isn't, a "Philosophy of the Demented." Perhaps it is this underlying faith in these inmates that draws one so irresistibly to Powys's masterful concept of bedlam.

The names in the book belong to the world of Dickens. The mental home where the action takes place is Glint. The hero is John Hush; his girl is Tenna Sheer. And there are others with a Dickensian flavor—Mrs. Squeeze and Mrs. Cuddle, not to mention Dr. Echetus, sadistic head of Glint, who maims his laboratory dogs for pastime.

Bernard Wolfe's "Limbo" is a "bilious rib" on our present day mores and ideologies. It is set in the imaginary world of the United States of tomorrow. Bilious, I am afraid, is the only word for it, for Mr. Wolfe is no Aldous Huxley or George Orwell. His heavy satire goes to such extremes as to suggest that masochism, in the guise of voluntary amputees, will set the pace of the future society. Mr. Wolfe is too often carried away by his own psychoanalytic ramblings to keep us engrossed in the antics of his Dostoievskian brain surgeon hero.

Novels about Hollywood seldom come up to Nathanael West's "The Day of the Locust," which captured the movie capital's lunacy and terrible obscenity. In Mr. West's book there was a glacial cruelty, a corrosiveness, which encompassed the frustrations and loneliness of Americans at large. For West simply used Hollywood's fabulous movie industry as a springboard to vault us into the "air-conditioned nightmare" which, like Henry Miller, he sensed had absorbed what had once been the American dream. Robert Carson's Hollywood story, "The Magic Lantern," is written on quite another level. It is neither angry nor satirical, being a documented history of the film business accompanied by a novel that never rises above the pedestrian. The story which it tells of the Silversmiths and their celluloid empire is strictly a screen writer's scenario material.

For years now critics have been fighting a losing battle against bulky novels. The appearance of Mr. Cooper's elephantine "Sironia, Texas" is sufficient to make the most imperturbable reviewer concede defeat. This novel is even longer than "War and Peace," but it takes ten times longer to wade through Cooper's soggy prose. Mr. Cooper's fictional Leviathan is thick with quaint regional dialect. In chronicling the births, deaths and passions of his fictitious town, Mr. Cooper seems unduly hard pressed to prove that Bellaman's "Kings Row" was a mere kindergarten compared to the torture chambers laid bare in Sironia, Texas.

RICHARD MC LAUGHLIN

Chicago Savonarola

Crowd Culture, by Bernard Iddings Bell. New York: Harper. $2.00

Canon Bell, a Savonarola with a dash of practicality and even some humor, continues to call a spade a dirty shovel. This book, his seventh, is subtitled "An Examination of the American Way of Life"; it performs as able a demolition job on the "progressive" and "optimistic" school of American cultural criticism as has been accomplished in years.

No one could condense better what Canon Bell has been trying to say in these 154 pages of his muscular sermon than the preacher has done it himself. He contends,

> *First,* that American culture is a crowd culture, provincial in its contemporaneity, dangerously trivial. *Secondly,* that far from our public education being able to rescue us from what we are, it has itself become the servant of our defective culture, reflecting our modern mistakes and with fervor encouraging children to repeat these mistakes. *Thirdly,* that organized religion, to which one might think we could look for help in saving us from what we are, is too much organizational and not enough religious for the task. . . . It seems afraid to tell the truth about God or man. . . . But *fourthly,* that we can be saved; our culture can be humanized and human dignity restored . . . but only if we raise up rebels willing to pay the price which rebels always must expect to pay.

A quite competent rebel himself, Canon Bell discusses each of these four propositions in a separate chapter, and each chapter casts merciless light on the cant of the prevailing liberal "optimism." The first chapter, "The Cultural Picture," exposes the baseness of a civilization which, instead of disciplining the Common Man's inferior appetites, accepts them as its own standards. The second chapter, "The School," illuminates with unchallengeable facts the expensive void a State-controlled educational system is creating in the souls and the minds of our uninstructed, ill-mannered and so catastrophically flattered youth. The third chapter, "The Church," throws a well-aimed barrage at that heretical "liberal Christianity" which teaches "that man is by nature good," the Church "a social club plus a forum for the exchange of human wisdom" and God "a sort of handy-man at the service of nice people." And the final chapter, "The Rebels," presents a persuasive plea for the emergence of a true, courageous and non-conformist elite of educated individualists who dare defend the moral law and the race's heritage against insolent majorities.

Learned critics might object (correctly) that "Crowd Culture" is not a seminal book but rather a popularizing pamphlet. Yet this, I think, is Canon Bell's admirable talent: he can express authentic theological concerns (which are always "highbrow") with a simplicity so urgent and so angry that it ought occasionally to penetrate even the Common Man's self-enamored inertia.

WILLIAM S. SCHLAMM

With His Own Petard

How to Understand Propaganda, by Alfred McClung Lee. New York: Rinehart. $4.00

This is a plodding job with an enormous amount of the impedimenta of learning. Mr. Lee's explanation of some of the machinery of his subject is correct, up to a point. He cites interesting cases. But oddly, for a man telling us "how to understand," the book keeps toppling over toward the left. The McCarran Act he considers hysterical. The judgment of the Supreme Court legalizing the New York Feinberg law is "ominous." Efforts to clear up the Commie mess in this country are "witch hunts." Mr. Lee also speaks highly of George Seldes and his leftist work and gives a totally false reason for the disappearance of Seldes's rag, *In Fact.*

HELEN WOODWARD

Rugged Individualism — or Merely Rugged?

The President's Commission on the Health Needs of the Nation (described by its chairman as a group of "rugged individualists") recommends, among other things:

1. Prepaid medical service, including hospitalization and drugs for everybody (i.e., compulsory health insurance) to be financed in part by the states and the Federal government.
2. Creation of a Federal Health Commission.
3. Federal grants for medical education, research, local health services, hospital construction, etc. The initial *estimated* cost of all this in Federal funds alone is $1,750,000,000 a year.

In other words, the Commission proposes a long step toward nationalized medicine. You will find the answers, based on a careful study of similar schemes abroad, in

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By Melchior Palyi

Dr. Palyi shows that "free for all," prepaid, government-aided medicine leads to

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2. Bureaucratic red tape which reduces efficiency and greatly increases administrative costs.
3. Overextension of curative medicine, preventing outlay for preventive medicine.
4. Skyrocketing costs—in England they have trebled in four years, to more than 10 per cent of the national budget, exclusive of payroll deductions.

The conclusion? That at the end of the road marked "National Health Scheme" stands the barrack doctor of the Police State.

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