

professor emeritus, 1982—; Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, professor of communication, 1982—.

WRITINGS: *Canadian News Index*, University of Saskatchewan Press, 1966; *The Politics of Futility: The General Jewish Workers Bund of Poland, 1917-1943*, Cornell University Press, 1967; *Pacifist's Progress: Norman Thomas and the Decline of Socialism*, Quadrangle, 1970; (editor and author of introduction) Norman Thomas, *Norman Thomas on War: An Anthology*, Garland Publishing, 1974; (editor with Mark Yerburgh) *The League for Industrial Democracy: A Documentary History*, three volumes, Greenwood Press, 1980; *The Impossible Dream: Rise and Demise of the American Left*, Greenwood Press, 1981.

WORK IN PROGRESS: "The American Diary," a thirteen-part television series for American National Enterprises; "Years to Remember," a television series for Berkshire Productions.

SIDELIGHTS: Bernard K. Johnpoll has a good knowledge of Yiddish and German. He can read Russian, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Spanish, and Portuguese.

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JOHNS, Kenneth

See BULMER, (Henry) Kenneth

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JOHNSON, B(ryan) S(tanley William) 1933-1973

PERSONAL: Born February 5, 1933, in London, England; died by his own hand, November 13, 1973; son of Stanley Wilfred and Emily Jane Johnson; married Virginia Ann Kimpton; children: two. **Education:** King's College, London, B.A. (with honors in English), 1959. **Home:** 9 Dagmar Ter., London N1 2BN, England. **Agent:** Michael Bakewell Assoc., 118 Tottenham Court Rd., London W1, England.

CAREER: Writer; film and television director and producer. **Member:** Writer's Guild, Equity, Society of Authors. **Awards, honors:** Gregory Awards for *Travelling People* and *Poems*; Somerset Maugham Award, 1967, for *Trawl*; Grand Prix, Tours International Short Film Festival, and Melbourne International Short Film Festival, both 1968, for "You're Human Like the Rest of Them"; First Gregynog Arts fellow, University of Wales, 1970.

WRITINGS: *Travelling People* (novel), Constable, 1963; *Poems*, Constable, 1964, Chilmark, 1964; *Alber: Angelo* (novel), Constable, 1964; (with Zulfikar Ghose) *Statement against Corpses* (short stories), Constable, 1964; (author of text) *Street Children*, illustrated with photographs by Julia Trevelyan Oman, Hodder & Stoughton, 1964; *Trawl* (novel), Secker & Warburg, 1966; (editor) *The Evacuees* (personal narratives; also see below), Gollancz, 1968; *The Unfortunates* (novel; also see below), Panther House, 1969.

House Mother Normal: A Geriatric Comedy (novel), limited edition, Trigram Press, 1971, Collins, 1971; (with Margaret Drabble) *Consequences: A Novel*, Greater London Arts Association, 1972; *Poems Two*, Trigram Press, 1972; *Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry* (novel), Viking, 1973; (editor) *All Bull: The National Servicemen*, Quartet Books, 1973; *A Dublin Unicorn*, Byron Press, 1973; *Everybody Knows Somebody Who's Dead*, Covent Garden Press, 1973; *Aren't You Rather Young to Be Writing Your Memoirs?* (selected short prose), Hutchinson, 1973; (editor) *You Always Remember the First Time*, Quartet Books, 1975; *See the Old Lady Decently* (novel), Viking, 1975.

Plays: "Whose Dog Are You?" (also see below), first produced in London at Quipu Basement Theatre, January, 1971; "B. S. Johnson versus God" (includes "Whose Dog Are You?" and "You're Human Like the Rest of Them"); also see below), first produced in London at Basement Theatre, January 18, 1971.

Radio play: "Entry," produced on BBC Third Programme, 1965.

Films: "You're Human Like the Rest of Them," produced by British Film Institute, 1967, published in *New English Dramatists 14*, Penguin, 1970; "Up Yours Too, Guillaume Apollinaire!," produced by British Film Institute, 1968; "Paradigm," produced by Elisabeth Films, 1969.

Television films: "The Evacuees," (based on his book of the same title), first produced on BBC 2, October, 1968; "The Unfortunates" (based on his book of the same title), produced on BBC 2, February, 1969; "Charlie Whildon Talking, Singing, and Playing" (documentary), produced on BBC 2, March, 1969; "Bath" (documentary on architecture of city), produced on BBC 2, June, 1969; "The Smithsons on Housing" (architectural documentary), produced on BBC 2, July, 1970; "On Reflection: Sam Johnson" (documentary), produced by London Weekend Television, January, 1971; "On Reflection: Alexander Herzen," produced by London Weekend Television, April, 1971; "Not Counting the Savages," produced on BBC-TV, January, 1972; "Hafod a Henref," produced by Harlech Television, April, 1972.

Also author of play, "One Sodding Thing After Another," commissioned by Royal Court Theatre, 1967. Contributor to anthologies. Contributor to *Times*, *Observer*, *New Statesman*, *Spectator*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *Encounter*, and other periodicals. Poetry editor, *Transatlantic Review*, 1965-73.

SIDELIGHTS: B. S. Johnson, generally regarded as an experimental writer, utilized his art to probe the structure of the novel by creating new forms of prose and by manipulating the basic conventions of the medium to suit his own avant-garde vision. "For ten years," wrote Robert S. Ryf in *Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction*, "in seven novels and a number of short pieces, Johnson single-mindedly and belligerently pushed at the frontiers of the novel and prowled the shifting and nebulous borders between fiction and fact. He was centrally concerned with the relationships of the writer to his material as well as to his readers."

Called a "caricature . . . of the classical novelist . . . who sees through the fiction game and its weary conventions" by D. Keith Mano in the *New York Times Book Review*, Johnson believed the traditional form of the novel was outdated and the structure of the modern novel had to be extended to reflect modern man's expanded perception of reality. A critic for the *Times Literary Supplement* asserted that Johnson was "against narrative, against fictions of all kinds, against novels which require effort to appreciate, and balefully serious about his conception of the way his medium should develop."

In *Travelling People*, his first novel, Johnson employed many different manipulative techniques designed to transform the novelistic medium. According to Ryf, the book contains "a collection of styles, including that of ironic detached expository narrative, extreme fragmentation with suggested headlines in the manner of [part of James Joyce's] *Ulysses*, sections of interior monologue, quotations, scraps of conversation, and letters." This novel, which "showed that Johnson had unusual talent and some disconcerting and provocative ideas" about

the medium, as Bernard Bergonzi suggested in his book *The Situation of the Novel*, also revealed what Johnson had learned from reading James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, and Laurence Sterne. Bergonzi believed that the "typographical eccentricities" found in the novel, such as the instance "when one character has a heart-attack and Johnson illustrates its effect with a blank page printed entirely in black," can be traced to the influence of the eighteenth-century novelist Sterne. Critic Julian Barnes argued in the *New Statesman* that Johnson's artistic devices did not, in fact, "go very far beyond Sterne."

Ryf quoted Johnson as defining the form of his novel *Trawl* as "all interior monologue, a representation of the inside of my mind but at one stage removed; the closest one can come in writing." Here Johnson's obsession with truth in fiction emerged in a work that is "one of the early and most important instances in the contemporary novel of the author's use of himself as his own principal character," according to Ryf. Although Johnson was attempting to present autobiographical reality—truth—in the novel, the work, ironically, "reads like a fairly conventional novel of recall," wrote Ryf, "in which the central character tries to come to terms with his present situation in the light of his past." Furthermore, while Johnson tried to represent the workings of his own mind, processes which are often considered to be randomly ordered, Ryf found that "one's final impression of the novel is that it is . . . highly and artfully patterned."

Johnson's concern with the randomness of human experience and thought surfaced again in *The Unfortunates*, a book which was issued in a box and held together by a removable paper wrapper. Johnson's motive in using this highly unusual form was to create an alternative to what he called the "enforced consecutiveness of the conventionally bound novel." By utilizing twenty-seven loose sections, or chapters, which could be rearranged to the reader's liking, he felt, as Ryf quoted him, that the "whole novel reflected the randomness of the material; it was itself a physical tangible metaphor for randomness." Patrick Parrinder, writing in *Critical Quarterly*, believed that the novel's theme, which deals with the narrator's feelings toward his friend's death by cancer, "contrasts sharply with the whimsical randomness that results from putting the novel into a box. . . . Johnson's idea is to allow the reader to participate in his own uncertainties about structuring the novel; but in fact the demonstration is pointless because it makes one feel that the structure does not matter."

In the *Listener*, Mary Sullivan explained the structure of *House Mother Normal: A Geriatric Comedy* as "an attempt to make the reader register the experience of nine persons as nearly as possible simultaneously. The . . . thoughts . . . and . . . words of each of eight old men and women are presented in turn, as each lives through an evening in an old people's home; finally their heartless and obscene housemother has her say." These nine interior monologues, each of which covers the same span of time within the plot's framework, comprise what Parrinder called a "technical *tour de force*," which was "handled with such ingenuity that we can identify with each of the inmates in turn, while putting together the complex jigsaw of events" of the plot. "The novel," said Parrinder, "has a powerful *momento mori* effect, not least through Johnson's use of blank spaces to indicate periods of pain, mental confusion and unconsciousness. . . . *House Mother Normal*, I believe, will stand as Johnson's finest work."

Johnson completed the novel *See the Old Lady Decently* just a few weeks before committing suicide. It was to be the first

part of his projected "Matrix" trilogy, and parts two and three were to be entitled *Buried Although* and *Amongst Those Left Are You*. In this, his last novel, Johnson was still experimenting. The book's themes, which center around the concepts of motherhood, are represented, according to a *New Yorker* critic, in "documents, imaginings, fragments, concrete poems—enough verbal games to fill a compact volume. . . . The book is clever, playful, and spirited." While the novel is "about mother, mother country, great earth mother," noted Mano, "it's as much about the possibilities inherent in fiction. . . . This is an extraordinary novel, full of agonized, half-articulate emotions. B. S. Johnson could not have confronted himself with a more harrowing challenge. May he rest in peace."

Ryf concluded that although Johnson was "stubborn and unregenerate, . . . these very qualities help make his work significant. For he was not satisfied with the form he inherited. He rejected what to him was an outworn legacy, and he stretched the form to accommodate and give voice to the stuff of the contemporary world. He never let us forget how important the novel is."

BIOGRAPHICAL/CRITICAL SOURCES: Bernard Bergonzi, *The Situation of the Novel*, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1970; *Times Literary Supplement*, June 11, 1971, November 9, 1973; *Listener*, June 17, 1971; *New York Times Book Review*, September 23, 1973, August 10, 1975; *New Statesman*, May 2, 1975; *New Yorker*, September 22, 1975; *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, Gale, Volume VI, 1976, Volume IX, 1978; *Critical Quarterly*, summer, 1977; *Critique: Studies in Modern Fiction*, Volume XIX, number 1, 1977.

OBITUARIES: *Times*, November 15, 1973; *AB Bookman's Weekly*, July 15, 1974; *Transatlantic Review*, summer, 1974. †

—Sketch by Kerry L. Lutz

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JOHNSON, Benjamin A. 1937-

PERSONAL: Born June 29, 1937, in Melby, Minn.; son of Ben Arvid (an insurance agent) and Ruth Ulrika (Werner) Johnson; married Suzanne Wasgatt, May 13, 1960; children: Samuel Perry, Jennie Ruth, Krista Davis, Jesse Jerome. **Education:** Gustavus Adolphus College, B.A., 1959; Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, Ill., B.D., 1961; Harvard Divinity School, Th.D., 1966; attended Oxford University, 1971-72. **Politics:** Independent. **Home:** 264 South Broadmoor Blvd., Springfield, Ohio 45504. **Office:** Salem at Riverside, 211 First St. S.E., St. Cloud, Minn. 56301.

CAREER: Ordained minister of Lutheran Church in America, 1965; Wittenberg University, Hamma School of Theology, Springfield, Ohio, 1965-78, began as associate professor, became professor of New Testament and dean; Trinity Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, professor, 1978-80; Salem at Riverside, St. Cloud, Minn., senior pastor, 1980—. **Member:** Society for Religion in Higher Education, Society of Biblical Literature.

WRITINGS: (Editor with Herbert T. Neve) *The Maturing of American Lutheranism*, Augsburg, 1968; *The Church in the New Testament*, Lutheran Church in America, 1968; (with Daniel B. Stevick) *Proclamation—Holy Week: Aids for Interpreting the Lessons of the Church Year*, Fortress, 1973; *The Mark of the Christian Community*, C.S.S. Publishing, 1975; *Matthew*, C.S.S. Publishing, 1978; *Blueprint for Sainthood*, C.S.S. Publishing, 1980.