricks, and other playful deceits. But the evidence has grown to the point of being undeniable, and Sturrock adds greatly to the stock of examples. This one is typical: in "Nota sobre (hacia) Bernard Shaw" (*Otras inquisiciones*, 1952) he points to an idea "attributed to a hypothetical scholar by the name of Kurd Lasswitz (taking *lass* to suggest *lass*itude, or the French *las*, and *-witz* to suggest *wits*, we end up with . . . 'Weary-wits')." Sturrock's magnifying glass is highly appropriate to an analysis of Borges's work.

Sturrock is not an academic but a literary journalist, Deputy Editor of the *Times Literary Supplement* of London. Perhaps for this reason he carries on almost no dialogue with other critics whose observations may either approach or coincide with his own. (He makes points previously made by Ronald Christ [*The Narrow Act*, 1969] or by myself [*The Mythmaker*, 1969] without acknowledgment. No matter; I am grateful that the principles he lays down so convincingly vindicate many of my own interpretations, particularly my unapplauded assertion that "The Sect of the Phoenix" is a story about the making of fictions and not about the sex act as many would have us believe.)

Given Sturrock's productive insight, it is disappointing that his study deals only with selected stories and essays; but these are taken from the whole range of Borges's prose and show how consistently Borges has followed his "system" from the beginning to the present. Sturrock is required reading for Borges scholars, and students just entering into Borges criticism can profitably begin with this book.

Carter Wheelock

HEINZ KRUSCHEL
Gesucht wird die freundliche Welt
Halle (Saale): Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1976, Pp. 356.

This is a moralizing, socialist novel from East Germany, in which the rebellious eighteen year old heroine, Sabine Wulff, undergoes a year of rehabilitation converting her from surly, antisocial defiance to altruistic communism. We are shown in detail her painful, unconvincing progress from a reform institute for teenage delinquents through many tearful trials and temptations, that would have made Job himself recommit the sin of despair, to the shining goal of salvation. Salvation being here the fulfillment of her production quota in a depressing shoe factory.

The plot of the novel is reminiscent of Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, in which the antihero Franz Biberkopf has just been released from Berlin prison and is subject to various trials to see whether he can find a true sense of moral responsibility. Kruschel has Döblin's sympathy for the delinquent main character, but all artistic similarity ends there. For Kruschel sadly lacks Döblin's penetration and stylistic innovation.

In all stages of her socialist apprenticeship, at school, at home, in the shoe factory, in the reform institute, etc., Sabine always retains the same characteristic: she discovers that the conventional norm is based on hypocrisy and she insists on ostentatiously telling the truth, on exposing the sham. We all know from Ibsen's plays what happens to the delicate fabric of social order if a truthsayer insists on continuously testing the strength of the thread. But Kruschel refuses to share Ibsen's pessimism and attempts to demonstrate that Sabine's truth is a breath of fresh air for the stale, bureaucratic monolith of East Germany.

The novel is constructed on a formula well known in the West: two thirds sensationalism mixed poorly with one third moralizing. Perhaps it is even daring by East-German standards that the heroine feels it to be her ethical duty to shock the staid conventional population by wearing squalid, foul smelling clothes, and by pulling up her jumper and exposing her bosom to anyone in the local pub who offends her delicate sense of honesty and frankness. When some of the local regulars become incensed at this moral outrage, Kruschel feels it is the right time to introduce his deeply philosophical, titular question "Just how friendly is the world really?"

Kruschel is aware of such techniques as shifting narrative perspectives and point of view and interior monologue, but his attempts to utilize such methods end in glib, superficial imitation. For example, as in Heinrich Böll's recent novel, *Gruppenbild mit Dame,* he attempts to draw the character of the main female figure through the testimony of various witnesses who tell their version in the first person. For example, "Mrs. Peggy Sandkorn to the witness box please" (p. 18). But instead of providing a penetrating new point of view, Mrs. Sandkorn produces an erotic and tasteless anecdote.

On the positive side one should note that occasionally Kruschel overcomes his earnest didacticism and captures in Sabine's youthful slang her need for freedom, for joy, and for experiment. One also feels his love for his heroine vibrating through his inadequate clichés. But it is this very love which inspires him to wander off into sentimentality and melodrama. Some of the melodrama—oddly enough in classless East Germany—is of an eminently bourgeois type. For example, when Sabine Wulff returns home after a night on the town smelling of alcohol and cigarette, her mother drags her off immediately to a gynaecologist to determine whether she has or has not indulged fully in the "Egyptian fleshpots." It would also seem that hashish and indiscriminate promiscuity feature just as strongly in East as in West Germany as "beat" ways of protesting against civic authoritarianism and hypocrisy.

There were evidently, however, enough compulsory mentions of antifascism in the novel for it to be passed by the censor. There are references to Nazi concentration camps and to the young boys in the "Edelweißpiraten" who died there for having beaten up two leaders of the Hitler Youth Movement. There are references to the idealistic school teacher who wants his pupils to do voluntary community work and send the money earned as a donation to Vietnam, to the workers in the shoe factory who work an extra shift on Sunday to buy milk powder for the innocent victims of the fascist coup in Chile, and to the vicious cowards who desert their two little children in socialist East Germany, thereby causing the death of the baby, in their cynical rush to flee to capitalist West Germany and earn enough money to buy a Mercedes Benz. Such incidents serve only to illustrate the sad truth that even well-intentioned propaganda is seldom compatible with art.

David A. Myers

JOSEPH FRANK
Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt, 1821-1849
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976. Pp. 401. $16.50.

It is a well-known fact that childhood and early years are of utmost importance for any artist. Some draw on early experiences throughout their artistic career, either exclusively or to a large degree. And for some, the unhappy events in early life constitute the source from which their tragedy-filled creations and pessimistic attitudes spring, shaping their entire artistic outlook. Fyodor M. Dostoevsky is a case in point.