

## THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

By C. Wright Mills. Grove Press, New York, 1961. Pp. 234.  
Price \$1.95.

This volume, by a practising sociologist, constitutes a candid discussion of the problems which afflict contemporary sociology in America. Since much of what passes as social theory today originates in the United States, it is important that one be adequately apprized of the situation which there prevails. Professor Mills' book goes far in providing such an appraisal.

Much of American sociology, captured by "grand theory" which deals with broad and verbose abstraction (cf. chapter 2) or "abstracted empiricism," has succeeded in either withdrawing from real social issues (p. 48) or in becoming trivial by pre-occupying itself with minor problems unconnected with those issues (p. 20). Thus emasculated, sociology has, at least in significant measure, become the tool of prevailing interests. As "grand theory" it generally provides a legitimation of the prevailing "social structure;" as "abstracted empiricism" its abject dependence upon select methodological devices make necessary its dependence upon established agencies for operating expenses. Such "empiricism" demands the systematic employment of expensive data-gathering techniques. Consequently an appeal must be made to foundations representing, by and large, special interests. Often the professional future of an academician hangs on the availability of such funds. There is then the pressure to tailor research as well, conceivably, as the findings of such research to the interests of those who pay the piper. (Cf. also in this connection Professor P. Sorokin's similar appraisal in his "Theses on the Mutual Influence of the Natural and the Social Sciences upon Each Other," *Studi in onore di Corrado Gini* (Rome, 1960, vol. II, pp. 465 f.)

"Independence" under these circumstances becomes increasingly difficult. The difficulty is increased by the establishment of "schools," the members of which favorably review each other's works, recommend the publication of each other's essays and support each other in the application for grants and sundry academic benefits. Under these circumstances talent is easily captured. The social scientist sensitive to the prevailing academic opportunities will hardly venture to draw the fire of the Establishment by venturing upon "unorthodox" or "suspect" opinions.

Professor Mills' work is, in large part, an indictment of much of contemporary American sociology. It goes far in making comprehensible to the intelligent layman the forces which tend to create and foster "established opinion" so dangerous to true academic freedom. Professor Mills' work is thus an eloquent plea for intellectual integrity, intellectual independence and intellectual imagination—and as such it should be read by everyone interested in social problems.

A. JAMES GREGOR.

## DIAGNOSIS OF MAN

By Kenneth Walker. Penguin Books, 1962. Pp. 259. Price 5s.

This little book, first published in 1942, is here reproduced in paper covers at a price that everyone can afford. The author found few alterations necessary, and the present reviewer, after a careful reading,

finds little further to ask for. This is well supplied by the bibliography. The theme is the nature of man, and in some respects it parallels Teilhard de Chardin's *Phenomenon of Man*. But while the latter finally goes off into mysticism, the present author, who is a medical man, sticks to the scientific point of view although his later chapters are concerned with such topics as early Indian philosophy, Yoga, the world religions, and mystical Christianity.

Chapter Two, on the cell, can give thought to any biologist. The author refuses to admit any essential difference between life and no life. He recognises the purposive actions of single cells, wandering, or co-operating with other cells in a tissue, and accredits Paramecium with memory and mind. Indeed, mind is coincident with life.

A chapter on the endocrine glands shows in simple language how they control the chemistry of the body, and another on human types shows how they play an important part in determining character. In the chapter on the brain and nervous system, for example, the thalamus of the brain, not the solar plexus (of the sympathetic system) is recognised as the seat of the emotions. That much bodily disease originates through disturbances of the psyche is now well recognised, and the work of Pavlov, Macdougall, Freud and others explains modern points of view in psychology. The statement (p. 81) that Pavlov's mice learned faster to respond to the ringing of a bell in successive generations was later withdrawn. These records were the work of an over-enthusiastic assistant.

The problem of consciousness is discussed in another chapter, which regards intelligence as innate in all living tissue. A wide range of Western philosophers appear in this connection, and later an extensive review of Eastern philosophy and higher states of consciousness. The unity of the basic truths in all religions is emphasised, remarkable parallels between Christ and Buddha are pointed out, and a short history of the early Christian Church leads up to the present position. The point of view throughout appears to be consistent and such as any scientific man can accept, the crucial point being the very early appearance of mind in the cosmos, which lessens the distinction between mind and matter.

R. R. G.

## PRIMITIVE GOVERNMENT

By Lucy Mair. Penguin Books, 1962. Pp. 228, 2 maps. Price 4s 6d.

This interesting book on primitive government, while dealing with general principles, cites as examples the many countries of Central and East Africa where much of the author's work has been done. The reader thus obtains a detailed understanding of primitive governmental conditions in Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika as well as of the Nilote peoples, Shilluk, Nuer, Dinka, Anuak and others. At the same time the beginnings of government are traced, from a condition of "ordered anarchy" in which nothing that can be called government exists, as in the Nuer, to the relatively advanced native rulers in provinces of Uganda such as Bunyoro and Buganda.

The state in its simplest form "entails the recognition that one body of kin have an exclusive claim to provide the ruler from among themselves." Methods of redress for wrongs are many in areas where feuds and homicides lead to various efforts to keep the peace. It is shown that