

Letters

Dear Who?

San Francisco

Gentlepersons:

I enjoy your magazine but the address label covers too much of the cover to get any effect from backing off or squinting at Professor Pierce's picture in 84 characters. Except for the low brow, it could just as well be me.

My calculator shows that your error re 1/273 gives a true repeating decimal — 0.003663002663, etc., while Feynman's 1/243 is imperfect (0.004115226337448559677081).

In response to the terminal question in your letters column (What is the proper salutation in this modern age?), the above is my suggestion for a modern salutation to be used by one who doesn't know you well enough to use "Dear Ed and Jacque."

JOHN DASHER

Thanks — and we're sorry those address labels got slapped right into John Pierce's face last month. Our mailing service is still arguing with the Post Office official who made them do it.

Caltech

How about "Dear Mr/s" as a salutation when you don't know the sex of the person, e.g., Lynn? The addressee can read it to suit the occasion: Mr., Mrs., Ms.

JOHANNA TALLMAN
Director of Libraries

Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir or Madam, as the case may be:

I too would like a copy of Feynman's article on cargo cult science, which you published a couple of years ago. The above salutation is in response to your query in the March-April issue.

EDWARD A. FINN '60, Deputy Director
Lunar and Planetary Programs, NASA

Books

RACISM AND EMPIRE: White Settlers and Colored Immigrants in the British Self-Governing Colonies, 1830-1910.

by Robert A. Huttenback
Cornell University Press\$17.50

Reviewed by Edwin S. Munger

Impeccable scholarship is often covered by the barnacles of pedantry, resulting in a book that is unreadable and unread. Here is a lucid exception. In examining Joseph Chamberlin's assertion that the British Empire "makes no distinction in favour of, or against any race or colour," the book informs and entertains.

Dr. Huttenback, who has spent his academic career at Caltech since taking his PhD in history at UCLA, has done research for this study over a period of years in Britain, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and South Africa. The result is a fascinating, fair, and devastating refutation of Chamberlin's doctrine.

The author obviously relishes the tidbits of history that serve to garnish his imperial roast. Thus from New Zealand he quotes the *Otago Times* in 1871, which decried Chinese market gardeners as "Mongolian Filth": "We are free men, they are slaves! We are Christians, they are heathens! We are Britons, they are Mongolians!"

In Canada, the Victoria Trades and Labour Council contended that "the Hindoos by reason of their caste prejudices, peculiar religious convictions, loathsome habits and obnoxious manner of living, can never assimilate with white people or perform the duties of desirable citizens of this country." Nor were Indians more generously described in Natal, where in 1897 they were called "black vermin," and common phrases included: "A thing black and lean and a long way from clean," or "the Asian dirt to be heartily cursed."

Sexual fears and stereotypes were

common in the white colonies. The Canadians attempted to save white women from the allegedly vile and unspeakable habits of Chinese by prohibiting Asians from employing white girls. A communication from the Vancouver branch of the Trades and Labour Congress declared that the Chinese "are also adept druggists in their own way, and as servants they have ceaseless opportunities of adulterating food with drugs unknown to white men, thus placing the female members of the household at their disposal and unscrupulous will."

The result of all this denigration and of the widespread, if less pejoratively expressed, views by white colonists was the passage of various acts to exclude Asians from settlement. British Columbia and California followed similar paths. All kinds of tricks were employed, which included asking a ship officer of Austrian and Egyptian antecedents to take Greek dictation to prove that he was "civilized."

The author shows repeatedly that the authorities in London did try to secure an even break for non-white British subjects, but they were usually overridden by the local white settlers.

The situation hasn't changed all that much today, when we find successive British Prime Ministers all but impotent in seeking an end to the decade of independence in Ian Smith's Rhodesia. But whereas the British government is today equally as powerless as in the nineteenth century, it has not acquiesced and will not acquiesce to the continued domination of a white minority outnumbered by blacks probably thirty to one.

The book describes how Indians lost their jobs in Natal when they couldn't keep books, as required, in English. A few years ago this reviewer heard Indians in Mauritius justifying a bill designed to exclude Chinese from being bookkeepers by requiring them to know Tamil. Racism will never be a monopoly.

Professor Huttenback recognizes that it is often "much too easy to judge the past through the eyes of the present," and that "the British Empire

of Settlement was not alone in denying the brotherhood of all men." And although he sees validity in the view long presented to American schoolchildren of Britain as a birthplace of liberal ideas, in this study of prejudice and deception he rattles a major skeleton in the British imperial cupboard.

Edwin S. Munger is professor of geography at Caltech.

INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION AND THE
WORLD BANK

by *Robert W. Oliver*

The Macmillan Press Ltd ... \$20.80

Reviewed by Horace N. Gilbert

A book review should not be a summary of its contents, but because few of the readers of *E&S* probably will come across this book, there is reason to depart from this convention. Professor Oliver has written a book in a highly readable style on one of the most important subjects of the century: the development of means, formal and otherwise, to bring about international economic cooperation.

The story begins with the end of World War I when the economics of most European countries were in disarray, some extremely so. Country by country emergency measures were taken. Varying degrees of success were attained largely because of the cooperation and personal leadership of Benjamin Strong, governor of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, Montague Norman, governor of the Bank of England, Hjalmar Schacht, governor of the Reichsbank, and Professor Charles Rist, representing the Bank of France. The postwar recovery, the expansion of foreign investment, and the complications of war debts and reparations gave rise to widespread concern regarding the improvement of ways to handle international economic transactions.

Oliver's presentation of the discussions that took place during this pre-Bank period are detailed and enlightening. His ideas of John Maynard Keynes

during these years are set forth in considerable detail. Keynes stands out prominently for his creative thinking and wisdom regarding the steps that should be taken to bring about international economic cooperation. It was a relief to hear Keynes cited on broader matters than deficit financing, the main theme of his 1936 classic book. In 1930 Keynes offered a plan for a Supernational Bank which anticipated much of his plan for an International Clearing Union drafted in 1942 and presented as the British position at Bretton Woods. Oliver describes the limited but significant role played by the Bank for International Settlements.

World War II called for a new American foreign economic policy, and the Treasury Department played a leading part in its formulation. In the Treasury the person most concerned with the assignment was Dr. Harry Dexter White. Oliver tells the dramatic story of White's career, his dedicated work preparing the American draft for the World Bank and the Monetary Fund, his leadership representing the U.S. position at the Bretton Woods Conference, his appointment in 1946 as the first U.S. Executive Director for the International Monetary Fund, and in 1948 his being accused of association with a Soviet espionage group.

Bretton Woods was ratified by the U.S. Senate on July 18, 1945, and signed by President Truman on August 4. By the end of the year enough nations had joined to make the Bank and the Fund realities. There were the usual problems and delays in staffing and becoming operational. A serious difficulty was the definition of the relative authority of the president of the Bank and the executive directors. The first president, Eugene Meyer, resigned over this issue; the second, John J. McCloy, accepted the appointment after rewriting the bylaws giving the President clear top authority.

The emphasis in the book up through the successful launching of the Bank and the Fund is on careful history. Oliver gives a lighter treatment to the years that follow, with little attention to the operating record over the years.

This information is readily available in the annual reports of the two institutions. He does note a common criticism of the Bank, that it has been too much of a "bank" giving prime consideration to the credit worthiness of borrowers rather than to reconstruction and development. Perhaps this policy has been just as well. It has established the good credit of the Bank's bonds sold in the international money markets to raise funds for the making of many loans. Also the Bank's operations must be judged in the context of other institutions and programs set up to promote reconstruction and development.

Much has been written about the subject of Oliver's book. His differential contributions are a balanced weighing of the circumstances attending the efforts to find and develop formalized ways to bring about international economic cooperation, and a scholarly account of the conception and birth of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, institutions that have proven themselves as valuable for the achievement of important goals. Caltech can be proud of Oliver's significant contribution in this field.

Robert Oliver is professor of economics at Caltech, and Horace Gilbert is professor of business economics, emeritus.

MALRAUX'S HEROES AND HISTORY

by *James W. Greenlee*

Northern Illinois University

Press \$12.50

Reviewed by Annette J. Smith

Outside of France and a small circle of French literature aficionados, the name André Malraux probably brings forth the picture of an intellectual man of action, surrounded, somewhat like his Anglo-Saxon counterparts T. E. Lawrence and Hemingway, by a mysterious personal legend. Tourists of Paris in the 50s and 60s know him as the Minister of Culture under DeGaulle who undertook the inconceivable and seemingly sacrilegious task of sandwashing the monuments back to their original freshness. To readers of

Books . . . continued

World Masterpieces, he is the author of *Man's Fate*, a landmark of modern literature. Students who have lived through the spring of '68 passionately resented hearing that Malraux responded to the news of 450 wounded Parisians lying on the street with a dry, "Nobody killed yet. Rather interesting, isn't it?" while proceeding to chat with a friend about *his* passionate years in the Spanish International Brigades.

This is all to say that M. Malraux is not an endearing man. But James Greenlee's study of Malraux reminds us what a central position he occupies in contemporary literature.

The fact that Malraux's writings span 50 years of our time works both for him and against him. For him, because he is a better mirror than almost any other French writer of the successive philosophical trends in the twentieth century. Not only is he a pre-existentialist, but one might say he also is a post-existentialist, or an anarchist. On the other hand, many critics wonder how the same man can have been, within one lifetime, a cynical adventurer, a devoted Marxist, a militant Gaullist, and finally the apolitical Grand Priest of the philosophy of art. Greenlee's main merit is precisely to provide the reader with a valid rationale for these changes and to follow it concretely and painstakingly through the complete body of the works.

Malraux's own philosophical crisis was precipitated by several sojourns in the Orient and the confrontation of the passive but cosmic Oriental point of view with his Western concept of personality in a dynamic opposition to the world. This antagonism between the Westerner and the world was denounced by Malraux as "absurd" (two decades before Camus made the adjective famous) and summed up in subsequent works in the word "destiny." Destiny must deal with history as the only transcendental framework left by the disappearance of God from modern literature.

The overall path followed by his

heroes reflects Malraux's changing views of the relationship between the individual and history in the course of his life. While not much different in substance from other existential solutions, Malraux's responses offer the advantage of changes within an organic continuity.

From 1926 to 1933, Malraux's works reveal a tragic concept of history. In Oriental contexts and plots heavily tinted with colonialism, his heroes seek mainly personal gratification, and so remain disconnected from history, which refuses to respond to their demands and turns against them. From *Man's Fate* (1933) on, the main characters succeed in transcending their own lives by serving a collective goal (here the Chinese Revolution). Imprisoned, tortured, or forced to suicide, they still fail from a historical point of view, but find redemption and meaning in the fraternity of militants. *Man's Hope* (1937) carries the same theme to a more optimistic conclusion as we witness a hero of the Spanish International Squadron evolve from an abstract Marxist ideology to a realistic and efficient military leadership, or, as Malraux puts it, "lose his virginity of command." Thus, individual destiny and history have found a way to coincide, each affecting each other.

However, a still later stage, dialectically illustrated in *The Walnut Trees of Altenburg* (1948), then reworded in the first person in the *Antimemoirs* (1967), proposes to find the meaning of life no longer by identifying with history — whether tragic or hopeful — but by identifying with civilization; that is, those creative human endeavors which both preexist and survive the boundaries of history and national cultures. Thus it is through the mediation of art and out of time that Malraux finally sees a possible reconciliation of man with the cosmos. This "concept" of "Antihistory" or "Antidestiny" underlies several massive volumes on the philosophy of art: *The Psychology of Art* (1949-50), *The Voices of Silence* (1953), and *The Metamorphosis of the Gods* (1960-).

This sweeping trajectory which goes

beyond the existential solution and fuses being and doing, East and West, is perhaps what makes Malraux (and Greenlee's study) more relevant to younger readers than other existential writers. They too seek, unfortunately by less arduous and more superficial means, a reconciliation with the universe. They too often believe in a disengagement from politics and in being rather than doing.

Do they read Malraux? I do not know. If they do, I doubt, nevertheless, that they would recognize themselves in him. Even when giving in to the collective, Malraux remains obsessed with the individual achievement or quest. His world is fraternal but could never be communal. It is tense, solemn, occasionally accompanied by the accents of Palestrina or Beethoven, and foreign to the kind of universal "letting go" and inner space that appeal to the young. He is too wordy for an era which so much distrusts language.

Finally, as a woman, I should add that his is a monolithically virile world where women appear at the least as sexual outlets for a masculine libido frustrated by history, and at the most as sexless militants. Vice versa, action is viewed by Malraux as a higher form of libido. This personal reaction would be irrelevant if Malraux were not in conflict with the present general suspicion of machismo.

But beyond the debt a literature teacher will have to Greenlee's useful and illuminating panorama, some lines of Malraux will speak for and to all men and women who might feel constantly *depassé* — or only bypassed — by a technological, elitist, quantitative, and sometimes merciless society: "An individual is more than his biography, or at least, than the sum of his acts." And, again, "We hear the voices of others with our ears, our own with our throats. Yes, And our lives, too, we hear with our throats . . ."

James Greenlee, who was assistant professor of French at Caltech from 1967 to 1973, is now teaching at Northern Illinois University. Annette J. Smith is lecturer in French at Caltech.