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MEANJIN ON LSD

LSD? Some might say: but Meanjin’s already ‘done’ drugs. True enough; it was a sell-out issue, too (vol. 61, no. 2, 2002). But what’s in an acronym? There was a time in Australia when those initials stood principally for pounds, shillings and pence. The decimalisation of our currency in 1966 put paid to that usage, and, as this coincided with the golden age of hippydom, the acronym then became most commonly attached to lysergic acid diethylamide, the coolest, ergiest hallucinogenic drug of the day. But that golden age has long passed, and its fashions (in drugs as in dress) seem almost quaint now. Among today’s young, there’s nothing cooler or hotter than ice, which could be an acronym though is actually just a nickname (for methamphetamine in crystal form). One of our youngest contributors to this issue saw no problem, therefore, when corresponding with me about it, in co-opting those old-hat initials for our current theme: love, sex and desire.

‘How goes the LSD issue?’ this author casually asked me, about halfway through the production process. What a perfect encapsulation, I thought. It at once evokes the past associations of those initials with currency and drugs (money, as well as love, ‘makes the world go around’; and sex can be as addictive as any chemical) and reassigns them to human impulses that may be susceptible to fashion but are too fundamental ever to become passe. It also makes a neat package of love, sex and desire, which reflects their interrelation in our lives, but without conflating the three elements to the extent that they become indistinguishable. The chief focus of this issue—Heart Burn, as we’ve alternatively titled it—is undoubtedly on erotic or romantic yearnings and their physical incarnation, but we also hope to suggest something of the wider scope of emotional experiences, fulfilments and frustrations, as manifested in feelings for people or things that may involve but go beyond bodily attraction: family, friends, teachers, places, artistic and other objects.

‘CHINA’ is the title of the novella we have chosen to publish in this issue—the winner of our novella competition in 2006—and the title refers not to the country but to a fairly humble domestic object, or group of objects: a tea set. This is no less an object of love
rated by postwar signs of socialist ascendancy, for him the constant question was: Who will inherit the kingdom of history? Whereas other men, according to Stead, ‘would have left me with a torn-up mind’, Blake stocked hers and lent it intellectual coherence, without smothering her critical independence.

What emerges most clearly from the correspondence, however, is the abiding nature of their love. It is evident everywhere, whether in blunt statements (‘I read it [your letter] forty-one times; no one will ever believe that we have known each other some fourteen years’), homely images (‘[in your absence] my breast is as empty as a turned-out tip of peaches’), or nostalgic reminiscences: ‘Also have packed one thing … the embroidered skirt of the dress you gave me first thing on going to Paris, which I have always considered my wedding dress.’

Certainly, the exhaustion of frequent moves, coupled with decades of postwar poverty, imposed strains on their relationship, and Stead had a fertile, fervid imagination, with a wandering eye to match. But their expressions of love and solicitude, as recorded in their daily correspondence when geographically separated, ring true. Uneasinesses with each other, or passion for a third party, were rightly judged as not fit ingredients for maintaining the spirits of an absent partner. Their dissonances were rarely fundamental and, in any case, as Stead remarked: ‘Love always looks such a misfit from the outside.’

Hindsight lends an unintended, sometimes tragic irony to some of their exchanges. ‘Marriage for us’, Stead protested once, ‘has very little meaning, except that if we pass out, we will be buried as “Mr X and Mrs. Mary” and that is worth something’, but Blake was to die in England and Stead fifteen years later in Sydney. No-one came to collect her ashes, so they were scattered around the crematorium. Life, as Stead realised, could be unbelievably cruel. That was undoubtedly a major reason behind her compulsion, after 1968, to present her years with Blake as an ideal partnership and romance, and still earlier to avow to him and the world at large: ‘Please do not think for a minute that there is anything higher (to me) than “for love alone” — I mean that from the bottom of my heart.’

AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER

THE NEW YORK INTELLECTUAL WORLD OF THE 1930S AND 1940S WAS RIDDLE WITH COMPLICATED EMOTIONAL ENTANGLEMENTS. HISTORIAN AND BIOGRAPHER DESLEY DEACON RECOUNTS THE BRIEF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARY MCCARTHY AND PHILIP RAHV THAT GREW INTO AN ENDURING LOVE.

‘So he’s gone, that dear phenomenon,’ the 61-year-old Mary McCarthy wrote on the front page of the New York Times Book Review on 17 February 1974. She was speaking of Philip Rahv, the only one of her former husbands or lovers she remembered, at least in print, with affection. When her friend Hannah Arendt read the article, she commented, surprised: ‘So, my dear; you loved him. I never knew.’ But Margaret Miller, who had been a friend of McCarthy’s from their student days at Vassar College and knew her well during her marriage to Harold Johnsrud, was sceptical: ‘I think the eyes that Mary attributes to Philip Rahv in her last memoir were John’s;’ she told the biographer Frances Kiernan. Perhaps what McCarthy had in mind was the sort of love Arendt had evoked in her book Men in Dark Times (1968)—of apprentices starting out with their bundle on a
pole and doing a piece of the road together]. Certainly their ‘heroic, hand-carved, home-made’ destinies seemed, to both of them, of more consequence than the pleasures and wounds of their youthful love.

McCarthy met Rahv in spring 1936, probably at James Farrell’s party to celebrate the publication of his *Note on Literary Criticism*—one of the first salvos in the literary war between the Stalinists and Trotskyists that would shape her life over the next few years. Farrell’s party proved to be her entrée into the sort of life she had dreamed of as a schoolgirl in Seattle. ‘The guests were all intellectuals,’ she remembered, ‘of a kind unfamiliar to me. I could hardly understand them as they ranted and shouted at each other.’

Philip Rahv was the most extraordinary of the group of young men who became known before long simply as the New York Intellectuals. (They were all men until McCarthy joined them in 1937.) Twenty-eight years old when McCarthy met him in 1936, he was born Ivan or Ilya Greenberg in 1908 in Kupin in the Ukraine, where his family ran a dry-goods store in a Jewish ghetto. The family was divided in 1916 when his father emigrated to the United States. In a confused period following the civil war in Russia, his mother managed to get Rahv and his older brother to Austria, where they stayed long enough for him to learn German, then to Palestine. At some stage the family reunited in Providence, Rhode Island, where Rahv opted to stay with his brother and attend school while their parents settled permanently in Palestine. Having left school in 1925, when he was about seventeen, Rahv found himself penniless in New York in the early 1930s, and completed his education, as he liked to tell it, in the New York Public Library.

By 1932 Ivan Greenberg had become a central figure in the New York John Reed Club, the youth wing of the American Communist Party, and had changed his name to Philip Rahv (the Hebrew word for teacher). In 1933, just as McCarthy was graduating from Vassar, Rahv and fellow Reed Club member William Phillips had persuaded veteran Communist Joe Freeman, editor of the *New Masses* and founder of the Reed Clubs, to support them in establishing a high-quality literary journal in place of the current mimeographed newsletter. The first issue of *Partisan Review: A Bi-Monthly of Revolutionary Literature* came out in February–March 1934.

When McCarthy met Philip Rahv two years later, in 1936, he had the glamorous and powerful aura of those ‘dark smooth-haired owls with large white lugubrious faces and glasses’—‘the spiritual directors of the Communist cultural celebrities’—who so impressed her at parties for the Theater Union or the sharecroppers. Just before she went to Reno for her divorce from Johnsrud she had toyed with joining the Communist Party, but then the Moscow Trials began that were to shake many American Communists’ faith in Stalinist Russia and the international Communist movement. She read up on the trials and joined the anti-Stalinists. Rahv and Phillips were already unhappy with the Party’s leadership, which they felt had abandoned Marx, and they had been battling for some time for greater independence for *Partisan Review*.

McCarthy met Rahv again in late spring 1937. She was by then working for the publishing house of Covici-Friede. She needed a reader for German and Russian manuscripts and called Rahv. ‘He came to the Covici office, and we talked a little in the waiting-room,’ she recalled towards the end of her life. ‘He had a shy, soft voice (when he was not shouting), big, dark lustrous eyes, which he rolled with great expression, and the look of a bambino in an Italian sacred painting.’ ‘I liked him,’ she decided. ‘Soon he was taking me out to dinner in the Village, holding my elbow as we walked, and soon we were lovers.’

Rahv was an exciting figure for someone who was just discovering this rich mix of politics and intellectual life. ‘He was breaking at last with the Party and joining the Trotsky Committee,’ she remembered, ‘and I was greatly excited by his powerful intellect.’ He and Phillips had by this time persuaded Fred Dupee, the Yale-educated literary editor of the *New Masses*, to join them in a new, Marxist but non-Communist, *Partisan Review*. Dupee brought in his Yale friends Dwight MacDonald and the wealthy artist George L.K. Morris, who provided the financial backing they needed. Mary, who had just published a series on ‘Our Actors and the Critics’ in the *Nation*, was to be the journal’s theatre reviewer.

The six young intellectuals—all still in their twenties—spent a glorious summer planning their new magazine after Rahv had publicly aired his disaffection with the Party at the American Writers’ Conference early in June 1937. The first issue of the independent *Partisan Review*—now subtitled merely ‘A Literary Monthly’—came out in mid-November, with a mixture of established and emerging writers, including America’s leading literary critic Edmund Wilson and the pre-eminent poet of the day Wallace Stevens; younger authors such as James Farrell, James Agee, Lionel Trilling and Delmore Schwartz; and political theorists such as Sidney Hook. The magazine paid equal attention to European and American, modern and classical literature.

By the time the February 1938 issue of *Partisan Review* came out, McCarthy had abandoned Philip Rahv and had become, almost overnight, Mrs Edmund Wilson. The first Jim Farrell knew of the impending marriage was a telephone
call from William Phillips on the Saturday before the 5 February wedding. 'While it will undoubtedly hurt Philip now, I believe that it is good for him,' Farrell wrote in his diary two days later. 'Mary had practically given him marching orders to go out and become a great man in six months ... She is a shrewd and calculating girl.'

McCarthy had met Wilson sometime in October 1937, as Rahv was in the last throes of bringing out the new Partisan Review. When she reconstructed the events in a fictional account in her 1955 novel A Charmed Life, she conveyed how Wilson had

started bulldozing her into marriage before she really knew him. It was what she needed, he assured her ... when she woke up, for the second time, in bed with him, after a lot of drinks.⁹

Neither appeared to be in love with the other and they certainly did not know each other very well.

The Partisan Review boys—all avid gossips and highly ambitious themselves—agreed that McCarthy's sudden desertion of Rahv for Wilson was self-seeking. Farrell wrote in his diary a few weeks after the marriage:

The Mary McCarthy-Edmund Wilson marriage was obviously calculation on Mary's part. She didn't want to work, and wanted to climb socially and intellectually. She told Phil when she left that she loved him, but she wanted the security that Wilson could give her ... Wilson, according to Mary, said he knew that she didn't love him but that he could give her so and such advantages which Rahv couldn't.

Delmore Schwartz, who was fascinated by the three characters of this drama, quipped that Mary had left Rahv for Wilson because he had a better prose style. (This may have reflected Rahv's own opinion; years later, in a letter to McCarthy, he wrote resentfully of "the great critic" ... with his fine reasons and lovely style.) Rahv was 'terribly upset', the Partisan Review's business manager Nancy Macdonald told biographer Carol Gelderman in 1982: 'He was very much in love with her, and she seemed so happy with him.' But to William Phillips, recalling the relationship in the 1990s to Frances Kiernan, they didn't seem terribly happy together. I don't know why, but they weren't ... you didn't get the impression that they really liked each other that much. He was stricken with her. I would not say he adored her. She had a certain kind of charisma obviously. She was handsome and she was sophisticated and bright.⁹

McCarthy, remembering the relationship fondly at the end of her life, puts its unhappy demise down to class differences. If she had not been so excited by Rahv's powerful intellect, she suggests, she would probably have married Bill Mangold, the Yale graduate she was seeing when she met Rahv. He was, she says, 'more my kind of person.' Certainly she put any class differences severely to the test by moving Rahv, who was still a member of the Communist Party, from Greenwich Village into a Beekman Place apartment lent for the summer by friends who belonged to the wealthy Rosenwald family. Surrounded by 'seriously elegant modern furnishings, all glass, steel, and chrome on thick beige rugs', they quarrelled over her insistence on such bourgeois customs as having a drink before dinner and sitting down to supper with tablecloth and napkins and her mother's silver. Things did not improve when they moved at the end of summer to a pretty, 'moderately expensive' apartment on East End Avenue, far from her 32nd Street office at Covici-Friede and even further from the East 17th Street offices of Partisan Review and their favourite bohemian drinking and eating spots, the Brevoort, Pete's Tavern, and the Jumble Shop.⁸

At first their differences were thrilling. Echoing the upper-class rebels in Philip Barry's plays of the period (such as Philadelphia Story), she confided to Nathalie Swan, another of her friends from Vassar: 'My dear, I've got the most Levantine lover.' The enormously wealthy Swan was to marry Rahv herself a few years later. It was through living with McCarthy that he first acquired a taste for bourgeois luxuries. What served to erode their relationship was not this but, rather, his deadly sin, sloth—well attested to by McCarthy and other colleagues. 'On the wall of our life together', as she later recalled, 'hung a gun waiting to be fired in the final act.' Rahv was living on a WPA stipend; that is, he worked nominally for the federal government's Writers Project, which supported out-of-work writers. He had to check in there every day, but this was just a formality, and the rest of his time was spent at the Partisan Review office 'arguing with whoever was there, reading the mail, directing the composition of the Editorial Statement', while also writing occasional reviews for the Nation. McCarthy, on the other hand, held down a full-time job she did not particularly enjoy at Covici-Friede and worked on her own reviews and translations at night while also doing all the housework and cooking. As she discreetly put it, 'I was conscious of the discrepancy between Philip's working time and mine.'³¹

Marriage, too, was an issue. Rahv had a wife, Naomi, whom McCarthy never met. But he was too poor to get a divorce (which required, at that time, a trip to Reno and the services of a lawyer). 'We did not think of marriage anyway,'
Desley Deacon

McCarthy acknowledged just before her death: 'I believed in free unions, and so, I guess, did he.' But she wanted children; and Rahv, like Harold Johnsrud before him, had no place in his life for the costly diversion of fatherhood.17

Moreover, Rahv was ruthless in his pursuit of fame—more so than Johnsrud or even Wilson. After McCarthy's marriage to Wilson, Rahv wrote congratulating her on her photograph with her new husband in Time. 'How does it feel to be famous?' he asked, apparently without irony. Everyone who knew Rahv described him as overbearing, calculating and abrasive—a 'manic-impressive', in William Phillips's witty phrase. Intellectual women were attracted to him, as McCarthy was, and Elizabeth Hardwick after her. But they did not marry him, sensing perhaps the 'quality of possible ruthlessness' he conveyed. As Phillips again put it, 'Yes, he fascinated women, like Jack the Ripper.'18

In 1937 everything conspired to bring out Rahv's ruthlessness and self-absorption. He was being drummed out of the Party to which he had been devoted for much of the decade. His new magazine was being attacked by many of his former, powerful, supporters among Stalinists and Trotskyists alike. There were even rumours that he was in danger from the Soviet police. 'The implication was that Philip should surround himself with an arsenal of guns, double locks, blackjacks, etcetera,' McCarthy wrote to Wilson in December. Of more immediate concern was that Rahv might lose his job at the Writers Project, and that Trotsky himself was writing from Mexico less than enthusiastic about the new magazine.19

Rahv had nightmares over whether he had done the right thing in breaking from the Party and linking his fortunes to partners such as the upper-class, 'adolescent' Dwight Macdonald. But as he wrote to Mary soon after her marriage to Wilson:

I have decided to stick it out with the magazine till the end of the year. It appears that I have a 'moral and political obligation' to see the thing through. I am going to make the best of it and write several leading pieces that, I hope, will do some damage and justify the sacrifice of self-interest.20

It is little wonder therefore that Rahv did not 'do anything' for McCarthy, as Wilson accused him. Wilson thought McCarthy had a talent for imaginative writing that should be cultivated, and that she was wasting herself on theatre reviews. 'Looking back, I can see that he was right where Philip was concerned,' McCarthy wrote in her memoirs. 'If it had been left to Rahv, I never would have written a single "creative" word.' McCarthy still deplored the idea that she might have been swayed by Wilson's promise to 'do something' for her career. But she does seem to have been attracted by the thought of having a patron who would allow her to leave her job and give her the time to write.21

After Rahv married Nathalie Swain in 1941, the couple entertained regularly at their Greenwich Village apartments, decorated in modern style by Swain, first at 32 West 10th, then at 135 West 12th. Rahv dominated these evenings. 'Dark and faintly menacing; he could be mistaken for a diamond merchant in Antwerp or a mysterious agent on the old Orient Express', according to William Barrett. William Phillips wrote wistfully of his former partner in 1983: 'He made up his guest list for his own parties more carefully than the President chooses his Cabinet,' McCarthy, in one of her less fond moments, wrote to Hannah Arendt of 'the Rahvs' drawing room, with the favored couples arrayed on the Bauhaus furniture.'22

In October 1945 McCarthy wrote to her new lover, Bowden Broadwater: 'Philip Rahv has four contracts outstanding with publishers for books he will never write.'23 But he did make good on them: that same month Dial published his edited volume of Henry James's long-neglected The Bostonians; a year later his Permanent Library edition of The Great Short Novels of Tolstoy appeared; Houghton Mifflin published Discovery of Europe: The Story of American Experience in the Old World, edited with an introduction and comments by Rahv in 1947; and New Directions published a collection of his articles, Image and Idea: Fourteen Essays on Literary Themes, in 1949.

Rahv's most enduring partnership in publishing was with the firm of Farrar, Straus and Company, which started up in 1946, promising to publish new young writers. William Phillips recalled Roger Straus, Jr as the first friend of Partisan Review outside its inner circle of writers and professional intellectuals. Phillips had drawn him into the magazine's orbit, but Straus and his wife Dorothy became Rahv's close friends. Dorothy's fond memoir of the first time she met Rahv in 1947 gives us a striking portrait of the man McCarthy had left ten years earlier. Young and nervous, she noticed Rahv across the room at a party. He was taller and broader than everyone else, swarthy, with an oversized head, a shock of black hair, and a generous turned-up nose. 'He looked like a truck driver set down at a gathering of college professors,' she recalled. 'His lips were thick but shapely and there was something poetic about their sensuality in contrast to the rest of his plebeian appearance.' When she got closer she noticed the 'surprisingly gentle and thoughtful yet unflinching' eyes that had also captivated McCarthy. She was hypnotised by his speech, 'guttural and soft, with an accent so heavy that it was all I could do to recognize a stray word here and there.' And like McCarthy, she
was immediately struck by ‘his bold intelligence and a sincerity as aggressive as his physical person’:

His pronouncements were delivered with so much combativeness as to sound like violent rebuttals directed at an invisible, inaudible opposition ... He would emphasize his points with wide flappings of his hands interspersed by rough absent-minded nudges at me.

And he had not lost his taste for smart, attractive women. ‘After a pause,’ Straus went on, ‘in a different tone, caressing yet impersonal and blunt, he said, “You’re quite pretty. What’s your name?”’19

Rahv became part of Roger and Dorothea Straus’s inner circle, a regular at the literary salon they established in their East Side town house. Roger Straus consulted Rahv on publishing matters and published his anthologies of Alberto Moravia and Bernard Malamud. In 1965 Farrar, Straus & Giroux, as the company was then, published Rahv’s collected work, The Myth and the Powerhouse: Essays on Literature and Ideas. This friendship had become particularly important after Rahv’s divorce from Nathalie Swan and his move to Boston to teach at Brandeis in the later 1950s. Increasingly alienated from William Phillips, Rahv tried to wrest control of Partisan Review from Phillips and his supporters with the help of Roger Straus, who joined its Advisory Committee in 1959, and from 1961 to 1963 he chaired a new Publications and Advisory Board. When this attempt failed, and Phillips moved the magazine to Rutgers and appointed Richard Poirier Associate Editor, Straus helped Rahv establish his own journal, Modern Occasions: An Annual of New Writing in Book Form. One issue of the annual came out in June 1966, but the project was put on hold until 1969, when Rahv finally resigned from Partisan Review after a long legal wrangle with Phillips.

Although Rahv’s cultural authority deteriorated at the end of the 1960s, he was, in the twenty years before that, one of America’s most powerful figures. In a New York Times article of 18 July 1965 on ‘The In Crowd and the Out Crowd,’ Rahv was the only literary critic listed among ‘The 97 In-Most—America’s taste-makers and fashion-setters of the highest order’.

Although Rahv exuded forcefulness and self-confidence among his male colleagues, he revealed a certain vulnerability among women. McCarthy remembered that vulnerability in her memorial to him in the New York Times Book Review, where she finishes with a picture of him as ‘the dark “little man” in his long, dark East European clothes eyeing the teacher from his grammar-school desk in Providence.’ There were three persons in Rahv, she decided: the one who talked ‘pungently, springily, in a heavy Russian accent’ (‘political, masculine, and aggressive’); another who was ‘feminine, artistic, and dreamy’ (the sensitive one who ‘wrote tenderly’); and the third, who was ‘an unconstructed child with a child’s capacity for wonder and amazement’: the physical one who would ‘hug you, if you were a man, squeeze your arm, if you were a woman—as though you were watching a circus parade of human behavior, marvelous monstranacies and curious animals pass through your village.’

His love for his mother had ‘kept him sweet, at bottom, underneath his sourness,’ McCarthy wrote in her memoirs. (Yet he appears never to have visited this beloved mother, even though she was still alive, in a nursing home in Israel, when he died.) It was this tender side of Rahv that emerged when McCarthy told him she was going to marry Wilson some time at the end of January 1938. ‘He took the news very soberly,’ she remembered. ‘He was struck by the marriage proposal into a kind of thoughtfulness. It was as though the situation was too grave for anger.’ ‘What do you want to do, Mary?’ he asked her gently. When she decided to go ahead with the marriage, he accepted it without bitterness. ‘Philip’s capacity for forgiveness will surprise people who thought of him ... as a gruff, rancorous man,’ she wrote. ‘But [he] had an open heart and a childish, somewhat docile nature with those he had opened it to, few as they were.’

The pragmatic entrepreneur in Rahv was also present in his thoughtful response to her dilemma. He understood that the marriage could be advantageous to her, just as his own subsequent marriages to the wealthy, upper-class Nathalie Swan and Theo Stillman were to him. And it could also be useful to the magazine to have one of their founding editors linked so closely to the country’s leading critic. McCarthy suggests as much when she notes that Rahv, ‘as the helmsman of a young, endangered periodical ... would not have allowed himself to be angry with Wilson.’

What is striking about Rahv’s attitude to McCarthy throughout their relationship is his real equality of intellectual engagement. He may have used ‘forceful assertions, punctuated by short, harsh laughs’ when they argued about Marxism or Christianity, but he enjoyed her side of the argument and was willing to learn from it. He may not have helped with the housework (though he did learn to do the dishes, and in his later marriages became an enthusiastic cook and proud house-owner); but he appreciated her talents as a writer and had no ambitions to change them, as Wilson did. McCarthy called it love, but it was a modern sort of love that had faith in its object and did not seek to change it. His love, unlike Wilson’s was from the heart,’ she wrote. ‘He cared for what I was, not for what I might evolve into.’
From the beginning, Rahv recognised McCarthy's peculiar talents as a writer, and as he became increasingly powerful in the cultural world they both inhabited, he remained her staunch supporter. It was the theatre chronicle she wrote at his insistence in April 1938 that caught the eye of editor Maria Leiper at Simon & Schuster and led to her first book, The Company She Keeps. She published her best-known short story, 'The Man in the Brooks Brothers Shirt', in the Partisan Review in July-August 1941. Although he understood that she needed to publish in money-making magazines such as the New Yorker, Rahv was always ready to help her out when necessary, even after she quarrelled with him over her third husband, Bowden Broadwater, and caricatured him quite cruelly in The Oasis. In the mid-1950s, when she and Broadwater were in fearful penury, he drew on his resources to publish her work and to reprint her writing from Partisan Review.

The first chapter of what was to become The Group was published in his second Avon volume of Modern Writing in 1954. When her collected theatre criticism was published by Roger Straus, Jr in 1956, entitled Sights and Spectacles and dedicated to Philip and Nathalie Rahv, the cover quoted a Time description of her as 'quite possibly the cleverest woman the U.S. has ever produced'—that sobriquet probably given to Time by Rahv.

When McCarthy became rich and famous with the publication of The Group in 1963, Rahv delighted in her success. His own fortunes declined precipitously during the 1960s: he never approved of the 'pornographic' new writing; his wife Theo Stillman died in a fire that consumed their Boston mansion in 1968; he made a disastrous final marriage with the much younger Betty McIlvain in 1970; and he became increasingly dependent on alcohol and drugs. But he never lost his pleasure in his association with McCarthy. In May 1973 he wrote to McCarthy in Paris, where she now lived with her fourth husband, Jim West: 'It's a long time since we have had a talk and I long to see you.' But McCarthy didn't get around to answering it, nor a second one that came in August. Just before Christmas she received a telegram from Elizabeth Hardwick telling her Rahv was dead.24

'I find I miss him disproportionally,' McCarthy wrote to Hannah Arendt two months after his death. She continued:

I can't bear to take his picture (in color) off my desk or file away his last two letters, which alas I never answered. It's strange, but his death has hit me harder than anybody's... Maybe love, even such a long-ago one, gets at your vital center more than friendship and admiration. I realize now that I must have loved him when we lived together and continued to do so, though unaware of it.25
In her memoir of him in the *New York Times Book Review*, McCarthy comments that 'If no two people are alike, he was less like anybody else than anybody.' He remained an outsider, she pointed out, someone who always swam against the tide. Perhaps that is why, unlike Harold Johnsrud and Edmund Wilson—and unlike the contemporaries she pillories in *The Group*—he was able to resist traditional and fashionable ideas about men and women and treat her as a person and a colleague. And perhaps that is why she decided, in the end, that she loved him after all.

**NOTES**
18. McCarthy to Broadwater, 31 October 1945, McCarthy Papers.