

PAPERBOUNDS

THE PASSIONS AND THE INTERESTS: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph. By Albert O. Hirschman. Princeton, 1977. 153 pp. \$2.95 (cloth, \$10)

With the Renaissance there began a trend of political theorizing based on looking at man "as he really is." New concepts evolved to replace traditional advocacy of the repression of passions for the sake of political and social order. One, systematized by Bernard Mandeville (1670-1733), was to harness these human feelings. Another, proposed first by Francis Bacon (1561-1626), was "to set affection against affection and to master one by another." This Baconian notion of countervailing passions grew into the doctrine that transformed greed into economic interest; Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) represents its culmination. Harvard political economist Hirschman illuminates this evolution with brevity and clarity. "Both critics and defenders of capitalism," he concludes, "could improve upon their arguments through knowledge of [its] intellectual history."

THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL SECURITY. By Alicia H. Munnell. Brookings, 1977. 184 pp. \$3.95 (cloth, \$9.95)

A quote suggests why this book is of relevance to most Americans: "Social security covers over 90% of the working population and pays more than \$83 billion annually. Current members of the system have been promised future benefits exceeding \$4 trillion." Against a background of absurdly overlapping or arbitrarily preclusive programs, Alicia Munnell provides the reader with a painstaking, down-to-earth survey of prob-

lems arising from flaws of coordination, the gross inequities that result from careless legislation, negative feedbacks on savings. Her cool look at the statistics is a far cry from the sterile all-or-nothing terms in which Social Security is often debated.

CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY: Selected Readings. Edited by Paul Connerton. Penguin, 1976. 520 pp. \$4.95

Critical theory is concerned with the study of how social conditions determine our knowledge. This anthology presents a good summary of the main positions in this "branch" of sociology, better understood as a phenomenon of German intellectual history. It includes an excellent selection of texts by Hegel, Marx, Wilhelm Dilthey, and the writers of the Frankfurt School—Adorno, Habermas, Benjamin, Marcuse, Max Horkheimer.

THE STRONG BROWN GOD: The Story of the Niger River. By Sanche de Gramont. Houghton Mifflin, 1976. 350 pp. \$5.95

Sanche de Gramont, journalist and author, recaptures an age of adventurous exploration when brave and foolish Europeans endured unspeakable hardship to find West Africa's Niger River and trace its capricious 2,600-mile course to the sea. Those, like Mungo Park and Richard Lander, who did not succumb at once to murder, misfortune, or disease returned home to England and France. There they inspired new expeditions funded in the name of abolitionist conviction or the imperial mission. Reading this intriguing history, one can only marvel at the suicidal zeal of these men.