

international firms, from Ford's to Hilton Hotels, mostly American-based, and the new problems their power posed. There was the international radicalisation of student youth, which began at Berkeley in the year when Wilson went to No 10 and changed the whole climate of the Sixties. Of these and similar trends one finds scarce an echo in George Brown's bland political pages. It is not that his general comments on society are less clever than the next man's, but that social change has become very complicated indeed, and to glimpse its trends one has to work rather harder than George Brown in his off-the-cuff way seems to think.

T. R. Fyvel

Not So Grateful

IN A LETTER to me dated 11 December 1968, Dr Mulik Raj Anand wrote: "The American lady, Dr Margaret Berry, has taken the tip from Dr Gowda [a Professor of English at Mysore University] and detected the hand of Moscow in my work. She accuses me of following a doctrinaire aesthetic." This remark was occasioned when Anand received from Margaret Berry a copy of her M.A. dissertation, inscribed with these words: "With grateful good wishes." She had every reason to be grateful to him for the thirteen letters he wrote to her, discussing his aims as a novelist, his humanism, his brand of expressionism, poetic realism, and much else, from which she has quoted sumptuously in her thesis and which make interesting reading.

Dr Berry's study¹ is based on the thesis, which was completed in 1968, and shows little evidence of having been revised for publication. Anand's *Morning Face*, published in 1968, is stated to "be due from Kutub Publishers, Bombay, this fall, 1968." No mention is made of Meenakshi Mukerjee's "Beyond the Village", included in *Critical Essays on Indian Writing in English*, also published in 1968. It is understandable that Dr Berry could not include studies on Anand which appeared after 1968, but some of the important work done on Anand in 1968 should have been referred to in her book (the first on Anand, and perhaps the first on a contemporary Indian novelist), and their absence can only be put down to carelessness.

I have other reservations to Dr Berry's book. Bent on proving that Anand is a propagandist, she comfortably dismisses what does not suit her purpose. She is not impressed with V. S. Pritchett's and C. Day Lewis's arguments that Anand is not a propagandist, and she does not mention other notable scholars who agreed with their views, such as Stephen Spender, Walter Allen, Bonamy Dobrée and E. M. Forster (none of them, by the

way, Marxists). She dismisses the insights offered by K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Jack Lindsay and others as "undermined by exaggeration, idealising, wishful thinking, induced it may be by personal, patriotic, or party loyalty." And as she herself rarely gives reasons for her own conclusions, it is almost impossible to refute them.

Only in the last chapter, titled "Evaluation", does she come near examining the novels as literature. Here she gives us what she terms "an original definition" of the novel: "A good novel presents interesting and believable human beings in reaction with their environment so as to suggest richly and intensively the universal experiences of man." One would have thought that by now one has had enough definitions of the novel, Mr Anand himself having added several! But I guess it is both Mr Anand's and Dr Berry's genius to turn up old earth and look at it as fresh soil. And not only that: Dr Berry's phrase "the universal experiences of man" shares some of the fuzziness of mind we have lately come to associate with Anand.

Despite the foregoing, there is much to arouse enthusiasm in Dr Berry's book. She has given us a clear-headed analysis of Anand's faith as a writer: a difficult task considering the nonsense written on the subject. She points out how before 1932 Anand viewed literature and the arts "mainly as religious and philosophic derivatives," and that it was only after he had come under the influence of Marx that his concept changed radically. Her discussion of the other influences that shaped his mind is also good, and in her study we come across some sharp comments on *The Village* and *The Big Heart*. I wish she had discussed Anand's short stories as well, which are on the whole free from some of the defects to be found in the novels.

Saros Cowasjee

The Tragedy of Yasnaya Polyana

ELIZABETH GUNN'S title for her book on Tolstoy, *A Daring Coiffeur*,¹ is one of the most puzzling things about it. No more inappropriate analogy could be found for Tolstoy, who hated Parisian sophistication, than that of the *perruquier*. As her own quotation from Gorky's *Reminiscences* shows, Tolstoy applied the phrase "a daring coiffeur" not to himself, but to the philosopher Shestov, whom he disliked. He even went on to explain to a puzzled friend that the phrase meant that Shestov (who, by the way, had made some penetrating criticisms of him) was "a fashionable dandy" of thought.

¹ *A Daring Coiffeur*. By ELIZABETH GUNN. Chatto and Windus, £1.50.

¹ *Mulik Raj Anand: the Man and the Novelist*. By MARGARET BERRY. Oriental Press, Amsterdam, f30.

Tolstoy, the "great writer of our Russian land" as Turgenev movingly called him, remains just too big for his critics. Elizabeth Gunn speaks of him (as Turgenev too sometimes did) as a Philistine and a hectorer and yet when she writes of history she falls back on Tolstoy's own contention (a *non sequitur*?) that an historian's account of events must, of necessity, to some extent be false since much that occurred went unrecorded and much was accidental. It may be, as she claims, that it is characteristically Russian to be "pregnant with intolerance, with irritation", but my surprise at her claim that *War and Peace* and *The Kreutzer Sonata* are more connected than we think is somewhat moderated when I reach her fantastic hypothesis that the motive for the countess Rostov's cruelty to Sonya is—of all things—jealousy. Only two pages before this we have been told that Nicholas' parents "resemble grandparents" because "they are safely out of the sphere of sexual relations", but now it seems that the count has failed the countess "as a man", so that she has to compensate for this in her feelings for her son Nicholas. Shades of D. H. Lawrence! Elizabeth Gunn finds that "we" do not believe in Pierre's debauchery and are unmoved by Prince Andrew's death. I, for one, opt out of the authorial "we" here. She tells us that in *Anna Karenina* Kitty is not merely pedestrian, but "ceases to be human", that Vronsky has "tragic stature" because he is "conventional", and that Tolstoy sinks to the "cheap device" of making Karenin "the villain of the piece." She sees Levin's not uncommon reluctance to speak of his deep feeling for nature as showing us that Tolstoy was curiously miscast as a protagonist of the "inner world." I would ask her to consider Tjutchev's poem "Silentium" with its line "Thought uttered is false", and Tolstoy's constant puzzlement about consciousness in his diaries. It is impossible not to score some critical hits with a target like Tolstoy, but *A Daring Coiffeur* does not just miss too often, it sometimes even seems to be pointing in the wrong direction.

²*The Last Year of Leo Tolstoy*. By V. F. BULGAKOV. Translated by ANN DUNNIGAN with an introduction by GEORGE STEINER. Hamish Hamilton, £2.25.

Tolstoy's secretary Gusev was exiled in 1909 and Valentin Bulgakov came to act as his secretary in 1910, the year of Tolstoy's flight and death. Bulgakov kept a diary of that year which has now been translated into English for the first time.² We must be grateful to the translator for making available this account of what Bulgakov called "the tragedy of Yasnaya Polyana", a tragedy all the more tragic in that one feels "nobody's fault" is, in the end, its most fitting epigraph. Both Gorky and Pasternak rightly rebuked those who, like Tolstoy's disciple Chertkov, blamed the countess. It is a pity, therefore, that Dr Steiner, in his introduction, cannot refrain from referring to Tolstoy's "inhumanity" and "utter tactlessness" simply because Tolstoy told Bulgakov that he had made a note of the fact that it was easy for him to pity his wife "when she suffers and does not make others suffer." Actually both count and countess emerge from Bulgakov's diary as pretty decent human beings. Again, why does Dr Steiner feel called on to speak of "the frequent dogmatic banality" of Tolstoy? Tolstoy could be banal and fatuous no doubt, but the dominant impression left by Bulgakov's diary (as by the notes of Gorky and Goldenweiser) is of a penetrating, vigorous and resilient intellect. How many 82-year-olds could have their slightest *obiter dicta* recorded and escape so lightly, particularly when they were at the centre of a family power struggle? It is true that Tolstoy sometimes deceived himself as to his motives and that this on occasion led him to forget that even Christianity at its most extreme calls only for the imitation of Christ and not for his supersession, but Bulgakov recalls little in the way of such delusion that I can remember. What remains with me rather is Tolstoy's sensible remark apropos of a preacher visiting Yasnaya: "In him the religious feeling is combined with a desire for fame, and the superstition that it is possible to arrange other peoples' lives." No doubt it was all too human of Tolstoy not to see how aptly such a shrewd observation sometimes applied to himself. Before his death he was to learn that he would not find it easy to arrange his own life either.

E. B. Greenwood