

Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Le quatrième siècle* by Edouard Glissant

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into his fiction a dozen characters who have appeared in his previous works. Also, he manages to spice his pages with peppery references to certain aspects of contemporary French manners in the realms of finance, religion, book publishing, business, journalism, entertainment, and writing. The incisive nature of this book assures it of a tripartite fate: some will ignore it, others will acknowledge it, and still others will acclaim it.

Spire Pitou
Marquette University

✎ José Cabanis. *Les jeux de la nuit*. Paris. Gallimard. 1964. 110 pages. 5.40 F.

This is the eighth novel of the forty-two year old Cabanis, a native of Toulouse, whose *Bonheur du jour* was awarded the Prix des Critiques in 1961. *Les jeux* is a restrained tale of love recounted after the fact by a nameless first-person narrator, a bookish soul who had entered into a liaison with a liberated and non-bookish young lady. Through her he learns to savor joys previously unknown—but whose flavor he is unable (or unwilling) to communicate to his readers. The limpid style, stripped of ornamental metaphors, recalls Camus's *L'étranger*; the mild anti-intellectual materialism brings to mind Gide's *Les nourritures terrestres*; the motif of jealousy, which adds a certain piquancy to the novel, Robbe-Grillet's experimental *La jalousie*. Cabanis's work shares with its famous predecessors a certain open-ended, allusive quality, but neither their brilliance nor their force.

Herbert S. Gershman
University of Missouri

✎ Jean Dutourd. *La fin des Peaux-Rouges*. Paris. Gallimard. 1964. 202 pages. 8.80 F.

In this collection of short stories the author vividly portrays human frailties. There are humorous incidents, and Voltairian quips on a variety of subjects. Setting remains unimportant. The beauties of nature are absent but the odd quirks of fate become amusing. Emphasis is on situation. The style is precise and has the concentration of a Maupassant. Dutourd relates his stories with clarity and insight. In the preface addressed to children, he states that he wants them to read tales true to life, not fairy stories. In the manner of LaFontaine, a boastful reed that affirms it can withstand a storm better than an oak is crumpled by a human. A boy who tells an emperor that the ruler's outer clothing is shockingly transparent finds his future ruined. The second Faust resembles the first one in a short while; a shoemaker grows prosperous from the gifts of

money from a financier but shows no appreciation; the letters of an unfaithful husband (written earlier and sent by a friend) reach his wife even after his death in a plane crash. The tales, though not profound, reveal a little of the charm of a Daudet. They are refreshing after reading some of the complicated and sordid narratives of modern times.

Patricia M. Gathercole
Roanoke College

✎ Edouard Glissant. *Le quatrième siècle*. Paris. Seuil. 1964. 293 pages.

This book is written from an unusual point of view. It is the story of the descendants of two negroes who were brought to a Caribbean island in a slave ship in 1788. One became a plantation slave; the other escaped and lived as an outlaw in the hills.

In the fourth generation, Papa Longoué and the young Mathieu Béluse are the last of their lines. Mathieu is much interested in the old country and why they were deported and what happened afterwards. With many words, Papa Longoué tells him the little he knows.

The setting is a French, primitive, tropical island. In the course of the four "siècles," especially after the freeing of the slaves in 1848, many improvements were made and the island soon took its place in the modern world. The wind, the heat, the colorful landscapes are cleverly woven into the story.

Margaret Horsfield
University of Kentucky

✎ Alfonso Grosso. *La procession*. Paris. Seuil. 1964. 222 pages. 12 F.

This is the translation of a novel, *El capirote*, so far unpublished in Spanish, by one of the leading writers in the present Spanish novelistic movement. It certainly seems to us that it is Grosso's best long novel. The excellent translation by Gisèle Vantajou—only a couple of points remain obscure, such as the reference to the "maquis" (p. 49) and the lovers' talk on pp. 62–63—is the more commendable since Grosso's prose is often intricate and at the same time depends very much on implication and tacit points.

The novel tells of Juan Rodriguez, a poor peon working in the rice fields on the banks of Guadalquivir River in southern Spain. He is accused of theft and put in jail. Although his innocence is later shown, he is now the victim of an incurable disease as the result of the brutality of prison life. Out of work, he has to accept a job as one of the porters of religious figures during the well-known Holy Week