

(History) anthology editors' harried air, as if they've been herding armadilloes.

(I decided) to be governed by the particles in my mind rather than those making storm clouds above the Big Belts.



Nov. 29,  
A1

Observer  
RUSSELL BAKER

## 'Bunk,' Ford Called It

Political intellectuals are having a nasty argument about what history should be taught to American schoolchildren. Tales you hear indicate that, whatever history may be taught in the future, at present kids learn practically none of any kind.

My own favorite anecdote stars an apparently normal high school student. Amazed to hear a graybeard refer to the First World War, he cried, "I never knew there was a First World War!"

Evidence of equally preposterous ignorance turns up in the papers with comic regularity. Yet we have this serious quarrel among ostensibly serious people about what history should be taught to the kids of some improbable future.

I say improbable because of my own experience with schoolbook history. Though a major drudge, I was unable to digest more than a few lumps of schoolbook history until college was well behind me.

My history learning was a bone-yard of unrelated facts useful for passing tests, but utterly useless to a person who should have been trying to orient himself in a complicated, long-running show. What a shabby store of facts:

1492, 1776, Columbus. Something about the "Fertile Crescent." Tigris and Euphrates, Hammurabi, Pilgrims, Plymouth Rock, a New England Indian named Squanto (can that possibly be right?), assorted wars, George Washington, Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, world safe for democracy . . .

The one time I awakened in high-school history was at mention of some medieval thug or king whose sister was seduced by I've forgotten who, or whom as I would have written at the time, being a tiresomely nagging grammar bore.

The names of the stars of that 10th-grade moment escaped me almost at once. What woke me was the teacher's saying "seduced."

Tenth-graders weren't supposed to hear words like that, and the outlaw thrill of hearing such stuff from a teacher was exquisite. Students and teacher were all males in that classroom. Here was a gamy whiff of barracks freedom. Could it be that history was more interesting than school had hitherto let on?

No. On and on I careered into college, fighting sleep as professors talked of the Sherman Antitrust Act, Luther's 95 theses nailed to the church door, the reign of Commodus, Wellington's horse, Henry George and the single tax, the Whiskey Re-

bellion, the invention of the incandescent light bulb . . .

Reader, I was not remarkably dumb, just typically disoriented by avalanches of history crashing all around me. I will tell you the bleakest thing of all:

At the age of 18, I went off with whooping patriotic gusto to defend the nation against Imperial Japan, yet I had no idea why that war had occurred until 30 or 40 years later on a Caribbean beach I read John Toland's book "The Rising Sun."

By then my own sun had started to set, but history had finally taken me under her spell. It had something to do probably with realizing at last that it might all be wrong. After all, it was just a story that humans had worked out in an effort to make sense of who they were and how they had got there to the point at which they picked up the quill.

It was all just a well-informed speculation. Like the stock market. What a delight. As we know from our lives, much of an individual's own past is unknowable with certainty, even to himself. Much of what he believes to be his past may be fiction he has recited so often that it has taken root as truth on the back of his own skull.

I doubt that many schoolchildren

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### Avalanches of history crashing all around me.

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can be brought to value history or enjoy the delights of its tantalizing subjectivity. Much of its pleasure lies in discovering its ironies, and irony is uncommon in the typical harassed, scared, browbeaten American schoolchild looking forward in dread to S.A.T.'s that may wreck his life while simultaneously wondering if the student in the desk behind him is packing a semiautomatic pistol.

Irony is for people who don't have to decide at age 18 what they are going to be when they grow up. My memory of that experience is that it was like being asked to choose among a variety of prison sentences. Of course, I may have invented this memory much later, thought it sounded clever, and repeated it so often that I now believe it's true. That's history for you. □



# Less Is More and More

## CHROMA

By Frederick Barthelme  
Simon and Schuster. 173 pp. \$15.95

By Jack Sullivan

**M**INIMALISM, whether in the stories of Hemingway, the music of Webern, or the later plays of Beckett, has traditionally been defined as the concentration of intense thought or feeling into a tiny format. Recently, however, a new kind of minimalist writer has become addicted to taking something potentially large and interesting—a separation, a death, a breakdown—and flattening it into blandness; or, alternately, to taking something radically uninteresting—a condo sale, a barbecue party, a trip to the mall—and stretching it out through elliptical dialogue and sheer repetition, so that even the shortest shorts seem curiously long.

What all this flattening and stretching represents, we are told, is an honest commentary on the blandness and vapidity of our time. Our time may well deserve it. But does the reader?

*Jack Sullivan, who is working on a book of music criticism, writes frequently about contemporary fiction.*

As is illustrated in *Chroma*, a new collection of stories, Frederick Barthelme is one minimalist who knows how to have fun with the genre. His references to junk culture are irresistibly comic; his tone has a surreal, spaced-out serenity. In "Magic Castle," about a failed pick-up at the mall, the hero and heroine gaze at shoppers and listen to "the big happy music" coming out of speakers in the mall, "satisfied in some wholly immeasurable yet noticeable way." In "Architecture," a mutual friend asks an incestuous brother and sister on the run why they don't "go home and watch TV together like everybody else?" In "Sis," emotion on a character's face is described solely in terms of someone watching a plane crash on CNN: "you'd watch the live coverage with this face," explains the narrator. Certainly no one can accuse Barthelme (as some critics have accused Mary Robison, Bette Pesetsky and others) of unconsciously aping television talk: For him, television is an insidious muse, an endless source of deadpan comedy.

Barthelme's shrewdest stories depict characters with a "mid life thing" attempting to capture a lost or never-attained hipster sensibility. In "Driver," a real charmer, a pool-accessory salesman sees a television program about San Diego lowriders and finds himself suddenly weeping because he doesn't have one. The next day he secretly

trades in the family Toyota for a customized Lincoln, drives it to the mall where he impresses the girls, picks up two dogs at 4 a.m., and then tells the animals how weird he and his wife once were: "We aren't weird now," I told them. 'But we were weird. Once. In olden days.'"

**T**HIS IS the cute version of the theme. Things get edgier when Barthelme's characters feel they missed out altogether, that they woke up one day and realized they were post-modern. The heroine of "Perfect Things" tells her husband she's having an affair with someone 20 years younger because she feels left out: "'Of everything . . . The Vietnam War, for example. The Me generation. Farm Aid. The New German Cinema. The BMW crowd. I mean, where's *my* 50s? Hawaiian shirts . . . The sexual revolution. Making ends meet—remember that? . . . I hate the lawn, Jerry, know what I mean?"

For Jerry, the narrator, the main source of ennui is getting the newspaper every day "in this sick-looking robe I've had since Nixon." Yet Jerry knows that these exchanges are just "clever" ways of deflecting more terrifying issues like aging and loneliness. Unlike the trendy airheads in the collection's lesser pieces, he is a narrator with something to say.

The least attractive stories here are Barthelme's stylishly bleak present-tense tableaux, such as "Trick Scenery," where

the anonymous second-person hero drives a steel gray '30s Chevrolet, observing at the conclusion how "endless" the highway is and how his "splash" of headlights "illuminates nothing." Look how cool I am, this story seems to say, how painterly and state-of-the-art.

When Barthelme tries too hard to be chic, even his wacky dialogue loses its edge. At the end of "Pupil," an 18-year-old student, after having barbecued chicken at her teacher's condo, reaches for a button on her Hawaiian shirt and says, "'So now we start stuff, right?'" It's a terrific line, but it could have been uttered by any of the other characters, who are interchangeably hip and laconic.

At least this story has a conclusion, though. What's most grating about *Chroma* is that Barthelme, like his colleagues, often resorts to non-sequitur endings, a device as conventional and gimmicky as any O. Henry ending. At the end of the title story, about planned infidelity, the heroine looks as if she's about to say something significant, then asks her husband if he "could use some cheese ball . . . I am *dying* for cheese ball." At the end of "Sis," which is also about marital problems, the narrator responds to a difficult question by "trying to remember when we'd last had black beans, and it seemed to me that it had been a while." When we finish a story like this, we long to ask, as the characters surely would: Is that all? The whole deal? If you start stuff, shouldn't you finish?



# When One Inspired Gesture Illuminates the Stage

By WALTER KERR

**A**n actor's ultimate success or failure in a part probably has very little to do with the ordeal of rehearsals, the ministrations of a director, the out-of-town agony of turning the play upside down. Everything is most likely determined long before, when the performer is struck all of a heap by what seems a blinding flash of inspiration (and by what may well be a flash of inspiration). The performer may be reading through the text, or running through his lines, or, for that matter, picking up lunch meats at the corner delicatessen. And, there — like a thunderclap — it is.

Suddenly the actor *sees* the part, sees it whole, sees himself in it. If he happens to be leafing the script at the time, he will now turn the page with the character's own gesture. At the deli, he will use the character's lift of chin to spurn the imported salami. The performer has at last got what is called an *attack* on the part, and from

here on in the part will be studied, rehearsed and played with that attack as its core, its reference point, its heart-beat. If I am wrong about this, I shall no doubt be told so by several motley actors I know, and I shall make apologies hereafter. But I do indeed suspect that this all-of-a-piece image that seems to come like a gift from unknown gods has more to do with the final performance than all the grueling patching together that comes in between.

I also suspect that the inspiration may come in the form of a single gesture, one revealing posture, an isolated inflection. It's not the entire acting job; that does indeed still have to be worked out. But once it's been overheard, or seen for an instant in flight, it becomes the key to everything else, which is why it's called an attack. Presented with an acting problem in Act Two, Scene Three, think back to the key, think back to the attack, and apply its rightness to the poser at hand.

Supposing that it does work this way, we are now given a game to entertain ourselves with (whether we

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# When One Inspired Gesture Illuminates the Stage

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had been thoroughly satisfied in the theater or not). As we watch a performer go about his chores with a strangely imaginative consistency, we can tease ourselves with the question: Which of the many, many things the actor is doing tonight *might* have given him his clue to the whole shebang? Does any little piece of business or any odd line-reading seem to contain — or suggest — everything else?

With no confidence whatever in my powers of divination, I am going to take a shot at guessing what it was that led Rex Harrison into playing Shaw's Captain Shotover the way he does. I must say at once that the way he plays it is a superb way. It is conceivably the best work the actor has ever done — or that I, at least, have ever seen him do. (Never mind reminding me of "My Fair Lady." For all its brilliance, that was a one-note job compared to this crazy full-bearded prophet in a rumpled jacket who seems a Tolstoy carrying his mission to the rich and heedless.) Is it possible, I wonder, that he found the part's full range in an apparently trivial spurt of Shavian foolishness — with the customary wisdom locked in — that is repeated and repeated in "Heartbreak House" at Circle in the Square?

It has been Mr. Shaw's pleasure to give his Captain Shotover, master of a house whose timbers are arched like those of a ship's hull, an incurable habit of making outrageous statements (he holds that offspring have no claim upon their parents beyond the age of 6) or tossing out unsettling questions (he questions the identity of his own daughter, among other things), after which — and before answers or comment can be offered — he disappears. In one door, toss off a good one, out the other. Almost like that.

Most actors smack their lips at such opportunities. Entering, they make enough of a bustle to notify the audience that a haymaker of a joke is on the way. They then take care to land the haymaker, making it perfectly plain that they think the joke funny, too. Instantly thereafter they whip on out again, practically timed by a stop watch, so that they will get the benefit of exiting *with* the laugh — a trick that also tends to produce applause.

No such vaudeville nonsense for Mr. Harrison. He straggles in looking



Martha Swope

Rex Harrison and Amy Irving in the second act of "Heartbreak House" — "an intellectual snuggle"

quite as wispy in his walk as in his unshorn and most untidy white hair. He listens to what is being said while the fools would have gone on cheating and kissing and dancing about with swords during his absence. When he has grasped the situation, he makes his own brisk, blunt, intensely opin-

ionated observation upon it and turns away to take his slippers while still contemplating what else might be said on the subject. You see, his mind doesn't cease functioning just because he's said something funny with a period at the end of it. He hasn't tossed the *mot* into the air and

given it a goodbye kick with his heel, like Charlie Chaplin getting rid of a cigarette.

Mr. Harrison has *thought* the line, and one thought quite naturally leads to a raging tumble of other thoughts. But he doesn't choose to give voice to these others, doesn't announce them aloud. Rather, as he disappears from view you can see his busy lips moving silently, his beetling brows jogging up and down expressively. Laugh if you will, applaud if you must. Just don't bother him with it all. He's *busy*. He is a continuum, this fellow, and his trick of pursuing intellect into infinity, or at least into the kitchen, makes both infinity and the kitchen quite real. You could imagine him out there chattering away at the parlor maids, testing the stale cake to see whether it crumbles away in his fingers or is still substantial enough to sustain life.

Can Mr. Harrison have seen that shuffling exit in his mind's eye one day and decided that it had just about the proper pace, and contained approximately the right amount of truthful impertinence, for the part as a whole?

Could it have led him to the magical, sleekly alert second-act scene in which he joins the youthful but utterly sane Ellie Dunn on a sofa to engage in what amounts to an intellectual snuggle? The two discuss, with a kind of waspish affection, such matters as age and energy and marriage and drink ("I drink now to keep sober") as well as the peace that comes of having your heart broken once and for all. Amy Irving, as Ellie Dunn, does lovely work, second only to Mr. Harrison's, which is quite a surprise considering some of the big guns she is up against: Rosemary Harris, Dana Ivey, Philip Bosco, et al. But the tone of bemused honesty is set by Mr. Harrison, and, though I can't precisely swear to where he found it, I can and do attest to its quality. (I should mention in passing that the second act stretches out a bit and the ultimate bomb blasts from the sky seem abrupt. The evening's a rich, tasty treat nonetheless.)

If there is anyone now working in our theater who seems to have a positive genius for flushing out an inspired slant that can turn the most trivial role triumphant (think of her in "Rose" or in whatever may be your own favorite, most astonishing example) it is Jessica Tandy. All the more startling, then, that she seems to have found none for prattling, motherly, daydreaming Amanda

Wingfield in Tennessee Williams's "The Glass Menagerie." Or, rather, that she has found the wrong one.

Her Amanda, brow all furrowed and voice sharp as tacks, is a nag to her children, as she ought to be. But she is a realistic, almost a reasonable nag. Her dismay that shy and crippled daughter Laura has secretly abandoned the business course in which she's been enrolled, or her utter failure to understand why son Tom would rather go to the movies nightly than to spend a single evening at home, make a kind of fussed common sense.

Perched on the arm of an overstuffed chair (one of the more unlikely positions in which director John Dexter has inexplicably placed her), she harangues the two in ordinary, standardized, you'll-be-the-death-of-

**'Does any little piece of business contain — or suggest — everything else?'**

me rhythms. She's a plausible scold whose worries are wearing her to the bone, but she's no bigger than that. There seems nothing peculiar about her, nothing oversize or odd in her fretful behavior, no sense that she is using up all of the oxygen in an already drab St. Louis apartment (here equipped with sky-high translucent pillars that suggest the play is being performed in the rotunda of the Citi-corp building.)

How is she — or should she be — using up that oxygen, making it necessary for Tom to flee for his life? With her memories, of course. We always call "The Glass Menagerie" a "memory play," mostly because narrator Tom labels it from the beginning and because we know that it was that for Tennessee Williams. But there's more to the term. The memories that truly overwhelm the play are mother Amanda's — vivid dreams of past glories that literally devour the present. Amanda sees her own children not as they are but in terms of her memories: their table

manners must echo those of a candlelit plantation; Laura should have a stream of "gentlemen callers" and the fact that she hasn't is her own foolish fault. Dreams live here. People can't.

All of this is in the play's lines, of course, and we still hear of the evening on which Amanda once entertained 17 callers, of the night she led the cotillion, of the swain who died with her picture near his heart. What we do not get is the power of the past to exist more intensely than the present, to spread its faded wings in a great mothlike ambiance that charms even as it suffocates. Amanda's gentility is real; her memories are not lies. But all of that is gone now, it is only ludicrous in the present, irrelevant for a Tom, a Laura. That is the emotional contest of the piece.

In Miss Tandy's performance — and in Mr. Dexter's awkward staging — half of this contest is missing, the half that makes our star *still* the belle of the ball, the half that confuses past and present. And the truly wild aspect of this curious omission is that we not only know that Miss Tandy can play the missing half, we have already seen her do it. The Blanche Dubois of "A Streetcar Named Desire" and the Amanda Wingfield of "The Glass Menagerie" are aspects of the same woman. The refinement, the artifice, the sense of having been betrayed and the incredible fortitude are simply put together in different proportions at another time, in other circumstances.

And that suggests to me a possible reason why Miss Tandy has let the part thin out on her — prose out on her, if I may put it that way. It's possible that, in searching for a slant, a key, an attack on the role, she was firmly determined not to lean on her performance as Blanche, not even to seem to lean on it by making use of any of its inflections or gestures. But that, I think, has robbed her of something that Mr. Williams wrote — and of an aspect of Amanda to which no one has a better right than she. "The Glass Menagerie" is such a fine play that, by the time a gentleman caller comes to call, it finds its footing and so survives. But the earlier portions cry out for the precise and special glow that Miss Tandy is prepared to provide.

And mightn't it have been exhilarating if she'd chosen to show us both women, caught together in a single blaze of light?



I think here at last is a place in this  
 confce where we can <sup>answer</sup> ~~say~~ with a bit of cheerfulness  
 about who owns at least a chunk of the west.  
 We ~~do~~ <sup>own some of it at moment</sup> by god, the writers and moviemakers and  
 other artists, and we won it with our typewriters  
 and cameras and the willingness to work at it for  
 a helluva lot less pay than anybody else in this  
 society is willing to put up with.

<sup>saying we own a chunk T-W</sup>  
 I mean by ~~that~~ <sup>7</sup> that we ~~do~~ have some dominion  
 over some of what goes into people's heads, when  
 they think about Montana, at least. Nobody who  
 reads <sup>even</sup> can look up into the air out here without  
 having Bud Guthrie's Big Sky imprint itself on  
 the inside of ~~their~~ <sup>his</sup> forehead. ~~Nobody who reads~~ <sup>one of any imagination</sup>  
<sup>at all</sup> can wet a ~~trout~~ line in a Montana trout stream  
 without <sup>seeing, in the shadow on</sup> looking <sup>beginning to</sup> hopefully up the water, ~~for~~ Norman  
 Maclean's brother ~~making~~ <sup>e</sup> his powerful cast.

Now, we do not have total dominion--which I'm  
 sure saves us from a lot of sin. ~~Wax~~ I had a  
 forceful reminder of that last summer... (LIFE)  
 ...final image was one photo, chosen by a NY photo  
 editor because it showed big hats and a can of  
 Coors.



I also think it's just not in the cards that we can go on and on with the level of work represented at this conference--or <sup>rather,</sup> at least with the particular kind of work mostly represented here. Bud Guthrie and Norman Maclean and I have had a lot of kind words said <sup>during this confce,</sup> to us about our books, and we intend that there are going to be more such books. But if the three of us have anything in common, I believe ~~that~~ it's <sup>as literary</sup> that we are citizens of ~~Montana's history.~~ <sup>have & will come</sup> Our books come out of our past, and therefore Montana's past. So, what about literature's citizens of the present?

...I'd like very much to see <sup>in future, not all that many</sup> fewer paragraphs written about drinking Coors, and more about Colstrip 3 and 4--or about what it's like to be a farmer or rancher in an era of agribusiness. or to be a logger in a time of diminishing landscape? I hope very much, for instance, that it will be redognized that Bill Kittredge has <sup>just about</sup> had the final word on "Redneck Secrets" in the current issue of Rocky Mountain Country. <sup>pretty much</sup> Bill has said it all for us; we--you--have got to find other things to say. It reminds me of the analogy ~~of~~ I once read of the figure-skating of Peggy Fleming--that there can never be more beautiful arabesques than she skated, only prettier ones. That's the case with Bill's topic of downtown rednecks--his argument can only be prettified, not bettered. <sup>--at least not for some consdble tm</sup> In the same sense, I hope not to see further books about growing up in White Sulphur, about Bud G's free trappers, about Norman Maclean's trout streams.



topics really out of our reach, because  
(they're in your generation, your accm'tg pst  
I do hope to see work on new topics, such as the  
matter of coal, of ranching, of Missoula suburbs,  
of the view of life from the cab of a logging  
truck--whatever topic<sup>s they are</sup> it is that burns in you,  
rather than the ones that have burnt in us.

From there, I'd go on to say that I hope what  
does continue in the tradition of doing an honest  
day's governing of whatever dominion we have over  
this piece of the west. And it's not enough simply  
to keep going through the motions we've learned--  
keep turning out books, poems, movies. I think  
there's a cautionary example for us in what has  
happened ~~xx~~ with Jimmy Carter and his Georgians.  
It strikes me there are some similarities in their  
situation of a few years ago and what may be ahead  
for us as ~~western~~ interpreters of the west.



To put an end to this - I'd simply

~~From there, I'd go on to say that I hope~~

what does continue is the <sup>Montana</sup> literary tradition of doing an honest day's governing of whatever dominion we <sup>do hold</sup> have over this piece of the West.)

~~I think that it's notable that this conference has produced a lot of denunciation and apprehension about the political and economic governance of this part of the west...and not many complaints about the job being done in the literary chunk we happen to hold.~~ I desperately hope our standards will hold up--that the sense of land, of community, of lineage will continue, and that they will continue to be written of with accuracy, ~~the painstaking rightness of words not only of language but of~~ <sup>all that</sup> ~~and detail~~ the rightness of fact, as well as language, which I think has given Montana literature its high reputation.

We never will have total dominion out here-- <sup>on his tongue or other words in mind</sup> the writers and artists, never do. But we've got a considerable piece of property, and I think if we continue to be careful and honest and canny, we'll hang on to it <sup>for awhile</sup> If we're not, we won't deserve to.



# Old West's Centennial Effort: Hail Indians (and Custer, Too)

NYT

Dec. 13, '88

By TIMOTHY EGAN

Special to The New York Times

SEATTLE, Dec. 12 — As six Western states prepare to celebrate their centennials in 1989 and 1990, official historians are having much more trouble telling the story of how the West was won than they did the first time around.

The state governments, aware that Indian groups have been critical of how they are portrayed in many history texts, are trying to include more of the perspective of Native Americans in the commemorative histories and events scheduled for the next two years.

But at the same time, as self-examination vies with self-promotion, the states are trying to attract tourists who are drawn to the West to see the very cowboy monuments that many tribes find so insulting. The situation has led to considerable bitterness and division on the centennial commissions of Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota.

## Custer Rides Again

In North Dakota the centennial commission stepped on a historical land mine in agreeing to spend \$2 million in Federal money to refurbish the cavalry post where Lieut. Col. George Armstrong Custer spent his last days before riding into history at the Little Big Horn. This effort has outraged some Native Americans who consider Custer a psychotic Indian-hater.

"Some of my people said to me, 'How could you do that?'" said Mary Louise

Defender-Wilson, a Northern Sioux who is on the North Dakota centennial commission and approved of the use of the money. "My answer is: this is a democracy."

Across the border in Montana, where Custer died in the 1876 ambush by the Sioux and Cheyenne, his name is gold to the tourism industry. "When the Japanese come over here all they ever talk about is Custer," said Lieut. Gov. Gordon McOmber of Montana.

Washington is another place where there is little neutral feeling over the painful episodes that are emerging as

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## International

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3 Commuter Trains  
Crash in London,  
Killing 36

Government Scandal  
In Switzerland

## National

Federal Help Sought  
In Nurse Crisis

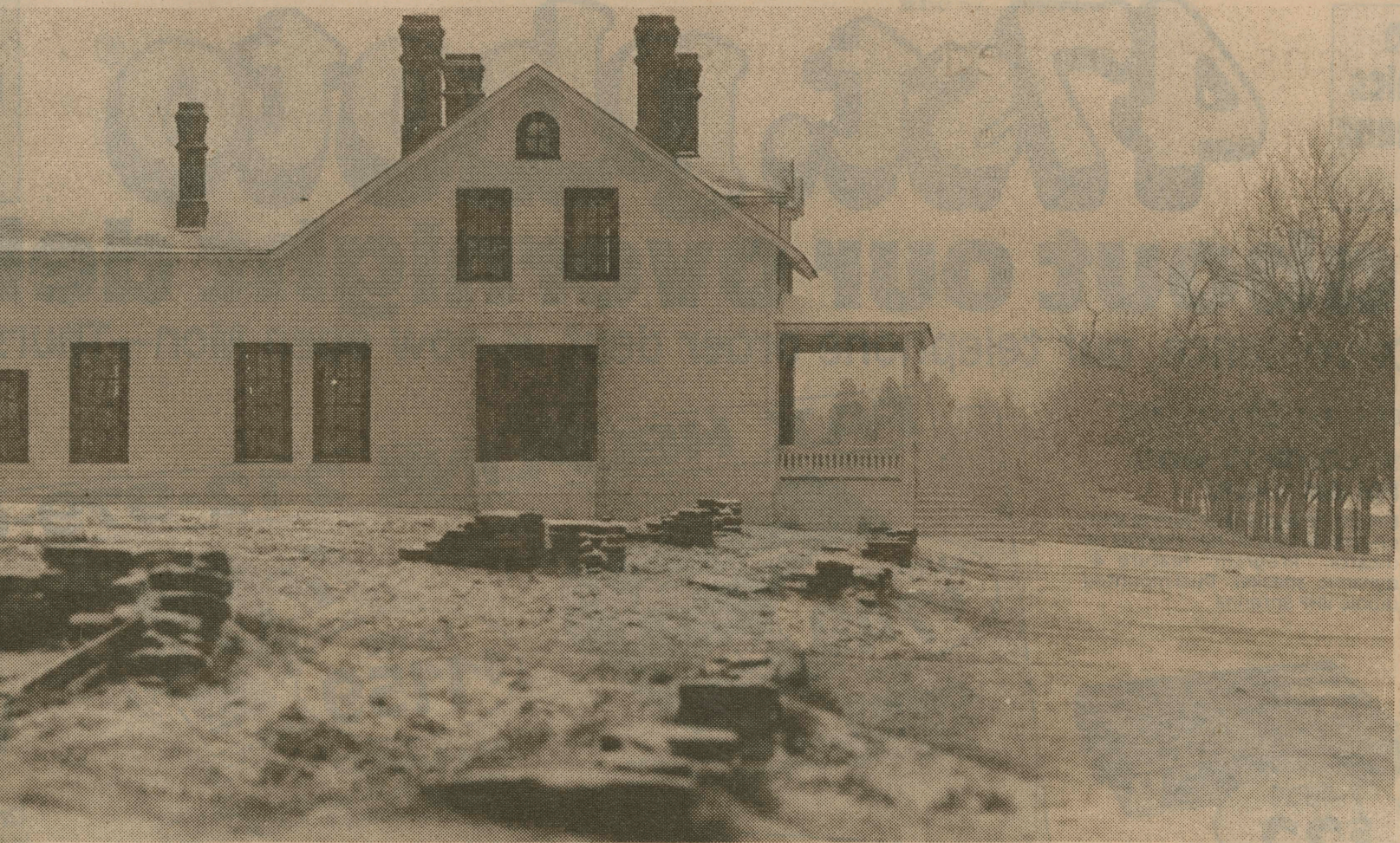
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The New York Times/Bruce Wendt

The refurbished house near Mandan, N.D., where Lieut. Col. George Armstrong Custer spent his last days before riding with his troops into

the Battle of the Little Bighorn. In foreground are foundation remains of the officers' quarters.

## Old West Centennial: Hail Indians and Custer, Too

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states look back.

Historians of the Northwest have glorified the work of Dr. Marcus Whitman, a pioneer Christian missionary who was killed by Cayuse Indians on his mission on the Columbia River in 1847. Some Indian historians say Whitman helped bring disease that wiped out many tribes and he contributed to the stripping away of Indian culture.

"There is a crying and urgent need for all voices to come forth in this centennial," said Sandy Osawa, a Makah from the Washington coast. "But instead, Washington state officials want them poles and canoes. There is an appreciation only of the safer aspects of Indian life."

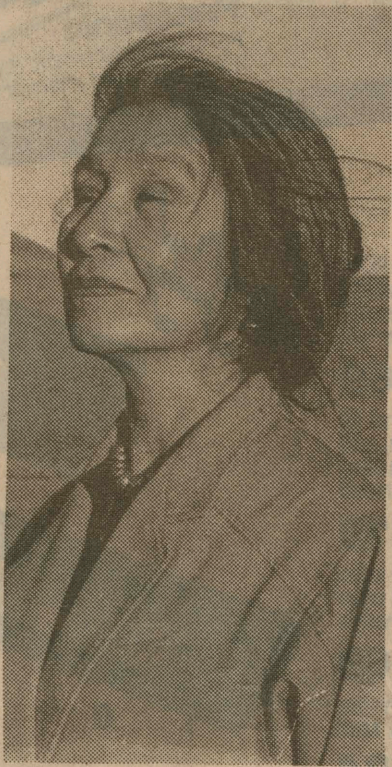
### Film Maker May Sue State

Ms. Osawa, who makes documentary films, was turned down for a \$65,000 centennial grant to tell the story of Washington's Indians. The production money went to a non-Indian. Ms. Osawa is considering a lawsuit against the state. "What bothers so many Indians is that we've been denied the right to tell our own story," she said. "We don't have a voice in our own image-making."

Washington centennial officials deny they are excluding Native American voices. They cite many Indian community celebrations, a re-creation of a Native American village and a major effort to trace and retrieve coastal Indian art that has been lost to collectors around the world.

Montana officials have run into just the opposite problem, meeting stiff resistance when they try to get Indians participate in some commemorative events.

Gov. McOmber, the Lieutenant Governor, said most Indians in his state



Mary Louise Defender-Wilson, a Sioux who is on the North Dakota centennial commission, approved of the use of the money for refurbishing the residence.

had a deep distrust of government. "I went to one reservation to try and enlist their support and the response was that the first hundred years Federal Government took their rights and the second hundred years the state is after them," he said.

Indians were enthusiastic about at least one event in Montana's history. "One tribe wants to re-enact the signing of their treaty to remind everyone how they came out on the short end of the stick," said Mr. McOmber.

In seeking to resolve competing claims to the past, some states are presenting two versions of an event or a trend. An Indian tour guide and a non-Indian tour guide will be on hand to offer different sides of the story at the site of a battle at Fetterman Ridge, a tourist highlight of Wyoming's 1990 celebration.

### 'Our Side of the Story'

"Our mission is to re-educate people," said Bob Spoonhunter, director of the Native American Institute on Wyoming's Wind River Reservation. "The Indian people have existed apart from Wyoming for so long and the whites have never paid much attention to us. Now there seems to be a very strong interest in telling our side of the story."

A commemorative wagon train will tour South Dakota next summer, but it will encounter a large and officially sanctioned Indian powwow when it arrives at the Pine Ridge Reservation. The state also spent grant money both for an official history and for "Who's Who Among the Sioux," a book written by a Native American.

North Dakota has authorized an Indian official seal and a non-Indian official seal for its centennial. The State Legislature, while appropriating money to commemorate high points of whites' settlement, also allocated funds for an extensive curriculum of Indian studies for all public schools.

"Attitudes have changed," said Sebastian Hoffner, director of North Dakota's centennial commission.

"Both sides of the story will be told. It won't be like the movies, with winners and losers."

### For Serious Historians, a Shift

Some historians say the hardest concept to change may be the Western image of the lone cowboy or settler who fights Indians and the elements to clear the wilderness for civilization. "I'm afraid there may be no hope for ever seeing the cowboy in his true form," said William Lang, editor of Montana, the Magazine of Western History. "We're just now finishing up with a President who is the embodiment of that myth."

Mr. Lang said there had been a big shift in the treatment that serious historians accord the Indian.

"The Indian's place has always been into the battle and out, before and after," the editor said. "More important to us now, Indian culture is not just an exotic thing — it's a real thing. It has influenced us, especially in the spiritual realm — how the world was made and why it was made."

Some Native American historians say telling the spiritual side of the Indians in the centennial histories is just as important as telling the political point of view.

"What I would like to see come out of this centennial is a new beginning for our culture," said Ms. Defender-Wilson, who is an oral historian.

"The missionaries," she said, "made us look bad in order to justify what they were doing to us. People should know that the history of this state did not begin with the arrival of the whites."

Most Indian tribes "never had a word for Devil until Columbus landed," she said. "We have many words to describe a bear. But it wasn't until Columbus arrived that he brought the Devil."



*many*  
*multiple*  
All the summers <sup>often</sup> that I was sixteen--those summers in their plurality of memory--

...hay bleaching beneath the sun's slow fire

--the brief sudden green world of June (lengthened, browned)

--glove leather worked to a softness

--hay hooks; bales and their chafing wear on the thighs of my bluejeans

--oatmeal water, trick learned from Alex Knox, who knew what his croft ancestors knew



no funk: people are (were) afraid of things that count--lightning, blizzard,  
their own tendencies.



So tonight, here with those of you who are the West's searchers into "original the case history I've been asked to talk about cultural environment," in trying to sketch out for you the making of the book which grew from those musings on relic-hood I thought I'd go about it in roughly the paper-trail sequence my grandfather did when he started all this, by rooting out of Scotland and the Doig family into Montana--by proving-up on that homestead where my father was born. You'll be relieved that I'll keep the description of my process shorter than his was: the National Archives file documenting the land claim taken up by Peter Doig under the Desert Land Acts of 1877 and 1891 runs to 65 photocopied pages of periodic testimony and proof, and covers 13 years. My own proving-up papers--notes and letters and diary entries made along the way as I tried to cultivate an idea into a book--only go across about ten years, I hope condensed into the next half hour or so.



...the West of brush and stone, and bison bone



file cards I'd accumulated in this file were transferred to Whistling Season, &  
my corner notations on them mistakenly are Barbwire Jazz instead of Growing Up Western.



Bjazz

he met the one named Berneta. Genetic bingo took some years yet, but  
my existence was promised from the first time Charlie Doig and Berneta  
Ringer put a hand in the small of each other's back and danced together  
in the hall at Ringling.



*... (m.)*  
easily  
We've never tabulated ~~quite right~~ as a family.

--Dad so much older than Berneta when courting her.

--me as wild card, only child they could have

--Our colors were not crisp.

*no crispier here than in...*

the war had wilted us(?)

*state,*

*add: desert cabin scene?*

*BJazz*

Dad: burning inside with appendicitis, then ulcer.

--similarly, Berneta's asthma. Two people with ill health like underground fires...

*BJazz*

Doig homestead a kind of bunkhouse occupied by people of the same <sup>last</sup> name.

--my folks' lifetime consisted of trying to rise above the bunkhouse, the cookhouse?

--big houses (the Castle, Bair, Ringling etc.) and bunkhouses in Meagher County and not much between.

--Algona Park housing; still a form of the bunkhouse? *use w/ Xmas '44?*

--manse

*seasonal work?*

*BJazz*

Prosperity was measured by going from a kerosene lamp to a Coleman lantern.



B Jazz

With us, prosperity was.  
My parents were as seasonal as

hollyhocks: along side of ranger station, or possibly in town at Heaneys.

So, our prosperity as seasonal as...

B Jazz

in my pouch of myself

(already, as a self-possessed child who secreted myself away and imagined)

B Jazz

shepherd grub; shepherd's principle: that a washed pot never boils.

B Jazz

the patterns their muscles knew



*books? reading?*

The bars gave me the attention span of a raccoon.  
Whenever anything more interesting came up, the  
conversation padded off toward it.

*reading @ 7:00 PM  
& later  
BJazz*

Or am I granted the most characteristic possible glimpse of my mother and my  
early self (of her sitting and reading to me by the hour, both of us ~~kept~~ kept  
quiet by the infinite song of pagewords)...

*BJazz*

*Montana?*

(In the Smith River Valley) we can never quite ~~longer~~ *no longer* dodge our own dust.

--(Dad's point of view; i.e., the past failures are always there, catching up  
with us again.)

*BJazz*

What was taking place in (my mother? me?) was something like an inward tuning,  
the wind-struck music of the bone harp that Robinson Jeffers has said we all  
ultimately are.



BJazz

The City and the Country, Raymond Williams

p. 189: Alexander Somerville's "Classic" Autobiography of a Working Man (1848)

Scottish. "his parents owning a small pane of glass and carrying it round as a window from 'house' to 'house, hovel to shed"

BJazz

The Country and the City, Raymond Williams

--praises Brother to the Ox (1939), by Fred Kitchen, as autobiog of modern farm laborer

BJazz

WSS on knolls (Castle on knob-like hill) above meadow-bottomland & Sm River; sample of small hills, Mn St betn two largest. (Not ~~z~~ noticeably hilly driving up Mn St - road comes & goes flat.)

- hills rise as if land tired & running flat for so far



B jazz

Lost Country Life, Hartley/3

p. 314:--"Forestalling--buying up goods before they reached the market, so as to resell at a higher price--was a crime..."

p. 323: hay

p. 324: "It was a medieval belief that when the unicorn stopped to drink, he dipped his horn into the water to test it."

--"unicorn horn" was sold as a guard against poison; nobility used it to test with

p. 327: "Medieval people had a genius for getting hold of the wrong end of the right stick."

B jazz

The Country and the City, Raymond Williams

p. 106: "What these 'great' houses do is to break the scale, by an act of will corresponding to their real and systematic exploitation of others."

"It can make some difference, as you go about every day, to be out of sight of that explicit command."

--This is relevant to the differences I felt between the White Sulphur country--with its Ringling house and the Castle and the Manger and Rankin and Dogie big ownerships--and the Dupuyer country where no house or enterprise stood out.

--An adaptation of this may be a lever of argument against what I understand as Cronon's view that all changes in nature are simply nature: surely there's a matter of scale, in knapweed replacing buffalo grass?



Lost Country Life, Dorothy Hartley

p. 32: quotes Irish extract of 1656, "For the better destroying of wolves..."

p. 62: formula for "a turrible lot o' lambs"

p. 87: process of sowing broadcast, inc. need for smooth steady pace

p. 90: methods of counting and calculating

"The stretch of man's arrow arm was the yard, to measure how much cloth he needed for his coat..."

pp. 121-3: sheepdogs

p. 125: "any cat who will not steal must be mentally deficient"

p. 153: haystacks; bracken base

p. 174: harvesting: "oats should 'stand under three church bells'" (abt 2 wks)

--p. 176: headland grass for sheave ties because it grew strong from oxen urinating there while resting

over

Lost Country Life, Hartley/2

p. 206: "Michelangelo is said to have earmarked a lump of marble in the quarry because 'he saw an angle' in it."

p. 211: a garnish of pewter

p. 234: "The strong feathers of the goose flighted arrows."

p. 235: "'They put pigeon feathers in my pillow, no wonder I could not die.'"

p. 243-4: 1850 Scottish Board of Ag report on "droving" sheep

p. 245: the high horses of nobility

p. 253: "The expression to 'draw a bead' when shooting is a reminder that the sights of the early crossbows were beads threaded on horsehair."

p. 255: "The resolving of a herd of cattle into 'products' can be studied along the river in almost any old town. First the cattle pens, then the slaughter yards, then the tanyards, then the horn works and last, farthest downriver, the soap and glue-boiling yards."

over



- p. 179: the Harvest Lord (akin to a foreman)
- " : the noon sleep, in the field
- p. 180: food carried to workers in fields
- p. 180: bonus "called for" by field workers, a la 3 cheers
- p. 183: the role of bracken
- p. 184: corn dollies ~~were~~ were trademark designs by thatchers, marking their work for all to see
- p. 186: pattern of flailing resembles pattern of bell-ringers
- p. 189: kingpin of millwheel; how it is "taken up" (inserted further when/worn)
- p. 200: "by hook or by crook," hauling out deadwood
- p. 204: "the splitting image", split halves of same tree used for symmetry in building

p. 261: "While the astrologically educated poets (male) ascribed all variations, both physical and mental, to the influence of the planets, the earth-educated woman realised the variations in seasonal diet were likely to be responsible."

p. 267: chimney-cleaning: "a hen dropped down from the top cleared a short chimney very quickly."

p. 271: onomatopoeic tool names: type of scoop called a scruppet, from scrape-up-n'-out  
--2-p. list of Tusser's "husbandly furniture" words

p. 279: "In mediaeval days wants accumulated for months, becoming definitely formulated, so that when you went to market you knew what you needed and how much of it, and bought a year's supply."

p. 280: list of measures for various goods--barrel, bolt, ell etc.  
--282: punnet of raspberries, frail of strawberries

p. 287: trade marks (my note: akin to livestock brands)

p. 289-94: list of types of trades people, and their functions

p. 301: "There was a tidal limit for burial at sea--for instance, Graves-end on the Thames."