John D.

John D. Rockefeller, A Portrait in Oils, by John K. Winkler. Vanguard Press. $2.25.

The author of this book who will be remembered as a former employee and a recent biographer of William Randolph Hearst, gives us a sprightly, superficial, sensational, readable, mildly irreverent account—an enlarged Sunday supplement story, so to speak—but no real biography of John D.

And yet the story of John D. will well repay hard scientific labor. The man who lived thru historical epochs is certainly worthy of the best efforts of historical scholarship. The man who embodied in quintessence the truly evangelical Christian virtues of industry, shrewd business, and profit making as the chief end of man upon earth and who brought these virtues to a perfection never before witnessed in this sinful world, deserves deep study as the most representative man of his time. The man who, once the most execrated figure in the country, pictured in every village as the bird of prey, the giant octopus fattening upon the blood and marrow of millions, nevertheless emerges in his ninetieth year as the object of admiration, reverence and awe really concentrated in his own personal life the story of the tremendous changes that have been transforming every aspect of the economic, social and political life of this country since the Civil War. A real biography of John D. Rockefeller would be a personalized account of some of the most important phases of the history of the United States.

The story of John D. Rockefeller is the story of the Rockefeller dynasty. Mr. Winkler devotes some of the closing chapters of his book to the second and third generations. But he does this in order to be able to atone for his very mild iconoclastic irreverence in regard to old John D. with the most insipid eulogy of Junior and John D. III. Of course, this is in line with the rapid general revaluation of the public estimation of John D. that reflects the

latest stage in the economic and political development of this country.

The real significance of the life story of John D. Rockefeller is a book closed to Mr. Winkler. He never makes any move, no matter how tentative, in such a direction. That is why he describes with characteristic reportorial superficiality Mr. Rockefeller's diet and golf game and passion for "America" but has nothing whatever to say about his hero's relation to the basic social forces of the period.

John D. Rockefeller remains at once a challenge and an opportunity for the Marxist biographer.

WILL HERBERG.