opprobrium of the village—that the caverns of hell had opened so much wider, ready to engulf . . . his defaulting soul" (pp. 146-47).

Another, and more important, illustration of the erosion of the society is the fact that the "Bamboo wedding" (a traditional Hindu wedding ceremony) is no longer considered sacred. Gurudeva allays Daisy's fears of his wife saying quite candidly: "You shouldn't mind she. She is not me legal wife. Bamboo wedding" (p. 108).

Along with the unspoken jeremiads, Naipaul provides the reader with a wealth of the prevailing customs of the community: Jokhoo, tramp, storyteller, and matchmaker, appears in "Gurudeva" as well as in "The Wedding Came"; the basic differences (remnants of the caste system) between "India-born" and "Trinidad-born"; and the many rituals and superstitions that govern everyday living, for example, the six-fingered boy being an evil omen in "They Named him Mohun." This exposé also furnishes an insight into man-woman relationships: women do not eat with, but rather after men; it is bad manners for a newly wed girl to laugh; and it is a man's privilege and prerogative to beat his wife (p. 30); and finally, a male child is the best gift a woman can give to her husband.

In order to convey his message and to reveal his society, Naipaul makes use of third-person narrative throughout except in "In the Village," where the author and narrator are one and the same, and in which first-person narrative is used. Whatever the narrative voice, this author seems unable to disguise either his personal involvement, or the fact that he is a newspaperman. All his plots are linear, and "Gurudeva," made up of seventeen episodes, can only be considered a whole because of the continuing cast of characters. In fact, Naipaul's presentation would classify him more as an understanding chronicler than as a consummate creative writer. His closeness to his material might account for his limited portrayal of the society at large in which he lived. He laments the incursions of the outside world but treats his own community as an isolated entity.

This very familiarity nevertheless serves him in good stead in his representation of the speech of his characters. Hindi words punctuate the language of the speakers and their brand of English is also ably reproduced: Ramdas, speaking of his barren cow is made to say that "she will put down," at least so the man said, "in t'ree months. Cow here six months now—and no calf" (p. 77).

In spite of its obvious limitations *Gurudeva,* not only deserves to be read, but also makes it abundantly clear that had Seepersad Naipaul lived longer and pursued the art of the narrative he might today be a worthy rival to his illustrious son, V. S. Naipaul.

Dexter J. Noël

RICHARD LLEWELLYN
At Sunrise, the Rough Music
New York: Doubleday, 1976.
Pp. 309.

A harijan (untouchable) messenger employed at the House of Commons takes an urgent message to a Cabinet Minister, whom he finds cavorting with a secretary. This Minister is also part of a smuggling network. The opening pages of Llewellyn's novel (set in the 1970's and published in 1976) would encourage a reader to expect a gripping political drama against the backdrop of the recent Emergency Rule in India. Other than giving one the impression that everyone at every level is matter-of-factly corrupt, there is nothing political about the novel.

The blurb on the dustcover, which is a stringing together of some popular conceptions and misconceptions about India, turns out to be even more irrelevant and misleading than usual: "It[the novel] embodies all the contrasts and conflicts of a country where seeking and questioning are set against fatalism and acceptance . . ." Though the contrasts, conflicts, seeking, etc. are nowhere in evidence, there are the usual astrologer-guru, illicit and exotic sex, and the Harijan cause, with an Indian version of Mafia thrown in for good measure.

The novel, ostensibly, is about an untouchable's rise from messenger to master of a business empire, but the details of his career, his strategies, his conflicts, are more splotchy than a child's finger painting. Vague references to smuggled goods and government godowns and ministerial corruption are repeated just often enough to give the impatient reader the feeling he has glossed over some events. However, closer reading does not reveal any more knowledge or interest—Prem Naran, the business prodigy, keeps his Mafia secrets so well that the reader never comes to know anything clearly about any person, place or thing.

It purports to be an action novel with thugs unscrupulously wiping out lesser crooks and dealing with contraband commodities on a multimillion dollar scale, but all the action takes place offstage. All one hears are Prem Naran's commands to his commandos in tersely phrased sentences.

Characterization is not to be expected in popular fiction. But one does wish to be told at least in passing something about the philosophies held by Prem Naran's mentors—his guru, and his boyhood patron Mr. Raybould. A Freudian, probably, could say what makes Prem Naran tick by analyzing his sexual eccentricities which consist of slapping down a wad of currency bills on the table and insisting that the girl take off everything, a phobia for the "love-moss" (he sends packing girls who don't have a thick growth or have shaved it), and his preference for the sitting posture.

No, one does not expect any profound insights in a volume of popular fiction, but one does expect readability. The author's experimentation with language is unfortunate. Omitting articles, transposing words, literal translation from the vernacular, use of semiliterate officialese, all these can be and have been used by others to give a regional and linguistic flavor. But in this novel, the experimentation is disastrous. More than half the novel is in dialogue, and the dialogues tax the reader with their unfamiliar word-sequences. One who did not know the vernacular would think Llewellyn is making a fine effort to communicate the voice and idioms of Hindi into English, but we are told early in the novel that everyone is speaking in English. The problem of ascribing a language to the dialogues of non-English speaking characters is a major one, but it is irrelevant here. Enough to say that it is highly unlikely that a man such as Prem Naran would speak (in the 1970's) to underlings, thugs, prostitutes, and even business associates, in English.

As the novel progresses, this stilted, telegraphic form of omitting articles and clauses, of contracting thought to a minimum, and of using jarring prose is carried over even to the narrative voice: "The assistant housekeeper had more notes, and another pat on backside jelly, very accommodating, and smile away, and promise to keep far, not seen, never mind if shouting, and no, absolutely and finally, no knowledge of outside activity of person or persons, strangers, in any manner. All in order." Even if the point of view were Prem Naran's, which it is not, three hundred pages of this kind of prose makes heavy, unrewarding reading.

Uma Parameswaran

CYPRIAN EKWENSI
Survive the Peace
London: Heinemann, 1976.

James Okonkwo Odugo, Radio-Journalist on the Biafran side, who had deserted his family and parents to work for the Biafra Radio wherever it is located, faces the fears, sufferings, and problems that beset the war-affected areas at the immediate end of the Nigerian Civil War. In the meantime his wife, Juliette, had run off to the city leaving their three children in Ogene Village. James now sets about to return to normal family life, but faces the ugly revelations and lessons of defeat and the brazen wartime immorality. He realizes, more than ever before, that he has fought "on the losing side of the no-victors, no-vanquished civil war" (p. 121) when he sees his wife heavy with another man's child. He too, has had affairs with Vic Ezenta, Radio Announcer, with Benne, and Gladys Nwike who gives birth to his child soon after his death at the hands of armed robbers who make an irony of his efforts to survive in peace time.