

BOOK REVIEWS

by

GERTRUDE MARTIN

THE CURRENT issue of Phylon, the quarterly published at Atlanta University, is devoted to a symposium on "The Negro In Literature: The Current Scene." Contributors include many of the best known Negro literary figures: Langston Hughes, Arna Bontemps, Gwendolyn Brooks, Robert Hayden, Alain Locke, Sterling Brown, George S. Schuyler, Margaret Walker and J. Saunders Redding, to name only a few.

The articles here constitute a comprehensive look at literature by Negroes in the last few decades and the trends that are apparent today. New writers are discussed and their work critically assessed. In addition to the wealth of critical material, there are poems by Langston Hughes, Carl Holman and Robert Hayden, which provide a fine and varied sampling of the work of Negro poets. There is also a profile by George Schuyler of Carl Van Vechten, who did much to foster the Negro literary Renaissance.

In his Summary, Alain Locke gives an excellent synthesis of the material presented by the various authors.

"The Negro intellectual is still largely in psychological bondage not only, as Reddick puts it, 'to the laws and customs of the local (Southern) culture,' but to the fear of breaking the tabus of Puritanism, Philistinism and falsely conceived conventions of 'race respectability.' Consciously and unconsciously, these repressions work great artistic harm, especially the fear of being accused of group disloyalty and 'misrepresentation' in portraying the full gamut of Negro type, character and thinking . . . To break such tabus is the crucial artistic question of the moment, the wrath of the Negro Rotarians, preachers, college presidents and journalists notwithstanding."

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Gwendolyn Brooks to Judge Poetry

Pulitzer prize winner Gwendolyn Brooks has been named as one of the judges to select the most distinguished book of poetry by an American published in 1950. The winner of the award in poetry, as well as one chosen in the fields of fiction and non-fiction, will receive National Book Awards. The awards are sponsored by the American Book Publishers Council, The American Booksellers Association, and the Book Manufacturers Institute.

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"Stories for Two"

"Stories for Two," by the famous playwright, Ferenc Molnar, consists of 18 dialogues, which, according to the cover blurb, "have appeared in many languages the world over, and been produced in theaters over the years." They are charming and witty, brief and inconsequential, but they reveal an observant eye and a keen knowledge of many ages and types of characters.

As the publisher indicates, "They are suitable for performance by professional or amateur players—on the stage, on a simple platform, in any classroom or auditorium, over the radio, on the television screen, or even as casual conversation in a living room where the audience is not seated in rows."

"Stories for Two" by Ferenc Molnar; Horizon Press; New York City. 1950; \$3.50.