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## Text-Book for the Immature

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H. B. Kimmel

*The Morning After* by Brian Crozier. (Methuen R3.60)

IF THE PEOPLES of the newly independent states are often immature, defiantly turning on their elders as they do, they need a text-book to guide them. They have it at last.

Impressionable Africans and Asians must know their seducer—this is communism while socialism and even planning are bad company too. The ex-guardian, now in the role of suitor, however, has nothing but honourable intentions. Mr. Crozier cannot understand why the new leaders, professing socialism, seem resistant to the appeal of private enterprise. As an apologist for capi-

talism he is far too patronising to win converts. The doubts one feels on reading 'I am a Western Liberal' in the preface are confirmed, rather embarrassingly, by indiscretions like 'that amiable irrationality which seems to be characteristic of Africa', 'the charm of Africa' and by anthropological howlers like 'the Burman mentality.'

To pick out all the absurd notions in this book would require more time than the 'few scattered weeks' it took the author to write it but here are two quotations most likely to antagonise even an ordinary 'liberal'—'there seems no reason whatever why it should be immoral for the Katanga to secede from the Congo and moral for, say, Dr. Banda's Nyasaland to secede from the Rhodesian Federation.'

About the 'Common Market' he has this to tell us—

'Sir Abubakar's attitude was as incomprehensible, in economic terms, as Dr. Nkrumah's'. Much is irrelevant in a book that attempts to review independence.

According to the author, India's prospects, despite a handicap of built-in socialism, are better than China's—after all, the tortoise reached the winning-post before the hare. One wonders whether Mr. Crozier drew on this African image intentionally. Whatever readership he had in mind, his ill-timed reminder that Kenyatta was the prophet of Mau Mau is not likely to promote the sales of the book in Kenya.

What will finally damn him, however, is a curious statement to the effect that there is not much substance to the 'myth' that the colonial powers grew rich at the expense of the colonies.

Projecting his ideas into a South African context, what would his solution be? His answer would lie in the observation: 'the federal system is the only one that can offer proper safeguards for minority peoples.'

If the South African orgy is segregated, one hopes, even if there is a hangover, that at least the morning after will be spent in mixed company. ●

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## To the Editor

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### The New World

SIR,—Can you help us to procure material for a new periodical which is going to appear in Denmark?

The name of the periodical will be *Den ny Verden* (The New World), and it is our intention to bring articles and literature from non-European countries to throw light on the cultural, economical and political conditions in those countries. We attach a great importance to obtaining as many and as good contacts as possible to people in these countries, and I therefore take the liberty of asking you if you would be willing and able to give us some information about material concerning South Africa, which might be suitable for our periodical.

Besides articles and literary contributions we are very much interested in getting as much illustration material as possible, photographs, drawings etc.

The periodical is going to appear five times a year, the first time in January 1964, and we would be very grateful to you for publishing this letter as soon as possible in order that we might, if possible, in one of the first numbers, bring some authentic material from South Africa.

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## Salahi

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BOTH THESE ART forms formed important starting points in Salahi's search for new forms and expression. The swinging rhythm of Arabic writing is felt in nearly his entire work. To begin with he drew many pictures which were simply decorative treatments of Arabic words or verses from the Koran. Then the doodles which decorated the letters began to gain a life of their own and develop into figurative images. We begin to have haunted human images peering through bold sweeping calligraphic patterns. But even where the drawing is completely figurative one can recognise that the basic shapes have been derived from the Arabic alphabet.

The use of decorative pattern is most notable in some but can also be found in many other drawings. The basic elements of these patterns may actually be derived from traditional Sudanese designs, but Salahi makes these patterns swing in a way in which no traditional design can. These patterns seem to have *live*, breathing surfaces.

And here we must remark immediately on one important element in Salahi's work. The traditional formal elements he has used are in themselves aesthetic and rigid. Sala-

hi's line on the other hand is extremely *sensitive*, it moves along nervously, tenderly and its movement is highly expressive of the artist's personality. Salahi's line has a life and expression of its own which is quite separate from its representational function.

These then, are the formal and structural elements of Salahi's drawings. But in strange contrast to their aesthetic perfection which borders on elegance, is the powerful, disturbing contents. Beneath the balanced design there is a strong magical element.

Out of Salahi's pictures eyes are looking at us, or *through* us. Eyes that seem to be asking, or pleading, or warning. Eyes that make us feel ill at ease. To whom do these eyes belong? Are they human, spirits, gods or masks? In Salahi's work there are no clear divisions between the natural and the supernatural. The dead and the living, Gods and men seem to mix freely. It is this quality that gives to many of Salahi's images a mask like appearance. When I looked at these drawings for the first time I felt sure that some of the images were inspired by Ivory Coast masks, for example Senufo funeral masks. But a closer look at the masks shows that there is hardly any formal resemblance. Salahi's art is not derivative. It merely happens to evoke similar responses in us.

Salahi's images are not inspired by objects seen. They rise from the dreams and fantasies of the artist's mind. They are visions, disturbing and compelling visions. Having once come into contact with Salahi's images we shall live with them for the rest of our lives.