

message about the dispossessed and misunderstood of Canada's population a real pathos and meaning. Nevertheless, if Garner's material fails to organize itself into the larger structure of a novel per se, there is much in *The Intruders* that is skillfully written—especially those sections delineating the movements of the Donhaven gang and its victims, the tenderly drawn portrait of Jenny Croydon and the chapter developing the grisly death of her mother, Lil. Individual chapters form neatly constructed short stories of their own, i.e. no. 4 in which the Cabbagetown Association strips away the mask of a city-hall official, and no. 18 wherein the homes of two socially divided characters in the slum are sold respectively to two kinds of "intruders": homosexuals and theosophists.

What Garner manages to tell us (at the price of constantly intruding his third-person narrator into the mouths of characters who ought to have been allowed unique voices and visions) is that in spite of momentary intrusions of the educated middle-class (artists, lawyers, businessmen) into the tougher, more resilient but less advantaged body of "slum" society the life of the proletarian instinctual man goes on unchanged; that Matthew Arnold's division of society into Barbarian, Philistine, and Populace (a quotation from *Culture and Anarchy* forms the epigraph of *The Intruders*) remains fundamentally sound. "Nothing really changes but the seasons" concludes printer Tedland on the novel's last page. It is the intruders who, initially threatening the integrity of Cabbagetown's culture, are inevitably expelled, the slum's inmates offered as morally sound. Like Faulkner's—though not with the same integrity and power—Garner's Populace endures.

Allen Bentley

### MIGUEL ANGEL ASTURIAS

#### *Men of Maize*

Translated from the Spanish  
by Gerald Martin

New York: Delacorte Press, 1975.  
Pp. 337. \$10.

By the time of his death in 1974, Nobel prize winner Miguel Angel Asturias had already established himself as one of the leading novelists in the world. His novels

have so far been translated into fourteen languages and one of his later works, *Mulatta*, went into several popular paperback reprints in English. But his main novel, *Hombres de maíz* ("Men of Maize") had never received an English version, undoubtedly because of the problem involved in translating a semi-Baroque Spanish text, analogous to an Indian language borrowed from the *Popol Vuh*, the Bible of the Mayas.

*Hombres de maíz* depicts the struggles between Indians of the Guatemalan highlands and white men, intent on the commercial exploitation of maize, a crop sacred to the old Mayas. Using his knowledge of pre-Columbian myth and literature, Asturias recreates the story of the oppressed Indians, the loss of their lands to the greedy landholders, and the moral and spiritual destruction of the Indians. There are in the book six chapters, each with the story of different Indian characters, but at the end most of them are reunited in prison, having lost their lands, freedom, and identity.

In the standard Twayne monograph of Miguel Angel Asturias it is said that *Hombres de maíz* "is a novel so rich and so full as to appear confusing" and it is called "a calculated work of art" (p. 53). The English version, *Men of Maize*, translated by Gerald Martin, is faithful to the Spanish original and is of high quality. This is a good book, in which artistically retold Mayan myths are interwoven with modern Latin American social and political conflicts, and all conveyed through an almost hallucinating language and atmosphere.

Evelio Echevarría

### TERESINKA ALVES PEREIRA

#### *Help, I'm Drowning*

Translated from the Spanish

by Angela de Hoyos

Chicago: Palos Heights Press,  
1975. Pp. 18.

*Help, I'm Drowning* is a translation by Angela de Hoyos of five short stories written by Teresinka Alves Pereira. Two of these ("Solitude" and "Letter and Telegram") deal with the problem of loneliness, while the other three ("The train and the flowers," "Help I'm Drowning," and "Little man") explore the question

of man-woman relationships. These three can be further subdivided into two categories: the love-triangle ("The train and the flowers" and "Help, I'm Drowning") and the deceived woman ("Little man").

"Solitude" is a study of the loneliness of a woman who finds herself all alone, except for her dog, in an apartment in a foreign environment. She is longing for some personal contact with another human being and this longing is made much more acute after she receives her mail. She becomes so desperate that she is about to call a hot-line "need-a-friend" number; however, her will power prevails and she goes for a walk with her dog instead. The fact that the dog's name is Solitude drives home the point of her loneliness.

In "Letter and Telegram" Martha, now faraway from loved ones, feels the stress of loneliness on Christmas Day and, in a letter, expresses her doubts, fears, and regrets to Edgardo, the lover she had left behind. In this story though, the full effect of loneliness is mitigated by the arrival of a telegram from Edgardo and others asking her to return home.

"The train and the flowers," the first of two stories that treat the subject of the love-triangle, tells of Ieda's meeting another man, Professor Rafael González, in Guadalajara where she had gone to give a lecture. Ieda, who is already accustomed to a relationship with her boy friend George, which "was carried on through telephone chats or by letters and promises to meet someday at some place" (p. 1), invites the professor, to whom she makes no mention of George, to visit her in Mexico City whenever he happens to be there. He accepts and, on the way to the train station where George is waiting, he buys her a bouquet of yellow roses from Jalisco. As fate would have it, she arrives late and is unable to share a compartment with George and, to complicate matters even further, flowers are not allowed on the train. The following morning, neither George, in whose compartment she had hidden the flowers, nor anyone else seems to be aware of the existence of any flowers. A few days later she receives a telegram from the professor announcing his arrival and with the promise of yellow roses from Jalisco. Ieda is confused because she does not know whether the first bouquet of yellow roses was part of a dream, or whether it was a case of déjà vu.

In "Help I'm Drowning," which lends its title to the collection and which is the only selection in verse, the author, by means of the metaphor of a "junkie" getting a hypodermic "high," transmits the tortures of a woman transported by the love of one man and confident that the other man, whom she likes, will forgive this love.

"Little man" expresses the bitterness of a woman who, in spite of herself, falls victim to a Don Juan whose life's purpose is to "screw with the mongrels in the streets" (p. 18). Behind her vicious attack on the man, however, one can see that she herself is the true object of the attack.

All these stories have a woman as the central figure and are told from her standpoint. In all but "The train and the flowers" first-person narration is employed to bring out quite forcibly the intensity of the emotions. In "Solitude" and "Letter and Telegram," it is the loneliness; in "Help, I'm Drowning," the complete helplessness of the woman; and in "Little man," her bitterness and anger.

The third-person narration of "The train and the flowers" permits the author the vantage point of distance to create the mystery of the flowers.

All in all, *Help, I'm Drowning*, apart from a few typographical errors, is a good and welcome translation of the works of an author who deserves a wider readership.

Dexter J. Noël

## BERT NAGEL

*Franz Kafka: Aspekte zur Interpretation und Wertung.*

Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 1974. Pp. 336.

Bert Nagel's book about Kafka's work with its descriptive subtitle: "Some Aspects toward an Interpretation and a Critical Evaluation" began as an essay on "In the Penal Colony." In order to comment knowledgeably on that sometimes neglected story, Nagel found that he had to come to terms with the stultifying profusion of scholarly comment on Kafka. To encompass it all was, of course, impossible, and, in