
PAPERBOUNDS

PIG EARTH. By John Berger. Pantheon, 1982. 213 pp. \$5.95

"The world has left the earth behind it." Not quite yet, in fact, but the likely extinction of peasant society makes this collection of essays, poems, and stories written between 1974 and 1978 (while Berger and his family were living in a French village) a work of urgent anthropology. It is also a striking artistic effort, capturing in tone and style the villagers' own portrayal of themselves and their world—"mordant, frank, sometimes exaggerated, seldom idealised." This volume is the first part of a projected trilogy, *Into Their Labours*, by the versatile British art critic and novelist.

SOME TIME IN THE SUN. By Tom Dardis. Penguin, 1981. 297 pp. \$5.95

Hollywood has never helped a writer, or so runs the cliché. But Dardis, editor, professor, and short story writer, claims that time in Hollywood was not ill-spent for F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, Nathanael West, Aldous Huxley, and James Agee. Fitzgerald's own assessment was that film work may have meant the sacrifice of his talent "in pieces," but it did not cause its destruction—as the uncompleted novel *The Last Tycoon* illustrates. At the very least, scriptwriting kept him away from the bottle (most of the time) and solvent. Hollywood earned Faulkner more money than he thought existed "in the entire state of Mississippi," buying him stretches of precious time back home for serious writing. (He may well have been one of the fastest studio writers, at 35 pages of script a

day.) West's work at low-budget studios yielded rich ore—material for his novel, *Day of the Locust* (1939). For Agee, Hollywood represented no compromise: The novelistic detail of his scripts and the literary excellence of his film criticism demonstrate his respect for the medium.

THE REVOLUTION OF THE SAINTS: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics. by Michael Walzer. Harvard, 1982. 344 pp. \$6.95

In this major work on the revolutionary temperament, Walzer, a political scientist at Princeton's Institute for Advanced Studies, considers the role of Puritanism during Britain's tumultuous transitional period between 1530 and 1660. England then, like much of Europe, was in the throes of transformation, political, economic, and religious; the ideas of earlier thinkers such as Martin Luther and Niccolò Machiavelli had called into question all the old hierarchies and privileges but offered few certainties. Reacting to the disorder of the times, and despising the hedonism of aristocratic Cavalier society, many gentlemen and merchants found in Calvinist doctrine the promise of a new form of order: self-mastery. Once "remade," the Puritan saints, the Cromwells and the Miltons, proceeded to shape society "in the image of their own salvation." If they killed kings, they did so to install a new state, self-governing, austere, and virtuous. Walzer's comprehensive analysis shows how these first radicals prefigured later generations of essentially intolerant zealots—Jacobins, Bolsheviks, and Maoists.