EARL PARKER HANSON

P. O. BOX 12143, LOIZA STATION SANTURCE, PUERTO RICO 00914 August 2, 1974

Mr. Alfred A. Knopf 201 East 50th Street New York, N.Y. 10022 · × 8/6

Dear Mr. Knopf:

yesterday's
The enclosed article from yesotorda's San Juan Star may interest you.

Any word as to the identity of Sara Lidman? Could Laxness simply have invented her, just for the hell of it?

Sincerely

Barl. Hanson

The Nobel Prize And Puerto Rico

Every year, throughout the year and everywhere, the world of letters speculates with some tension on the question of who will win the next Nobel Prize for Literature. In the face of the resulting urging, conniving, and manipulation, the gentlemen who run the Swedish Academy maintain suspense by exercising the garrulity of the Sphinx until, at long last, they

announce their annual decisions.

Imagine Puerto Rico's joy in 1956, therefore, when the laureateship was awarded to Juan Ramon Jimenez who lived here then and is still listed in at least one tabulation as a "Puerto Rican." The fact that his authenticity as such was, and is, open to question was taken care of at the time of the announcement. Since Don Juan was too ill to go to Oslo to collect the prize, Jalme Benitez, the then-chancellor of the University of Puerto Rico, graciously offered to make the strenuous journey and do the job for him. And if I know our Jaime correctly, his speech of acceptance was filled like all get-out with immense and impressive erudition.

The bizarre notion that the words "erudition" and 'wisdom'' are synonymous, which is spreading with alarming speed in modern Puerto Rico, is one of several false premises on which our entire western culture is based. Actually, "wisdom" demands two qualities which cannot be acquired from books, courses of study, religious experiences, or even regimens of

psycho-analysis.

A man either has them or he doesn't, and that's that! They are: (1), a profound love and compassion for people, for human beings as such; and (2), an all-prevading sense of human to permit the man all-prevading sense of humor to permit the man, among many other things, to refrain from making the egregious mistake of taking himself too seriously. The fact that the two qualities must go together, that neither is possible without the other, is in part responsible for the concomitant fact that wisdom, as a commodity, is in lamentable short supply in our modern life — in Puerto Rico as well as everywhere

One man who displays both qualities is Brazil's greatest writer, Jorge Amado. While he writes only about his beloved home-state of Bahia, he holds it up to the world as a mirror, often in rebuke, in the fashion in which the Nobel Laureate (1955) Halldor Laxness, holds up his own beloved Iceland. Aniado's widespread influence as a "universalist" is attested by the facts that his works have been translated and published in 30 languages and he is being urged on the Swedish Academy as the next Laureate publicly by the Denver Post, by myself in this column, and undoubtedly by others — and privately (I suspect) by a number of people who write letters to Stockholm which will not be answered.

I have read only some of Amado's books available in English, namely: "Gabriela, Clove and Cinamon,"
"Home is the Sailor," "The Tent of Miracles," and the delightful "Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands, which will soon appear on Broadway as a musical.

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cance in the first three years some gains were teal. tenth that amount. The actual loss is impossible to The \$25 million investment became worth less

Then the bottom dropped out. ped in and froze further investments by the St. Jose reportedly, at that point, a church official from Ri



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their sensible if often silly — aspirations, the whites as well as the blacks with their African religious practices and their genius for attracting world fame to the annual carnival doings. He is also delightful in the revealing humor with which he deals with the "Establishment," including businessmen, cops, and pompous professors. Indeed, so fine a job did he do of that in "The Tent of Miracles" that my son, David, before he gave up teaching political science for the more sensible study of law, thought seriously of making the book required reading for all his students.

Which brings me to repeating something I once wrote to Dr. Arturo Morales Carrion, the present president of the University of Puerto Rico, who seems to share my admiration for Amado and to regard my suggestion with a certain amount of interest. Let's invite Amado here for a while as "Writer in Residence!" I happen to know that he is interested in Puerto Rico and curious about the island. For a man like him, curiosity is a powerful motivating force, but whether or not specific arrangements can

be made remains to be seen.

My reason is not that he seems bound to receive the Nobel Prize, if not this year then soon, and that the production of two Laureates in a few decades would certainly prove Puerto Rico to be right up there, culturally, among the best. My reason is that his presence here will be immensely good for the island and its variegated, bewildered society. To a greater extent than almost any other people I know, the Puerto Ricans will be able to see, in Bahia and its people, a mirror of themselves and their problems, and to profit from the observations of a superb artist who is human, humane, and humorous. The Puerto Ricans will take him to their hearts immediately, despite the chauvinism which is today burgeoning here to an alarming extent. What our formidable pundits will do to him I have no way of guessing. But he seems to be a tough character and I will be interested to see what he does to the pundits.

So, come on Arturo! Let's go! You take it from here and do your university and Commonwealth a great big favor!

