

neither the training nor the inclination to change things. Indeed, they are usually the ones responsible for the problems. Too often these executives become captives of their critics, or worse, they actually begin to believe in their critics' agenda. Or they live in fear of a call from the boss demanding, "Why don't we support these guys?" or "Why this one?" So they avoid controversy altogether.

The chief executive officers, for their part, generally don't spend much time thinking about philanthropy, especially in public affairs. While the numbers involved may seem large and significant to the recipients, the amounts actually involve a relatively small part of a company's budget. In fact, public-affairs donations are usually included under

"other" in lists of types of philanthropy. So if the CEO ever does think about it, he either accepts the recommendations of his corporate giving staff, or he too seeks to avoid controversy.

And who defines what's controversial? The intellectual community—the universities, the policy organizations, the serious journalists—and the popular media. In other words, the very organizations that depend on business for their existence (through corporate grants or advertisements).

Thanks to *Patterns of Corporate Philanthropy*, we know that this cycle exists. What is now needed is a better understanding of why this happens, and a plan to encourage corporations to act more in the interests of their shareholders. □

TO REACH ETERNITY:  
THE LETTERS OF JAMES JONES

Edited by George Hendrick, with a foreword by William Styron  
Random House/380 pp. \$22.50

William H. Nolte

What can one say about this collection of some 120 letters of James Jones without finally damning it with faint praise? If we can believe with Dr. Johnson that a man's soul lies naked in his letters, then there's no gainsaying the fact that Jones was an extraordinarily decent fellow. He seems to have been every bit as likable, kind, and considerate as William Styron would have us believe in his recollection of their long friendship. But he was not a good letter writer.

No, that's misleading: he was an awful letter writer. He almost always used three (or four or five) words where one would suffice, and he had an uncanny knack for placing those extra words in the wrong place. The more he sought to clarify a matter, the more he obscured it. Without Styron's excellent foreword and George Hendrick's editorial assistance, particularly in biographical matters, the book would be of little interest to anyone save the most avid Jones fans, and there don't seem to be many of that breed left. To be charitable, I might note that not many people, either professional writers or the merely literate, are capable of doing much more than conveying information in their correspondence. Information but not entertainment—not, anyhow, to the serene outsider, to you and me.

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The first half of this volume is given over to letters, many of them quite long by modern standards, written between 1939, when Jones was an 18-year-old enlistee in the Army, and 1951, when *From Here to Eternity* made him famous and at least moderately wealthy. Most of the royalties from that novel, which had a tremendous effect on me when I read it in my early twenties, were used to subsidize a colony for writers in Marshall, Illinois, a few miles from his hometown of Robinson. He also spent a sizable sum on the bachelor quarters he built at the time. The Colony, as it was called, was the brainchild of Lowney Handy, the free spirit who took Jones in hand following his discharge from the Army in the summer of 1944. Although Jones encouraged people to believe that Lowney was his foster mother (she was seventeen years older than he), they shared both bed and board during the long apprentice years, as her understanding husband, Harry, looked the other way.

After finishing *Some Came Running* late in 1956, Jones took a break from his writing table and from his tempestuous taskmaster (or -mistress) and went to New York, where Budd Schulberg introduced him to Gloria Mosolino, whom he married a few weeks later. Not until some four months after that, with the couple back home in Illinois, did Gloria learn about Jones's relations with Lowney. The awakening came when Lowney burst through a screen door and attacked the innocent interloper with a

Bowie knife. Jones separated the combatants before any injury was done. Shortly thereafter, Jones and Gloria, whose marriage turned out to be a truly happy one, moved to New York for a brief stay, and thence to Paris, where they lived until 1974, when they returned to the States. Near the end of his long stay in Paris—where his splendid apartment overlooking the Seine attracted visitors, whether welcome or not, like an oasis in the Sahara—Jones admitted that he had never really learned to like the French. He was living in a farmhouse, which he bought and remodeled, on Long Island when he died in May 1977. Oddly enough, the collection contains only one letter from his last three years.

Most of the early letters were written to his brother Jeff and to his editors at Scribner's, Maxwell Perkins and, following Perkins's death in 1947, Burroughs Mitchell. (The letters to Mitchell take up about a fifth of the volume.) There he talks of how much he has finished for this or that chapter, what his intentions are for the next chapters, how, in short, the book-in-progress is progressing. There are also, of course, the obligatory epistles to Lowney—as dull as they are long, and they seem at times to be interminable. In one Texas-sized billet-doux, which even so has been abbreviated by the editor, thus making one wonder just how long it really was, he tries to get at the heart of the matter, or anyhow to lay bare his soul. (Note: the editor silently corrected misspellings but left the apostrophe-free contractions in place.)

That's where my faith is founded. I know now for sure you can never get over me, and that I can never get over you. It is as simple as that. Just that we are a man and his woman who love each other, a woman and her man who need each other. We are in love. Don't ask me why, or how. It just is, and must be accepted. We have loved through more than one eternity, to be able to love so much.

At which point marks of elision come to our rescue, only to be followed by a confession: "Words just fail me, Lowney. I can't explain. It's just love, overpowering, all embracing, unbeatable, that's all." But, alas, that's not all, not by a country mile, since six and a half long pages come panting after.

But some of the letters indicate that Jones possessed a good crap-detector, at least one that was operative in the case of other people although it sometimes malfunctioned in his own case. Two instances should suffice. While he admired the fiction of Faulkner and the early short stories, at least, of Hemingway, and even went so far as to mimic, almost to the point of parodying,

their styles in some of his short stories (see *The Ice-Cream Headache and Other Stories*, especially the title story, which apes Faulkner, and "None Sing So Wildly," which echoes Hemingway in an unwittingly comic manner), he readily called them to account when he thought they overstepped the bounds of common sense or decency. For example, he confessed to being "heartily disgusted" with Faulkner's Nobel Prize acceptance speech. He believed that Faulkner, like all the "affirmation-shouters," had somehow convinced himself that he really believed in the comforting words of that ringing endorsement of the species. Some people, Jones admitted, found the strophes moving; he considered the remarks "truly childish." In like manner, according to Styron, who went with him to the Lincoln Memorial, he dismissed Lincoln's Gettysburg Address as "just beautiful bullshit," adding with savage bitterness, "They all died in vain. They all died in vain. And they always will!"

Styron also recalls how Jones would "denounce Papa for a despicable fraud and poseur" whose later work was phony to the core. I doubt that anyone not permanently adolescent would disagree with his view that Papa was a war lover and "a macho contriver of romantic effects." In short, it was Hemingway's character that Jones found most repulsive. In a letter to Norman Mailer, who, incidentally, comes off rather badly in this collection, Jones spoke of those character limitations with a fervor that borders on moral indignation:

The consensus of [Hemingway's] outlook might be worded thusly: Say and do everything you can that will make Hemingway look good, even if it does make a lot of other people look bad. . . . Look up his comments on Sherwood Anderson—a snide parody of whom the whole book of *Torrents of Spring* aims at. Also his various comments on Mencken, and on Scott Fitzgerald, and on Tom Wolfe. Most usually they begin: "Poor Tom Wolfe etc, etc" or "Poor Scott Fitzgerald etc, etc"—"if he had only known thus and so" (implying he, Hemingway, does know this or that) "perhaps it would have helped his work thus and so."

The fact that Papa was a dreadful cad is perhaps too well known to warrant repeating; even so, I have to applaud Jones for stating the obvious, no matter that he stumbles and almost falls in doing so.

To hold our attention, letters must contain "surprises" of some kind, either in opinions expressed or, more importantly, in turns of phrase, in the manner of expression. Unfortunately, Jones offers little that surprises and nothing that thrills. Still, he must have been a pleasant fellow. Enough said. □

EVANS-PRITCHARD  
(continued from page 21)

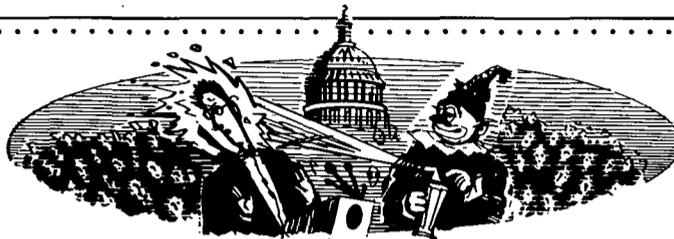
tions. Investment has come to a halt. There has been virtually no new construction for a year, and skeletal, half-finished buildings give a haunting look

to the capital. The Fiat, Ford, and Peugeot factories are running at an average 24 percent capacity. There have not been massive layoffs because the big companies are waiting to see whether the reactivation program will work. But they cannot pay their workers to do nothing for months on end.

Unemployment is about to explode, and it is going to be ugly in a culture where the elite, protected by its dollars, is not seen to share the suffering. President Menem, ultimately, will side with the *descamisados*. It is his instinct, and his political survival depends on it. If he is skillful enough, he will stick the

blame for his failed plan on the *empresarios*, the wizards of Bunge & Born, who let the country down. And then, who knows? More Peronism, perhaps. It is all going to end badly. So much hope weighs on Menem's slender frame, and so much future disappointment. □

## THE WASHINGTON SPECTATOR



### TOURS DE FARCE

You know somebody's been in Washington too long when he tells you that the city "empties out" during the summer. "Nothing's going on in August," he will say, with the implication (the self-delusion is breathtaking) that something of interest happens during the other eleven months. To nail the point he will add: "Everybody leaves town." As is always the case with statements so manifestly untrue, the point is something else entirely: what he means is that while congressmen are back terrorizing their districts, chomping greaseburgers at barbecue after barbecue, *toute la Georgetown* temporarily decamps as well. Ben and Sally, for example, pack their rackets for a month of doubles in the Hamptons. Chris Dodd and Teddy check out the babes on the Cape. Pamela Harriman crisscrosses Europe, tenderly feeling the pulses of widowed zillionaires. Claiborne Pell rests at the feet of some *sadhu* on the banks of the Ganges. You see the point: *everybody's gone*.

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Meanwhile, the nobodys—that is, such Washingtonians as bureaucrats, slum-dwellers, crack-smokers, shop-keepers, cops, busboys, Uzi-selling black marketers, and junior editors of conservative opinion magazines—stay and take the heat. Which isn't so bad. Some of us like to be reminded, once a year, what it's like to live in a city without congressmen. But as the city empties itself of elected representatives and the rest of its elite, it is simultaneously engorged with tourists. You can see them on the Mall, whole families under the pitiless sun, trudging from one end of the shadeless expanse to the other: Dad, his face flushed and doughy, his hair matted in curlicues round the crown of his head, dragging Mom, as her hairdo rapidly wilts and the sweat stains begin to appear around the waistband of her stretch pants, and

behind them trail the brats: Junior in a tank top, his shoulders adroop, his damp chubby arms swinging listlessly, and Sis with day-old clumps of cotton candy clinging horribly to her braces. For Washington nobodies, the sight is not so hard to take as it might seem: we're used to much worse. Balanced on the scales of human repulsiveness, even thousands of such families fail to match, say, a single Beryl Anthony.

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I speak with authority, for not only have I met Beryl Anthony but I have also been trying, this summer, to duplicate the life of the Washington tourist (passing the time, as it were, until *everybody* comes back). The most efficient method is to take a guided tour, as so many out-of-towners wisely do. On a tour, if you plan with care and intelligence, you can get everything—the memorials, the museums, the historical sights—out of the way in four hours max and be back in your hotel watching TV before lunchtime.

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The granddaddy, the Big Kahuna, the Titan of tours in Washington is the Tourmobile, a fleet of blue-and-white trams that circumnavigates the Mall, with tangents extending to Arlington cemetery, Mount Vernon, and the Kennedy Center. "Only on this tour can you see so much, so well!" the Tourmobile brochure vows. "We can't wait to share the secrets of Washington with you!" Maybe they can't wait, but you'll have to! You're allowed to disembark the tram at any of its stops ("free re-boarding!"), which then entitles you to move to the back of another line the length of a Metroliner if you ever hope to see the inside of another Tourmobile. The chances of your actually doing so, however, are only fair, for by this time all the trams are full to bursting, their

windows, which you glimpse as they pass, framing a collage of chubby arms, wilted hairdos, flushed damp faces, and faint wisps of steam.

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But don't despair: you're not missing much. The "secrets of Washington" the Tourmobile guides dare to reveal are, more often than not, less than revelatory. During my various trips, for example, I learned that John F. Kennedy's assassination "shocked the nation," that the Washington Monument is 556 feet high, that Arlington cemetery is "a real cemetery," that Abner Doubleday invented baseball, that the Washington Monument is 558 feet high, that much of "Scarecrow and Mrs. King" was *not* filmed in Washington, and that the Washington Monument is 555 feet high. Other secrets are of the maddeningly unprovable kind so beloved of perky tourguides and the late Mr. Robert Ripley. In view of the Pentagon, for example, one guide chirped: "If you took out all the telephone wiring in this building, you could wrap it *around the world seven and one-half times*." What's the proper response to such an assertion? Simple dismissal ("That's a load of crap!")? Or a direct challenge ("Prove it!")? Or an aggressive counterassertion ("I happen to know for a fact that it's three and a quarter times—*around the moon*!")? But tourists, over time, build up a natural immunity to the indignities they routinely suffer: everybody on the tram simply ignored her—the wisest course.

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The wise tourist, too, can always jump the tram and take another tour, of which there are dozens. The Scandal Tour, for example, has recently gained much publicity. (Its press packet is enormous—so thick, in fact, that if you

took each clipping you could *fill the entire Tidal Basin and still have enough left over to stuff the mouth of every guide who ever worked a Tourmobile*.) The Scandal Tour is put on by the comedy troupe Gross National Product, whose actors ride the bus and impersonate celebrity guides: George Bush, Marilyn Quayle, Paul Harvey, and so on. A Fawn Hall impersonator hands out little packets of shredded paper; the rest of the jokes aren't much funnier. Still, the bus is air conditioned, and you get to look in the windows of Gary Hart's town house. Most winningly, free drinks are served in the Ritz Carlton beforehand—an old insurance policy known to unsuccessful comedians everywhere.

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Drinks would come in handy on the Feminist Institute's "Feminist Tour of Capitol Hill," which is pretty much what it sounds like: a two-hour sewing club in which the tourists work eagerly on their hairshirts. Talk about facts! The VFW building reflects "the exclusion of women from military history," never mind the numberless women who served in the Civil War by aid of cross-dressing. Only six of the thirty nonprofit organizations in the Methodist building deal exclusively with women's issues—a national scandal. Mr. Folger couldn't have built the Shakespeare Library without his wife. Only male contractors worked on the Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress, even though women donated 75 percent of the money needed to complete it. The Women's Bakery has the best bran muffins in town. And this: the statue of Freedom atop the Capitol dome features a woman dressed in a robe *open to her navel*. "I like the idea that Freedom is a woman," our guide said, "but why be sexist about it? It's just the way that everybody thought back then." You see the point: *everybody*. —AF