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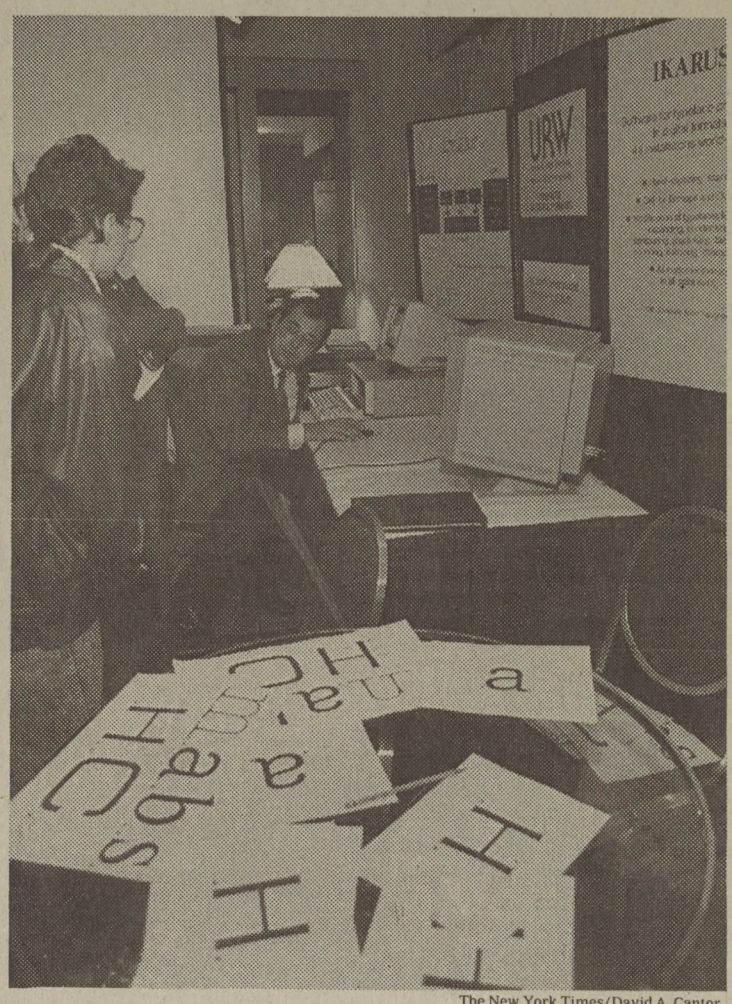

The New York Times/David A. Cantor

Helmut Hufenbach demonstrating a typesetting system to visitors at "Type 1987" at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Manhattan.

Type Design Concern: Saving Curvaceous Q's

By DOUGLAS C. McGILL

They spoke of the alphabet as an endangered species — 26 characters whose beauty and legibility are threatened by the computer revolution.

"It is both delightful and frightening at the same time," one speaker, Roger Black, said of the typographical cataclysm sweeping the world. "It's because of the fright that we are here."

The event was "Type 1987," an international conference at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in midtown Manhattan for men and women who design alphabets. Sponsored by the Type Directors Club, a trade organization of typographers and devotees of type, the conference started Friday and continues through Monday.

Concern for Beautiful W's

Yesterday, the hotel was a hive of typographers and type. The conferees darted in and out of rooms where lectures and slide shows were given on such topics as "My Obsession with Type," "The Japanese Love for Roman Letters," and "Collecting Forgotten Alphabets."

Trade secrets were traded and anecdotes of type were told. Through all the talk, a theme emerged: The artful design of English letters — the beauty and legibility of a well-wrought "w," or a curvaceous "q" — was urgently in need of protection against the potentially disastrous influence of computerized typeface designs.

At one lecture, Sandra Kirschenbaum, the editor of Fine Print magazine, told a story.

"I was just shocked when I saw a version of one of the great old typefaces, Gaudi Old-Style, that someone had made on their trusty home computer," she said. "It was some kind of strange caricature of Gaudi's design. I told the person who made it, 'Call this Jim Jones Old Style, or whatever you want, but don't call it Gaudi.' "

Mr. Black, who organized the conference, told of another troubling development. Certain software programs, he said, now make it possible for anyone with a home computer to develop their own style of type.

The New and the Old

"The technology is now so sophisticated that there are no limitations," said Mr. Black, the art director of Trips magazine, based in San Francisco. "People will figure out that they can imitate their own handwriting on a personal computer, and they will start to typewrite handwritten letters. It's scary."

All of which Stan Nelson, a historian of type at the Smithsonian Insitution, gave hardly a thought. In his lecture and demonstration at the hotel, he put on a pair of magnifying lenses, spread a tabletop with hammers and chisels, and proceeded to make a letter the old-fashioned way: carving it from a stick of steel.

"It's like sculpting," said Mr. Nelson, gently chiseling out the groove in a letter "v." "Anyone could be taught to do this, but you have to have a sense of good and bad design."

As for computerized typeface designs, he said he did not fear them. "The technology has changed, but the designer is still in control," he said.

Chuck Rowe, a salesman for Bitstream Inc., a "digital type foundry" that sells a line of software that allows people the use of 80 typefaces on their home computers, could only agree.

In his hotel room-turned-showroom, Mr. Lowe brought a visitor up-to-date on the history of typeface production.

"In terms of the history of output," he began.

"Excuse us, but what do you mean by output?" the visitor said.

A conference looks at computerized typefaces.

"I mean you begin with Gutenberg," he replied. "He used single pieces of type. Then the technology moved to linotype, which set entire lines of type. Then came photocomposition, and today, you have digital."

Digital technology, it was generally agreed, was both the main hope and the main danger for future typeface design.

Some at the conference wondered, however, whether the concern for preserving the integrity of typefaces was deeply-rooted enough in society to save the printed word from sloppy and illegible designs.

Jim Parkinson, a freelance type designer who spoke on "The Difference Between a Logo and a Word," told a story that suggested that hopes should not be set too high.

"My first job in letter design was at the Hallmark card company," Mr. Parkinson said. "I was going to draw rabbits. So I asked, 'Well, do you have anything else for me to do?' And they said, 'Well, if you can letter, we could put you in the lettering department.'

"It was a kind of purgatory. The lettering department was where you put people who weren't successful drawing rabbits."

Stung by Gore, Democrats Debate Future of Debates

By ANDREW ROSENTHAL
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 10 — After debating about foreign policy, economics and other issues in Iowa, New Hampshire, Florida and Washington, the Democratic candidates for President are now debating about debates.

An effort by one of the contenders, Senator Albert Gore Jr. of Tennessee, to use the debates to take the offensive against his rivals has touched off a heated discussion over how to conduct the debates and over how far candidates should go in attacking fellow Democrats.

The issue came into focus this week at what some campaign aides described as a spirited meeting between the campaign managers for the Democratic candidates and Paul G. Kirk, chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

Major Source of Friction

The aides, who were familiar with what went on at the meeting, said much of the criticism was directed at Fred Martin, campaign manager for Mr. Gore, whose recent effort to use the Democratic debates as a springboard to pull out of the pack of candidates has drawn fire from his opponents.

Participants in the meeting said there was a suggestion, later dropped,

> The Senator has taken the offensive.

to move the sites of two future debates out of the South, where Mr. Gore's message is well received. But the other Democratic candidates have heatedly denied a charge by Mr. Gore, made in a campaign trip to South Carolina last week, that they were trying to form a "cartel" to limit the number of debates through the rest of the campaign.

Still, the profusion of debates among the candidates, originally seen as providing neutral platforms for airing the views and Presidential qualities of a pack of contenders who lacked national recognition, has clearly become a major source of friction.

In addition to Mr. Gore's effort to portray himself as being at odds with the others on foreign policy and tougher on national defense, there is the sheer quantity of the debates.

One campaign estimated it had received about 100 invitations by groups or television programs wanting the candidates to make joint appearances, ranging from "Donahue" and "Saturday Night Live" to the Iowa Homebuilders Association.

"This is getting to be like the professional basketball season — it never ends," said Mark Johnson, a spokesman for the campaign of Rep. Richard A. Gephardt of Missouri.

Keeping a List of Invitations

In dealing with the scores of invitations, the campaigns must balance their reluctance to alienate a particular group with their crowded schedules and the need for other types of campaiging.

Another problem they face is pressure from would-be sponsors of debates who tell them that other contenders have agreed to attend. To deal with that, Mr. Kirk agreed at last week's meeting to keep a list of which candidates have accepted which invitations, said Terry Michael, a spokesman for the Democratic National Committee who on Friday joined the campaign of Senator Paul Simon of Illinois.

Mr. Michael also said there was no attempt at the meeting to reduce number of debates.

Debating has been one of the m salient features of the 1988 campai especially among the Democrats.

Although there have been disagr ments, the nature of the debates been cordial with most of the sh criticism being reserved for the publicans. But at a session in Iowa weeks ago, Mr. Gore began accus his rivals of being soft on defense.

Suggestion to Move Debates

In Miami and Washington this w he repeated those assertions. That Mr. Gore a great deal of attentio the press, since the Democratic had been focusing on issues of cha ter rather than policy. But it also c criticism from his opponents and m debates the focus of the meeting tween the campaign managers and Kirk.

Al From, executive director of Democratic Leadership Council, wh represents the conservative wing of party, said he had heard from so campaigns that there had been a s gestion to move the sites of two fut debates being sponsored by the cou out of the South.

Asked about it, William Carrick, Gephardt's campaign manager, sa "There was a discussion; it w thrown out there rhetorically."

Mr. Martin said: "I don't know wh a proposal is rhetorical and when not. The fact is, some people in th room did not want to go where D.L.C. has scheduled its debates."

Mr. Carrick and Mr. Martin said suggestion was dropped. Officials the Democratic National Commit declined to discuss the meeting in tail, citing an agreement on confid tiality.

Breaking Away From Pack

Some of the Democratic campai have accused Mr. Gore of mak rhetorical shifts to court conservat Southern voters, and the suggestion change the site of the debates n have arisen out of that dispute.

Aides familiar with the campa managers' meeting said it was a suggested that the results of a t phone poll conducted at the first Dem cratic Leadership Council debate, h in Miami on Monday, not be releas The poll was intended to gauge the sponse of conservative Democrats the debate at which Mr. Gore continu his attack on his rivals, and the aid said there was concern that it would cause further divisions amo the candidates. The suggestion, ho ever, was dropped, they said.

Mr. Martin, asked about what we on at the meeting, said, "The oth campaigns are demonstrably co cerned that Al Gore has unexpected broken away from the pack."

But some of the other camps d puted that view.

"We're not concerned about the fectiveness of Gore's strategy and don't think any of the candidates obje to a legitimate discussion of diff ences on issues," Mr. Carrick said. think what everybody objects to is tone and harshness of the rhetoric."

The other Democratic candida maintain that Mr. Gore's record a positions are not that different fr their own. And they say that attacks fellow Democrats weaken the pa and that the label "soft on defens could hurt the Democratic nominee the general election.

Mr. From disagreed. "For the f time in a really significant perio this party," he said, "we're havin debate that really gets to the fun mental core of differences that h long existed."

Military Pay Won't Be

By RICHARD HALLORAN
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 10 — President Reagan notified Congress today that the Defense Department would exempt the pay and benefits of military personnel from the cuts that have to be made under the newly revised budget-balancing law.

Designating that exemption means that the Pentagon must absorb up to $11.5 billion in budget cuts elsewhere, primarily in operations and readiness and, to some extent, in the development and procurement of weapons and equipment.

In a letter to Congress, the director of the Office of Management and Budget, James C. Miller 3d, said, "It is considered to be in the national interest to safeguard the resources necessary to compensate the men and women serv-

W. Weinberger, seemed certain t greeted with approval by senior tary officers, who have consiste maintained that taking care of troops must come first.

But privately those same offi have lamented the prospect of th ternative cuts, asserting that n gains in the pace of operations, in r ing the forces ready for combat ar the acquisition of modern weapons be severely reduced.

Staff aides to Democratic mem of Congress, while agreeing that Pentagon would be damaged by cuts, have asserted that the glo statements coming from the Def Department overstate the reducti effect.

Under the budget-balancing revi that was enacted last month, the G ernment must cut $23 billion fro

7-16-88

About New York

Selling Pens To Pulsation Of Doo-Wop

By GREGORY JAYNES

"Ahh-hmm-boppa-hm-bah-hmm-bo ppa-yea-eah why do birds si-ing so gay? And lovers await the break of day? Why do they fall in lo-ove?"

That's right, children, they don't write 'em like they used to. That was the classic "Why Do Fools Fall in Love" performed for you in Central Park this blistering noontime by Performing Artists Diversified, your doo-wop office supplier. Let's hear it for the singers!

Here's Lewis Lymon, from Lewis Lymon and the Teenchords. And here's Eddy Rezzonico, from the Passions; and Tommy Gualtieri, from the Chessmen; and Herman Santiago, from Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers, and our singer-songwriter Bob Barrett! Sing it, boys!

"Hmmmmmm. If you buy your office supplies from us, we will sing for you-ou!"

No. No. Keep your money, people. We're not here begging. This is a promotional thing. Pick that dime back up, boy. You guys over there, you with the boom boxes. Yeah, you! Turn 'em down. I wanna tell you a story. Most of you are too young to remember, but there was a time in the 50's and early 60's when groups were singing doo-wop on corners all over the city. Probably the best-known doo-wop song was "In the Still of the Night" from the Five Satins. Tightest harmony. Sweetest tenor. Every cat sang it. Still does. Shoo-do-shooo-bee-do.

•

Brooklyn was a hotbed of doo-wop. The Brooklyn Bridge, the Passions, the Crests and the Lovin' Spoonful were coming along. Jay and the Americans. Rock-and-roll at the Brooklyn Fox — ah, one of life's sweetest memories. Anyway, one of these guys hollering his lungs out on a corner in Brooklyn was a guy named Steve Sawyer, who went on to be in

> The plea is to help an artist maintain his creativity.

the Tokens, but after the Tokens had the hit "The Lion Sleeps Tonight." Ah-weem-ah-weh, ah-weem-ah-weh, remember? Doesn't matter.

Actually, Steve's name was Katz, but he changed it to Sawyer after he teamed up with Freddie Natarz, who changed his name to McFinn. They're singer-songwriters, see, and the two of them think they're gonna be the next Beatles. They move to L.A. and hook up with a guy named Charlie Green, who discovered Sonny and Cher and Buffalo Springfield. They bag a contract to write, produce and record what they think is going to be the next "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" and come back to New York and use half the New York Philharmonic on the record, and the thing dies a slow death. Sells maybe 1,500 copies. All of a sudden, their self-esteem goes into a spin, and they go into driving cabs.

They're depressed, see — listen to your D.J., children, the story has a happy ending. So they go give the left coast another shot. They're waiting tables, driving taxis, trying to write songs, trying to get bands together, and, finally, the act splits up, the Sawyer half returning to the city, the McFinn half staying on.

The former Token goes back to driving a cab, and, in 1979, at West End Avenue and 91st Street he's robbed by a man with a gun. Heavy. Now one of the things you get to feeling, from behind the wheel of a cab or behind a cafe menu, is that the citizenry is mostly wet-lipped slack-jawed barbarians. Cleaned out, Steve Sawyer abandoned the cab, threw his hack license into the gutter and got a job selling office supplies. Awesome.

•

It made him feel totally ordinary because he saw himself as a composer, and, indeed, he continued plugging along with his songs, getting a couple of them recorded, though they caused no stir. He even composed some scores for porno movies in this, his period of despair. Then, about 1980, he started taking his cassettes with him on his sales route, and telling people he was a composer, and asking them to listen and if they liked his music, maybe they would be good enough to buy some office supplies. It would keep an artist from waiting tables and driving taxis, he would say, listing the two occupations he detested most. Sales soared. The city showed it had heart. Con Edison stopped shutting off his electricity for failure to pay. Success comes to the lowly songwriter!

Stay with us, music lovers, there's more singing in moments. So then our hero runs into a woman named Iona Passic on a train home to Brooklyn. She was a broke film producer. Next thing you know she's in the business with him. Then they start taking on singers, actors, comedians, painters — 20 in all, so far.

The hours are flexible, meaning they can still follow their art and make $600 to $700 a week, to boot. Total sales are running $100,000 a month. Steve still considers himself primarily a composer, and he wants to make a rock-and-roll movie, too, Let's hear it from the horse's mouth: "I still consider myself the best singer-songwriter in the office-products industry today."

A-whop-bop-a-loo-bop-a-whop-bam-boom!

ARIES

, Dancer and Teacher

as ballet master, resident choreographer and associate artistic director. He danced in classical and contemporary ballet roles and was noted for his special sensitivity to the Balanchine repertory.

Mr. Rodham became artistic director of the Arizona Ballet in 1978, served as ballet master for the Milwaukee Ballet from 1980 to 1983, and became a company teacher for the Feld Ballet and for its associate, the New Ballet School.

A memorial service will be held on Oct. 23 at Stanton Hall in Philadelphia.

Samuel Mendel, 104, Oldest U.S. Veteran

GALVA, Ill., July 15 (AP) — Samuel Leroy Mendel, who was turned away from the Army in 1898 because he was too young to enlist but lived to become the nation's oldest veteran, died here Wednesday at the age of 104.

He was past commander-in-chief of the Spanish-American War Veteran's Association, although he never served in the war.

Mr. Mendel, a native of Fort Worth, Tex., was 14 when the battleship Maine exploded Feb. 15, 1898, in Havana harbor, Cuba, then a Spanish port. But he was unable to enlist in the Army until 1901, after the Spanish-American war officially ended.

He spent most of his three-year military career carrying a football on the athletic fields at Fort Sam Houston. In 1902 he was cited as the best athlete in the Army.

According to a spokesman for the Veterans Administration, with Mr. Mendel's death the last known veteran of the Spanish-American war era is Nathan E. Cook, 102, of Tempe, Ariz., a Navy veteran.

Mr. Mendel is survived by a son, Robert L. Mendel of Brookfield, Ill., a daughter, Fern Varley of San Francisco, two grandsons and a great-granddaughter.

Helen W. Gandy

Secretary, 91

Helen W. Gandy, for 54 years the personal secretary to J. Edgar Hoover, longtime Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, died of cardiac arrest July 7 in Deland, Fla., where she lived. She was 91 years old.

In 1972, after the death of Mr. Hoover, Miss Gandy said she had destroyed his personal correspondence. She testified before a House subcommittee studying charges of F.B.I. harassment of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that Mr. Hoover had ordered her to do so.

Surviving Miss Gandy are her niece, Elizabeth Pugh of Deland, and three nephews, Lawrence Gandy of Orlando, Fla., Charles Gandy and Edward Gandy, both of Newport, N.J.

Abraham Pereira

Stockbroker, 76

Abraham Pereira, a Wall Street stockbroker, died of cancer yesterday at Calvary Hospital in the Bronx. He was 76 years old and lived in the Bronx.

Mr. Pereira was a member of the New York Stock Exchange and a partner in J. Stréicher & Company.

He was president of the Educational Jewish Center, which is in the Bronx, for 25 years and a member of many groups, including the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies and the American Jewish Congress.

He is survived by his wife, the former Esther Clusky; a son, Dr. Benjamin, of Fort Lee, N.J.; a daughter, Sheila Charmak of Tappan, N.Y., and five grandchildren.

Weekend makes Friday even better.

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Deaths

SOKOL—Paul. West End Synagogue reports with sadness the passing of its congregant Paul Sokol and expresses sincere condolences to Harriet Schnur and to other devoted friends and family members.

Rabbi Lawrence M. Pinsker
Cantor Nancy Abramson
Chairs: Bert Linder,
Sheila Bassman

THEMANS—Isidore. It is with great sorrow that we learned of the passing of Mr. Themans. Mr. Themans was throughout his life a most devoted friend to our industry and left a lasting and deep mark on everybody he came in contact with. He will be missed by many, but his legacy will carry on. Our deepest sympathy to Mrs. Themans and family.

Diamond Trade Association
of America Inc.
William Verstandig, President

WALSH—Margaret M., (nee Loftus), on Jul 14, 1988. Loving wife of the late John H. Beloved mother of Carole Mahon, Sheila Fannon and the late John J. and Patrick A. Dear grandmother of eight. Fond sister of Anna Clune. Reposing Woodside Memorial Chapel, Inc 41-45 58 St, Woodside on Sun 2-5, 7-9pm. Mass of Resurrection St Sebastian's Monday 9:45 AM. Interment Maple Grove cemetery

WEISBERG—Philip, MD. Peacefully, on July 15, 1988. Beloved husband of Hazel, cherished father of David and Ophra, Richard and Cheryl, and adored grandfather of Dina, Jonathan, Oren, Daniel, Benno, Avi and Sam. Beloved brother of Herman. We shall miss his love, his wisdom and his special presence. Service Sunday, 1 PM, at "The Riverside", 76th Street and Amsterdam Avenue.

YAMPOL—Jay R. Beloved husband of Hope Hardcastle Yampol. Devoted son of Florence and the late Paul. Dear brother of Barry and Joanne Yampol, Jane Gerben and Gail Yampol. Cherished uncle and great-uncle. Services at "Park West Chapels," 333 Amsterdam Avenue, NYC, Sunday, 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to The Village Visiting Neighbors, 135 West 4 Street, NYC 10012.

In Memoriam

GLAZER—Simon. Tim Dear, it's been so lonesome without you these past three years.

Love Val

LOBENFELD—Ruth. Two years now Babe, and I still talk to you every day. My one and only.

Love, your Honey

"Who says lightning doesn't strike twice? Publisher Donald I. Fine has found another Follett in R.A. SCOTTI'S The Kiss of Judas"*

The time: 1978. The place: Rome, the Vatican's sanctum sanctorum. The target: The Pope. The Judas: ? ? ?

Pre-publication huzzahs!

"Fantastic...sinister...a shocker...a descent into hell." —*Los Angeles Times Book Review*

"Mesmerizing."—David Brown, Zanuck/Brown Productions

***"The Kiss of Judas* works ...the author's affection for Rome and the Romans brightens his pages."** —*St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

"Reminds one of Frederick Forsyth...a tingling, stirring thriller." —*John Barkham Reviews*

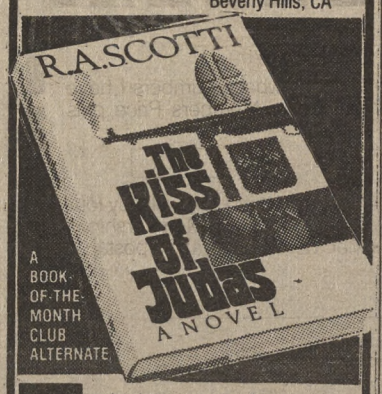
"Spectacular." —*Richmond Times Dispatch*

"Clever...explosive... superb." —*Christian Science Monitor*

"Superior...you simply cannot put this down." —Barbara Bannon, critic, former executive editor, *Publishers Weekly*

The Kiss of Judas

*Larry Todd, Hunter's Books, Beverly Hills, CA



at bookstores everywhere
DONALD I. FINE, INC.

Two Voices in Every Head

MIKHAIL BAKHTIN: THE DIALOGICAL PRINCIPLE
By Tzvetan Todorov. Translated by Wlad Godzich. 132 pp. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Cloth, $29.50. Paper, $10.95.

MIKHAIL BAKHTIN
By Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist. 398 pp. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. $25.

By Gary Saul Morson

AS Tzvetan Todorov points out in "Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle," the ideas of the increasingly popular Russian theorist pertain to all of the human sciences. Bakhtin (1895-1975) wrote on topics in literary studies, linguistics, folkloristics, psychology, anthropology and social history. Most of his work has surfaced only over the past decade, both in the East and in the West, and his breadth is such that he is fast acquiring a cult status like that of Jacques Derrida.

Bakhtin's key ideas all relate to his understanding of language. In contrast to most linguists, he argues that the fundamental unit of language is not the sentence or any subdivision of the sentence, but a different *sort* of unit — the utterance-in-dialogue, a piece of the ongoing exchange between speakers and listeners, who jointly shape everything said in all social situations. A corollary for Bakhtin is what he calls heteroglossia: there is no such thing as *the* English or Russian language, because each language is really composed of many different ways of speaking. Different ages, generations, social classes, occupations and areas speak variously, and each way of speaking is suffused with different values and degrees of social prestige. What we refer to as "correct" English is just the way of speaking (and thinking) currently enjoying the greatest prestige and power.

In psychology, Bakhtin rejects the entire Freudian framework as too individualistic, too biological and insufficiently social. For Bakhtin, thought is "inner speech," or social conversations we have learned to perform in our heads. When we think, we organize possible "dialogues" with other people, whose voices and implicit social values live within us. Psychological conflicts are ultimately social conflicts, and the self is really shared with others.

Society is built around this fact. The parodic quality of much folklore and everyday life, aimed at the dogmas articulated by "official" society, asserts the "joyful relativity" of all beliefs and values, an attitude exemplified for Bakhtin in the medieval carnival. The novel is the supreme contemporary art form because it embodies the spirit of parody, dramatizes social heteroglossia, shows that psychology is social, and, most important, represents each person's life as open-ended, incomplete and ultimately beyond any systematic description. Above all, Bakhtin is a philosopher of freedom, by which he means the capacity of the world and people to *surprise* us. In "Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics," he writes, "Nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the ultimate word of the world and about the world has not yet been spoken, the world is open and free, everything is still in the future and will always be in the future."

COURTESY OF THE BAKHTIN ARCHIVES
Mikhail Bakhtin in 1974.

There is something especially curious, therefore, about Tzvetan Todorov's book, which attempts to reduce all of Bakhtin's thought to a complete, orderly and fully worked out system. The book, the 13th in the "Theory and History of Literature" series of the University of Minnesota Press, is a good survey of certain aspects of Bakhtin's thought, especially his attitude toward philosophical anthropology and language. But it is so contrary to the whole spirit of Bakhtin's work that it almost reads like an unconscious self-parody on Mr. Todorov's part. Currently at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris, he is a well-known structuralist, the antithesis of Bakhtin. Mr. Todorov presumes that "properly speaking, there is no *development* in Bakhtin's work. . . . from 1922 to 1974, his thinking remains fundamentally the same." Although this presumption may lend unity to a book, it is hardly accurate. Bakhtin constantly changed his mind, developed new concepts, and modified his ideas in surprising ways.

• • •

In "Mikhail Bakhtin," the first biography of the thinker, Katerina Clark and Michael Holquist also underestimate the changes that occurred in Bakhtin's ideas, but for a different reason. Engaging in what might be called the biographer's fallacy, Miss Clark and Mr. Holquist, both professors in Slavic languages and literatures at Indiana University, repeatedly attempt to show how the germ of Bakhtin's essays and books is really present in his first work, an obscure and perhaps derivative exercise in neo-Kantianism, which Bakhtin neither finished nor published. Bakhtin's best and most original ideas lose their force in this presentation, and it is sometimes hard to see from the biographers' account why he was not just another second-rate philosopher. For example, Miss Clark and Mr. Holquist repeatedly refer to Bakhtin's attempt to "bridge the gap" between self and society — but one of Bakhtin's most striking ideas is that selves already *are* essentially social, and so there is fundamentally no gap to bridge.

"When we think, we organize possible 'dialogues' with other people."

What is marvelous about this book is its biographical sections. Years of research here and in the U.S.S.R. have led to a wealth of material about Bakhtin's life, working conditions and reactions to the Soviet experience. We learn of vibrant intellectual life in the backwater towns where Bakhtin lived during the Russian Revolution and Civil War, and which Marc Chagall painted (in both senses — the houses appear in his most famous paintings, and he literally used the walls of buildings as canvases). We learn as well of living conditions in Kazakhstan, where Bakhtin lived in exile during the 1930's, and of the strategies that intellectuals used to survive during the purge years, 1936-1938. The chapter on Bakhtin's study of Rabelais is especially keen in its analysis of Bakhtin's unsuccessful attempts to adapt his formulations to the changing Communist Party line on "the folk."

By contrast, Miss Clark and Mr. Holquist are disappointing when they discuss the Russian Formalists, an important school of thinkers reduced in this study to their earliest and least adequate theses. Given the Soviet context, in which the word "formalism" became a term of opprobrium — a sort of literary equivalent to Trotskyism — it is understandable that Bakhtin would have represented these complex thinkers in an unfair way. But surely his biographers know better.

I am sure they know better, because Mr. Holquist has produced some of the most interesting work on Russian poetics we have, and Miss Clark's book "The Soviet Novel" is the most interesting study of official Soviet writing to date. But "Mikhail Bakhtin" appears to have been written in haste, and is partially spoiled by unconsidered formulations and careless writing and editing.

BRILLIANT analyses of Bakhtin's ideas alternate with breathless superficialities about the environment in which he developed them and with idealized images of "Russians." "To compensate for the scarcity of paper which made publication difficult," Miss Clark and Mr. Holquist write, "intellectuals conducted much of their business in speech, a means of communication loved by Russians." Or, "Emphasis on the humanity of Christ caused Russians to value community." And almost all of Bakhtin's friends are described as delightful, eccentric geniuses, whose odd behavior (much of it probably legendary) and peculiar dress are taken as proof of their integrity. The biographers too often seem to take at face value their Soviet sources, who may well participate in the current Russian "cult" of Bakhtin; and what is supposed to be a description of Bakhtin's intellectual milieu is often really a series of anecdotes and legends about his friends.

In short, the best way to become acquainted with Bakhtin is to read Bakhtin himself, starting with the clear and eloquent "Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics," in a fine new translation by Caryl Emerson and with a helpful introduction by Wayne Booth. One could then proceed to "The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by Mikhail Bakhtin," to "The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship" (now being reissued by Harvard University Press) and to other works currently being issued or reissued. Once one has some familiarity with Bakhtin's ideas, Miss Clark and Mr. Holquist's book will best continue the dialogue. □

Gary Saul Morson, an associate professor and chairman of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Pennsylvania, is the editor of the forthcoming anthology, "Literature and History: Theoretical Problems and Russian Case Studies."

NYTBR Feb 10, '85

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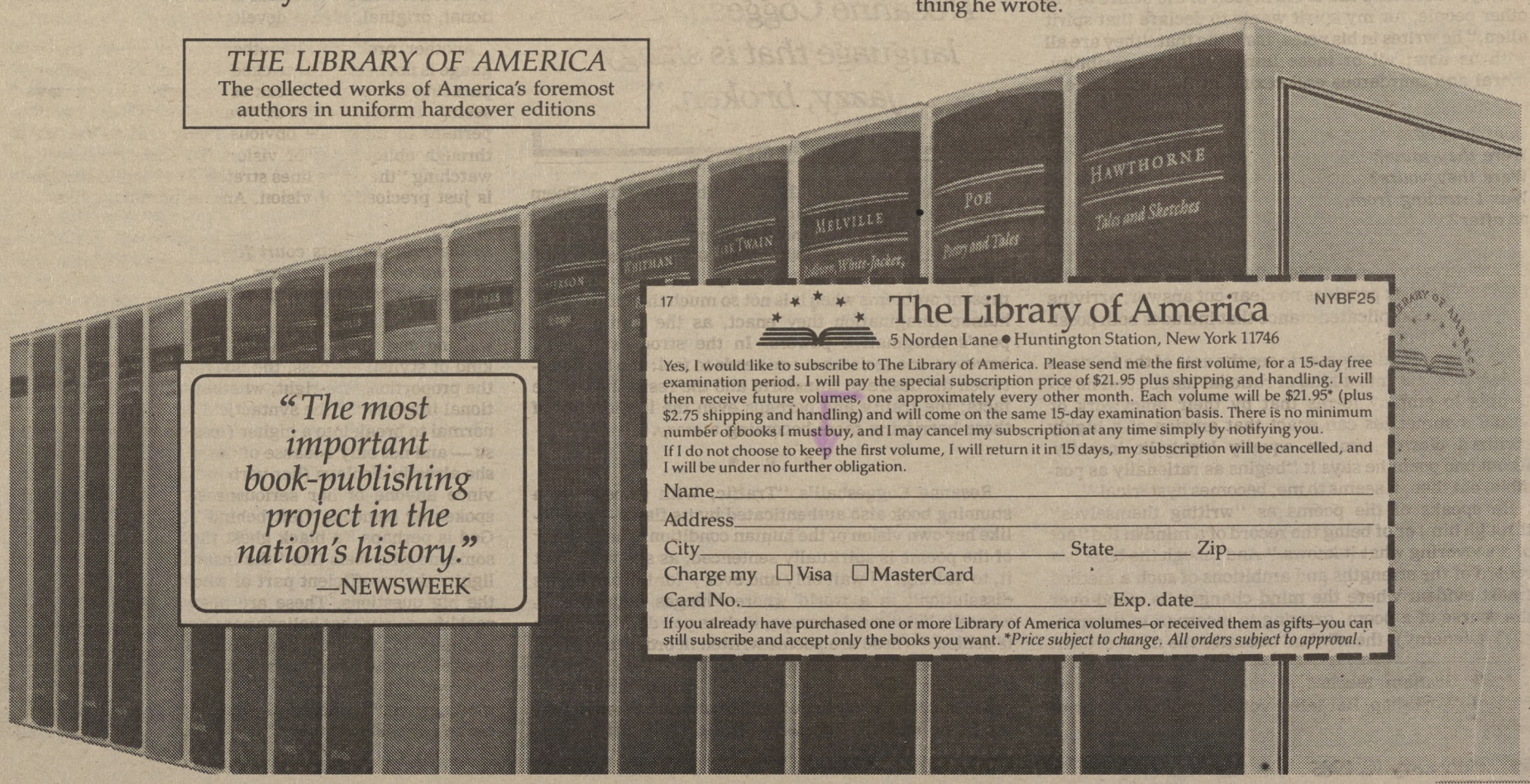

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THE FIRST THANKSGIVING FEAST
Joan Anderson, photos by George Ancona. Clarion, $12.95 ISBN 0-89919-287-4
Ancona's fine photos and Anderson's text recreate the historic autumn of 1621, when the Pilgrims decreed a day of feasting, revelry and thanks to God, because they had survived a hard year. The photographer and author documented the reenactment of the first Thanksgiving at Plimouth Plantation, a living museum, where "interpreters" play the parts of the *Mayflower* passengers and of their Indian neighbors who helped them to plant and harvest food, track game, etc. This is a treasure, a book that broadens the reader's conceptions of early days in the New World with pictures and an account adapted from histories of the rigorous times: *Of Plymouth Plantation* and *Mourt's Relation.* (7–11)

SAINT GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
Retold by Margaret Hodges, illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman. Little, Brown, $14.95 ISBN 0-316-36789-3
Hyman surpasses her previous creations with the illustrations of Hodges's tale, based on the Red Cross Knight in Spenser's *The Faerie Queene.* He is presented as different from the St. George whose *Acta* are preserved in several records dating from his life in the fourth century. Hodges leaves out the many subplots in Spenser's legend, to feature the Red Knight's journey with the maiden Una to her family's castle, where the hero engages the dragon in furious battles. Having killed the beast, the knight is betrothed to Una by her father the king. The lovers are wed and happy, although the warrior continues to serve his fairy queen, earning the title St. George of Merry England. The pictures glitter with color and mesmerizing details that dramatize the action-crammed fights, scenes of tranquility and joyful celebration. (5–10)

Fiction

CHILD OF WAR
Mary Ann Sullivan. Holiday House, $10.95 ISBN 0-8234-0537-0
Sullivan's first novel reveals her lack of professional skills, but we are less aware of the clumsy prose as the author's obviously genuine concern sweeps us up in the story based on atrocities she witnessed in Northern Ireland. Maeve Doherty is 13 when a soldier shoots her little brother Brendan dead, as they walk toward home on a Belfast street. Maeve retreats from the horrors of The Troubles into a world of fairies, living fantasies of bliss, until she faces further shocks. Egged on by kids her age, by stories about her mother, who had also been killed as a rebel, Maeve steals a gun and sets out to shoot her brother's murderer. The novel's end, semi-happy, promises a haven for the emotionally disturbed girl. Maeve is badly wounded in spirit but luckier than most of the children Sullivan was close to during her stay in the blasted city. (10-up)

CLOUDY-BRIGHT
John Rowe Townsend. Lippincott, $12.50 ISBN 0-397-32089-2
The British author has won awards in England and in the U.S.; he is known as an inventive and versatile plotter, popular with readers who enjoy his serious novels as well as cheery entertainments like his latest. The story is told alternately by Jenny Midhurst and Sam Horsfall. They meet by chance in Brighton, where Sam asks Jenny to lend him her father's valuable camera. He has lost his, borrowed from the institute where he studies photography. The upshot is that Jenny helps the young man with his project, trying to take a picture that will earn him a job on his local paper. His plans don't work out. Sam's shot is a winner but the editor favors another applicant, which makes him bitter and threatens his romance with Jenny. Still, Townsend hints at a rosy future for the lovers in his appealing variation on the theme: boy meets, loses, gets girl. (12-up)

Paperbacks

THE MOCKINGBIRD
Becky Stuart. Silhouette, $1.95 ISBN 0-671-53381-9. Original
"Two dark eyes stared down at her in a scowl beneath a knitted brow tumbled about with thick black curls." Thus endeth the first encounter between Brad Henshaw and Patsy Hanlon. Patsy, 16, arrives in New York from Iowa to stay with her aunt and pursue ambitions to become a Great Playwright. Backstage at the famous theater where her aunt is the wardrobe mistress, Patsy is amazed to find Brad playing the juvenile in the current production. He had figured the girl for another groupie when they had met cute, but now Brad feels as attracted to Patsy as she does to him. Their love grows stronger until it is endangered by the girl's first success: her play is showcased by the studio workshop where Patsy is enrolled. The plot concerns "a bright, witty writer" and "dumb, good-looking actor." Readers of the improbable doings in Stuart's First Love Romance will want to know what destiny awaits the lovers. (12-up)

THE BORROWERS AVENGED
Mary Norton, pictures by Beth and Joe Krush. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich/Voyager, $5.95 ISBN 0-15-210531-X. Reprint
PW predicted "a grand welcome for the latest adventures of the Clock clan," reviewing the fifth novel about Norton's beloved Borrowers. The Krushes add their magic touch to this and the previous books about the little people, titles now available in both hard- and softcover. Here, Spiller helps Pod, Homily and Arrietty Clock escape from their attic prison and make a new home where they have to arm themselves against their enemies again. (All ages)

THE WHITE STALLION
Elizabeth Shub, drawings by Rachel Isadora. Bantam/Skylark, $2.25 ISBN 0-553-15244-0. Reprint
PW praised "Shub's poetic mystery and Isadora's drawings, epitomizing the stallion's nobility and the characters of the story's humans." The white stallion represents a fabulous adventure to Gretchen, child of pioneers, who rides from the campsite on her faithful horse Anna into the company of wild horses, during her family's trek west in 1845. (7–10)

JUNK DAY ON JUNIPER STREET: And Other Easy-to-Read Stories
Lilian Moore, pictures by Arnold Lobel. Bantam/Skylark, $2.25 ISBN 0-553-15279-3. Reprint
Moore's good-humored stories are bound to please beginners who will have no trouble understanding the crisp, rollicking sentences relating unusual happenings. Clean-up time means getting rid of things nobody needs on Juniper Street. On the appointed day, all the families roll up their sleeves and deposit old chairs, bird cages, toys, pictures, books, etc., outside where a junk man will pick them up. But he gets nothing except a big rocking chair, since all the neighbors have discovered things they must have among the castoffs. The five other adventures are just as twisty and funny as the first and all are enhanced by prize winner Lobel's zesty drawings, spiced by a bright ruddy shade. (6–9) □

Tillie Olsen

"There was a fever in me to pass on to others what has been of importance to me," says the venerable chronicler of a woman's role in life

Tillie Olsen's name is revered by some women, excoriated by others. Many women (including some feminists, older women who feel their opinions on life have never really been written about, and a healthy group of young writers) think that Olsen is one of the great unsung geniuses of our time. She captured the voice of a generation in *Yonnindo: From the Thirties*, a book begun when Olsen was 19, then "lost" for 40 years through the birth of four children and having to do "real" work for a living. The four short stories in *Tell Me a Riddle* have been anthologized 72 times. *Silences*, a collection of essays, dealt with the power of class, color and sex in determining whether an artist's creative capacity will ultimately flower or be "silenced." There are some women, however, an equally impassioned group, who feel that when Tillie Olsen gave up her writing to raise all those kids it was a sellout, just an excuse not to sit down and *do the work*.

Instead of a glossy press kit sent to me before our meeting, I receive a series of letters written in Tillie Olsen's minuscule script and a daunting compilation of learned academic papers and books (*Excavations: Tillie Olsen's Reading List*; *From the Thirties: Tillie Olsen and the Radical Tradition*; and a biographical excerpt from *Portraits and Passages* by Ericka Duncan, to be published in January by Schocken Books). And Olsen is unsure about our meeting. When I say that I'm looking forward to the interview, she replies, "*I'm* not." She asks for samples of my work. Although I myself am a woman/writer/mother, it's the first time I've ever had to audition to interview someone.

Then one day there she is, standing on the landing of her San Francisco apartment building encouraging me up three flights of stairs. She remarks that in my profiles I always describe what people wear, but that she hasn't had a chance to get dressed because she spent the morning vacuuming. (Shades of "I Stand Here Ironing"?) She takes me out on her balcony and points out the sights—Japan Town, Bill Graham's Fillmore West and the building that used to house Jim Jones's People's Temple—and says, "This complex is multi-national, multi-hued." (Shades of her past as a '30s leftist?)

Olsen's new book, *Mother to Daughter, Daughter to Mother*—a collection of excerpts from novels, poetry, gravestone epitaphs and letters—has come about in part as a celebration of the 15th anniversary of the Feminist Press. The book includes pieces by such well-known writers as Gwendolyn Brooks, Colette, Emily Dickinson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Jessamyn West and Virginia Woolf, but also contains stories and letters from people Olsen has met on the lecture circuit (now her primary method of earning a living).

Olsen, 72, sits down in a child's chair and gets straight to work talking about the new book. "*Mother to Daughter, Daughter to Mother* was just one of those happenings and yet it has a long foreground," she explains. "You could say it started when I met Florence Howe during the first stirrings of feminism in academia. Years later [in 1970] she became the publisher of the Feminist Press." Olsen brought to Howe's attention *Life in the Iron Mills* by Rebecca Harding Davis, originally published as a series in *Atlantic Monthly* in 1861. Davis was one of the first to write about what Tillie Olsen calls "the lives of despised people." And she did so under the stresses of motherhood and making a living. The Feminist Press reissued *Life in the Iron Mills*—with an afterword by Olsen—in 1972.

"Last year Florence Howe came to me with the idea of doing a feminist calendar with pictures and a few quotes," Olsen continues. "I opened my big mouth, and the next thing I knew the calendar had turned into a day book—small enough to be carried in a purse, with room left between the passages for people to keep a diary or use as an appointment calendar. Mainly there was a fever in me to pass on to others what has been of importance to me."

That "passing on to others" is how Olsen has made her reputation. Although she has said of herself that she "may have given in too easily to the demands of family," she followed the rules of her generation, many of which still apply today. Talking with her makes me think of my son's three living great-grandmothers. One is the daughter of Russian immigrants who missed the first grade because she had to stay home and take care of her siblings, eventually married and hasn't "worked" a day since. Another is a member of the DAR, who worked all her life as a secretary in a hick town in the Mojave Desert and now lives happily alone in a trailer park. The third was a feisty Irish girl who married a Chinese when it was against the law and, now 80, still works five days a week. What Tillie Olsen has done in her work is to take *all* such lives and either raise them to art or make them into a paradigm or matrix that we all can recognize. When, after only a half hour of conversation, Olsen begins to cry and says, "We're all dying off, and no one has told our stories," you feel that loss with her, because there's the loss of her own story as well.

Tillie Olsen was born to Russian immigrants. In Nebraska, her father was state secretary of the Socialist Party. As a girl in Omaha, she read *Comrade* magazine and devoured every book in her neighborhood library, commencing with A and reaching the Ms. When she was 10 she worked after school selling

peanuts. She stuttered. At the age of 18, she joined the Young Communist League. A year later she began *Yonnindo*, and her first baby was born—out of wedlock. She was arrested twice for her leftist activities. The first chapter of *Yonnindo* was published in the *Partisan Review*. In her biography for the magazine she listed her occupations as tie presser, hack writer, model, housemaid, ice cream packer and book clerk. Bennett Cerf at Random House took an interest in the plucky 19-year-old, giving her a monthly stipend of $15. She married and again got pregnant, and somewhere along the line stopped writing.

Motherhood-and-writing is the subject that has haunted Olsen, both personally and professionally. "This has been a consuming concern of mine since I finished the tasks of the race—of perpetuating the species," she says. "It's always been a hard time to be a mother. I remember sitting by a very, very ill child. I was a single mother. I'd tried to take her to nursery school that morning, but they wouldn't accept her. So I had to lie to get off work. I sat by her crib all day, all night. I was reading *Grandma Brown: Her First Hundred Years*, and I was at the part where her child was dying and she just had to go and work. There were no choices for her. And I thought how lucky I was. Today, the world is a dangerous place. The 'experts' lie to mothers about what they're feeling. They say that a mother feels *guilt* when she leaves her child at a day care center and goes to work. But all that comes from the 'generation of vipers' thinking that began with Freud, who attributed all the ills of the human race to women."

Olsen has her own version of how the problems of mothering have evolved over the years. "In the last century, women/mother/writers wrote naturally about children. There were many women novelists whose reasons for writing were to support their children. Today you can look back at Harriet Beecher Stowe's work and see her suffering over the babies ripped from the arms of slave mothers. But today in *contemporary* feminist literature and literary criticism, you find a trashing of the last century's 'sentimentality' and tears over the death of a child. This is the first century when we haven't had to accept the death of a child as the will of God. Instead, now you have Mother's Day sentimental shit."

Olsen continues: "There were few women of my mother's generation who had time for their children. They had their hands occupied by all the tasks that kept a family together—all the washing was done by hand, farm chores, cooking from scratch. It was the older children who looked after the babies. During the Depression, although there were more abortions than ever, before or since, children represented the only possibilities of happiness for the human race. During World War II life was totally disrupted. Many women for the first time were running their families. It was the first generation where the majority got through high school. When their husbands came back, the government gave a young family the chance to own a home of its own. For the first time in American history we had the phenomenon of full-time mothers. I believe that the baby boom was not just a result of pushing women back into the home after their few years of independence, but a profound feeling about the preciousness of life on earth."

Olsen goes on to point out that these World War II brides have been unjustly maligned. "They raised daughters who gave birth to the women's movement, and sons—who in other times were raised to carry patriotic fever into battle to be slaughtered like cattle—instead were raised to feel that their lives were meant for something greater.

"Now, in this generation, we have made a great leap. You have a sense of your possibilities and the chance to exercise them. Frustrations can be laid to your own failures or choosing a wrong course. So here you are. You're marvelously educated and you have all the tools. *You just don't know how lucky you are!*" Olsen's eyes fill with tears again, but she goes on sternly. "And you're being thrown back into a situation generations old. Motherhood is the last refuge of sexism. Women have to obey the patriarchal injunction. They have to choose one or the other. Career women are told to unsex themselves. If you decide to have children, the total responsibility is yours. Standards and aspirations are infinitely higher for ourselves and our children, but human life is not valued. It's not being the best, but besting someone. It still comes down to the children. There is one fundamental question today, and it's the same one I wrote about years ago: 'Who's to care about them if we don't, who?' "

Critics, academicians, feminists and "average" women will argue for years over that question. In a 1971 lecture Olsen said that in all of English and American letters only one out of 12 writers was a woman. A perusal of current bestseller lists shows that Olsen is still right. Perhaps it's because of these insights into the everyday world that Olsen is both revered and disliked. About being disliked, she shrugs. About being revered, she gives a peculiar answer.

"It isn't revered. People respond to you if you don't trash them or put them down. When a woman reads 'I Stand Here Ironing,' she can see that women have all possibilities open to them. Yet critics always write about that story in terms of guilt." Then, cryptically, she says, "On the ninth night after the bombing of Hiroshima a light was seen on earth that was never seen before. It was a moonless night lit up with the strange blue light of radiated bodies. That's the light I have to write in, as opposed to the light of life." She adds, "I have an understanding about things that simply has not been articulated in our time. I know that sounds snotty and self-serving. But I do have certain comprehensions about human life and the hard task of raising a human being in our kind of world. When I first came on the scene, I only had a literary audience. Thanks to Xerox machines I began to have a people audience, because there was a group of teachers who began to put together a living anthology of feminist writers." And finally, "We usually have to accept other people's versions of what is. Most women today still can't harvest 'art' out of their situations. I look back on 'I Stand Here Ironing,' which I wrote in 1957. That's practically prehistoric times, and yet little has been written about motherhood since. Why? Because if you're a mother, every time the phone rings you jump. Is it going to be about the kid? You never have your own complete attention."

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S. Times May 15, '88

Ballard's 'Sun' makes him a star

by Michael Upchurch
Special to The Times

Santa Monica Boulevard didn't look at all unfamiliar to British writer J.G. Ballard when he visited Los Angeles last fall. He was there to assist in the publicity campaign for Steven Spielberg's film adaptation of his best-selling novel, "Empire of the Sun." Although it was Ballard's first time in the city, California's urban landscape had been so accurately depicted in American film and television that it conformed to every expectation he had of it.

"The one interloper on the scene, the one thing I hadn't anticipated, was a giant billboard advertising 'Empire of the Sun,' " Ballard said on a recent visit to Seattle. "Seeing my name below Spielberg's was like watching a 1950s sci-fi movie where some monster has been loosed from the scientist's head. All through my career I'd been challenging the media landscape, and now here I was a part of it. The irony wasn't lost on me. I'd been hoisted by my own petard."

J.G. Ballard

"Empire of the Sun," based on his childhood experiences in a Japanese internment camp in Shanghai, has brought Ballard a renown unprecedented in his 30-year writing career. He attributes its success partly to a bias (on the part of critics more than readers) in favor of "realistic" fiction. "I think critics find realistic fiction easier to describe."

His new novel, "The Day of Creation" — about a doctor in sub-Saharan Africa who invents a life-giving "Third Nile" only to betray it and bring about its demise — harks back in tone to his earlier science fiction works, "The Drowned World" and "The Crystal World." It also reflects Ballard's interest in the influence of the mass media on our lives and imaginations.

"What I've done in 'The Day of Creation' is bring together two strands that weren't previously linked in my work," he said. "The hero, engaged on a personal myth quest, is pursued by a documentary filmmaker who is trying to wrap the cliches of the media landscape around him."

While unable to pinpoint an exact moment of inspiration, Ballard suggests that the Whangpoo River (which flows through Shanghai and figures prominently in "Empire of the Sun") may have been the source for the imaginary river of the new novel. A visit to Egypt some years ago also figured in the imaginary river's genesis: "The power of the Nile to transform the desert landscape around it made a strong and lasting impression."

A powerfully visual writer ("I'm a frustrated painter — I have a painter's eye, but not a painter's hand"), Ballard vividly renders exotic locales that spring more from his imagination than his experience. He hasn't visited the part of Africa where "The Day of Creation" is set; he felt no need to.

"Any research I do," he said, "isn't for the sake of accuracy, which I don't think is all that important, but for the new ideas that can be triggered when one learns something fresh on a topic."

What difference does he see between the realism of "Empire of the Sun" and, say, the disturbing fantasies of "Crash" and "High Rise," two of his novels of the 1970s which depict a venomous social breakdown?

"The subject matter of 'Empire of the Sun' was handed to me on a plate by my own life, which isn't true of the other books. The landscape of 'Empire of the Sun' is fairly realistic, but it's seen through the eyes of a boy, my younger self, who has a powerful imagination. He re-imagines what he sees in a way not dissimilar to the way in which my older self has re-imagined the motorway interchanges and high-rise apartment buildings of London."

Ballard thinks of himself as a surrealist: "I share their hopes of subverting the bourgeois world which is not the real world but just another convention of illusions. It's important for the the artist to see the world through fresh eyes, to provoke the accepted order. All we have is the power of our imaginations and our dreams. The external world is a dream that needs to be decoded."

■ Donn Fry is on assignment. His column will resume when he returns.

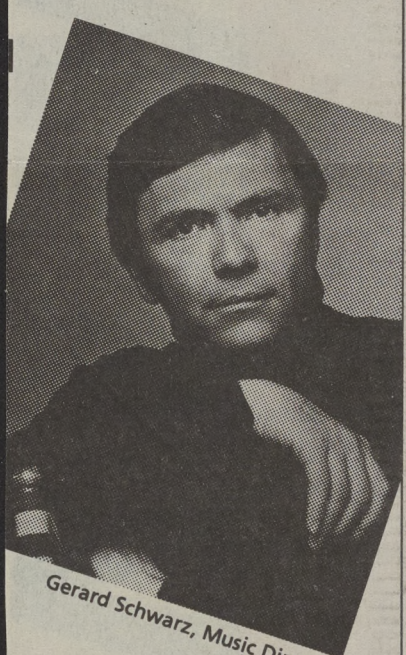
sell of excess

ence, and an arena-size boxing ring that descends from the ceiling while Roth, in a red, rhinestone-studded boxing robe with his nickname, "Diamond Dave," on the back, shadowboxes and backpedals, like a champ itching for a title fight.

Roth's shows are always full of such show-stopping delights, but they are also proof of his commitment to rock's history — he almost always includes a slow blues song in the set, and he manages to do at least one of his favorite covers and usually a ballad or two.

Roth shows a lot of respect for rock, even if he never gets any himself.

HONY



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BR World 5/22/88

Looking for Something Out of Life

THE WOMEN IN HER DREAMS
By Candace Denning
North Point. 199 pp. $16.95

BY JOHN RYAN FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

HERE IS an intelligent and interesting novel, the work of a writer of abundant gifts, that may indeed be just a trifle too intelligent for its own good. *The Women in Her Dreams* is so carefully wrought, so conscious at all times of the art its author is in the process of creating, that the care and the art get in the way of the story. Its strengths are greater than its weaknesses, and readers of serious fiction will want to pay heed to it, but *The Women in Her Dreams* would be a far more successful book had it a bit less calculation and a lot more heart.

Candace Denning seems to have gone to school on Joan Didion and the early Raymond Carver, which may explain her fondness for the terse, over-controlled narrative style that is commonly called minimalism. For the most part she avoids its worst excesses—the "excesses" of minimalism being extremes of ellipticalism and enigma—but at moments she succumbs:

"Sarah touched his shoulder. 'You scared me last night,' she said. 'I thought you wanted to make love in front of her.'

" 'I was testing you,' he said. 'You had the right reaction.' "

" 'Don't test me,' she said.

" 'Don't worry. I wouldn't want anyone to watch us make love.'

" 'Would you let someone watch you make love to another woman?' she asked.

" 'The important thing is I wouldn't do it with you.'

" 'Jack,' she said."

The trouble with minimalist dialogue, as that passage quite inadvertently demonstrates, is that this simply is not the way people talk. There is an expansiveness and volubility to human conversation that the minimalists, in their longing to strip everything down to its most cryptic essence, either fail to perceive or deliberately overlook; the result is dialogue that is arch rather than natural, that persistently calls attention to itself and intrudes most unwelcomely on the narrative.

Candace Denning is guilty of this, alas, and for her sins should be sentenced to a cell furnished with nothing except the novels of Henry James and Theodore Dreiser. But so much else in *The Women in Her Dreams* is attractive and appealing that her strained attempts at the minimal, however irritating, must be tolerated. She is a smart, tough, perceptive observer of human behavior, and she has a keen sense of the complexities of human relationships, familial ones in particular.

THE DREAMER of her title is Sarah Broderhouse, who has recently graduated from what I take to be the University of Illinois; the time is the late 1960s. She is a twin, and as the novel opens her sister, Laura, is about to be married—a step that simultaneously imperils the twinship and offers Sarah the possibility of liberation from what she perceives as the stifling constraints of her family. Soon enough the chance to flee is offered by a drifter named Jack, who passes himself off as a poet—mercifully, we are not subjected to any of his verse—and who tells her that she is "the woman he was looking for."

Notwithstanding that Jack is married, Sarah falls for his line and tags along as he motorcycles westward, then north to Canada. But as suddenly as he had swept her away, he drops her, leaving her to fend for herself. She makes her way to a small town in Michigan, where she works for a time as a waitress until at last she tires of being alone, cut off from the ties of family, and returns to Illinois.

It is a quiet story, its serenity interrupted by only an occasional moment of drama. Candace Denning is less interested in confronting Sarah with moments of truth than in exploring the state of her mind as she tries to figure out who she is and what she should do with her life. She is the daughter of conventional parents and twin to a conventional sister, all of whom are content to settle into their comfortable small-town ruts, yet Sarah herself is possessed by an itch to get away. "People should do things when they have the chance," she believes, and she is determined to pursue whatever chances present themselves to her.

But wherever she goes and whatever she does, she cannot flee the inescapable, central reality of twinship. It is of course the metaphor for the familial ties that bind—"Being twins seemed to be something they would never outgrow"—and her conflicts with Laura therefore epitomize her yearning to be off on her own. But Denning is, as previously mentioned, smart, and she knows not merely that family is something from which we long to escape, but also a refuge to which almost invariably we return. How Sarah does so, and in what condition this leaves her, is the material for the novel's satisfying, interesting conclusion.

If only it were not written with one eye so firmly set on the prevailing literary vogue! Unlike most of the minimalists, whose talents are as stunted as their genre, Candace Denning clearly has things to say and feel—though in good minimalist style she keeps those feelings under tight rein. Surely she has a voice of her own, one that doesn't sound just like all the others in the literary din, because there are hints of it just below the surface of *The Women in Her Dreams*. She needs nothing so much as to get out of that minimalist straitjacket, and speak for herself. ■

Tom Hayden, Born-Again Middle American

REUNION: A Memoir
By Tom Hayden
Random House. 539 pp. $22.50

By David J. Garrow

MENTION Tom Hayden's name even to a group of distinctly older students, as I did recently, and they identify him immediately as Jane Fonda's husband. One could complain that it is a sad commentary on our culture that Hayden is better known as a movie star's spouse than as perhaps *the* preeminent New Left student activist of the 1960s, but Hayden himself likely regrets such an identification much less than '60s historians. Indeed, it is no small irony that Hayden, who, in the 15 years since his marriage to Fonda has built a substantive and successful career in California politics, is far more at ease with his identity from these past 15 years than he is with his earlier, even more visible life as one of the 1960s' most controversial figures.

In this honest, impressive and at times quite moving autobiography, Hayden strives with considerable success to evaluate his dramatic evolution during the 1960s and to explain the far more mainstream political orientation he has adopted since the early 1970s. Even now only 48 years old, Hayden frankly and accurately speaks of himself as "damaged, but a survivor."

The only child of relatively apolitical, middle-class Roman Catholic parents, Hayden grew up in the Detroit suburb of Royal Oak before attending college at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. His first three years of college were generally unexceptional; "nothing met the need for enrichment and adventure," Hayden writes in reflecting upon that time.

Then, coincident with becoming editor of the campus paper, the *Michigan Daily*, in 1960, Hayden came into contact with the young black activists whose movement was sweeping the South. Recalling one 1960 student conference where he met several impressive representatives of the new Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Hayden remembers that "this was a key turning point, the moment my political identity began to take shape," for "here were the models of charismatic commitment I was seeking."

BY MARGARET THOMAS—THE WASHINGTON POST
Tom Hayden in 1968

democratic participation. "We were envisioning a new and alternative process that involved people as independent and creative human beings, expressing a new force outside of existing institutions." That was what SNCC's grass-roots organizing work in the Deep South reflected, and it was what a parallel SDS program for northern, urban, community organization-building known as "ERAP" (Economic Research and Action Project) also aspired to.

Beginning in summer 1964, Hayden spent the better part of four years as an ERAP community organizer in Newark, N.J. Despite some small but locally-significant achievements, these years did not witness the progress that ERAP and Hayden had hoped for. Part of the problem was that the Johnson administration's "War on Poverty" did not fundamentally address the basic problems of "effective job creation and better education" that plagued black Newark, but another part was that America's growing involvement in Vietnam was deflecting more and more resources into destructive rather than constructive endeavors.

Hayden's concern about Vietnam led him to accept a late 1965 invitation to join two anti-war historians, Staughton Lynd and Herbert Aptheker, in a North Vietnamese-sponsored visit to Hanoi. It was a choice that would be both instructive and hugely controversial. "What began as an exercise in amateur diplomacy," Hayden writes, "taught me more than I could imagine about war and revolution and inflicted unhealed scars, not to mention political baggage, that I still carry today."

Hayden's conclusion that America's conduct in Indochina—especially the aerial bombing—was fundamentally evil led him towards an increasingly harsh view of American society. He nonetheless maintained private contacts on the war issue with such establishment figures such as Averell Harriman and Robert Kennedy, but by the summer of 1968, following the back-to-back assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Kennedy, Hayden had reached what he terms "the depths of alienation." With the prospects for an anti-war presidential nominee in 1968 snuffed out, the electoral process no longer seemed to offer any possible referendum on the war.

IT WAS in that setting that Hayden, along with other anti-war radicals such as Rennie Davis, Abbie Hoffman, and Dave Dellinger, went forward with protests at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago that many feared—and some knew—would end in violence. Hayden remains uncomfortable with some of the particular details concerning his involvement in those disorders—an involvement that led to a federal conspiracy indictment, a lengthy and tumultuous trial and eventual dismissal of the charges—but he is relatively forthright about how low an ebb his life reached in the 1968-1971 period.

Then, in 1972-1973, Hayden returned to anti-war political organizing, this time in southern California, and found his renewed involvement a healing experience. "I had gone to the brink of breakdown, to the preliminary stages of civil strife, but now there were signs that working within the fabric of society was producing change." Indeed, Hayden claims, "I was a 'born-again' middle American, emotionally charged by my reacceptance in the political mainstream."

Recommitted to electoral politics, Hayden waged a respectable but unsuccessful 1976 primary challenge against incumbent Democratic Senator John Tunney, an "orthodox liberal" who prevailed 54 percent to 36 percent, only to then lose to Republican S.I. Hayakawa. Six years later, Hayden ran for a California State Assembly seat, in part because "I wanted the democratic process to confirm my legitimacy like nothing else could." After extremely tough—and exceptionally costly—primary and general election campaigns in which Hayden's opponents highlighted his allegedly traitorous 1965 trip to Hanoi, Hayden prevailed, and has retained his seat in 1984 and 1986 as well.

Last year James Miller, in his extremely valuable study of SDS and the New Left, *Democracy Is in the Streets*, wrote of Hayden that "it is striking how few colleagues believe that they ever really knew him." True as that may be, it is not a sentiment that any reader of this book is likely to share. Especially after reading Hayden's exceptionally moving description of his 1978 reconciliation with his long-estranged father, one views Hayden as not only a commendable though scarred political survivor, but as an impressive individual whose turmoils and stresses, public and private, over three decades' time have made him a better human being. ■

Michael Reagan's Search for Himself

WRITER'S N.W.

Vol. 3 No.2 NEWSLETTER Summer 1988

Northwest Regionalism:

No Safe Haven

Whenever the subject of literary regionalism comes up, I think of the southerners, Flannery O'Connor and William Faulkner. O'Connor was from Georgia and and Faulkner from Mississippi. Faulkner was the elder by twenty-eight years. O'Connor was Catholic and Faulkner of Protestant upbringing. O'Connor suffered from lupus and Faulkner from alcoholism. The point is that in many respects the two lives were quite different. So, too, was their writing. For openers, O'Connor found her strength in the short story, Faulkner in the novel.

At the same time, affinities are apparent in their work—certainly their sense of place, of history, their struggle with racism, the brilliance, wit, and sinuousness of their language, and something in their characters, particularly their "low-life" characters who are tied to land and historical circumstance. Such affinities, however, are observed by readers after the fact of creation.

Before that fact each of the two writers no doubt attended closely to their material, shaped it accurately into words, and at the same time remained alert to the world. In this way, Falukner's diminishing, delta-shaped wilderness in "The Bear" and O'Connor's negro statue in "The Artificial Nigger" were portrayed in detail, but also acquired meaning that to this day resonates with culture and history. In my view, it takes theses two things to make good writing—vividness and accuracy of language, and a willingness to look hard upon the world. I cannot prescribe how this is accomplished—very differently, certainly, for different writers, but it is so that O'Connor and Faulkner, two supreme regionalists, came upon the happenstance of an international readership.

In the last twenty years, there's been a literary explosion in the Northwest, perhaps a renaissance. There are more writers in evidence by far than there used to be, many of whom are unusually good writers. There are also more literary organizations, more conferences, readings, prizes, book tours, independent presses and literary magazines, more movies adapted from Northwestern novels and shot on location. Among prominent Northwestern writers are some who don't even write about the Northwest, which has to be another positive sign.

Many of our writers, however, do cultivate the natural world and take pleasure in being record keepers of a place they love. For my part, I've been called a regionalist by certain reviewers and readers, as well as by booksellers and distributors. The copy on the jackets of my last two novels makes prominent mention of my Northwestern settings. To my publisher this seems to be a marketing strategy a little like guerrilla warfare—attempt to control the edges first, and then try to edge across the country toward the place where, as Dick Hugo used to say, they keep the score. For the booksellers and regional distributors, it is probably a more narrowly defined strategy that comes in most cases with a genuinely felt enthusiasm for the homegrown.

This is fine, but I've struck this personal note because it raises again the question of the relationship between the source of material for the writer and the use to which vested interests may put it. Vested interest, it should be said, is not restricted to those connected by money to a given work, but runs the gamut through various enthusiasms, including the dangerous practice some have of placing their fancies at stake. Science fiction "groupies" come to mind—an odd contingent of readers who seem to put aside their sense of the value of well written science fiction for the sake of glittering other-worldly particulars that are used to fill a spiritual void. The same might be said of certain readers and even writers of Northwestern literature who indulge themselves in a world that does not exist. I am talking about a particular and curious kind of nostalgia that longs to remember what was never witnessed—a bounteous long-ago time of wild meat, folk-dancing, and kindly Indians. This is flight, or a descent into self-mythification. The idyll has uses, but its literary purpose disappears when the practitioner is not self-aware.

Arguably, the telling feature of Northwest writing is indeed its use of the natural world, a certain insistency that the world of plants and animals and earth still seem to have here. After serving as a jurist on several regional literary panels, however, I grew troubled by the number of Northwestern writers who have a thing about nature. Some of the writers are very fine, or more than fine, because they attend to detail and listen to the world in a way that permits their work to spring loose and to speak to others with whom they share virtually nothing. Others, however, have submitted to a regional cant, which all too often is no different from slavishly following the dictates of any other idealogical recipe—whether Marxist, religious fundamentalist, dare I say environmentalist, or even feminist. Such submission is limiting because it depends on shared experience and belief for its readershp, because it encourages a divisive view rather than a complex one, because it prevents one from listening to one's heart and substitutes ready-made systems of thought for those that are demanding, mysterious, and deeply felt. It discovers very little, and through it the writer becomes his or her own vested interest and so accepts an inward totalitarianism.

In my view the central truth about Northwestern life—for "white" people, at least—rests in the relationship between the natural world as a safe-house for sometimes rowdy individualism and the propensity of the state and of corporations that ape the state to turn the land and the people who dwell in it to their own purposes. It's a tricky contradiction that goes on and on. It's bound up with the two critical events of the nineteenth century—the Lewis and Clark expedition and the completion of the transcontinental railroad. To this day, it flips over on itself and pops up everywhere—in the white supremacists' wish to create their own haven here, in the endless battles over water and power production, in our visions of ourselves. It also connects us to the struggle against totalitarianism, inward and otherwise, in the rest of the world, and I guess that's the point—that we can't forget that as we attend to the meadowlark perched on the fencepost, singing its heart out. ❖

John Keeble *is the author of* ***Yellow Fish*** *and* ***Broken Ground;*** *he teaches at Eastern Washington University.*

This article has been made possible in part from a grant from the Washington State Arts Commission.

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Media Weavers Idaho Tour

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The Media Weavers tri-state literary tour comes to Idaho this month, and is presented with the support of the Idaho Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. As in previous segments of the tour, there will be workshops to assist writers to get published. In addition, a special invitation goes out to regional small presses and journals to display and sell their wares at a gathering of the clan in Boise, June 17 and 18. The tour itinerary is:

Pocatello: Sat., June 11

Freelancing - Publish What You Write, co-sponsored by the Idaho State University Communications Department. Pond Student Union Building 9:30–3:30, followed by a social gathering. Fee: General admission $15, seniors/students $10. Contact: Janet House (208) 233-4901 or (208) 236-3295.

McCall: Wed. June 15

Publish What You Write, co-sponsored by the McCall Arts Council and Chamber of Commerce, 7-10 pm. Fee: General admission $8, seniors/students $5. For the location, call Jennifa Lorenzi at the Chamber, (208) 634-7631.

Boise: Fri., June 17 & Sat., June 18

To celebrate regional writing and publishing, two days of workshops, readings and a small press fair will be held at Boise State University. This event is co-sponsored by the BSU English Department and will be held at the Hemingway Western Studies Center.

The **Book Fair** features publications of Idaho's small presses and journals, and is open to all regional presses.

Available for discussion will be publishers and editors from presses such as Limberlost Press, Blue Scarab Press, Honeybrook Press, Wind Vein Press, the *Palouse Journal,* Solstice Press, *EOTU, Idaho Librarian*, Confluence Press, *Idaho Arts Journal, Boise Magazine,* University of Idaho Press, and others.

Readings are made possible in part by the support of Boise BookShop and will be held **Friday at 7 pm**, featuring:

Robert Wrigley, Idaho "Writer-in-Residence" 1986-87, whose most recent book, *Moon In A Mason Jar* , was published by Confluence Press;

Leslie Leek Durham, who teaches at ISU and just published her first collection of short stories, *Heart of a Western Woman,* with Blue Scarab Press; (open mike will follow);

and **Saturday at 2 pm** featuring:

Mary Blew, short fiction writer and teacher, author of *Lambing Out,* published by University of Missouri Press, who has a new book being published by Confluence Press;

Rick Ardinger, currently literary editor of *Boise Magazine*, poet and publisher *The Limberlost Review.*

The **Workshops** schedule is:

Fri. 1-3 pm Classroom Publishing
3-5pm Freelancing, Magazines (both taught by Dennis Stovall)

Sat. 9:30-12 pm Book Publishing (Dennis Stovall)
9:30-12 pm Regional Writers & Presses: Resources for Librarians & Teachers (taught by Gregg Sapp, editor of *Idaho Librarian)*
2-4 pm Panel on Publishing & Marketing with Jim Hepworth (Confluence Press), Alan Minskoff (Boise Magazine), Opal Gerwig (Solstice Press) and Dennis Stovall (Media Weavers).

In conjunction with this event, Boise Library will have a special exhibit on regional writers and presses, thanks to Grove Koger and Sandy Glover.

Fees: Readings & Book Fair are free; workshops are $9 for one/$15 for all. Contact: Melanie Adams 208-385-1571 or BSU Office of News Service.

Previous workshops and meetings throughout Idaho, Washington and Montana have been assisted by grants from those states arts commissions. Media Weavers will report on the entire tour project in the fall newsletter. ❖

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Mike Miskowski, Seattle, WA

Writer's NW Newsletter

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Junior Birdmen Grow Up

FLIGHTS OF PASSAGE
Reflections of a World-War II Aviator.
By Samuel Hynes.
270 pp. Annapolis, Md.:
Frederic C. Beil/The Naval Institute Press.
$16.95.

By Diane Ackerman

SEVERAL years ago, The Columbus Dispatch ran a poignant photograph taken at the Air Force Museum at Dayton, Ohio, which was honoring the last surviving pilot who flew the famous mission to bomb the bridge over the River Kwai. In the photograph, an older man poses for journalists, holding a picture of himself as a 19-year-old, standing rakishly in front of a plane, on which he has painted a sea monster's nose and dozens of bombs. Hat cocked, khaki shirt open at the neck, the young man looks sun-tanned, slender, and luminous with life. His expression says he is indestructible, he will be 19 forever. After all, he controls whirlwinds of metal, he can blow up bridges and whole cities. What is *time* compared to that? He doesn't know that the real enemy — the one Richard Hillary, an R.A.F. pilot and World War II memoirist called "the last enemy" — lives inside his cells, is unreachable, and will certainly defeat him.

What brings that photograph to mind now is Samuel Hynes's touching, bawdy, at times very funny memoir, "Flights of Passage," about coming of age as a Marine aviator during World War II. Looking at old photographs of himself and his squadronmates, Mr. Hynes tries to remember how it felt, on the pulse, to be young in that era. "Every generation is a secret society," he begins. "The secret that my generation . . . shared was simply the war itself. We grew up on active duty." It is not a book that soars lyrically, but it is wise and honest and full of the hard-drinking, skirt-chasing antics of soldiers and the absurdity of war. By trying to recollect the young pilot he once was, he paints a moving portrait of a whole generation of teen-agers, fresh from high school but still socially awkward and wet behind the ears, who were given planes and told to drop bombs. During his three years in the Marines, he went from an invincible, naïve 19-year-old, desperate "to be tested" in war, in sex and in life, to a 21-year-old with a wife, memories of combat and the death of friends, and the hard-tack of responsibility to chew on.

Second Lieut. Samuel Hynes of the Marines in the cockpit of his bomber on Okinawa, 1945.

Mr. Hynes tells the story from the point of view of the young man, with very little distancing. In each of his units, soldiers fuse into a family, and he remembers their mannerisms and habits in vivid detail. Indeed, the best parts of this book are the brief, quirky sketches of people, like this one of a captain named Billy Childers:

"He was a tall, bony man, with a face that was at once weather-beaten and pale — I never understood how that could be true, but it was — and his eyes, which were always moving, were so light-colored that they seemed to have no pupils. (T, who flew on his other wing, said he had eyes like Little Orphan Annie.) Billy seemed to live at the edge of the squadron's life. He didn't drink beer at the club, or at least I don't remember him there, and he was never a part of the talk and the horseplay in the ready room. Maybe, I thought, that was because he was older; or maybe his years as an enlisted man had made him suspicious of officers."

Others he serves beside include a big "countryish boy from South Dakota, who "always spoke as though his mouth was full of water, and he didn't want to spill it"; "a gentle, Bible-reading Georgia boy" who "would wait until midnight to go to the toilet or take a shower"; and the squadron doctor, a surgeon, who "got nothing in his sick bay except athlete's foot and coral cuts to treat" until "he had gotten so bored and so hungry for surgery that one night, after a couple of drinks, he circumcised himself."

Irresponsible, wild, often drunk and disorderly, Mr. Hynes and his friends find such spots as wartime Daytona, Fla., where they are briefly stationed, to be like "an occupied city":

"There seemed to be no laws that governed the behavior of Marine pilots; nothing was prohibited; there were not even any proprieties. Many of the girls there were camp-followers, sluttish and obliging. . . . Hotel clerks would register any couple under any name; bartenders were always willing to ignore the fact that none of us was old enough to drink legally; the police might scold, but they never arrested us. Taylor once destroyed an awning of a store while trying to climb it to get to a second-story window where he had seen a girl. No one suggested that he should pay for the damage, and certainly such a thing didn't occur to him. The town had surrendered."

AMONG the pilots, there are the Crazies and the Sanes, and their escapades make this book at times a cross between "Tales of the South Pacific" and "Catch-22." At a dance hall on a pier in Daytona, while Glenn Miller tunes play, three prankish pilots fly their planes straight at the place "lower than the level of the casino floor." At the last second they pull up, jangling everyone's nerves, and it is "like looking down the barrel of a loaded gun." At one of his Pacific island stations, a night-fighter pilot who has had to make three emergency landings in the water talks and acts normally, but quietly paints every one of his belongings and everything that surrounds him blue.

In the military tradition of steal what you can first and find a use for it later, the squadron's radar officer scrounges a large load of plywood, and they decide to

Continued on page 11

Diane Ackerman's most recent book is "On Extended Wings," a memoir of flying.

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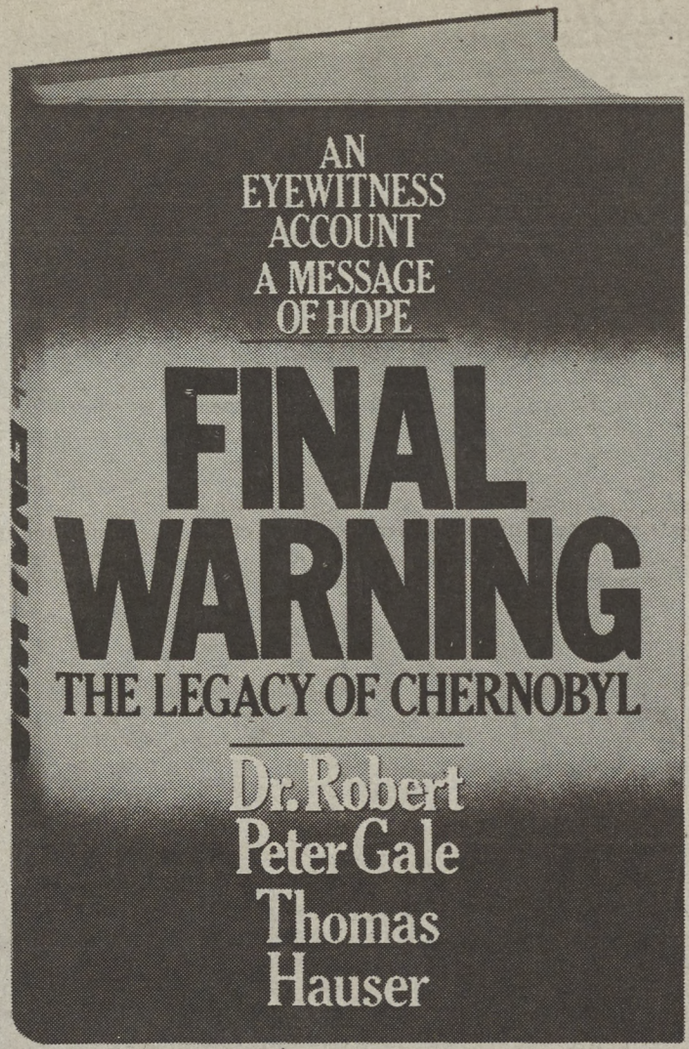

April 26 marks the second anniversary of one of the great disasters of our time—the explosion of the unit 4 nuclear reactor at Chernobyl. Now, as the world is again reminded of Chernobyl, Dr. Robert Peter Gale—the heroic American doctor who led an international radiation treatment team for victims of the disaster—considers how much we all have learned since that fateful day.

As timely and critically important as Jonathan Schell's *Fate of the Earth,* this is a moving, eyewitness account of Dr. Gale's struggle to save Soviet lives, his sudden entrance into the limelight of international diplomacy and his remarkable meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev. And here is the legacy of Chernobyl, and a powerful message of hope for a world living in the shadow of nuclear disaster.

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winner *The Making of the Atomic Bomb*

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Birdmen Grow Up

Continued from page 9

build a barroom, whose walls someone else lightly blowtorches to give it "a decorator effect." A tentmate begins shooting imaginary rats in a foxhole. One crew has to ditch, survives in a life raft for three days and is finally picked up by a seaplane, only to discover that the rescue plane sustained damage on landing and will have to *taxi* the 100 miles back to base. When one of the pilots arrives, he finds that his cot and belongings have vanished from his tent and that he's been declared dead, which is how his tentmates treat him.

Bomber pilots always flew in formation, and "if you were any good you could put your plane two feet from another one and stay there all day." This leads to tight echelons of friendship after hours, too, when they drink, chase girls and lie around the bunks telling dirty stories ("obscenity was a kind of intimacy"). They are "never too drunk to sing," and "Flights of Passage" includes a large "repertoire of songs suitable for Marines to sing while drunk. . . . a genuine oral tradition, like folk ballads." Most of them are comic and about sex or death, though a few are devoted to "despising senior officers and the military life." There are kamikaze raids to survive, booby-trapped planes to fly. The wrong places are sometimes bombed, and the long-awaited test, when it comes, turns out to be hollow, and Mr. Hynes survives it shellshocked by a reality of combat he wasn't prepared for. As someone once said, the first casualty of war is the truth.

Watching his fellow boy soldiers fall in, and then gradually fall apart, teaches him harsh lessons and matures him fast. It's to Mr. Hynes's credit that he's able to make a renewed sense of war's mania and absurdity into something personal, an individual rite of passage. He remembers his war years as coated in thrill, a delirious time of irresponsibility and freedom. Through his eyes, it's easy to understand why many men cherish the red alert of war as a high point their lives will never again achieve, a time when the world seemed carefree and savage, passionate and disarming, with nonstop moments of hatred, love and deliverance. □

From Russia With Hope

SHORES OF REFUGE
A Hundred Years of Jewish Emigration.
By Ronald Sanders.
Illustrated. 673 pp. New York:
Henry Holt & Company. $27.95.

By Martin Gilbert

DURING the past 100 years, the Jews have seen

have seen enough of monarchical governments to appreciate the blessings of this republic."

Nevertheless, the problems facing the immigrants, which Mr. Sanders graphically narrates, were always overshadowed by the torments in Russia. "America was in everybody's mind," one Russian Jewish girl wrote in 1891, as persecutions and pogroms reached their first decade of almost relentless intensity. Even the malaria and sand dunes of Palestine would be preferable to a pogrom in the most modern Russian cities.

Whatever the emigrants' destination, a helping

nexation, conquest and collaboration, caught most of Europe in its grip.

Ronald Sanders gives a clear and moving picture of the relentless closing of the gates, characterized most cruelly by the turning away of refugee ships from both Palestine and the United States. On April 23, 1939, the British turned back a ship with 270 refugees on board as it tried to land its human cargo at Haifa. A month later, on May 27, 1939, the 930 Jewish refugees on board the St. Louis reached Havana harbor. They too were to be

NYT
Ap 17, 188

Paperbacks

Her Mind Ran to Lurid Extremes

LULU INCOGNITO
By Raymond Kennedy.
305 pp. New York:
Vintage Contemporaries.
Paper, $7.95.

By Isabel Huggan

YOU know the kind of woman I mean — her clothes are ill fitting, her hair style outdated and her makeup garish. But there's something captivating about her. How, you wonder, can she be so badly put together and yet so immensely appealing?

"Lulu Incognito" is that kind of book — flawed, but still absorbing. Whether this is testimony to Raymond Kennedy's skill as a storyteller or to the nature of the material itself (a magnetic fusion of power, deceit and interfamilial rivalry) is a puzzle even as you feverishly turn the pages. Mr. Kennedy, the author of four other novels (among them "Columbine" and "My Father's Orchard"), teaches fiction writing at Columbia University. No doubt about it, he knows how to bait his hook, how to play the line, how to pull the reader in. But with this book, he just didn't catch me for keeps.

In some ways "Lulu Incognito" is like a fable, a moral tale of decay caused by pride and greed and lust; as a fable it succeeds marvelously, since that genre works best with broad strokes and heightened color. But as a psychological novel of complex Freudian tangles it falls short for the very reason Lulu herself is doomed — she remains mysterious and insubstantial and never becomes real enough to matter.

Though her lack of vitality is, arguably, necessary to the plot, it unfortunately weakens Lulu's hold on the imagination. Mr. Kennedy's narration often seems slightly removed and he distances himself from other essential characters as well, notably the beautifully named Soldier McNiff, who sadly never achieves more than a one-dimensional existence. The ironic twist of his appearance at the opening and closing of the novel is never fully developed because his presence is so lightly sketched. In the end, he will fade from memory, beautiful name and all.

In contrast, other characters who *are* fleshed out with personal histories are larger than life, such as the dramatic Mrs. Gansevoort. Known variously (and often confusingly within single paragraphs) as Julia, Auntie, Aunt Julia and Lulu's "friend," she is the molten-hot heart of malice at the core of "Lulu Incognito." The last member of a wealthy family still living in Ireland Parish, an old factory town in Massachusetts, she is left with only her summer home as security, since the family mansion soon may be taken by the son of her hated sister, Ignatia, who is now residing somewhere in Europe. Ignatia many years earlier stole Julia's lover and married him. Though Julia later married and had a daughter (Sylvia), when the story begins in 1951 she is widowed and childless, Sylvia having died in a car accident five years before. Over the years Julia's bitterness leads her to contrive a new drama of betrayal and perfidy in which she will have the starring role.

PETER KUPER

Enter Lulu. Poor little Luette Peloquin, French-Canadian clerk at the Woolworth candy counter, is a nobody, with little sense of herself except for a religious streak and a secretive nature. Just after a brief lesbian affair has left her extraordinarily vulnerable, she is discovered by the silver-haired, silver-tongued Leon Rafferty, clearly an agent of disaster. He takes Lulu to live in Mrs. Gansevoort's mansion as her personal secretary, her amanuensis; at first it seems she is meant to represent Sylvia, but soon it appears she is also to embody Ignatia. The action heats up to produce melodrama at its most steamy and irresistible:

"Lulu draped the negligee over a chair in her room and climbed into the cool bed in her violet gown. The house and its occupants, it struck her, were like a flower that opened in mystery, day by day, petal by petal. She lay awake for an hour, her mind running to lurid extremes. Try as she might, she could not avoid thinking the obvious, no matter how monstrous and unlikely the possibility, that Chloris [Mrs. Gansevoort's niece] . . . was lying in Auntie's bed; that the platinum-haired girl was devoted to her aunt in ways too awful and alarming to think about. It . . . wouldn't even be thinkable, she realized, but for her own failing weeks ago. . . . That was the key. What had happened once, to herself, had corrupted her, given her the power to see what was not: smoke without fire, snakes among satin ribbons."

Mr. Kennedy's writing is similarly rich throughout the novel, redolent of Baudelaire's "Fleurs du Mal" and evocative of another era — and this presents a problem. The extravagant language of description and discourse and the darkly decadent imagery (though hypnotically effective) serve to create quite another world than New England at the outbreak of the Korean War. Every reference to time and place seems to break the spell.

There are other jarring notes; the only French phrase Mr. Kennedy places in Lulu's mouth is incorrect. Also, there is the difficulty posed by changes in female fashions. Since Lulu's transformation and eventual loss of identity are accomplished by the wearing of clothes that belonged to the dead Sylvia and long-absent Ignatia, shouldn't some mention be made that these dresses are no longer in vogue? Lulu becomes severely agoraphobic as the novel progresses — one might think she was justifiably reluctant to be seen in public.

• • •

The baseball catcher McNiff is first seen by Lulu in a full-color cover photograph on The Ireland Parish Telegram's weekend magazine; in 1951, would a factory town daily have its own color supplement, or weren't they sent out by city papers such as The Boston Globe (in which case a local player wouldn't be featured)?

Even the hint of anachronism can disturb authenticity. I expect a fiction writer to be as polished as an expert liar, with no holes in his story at all; and though I admit to being swept along in the swirling eddies of "Lulu Incognito," in the end I don't really believe it happened. □

Isabel Huggan's book "The Elizabeth Stories" will be issued in paperback next month.

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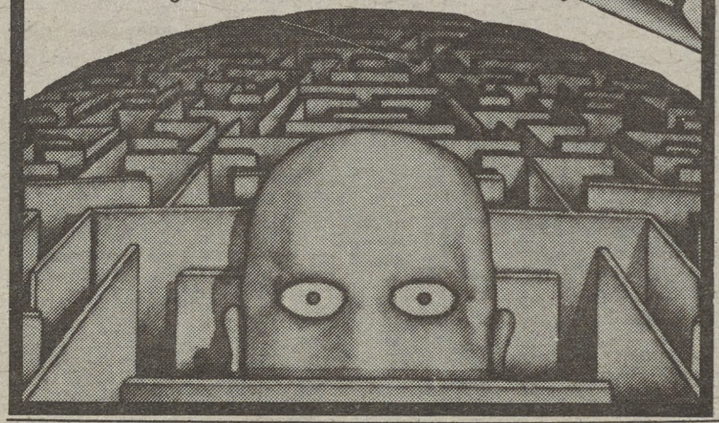

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'We're Talking Big-Time Illegal'

WHITE HORSE CAFE
By Roberta Smoodin.
249 pp. New York:
Penguin. Paper, $6.95.

By Patricia Vigderman

HOLLYWOOD is the location of the White Horse Cafe, a Mexican restaurant owned by Tomas and his grandmother, Concepción; Tomas's lover, Sasha, is an aspiring movie actress. "White Horse Cafe" itself has the feel of a slightly pulpy movie. Tomas has "a Rodin torso, to support all the emotions written on his big face." Sasha has long blond hair. Concepción, a sort of cross between the Godfather and Georgia O'Keeffe, is the 84-year-old widow of a long-defunct Mexican general.

There's a literary sensibility at work here, though. Tomas and Sasha, for example, have a sex life out of D. H. Lawrence. Concepción is given to long interior monologues in which she shows familiarity with Virginia Woolf and Coleridge — although her late hours seem to be divided between Johnny Carson and David Letterman.

Tomas is very good at running the restaurant, but he's apparently seen a few late-night movies himself, and he gets involved in a plan to smuggle some, uh, pigeon's blood rubies. This rings in the requisite colorful minor characters: a spoiled WASP college boy, a streetwise Chicano who keeps a copy of "The Great Gatsby" over his heart, and a psychopathic Arab drug dealer who finally has to be bundled offstage in the trunk of a car.

The scam is ultimately successful, but its details are curiously unimportant. Instead, the novel offers emotional close-ups — gestures from the flicks about a jewel heist. Sasha's relief that Tomas is not involved in a drug deal turns quickly to fear and anger. She takes that "big face" of his in her hands and tells him "we're talking big-time illegal." "Illegal never bothered me," he replies. To which the author appends helpfully: "Pure Bogart." In contrast, Concepción with her reels of glorious and bloody flashbacks to the Mexican revolution trembles "with aliveness for the first time in decades" and is thrilled to provide Tomas with a pistol from her nightgown drawer.

JIM MCHUGH
Roberta Smoodin.

Roberta Smoodin's style is often hip and funny; her throwaway lines on freeways, the drug scene, television, or the cafe's kitchen help are clearly observed. But this is not true of her improbable characters: reading about them is like watching amateur acting. And in an age of computerized banking, a plot based on ruby-smuggling seems oddly old-fashioned. □

Patricia Vigderman frequently writes about literature.

Is This Paranoia, or Am I Nuts?

THE MUSTACHE
By Emmanuel Carrère.
Translated by Lanie Goodman.
146 pp. New York:
Collier Books/Macmillan Publishing Company.
Paper, $7.95.

By Oliver Conant

TO have and enjoy a mustache, to rather

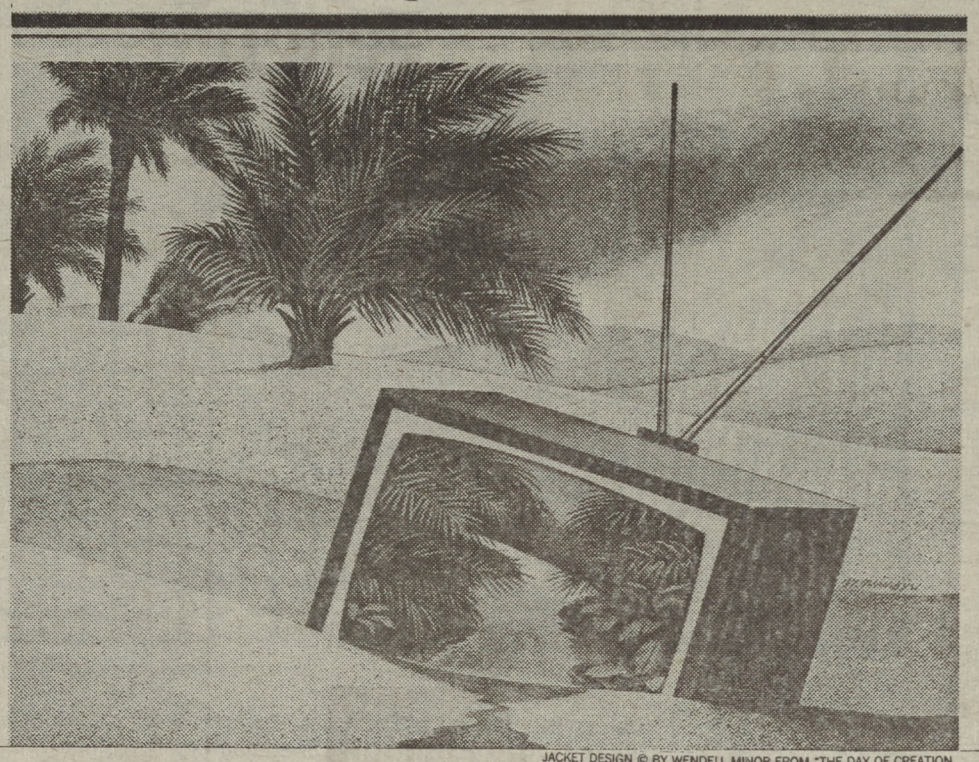
There he finds some relief from his mounting paranoia by riding the Kowloon to Hong Kong ferry back and forth all day. When his wife calmly materializes in Macao (where our hero, tiring at last of the ferry's soothing to-and-fro has also repaired, if that's the word), betraying no sign that anything untoward has occurred — as if all along they had been vacationing in the Far East! — he puts a gruesome end to himself and the novel.

That other people, despite any claim to understanding one might care to advance, may in reality

Brigitte Weeks

J.G. Ballard: Voyaging To the Source

THE DAY OF CREATION
By J.G. Ballard
Farrar Straus Giroux. 254 pp. $17.95



JACKET DESIGN © BY WENDELL MINOR FROM "THE DAY OF CREATION

BY FAY GODWIN

J.G. Ballard

MANY OF the thousands who bought the paperback of J.G. Ballard's *Empire of the Sun* are going to be in for a shock when they pick up *The Day of Creation*. Ballard has returned to his roots with a vengeance here, leaving us wondering where to place *Empire of the Sun* in his puzzling but distinguished career.

His creative roots are in bleak and apocalyptic science fiction, like his early novel *The Drowned World*, in which heat, flood and tropical vegetation gradually destroy civilization. His admirers were always a vocal, select group but it was only with *Empire of the Sun*, an autobiographical novel of a young boy growing up in a Japanese internment camp near Shanghai during the Second World War that Ballard found a widespread readership. In fact, the failure of *Empire* to win Britain's prestigious Booker Prize provoked a noisy controversy much like the fuss here when Toni Morrison's *Beloved* was passed over for two major awards. Then came Steven Spielberg's film to widen its appeal in this country.

The Day of Creation is Ballard's first novel since *Empire* (1984). Dr. Mallory, who tells the tale, works for the World Health Organization in an unnamed equatorial African country divided by a rather half-hearted civil war. The bare bones of the plot are these: In his quest for irrigation water, Mallory accidentally helps to release an aquifer creating a huge river.

Having created it, he is seized with a confused desire to staunch its flow and so attempts to sail up the new river to its source. In his illogical but fanatical quest he is accompanied by an African girl he calls Noon, and later by a television preacher named Sanger and his Indian assistant, Mr. Pal. As they journey up the river in an aging car ferry, complete with a Mercedes-Benz, guerrillas led by General Harare battle with government forces led by the local police chief, Captain Kagwa.

What is absolutely right with this novel is Ballard's writing. He creates the landscape of the strange river, called the Mallory after its discoverer, in inexorable detail. He builds up a lush but subtly rotting landscape, transformed by water that brings life but also poison, stagnancy, mosquitoes and death. The river and its biology are more of a palpable presence in the novel than any of its characters. "At one of the quiet beaches, a small gazelle drank from the stream. On the opposite bank a forest lynx, tired of roaming the arid savanna, loped through the shallows . . . . Nourished by the river, a vivid new flora had emerged in the past months, a cool realm that extended a hundred yards into the parched savanna. Curious tubers and corms, scarlet drupes, and culinary and medicinal herbs grew in the pale light, and I saw the yellow tubes and flared mouths of fragrant datura, their alkaloids promising drowsy potions on which the river might dream."

Ballard tantalizes with brief but wonderful images that rise above the metaphorical mud: "Below the wheel house Mr. Pal was grappling with a 50-gallon oil drum that had broken loose from its ropes, like an exhausted instructor trying to waltz with an overweight pupil." As Mallory faces his enemy, Captain Kagwa, "his face remained closed and I knew that in his eyes I was already dead, and that my present survival was no more than a brief administrative oversight." Ballard's writing makes it hard, even ungracious, to find fault with his fiction, but gleaming gems do not a diadem make.

HERE WE come to what is profoundly wrong with this strange but potentially wondrous tale: Mallory and his eponymous river are boring. The two cannot be separated. "I could almost believe," he tells us "that my own imagination was inventing the river as we moved along its course." But Ballard has failed to make the fate of either the river or its creator matter. His complex message of fruitless effort, decline, disease and death weighs so heavily upon the narrative that not even his magic voice can keep it afloat. So, the painful voyage of the fevered and half-starved pilgrims becomes pointless. A diverse cast of extras trails sadly across the stage. Amazons on a floating brothel murdering stray soldiers; Noon, perhaps a treacherous guerrilla, perhaps a seductive nubile young woman; and Sanger the television evangelist, half blind, seeing the world only through the lens of a camera. They are all in mortal danger, but their creator doesn't seem to care.

This is a maddening book: a fable written by a veritable wizard of words that fails to connect with the reader. It is not Ballard's vision of rottenness and destruction that alienates—no one writes more successfully of the rusting remnants of civilization. But after all the brilliance and poise, the landscape of his imagination in *The Day of Creation* is peopled with cardboard figures whose hopes and fears serve an arid vision and whose fate is finally a matter of indifference. ■

A Modern Austrian Master and His Vision of Despair

WOODCUTTERS
By Thomas Bernhard
Translated from the German
By David McLintock
Knopf. 181 pp. $15.95

By Martin Seymour-Smith

THOMAS BERNHARD may well be not only Austria's most gifted living author, but Europe's. This is a serious proposition by anyone's standards. Yet one can only say that no writer since Céline, with whom Bernhard has affinities, has done less to provoke such a status. He is a deeply pessimistic writer, brutal, solipsistic and obsessed with violence, illness, suicide, despair and death. A few years ago a critic spoke of him as little known in the English-speaking world. This is no longer true, to the extent that no one would be surprised if he were awarded the Nobel Prize—he has had more or less every prize Austria and Germany have to offer. One can be sure only that he would be as honestly unappreciative of such an honor as he has been to his own country's literary establishment, for which he has nothing but contempt.

Martin Seymour-Smith's books include "The New Guide to Modern World Literature."

"No one would be surprised if Bernhard were awarded the Nobel Prize—he has had more or less every prize Austria and Germany have to offer."

But he is a much more interesting writer than the preceding might necessarily indicate. There can be no possible doubt of his gifts, he is not a publicist (not even one of the now familiar type who "backs into the limelight"), he is immensely learned, and his suffering, stemming from his belief that there can be no response to life but despair in the face of the inevitability of death, is wholly convincing. Some of his writing has been monotonous in its enraged nihilism, but this was probably the inevitable price he had to pay for his rampant sincerity.

He was born in 1931 in Holland, of Austrian parents. His maternal grandfather, Johannes Freumbichler (1881-1949), a writer, and a cantankerous character who served Bernhard as model on numerous occasions, influenced him deeply. In 1949 he became so ill from tuberculosis that he was given the last rites. In 1952 he began to study music, supporting himself as a court reporter. Curiously, his earliest writings consisted of rather conventional verse, and received no more than cursory attention (this may be alluded to in the present work). The novel *Frost* (1963) changed all that.

The main works that have been translated include the novels *Gargoyles* and *Correction*, based on a person resembling Ludwig Wittgenstein, and the vehement and fascinating autobiography *Gathering Evidence*. Bernhard regards speech as mere monologue, "frenetic temporary therapy," political solutions as illusions, and life as essentially destructive. But he also acknowledges, if bitterly, the consolations provided by art. He has been compared to Beckett and to Strindberg, as well as to his own predecessors such as Musil and Broch. More fruitful comparisons are with figures further back in the past, such as Kleist, Novalis and even, in some respects, Grimmelshausen. In German-speaking literature he seems for the moment to have left Grass entirely behind him. If you dislike him, and you well might, then you will acknowledge without any

—*Continued on page 8*

Japan and America's Entangling Alliance

TRADING PLACES
How We Allowed Japan To Take the Lead
By Clyde V. Prestowitz Jr.
Basic Books. 365 pp. $19.95

By Robert C. Christopher

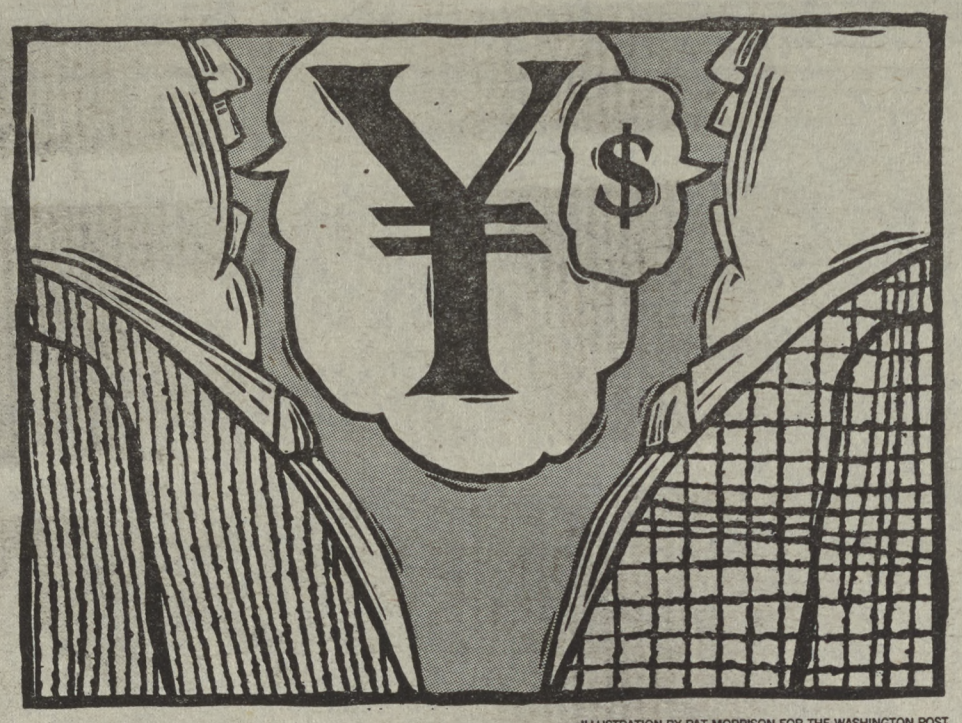


ILLUSTRATION BY PAT MORRISON FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

IT IS almost axiomatic," Clyde Prestowitz Jr. asserts in *Trading Places,* "that the experts are always wrong about Japan." As generalizations go, this one is not too far off the mark, but it also seems likely sooner or later to come back to haunt its author.

Few Americans have a stronger claim to expertise on Japan and more particularly on Japanese-American economic relations than Clyde Prestowitz. Fluent in Japanese and the possessor of a master's degree in Asian studies from the University of Hawaii's East-West Center, he has reinforced his scholarly credentials with more than 20 years of professional involvement with Japan. First as a businessman and then, for roughly half of the Reagan years, as counselor on Japan affairs to the secretary of commerce, he has been in a position to acquire extraordinary firsthand knowledge of trade and trade negotiations between Japan and the United States.

It is clearly these qualifications that give his book indisputable strengths. Despite an overriding preoccupation with economic issues, *Trading Places* is studded with general observations about Japanese thought and behavior; and while these seldom break new ground, they are for the most part intelligent and accurate. A good number, in fact, deserve thoughtful attention from anyone interested in acquiring greater understanding of how Japanese society and institutions function.

Even more thought-provoking than Prestowitz's cultural and sociological insights are those which, as a result of his years in government service, he is able to offer on the haphazard manner in which this country's trade and economic policies are shaped. Nothing I have read elsewhere so neatly epitomizes the degree to which the decline of U.S. economic power had been self-inflicted than the account he gives in his book of a cabinet meeting held at the White House in December 1982. The centerpiece of this occasion was a presentation in which then Undersecretary of Commerce Lionel Olmer strongly argued that if the United States wished to retain an overall leadership role in world affairs it must act to halt the erosion of American pre-eminence in high technology industries. During the desultory discussion that followed, Prestowitz recalls, President Reagan "at times . . . appeared to doze off." And from the rest of the author's narrative it becomes clear that, in this instance at least, President Reagan's behavior reflected quite accurately the true (as opposed to rhetorical) priority that the great majority of our political masters have assigned to this particular issue.

Like its virtues, though, the defects of *Trading Places* appear to be attributable to expertise. Precisely because his view has been so tightly focused on Japan for so long, Prestowitz overestimates the role of the American relationship with Japan as a causal factor in the deterioration of our international economic position. Anyone whose information on the subject was solely derived from this book would scarcely be aware that for a number of years this country has run trade deficits with virtually all its significant trading partners and that the major part of our global trade deficit is incurred in dealings with countries *other* than Japan.

Certainly there is no blinking before the facts with which Prestowitz is so concerned: that by far our biggest bilateral trade imbalance is with Japan and that in a number of fields of advanced technology Japanese industry has either already seized leadership from American industry or appears to be in the process of doing so. But by neglecting to emphasize that the United States has faced increasingly effective competition from foreign industry and agriculture in general, *Trading Places* obscures the point that Japan has not been the only nation to capitalize upon American complacency and economic mismanagement but simply the most successful in doing so up until now.

The qualification "up until now" is central since the fatal weakness of long-range economic forecasting lies in the inability of its practitioners to make provision for the possibility of radical change in the social, political or technological environment. This was the failing that in the 1970s betrayed those who assured us that the existing world financial system was in danger of being swept away by a flood of OPEC petrodollars. And it is one that in the end may well betray Prestowitz too. For even though the readiness to embrace basic changes in national behavior patterns is one of the most conspicuous features of Japanese history, Prestowitz makes no real allowance in his analysis for the possibility that Japan's economic conduct may alter significantly in the years ahead. And he gives equally short shrift to the possibility that the major threat to American competitiveness in world markets a couple of decades hence may come from nations that pursue social and economic strategies somewhat different from those of present-day Japan.

What makes this especially troublesome is that it bears quite directly on the validity of Prestowitz's proposals for change in the aims of U.S. economic policy. With evident sincerity, he argues that it is "a dead end" for anyone to suggest that the Japanese should model their economic behavior on that of Americans or that the United States should try to emulate Japan. Yet it is essentially the latter course that he, in fact, proposes. Or that, at any rate, is how most Americans will surely interpret a program that calls upon them to moderate their "obsession with the rights of the individual" and "the short-term benefit of the consumer," establish "co-operation between business and government to reach specific industrial goals" and, above all, treat foreign trade decisions as "an integral part of national security policy.

HOW DEFENSIBLE are these and the other more specific measures Prestowitz prescribes may be a matter of argument. It is, for example, questionable whether Japan itself can hope to pursue successfully for very much longer the kind of practices he wishes the United States to adopt or that the shortcomings of American management have as little relevance to our problems as he suggests. It also requires a considerable act of faith to assume that trade policies crafted with the avowed purpose of promoting national security objectives would actually do so with any consistency. (Certainly, the chief recent example of this approach, the ill-fated semiconductor agreement with Japan that Prestowitz helped to father, offers little grounds for optimism on that score.)

But in the last analysis all this is really beside the point: the fatal flaw in Prestowitz's recommendations is that there is no possibility whatever that the American body politic will accept them in the foreseeable future.

Trading Places, in sum, is a work of real but circumscribed value. As a blueprint for national action, it recalls the classic definition of remarriage: the triumph of hope over experience. And it is both too specialized and too loosely organized to be likely to hold the attention of the general reader. Yet the description Prestowitz offers of the politico-economic predicament in which the United States now finds itself is sufficiently cogent and the nuggets of history that he provides are so fascinating in their implications that his book will amply repay reading by anyone with more than a passing interest in this country's international economic relations. ■

Robert C. Christopher is the author of "The Japanese Mind" and "Second to None: American Companies in Japan."

The World of Alcoholics Anonymous

GETTING BETTER
Inside Alcoholics Anonymous
By Nan Robertson
Morrow. 298 pp. $17.95

By Carol Flake

IN THE penultimate chapter of her new book, *Getting Better: Inside Alcoholics Anonymous,* Nan Robertson tells the story of her own struggle to stay sober. A prize-winning reporter for *The New York Times* perhaps best known for her riveting personal account of the effects of toxic shock syndrome, she tells her story the way she might have done, she says, at an A.A. meeting—straightforwardly, unsparingly, and briefly. It is not such an unusual story, the journalist at the top of her profession whose grief at a personal tragedy spurs her progression from heavy social drinker to full-fledged alcoholic. Although the threads of her life began to unravel, she did not fall as far as some, and with the help of A.A. and therapy, she was able to put her life back together.

What is unusual is her decision to tell the story under own name—and to tell the story of the organization that aided her recovery. In so doing, she has violated a cardinal principle of A.A.: anonymity. And in so doing, she has taken a risk, not only of alienating some members of A.A. (already, the title and certain portions of the book have been modified at the request of A.A.), but of telling her story to an audience far broader and perhaps less comprehending than the sympathetic fellowship of an A.A. group.

Five years ago, as Robertson tells it, she approached Lois Wilson, the widow of A.A. co-founder Bill Wilson, with the idea of a book about A.A. "I want to demystify it," she told Lois Wilson. She wanted, she said, to tell how and why A.A. works. And she wanted to explain the role religion plays and does not play in A.A., probably "the biggest misconception people have about us—some people think we're a bunch of religious nuts."

"It's high time for such a book," Lois Wilson told her. And the millions of Americans whose lives are affected by alcohol might echo her sentiment. According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, there are some 18 million alcoholics and alcohol abusers in America. As Robertson puts its, at least 1/12th of Americans "have lost all control over booze."

Alcoholism remains an enormous problem in America. And yet A.A., which represents the most successful treatment program in history for the control of the disease, remains to most Americans a rather mysterious organization—something of a quasi-religious cult.

To an outsider, A.A. might very well seem to carry the trappings of a cult—the meetings in church *—Continued on page 5*

Carol Flake is the author of "Redemptorama: Culture, Politics and the New Evangelism" and the recently published "Tarnished Crown."

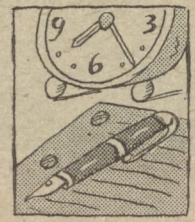
Bellow's Typewriters and Other Tics of the Trade

By Carol Sternhell

MY favorite story about writing is really a story about reading. A couple of years ago, when my friend Michael was young (he's now 4 years old and sophisticated about the limits of literature), he tried to climb inside a book. Unwilling to believe that so wonderful a world was unreachable, he simply opened the tale to his favorite page, carefully arranged his choice on the floor and stepped in. He tried again and again, certain he would soon get it right, and each time he was left standing out in the cold he cried in bewilderment.

Carol Sternhell teaches journalism at New York University.

We grown-up readers, accustomed to boundaries and suspicious of magic, have lowered our expectations. Instead of crying, we look for the trick, the hidden springs and pulleys, the key to how it's done. Because the literary process is so mysterious, we become obsessed with concrete details, however petty; we want to picture our favorite authors at their desks, to know whether they "keep bankers' hours," as John Irving said of himself, or sit alone with a yellow pad at 3 A.M., whether they measure their lives in deadlines or type to the beat of some internal drummer. For us, these questions are shortcuts to understanding creativity; to many writers, they-'re more like wrong turns, irritating and irrelevant. (Or as E. L. Doctorow said when I phoned him, "The whole subject is ridiculous.")



In defense of such questions — since I've just spent most of a month asking them — I would say the novelist's life is particularly opaque. Unlike the rest of us, who generally must accommodate our personal rhythms to the demands of our jobs, writers are alone with time. They determine their own schedules, choose their own work space and create their own systems (to quote Joyce Carol Oates) "of checks and balances, rewards and taboos." Such lives are both excruciatingly public and intensely private: Their work anticipates an audience, yet is performed in isolation. It's not surprising that those of us in the audience seek to pene-

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Bellow's Typewriters and Other Tics of the Trade

Continued from page 1

PAUL MEISEL

trate the literary veil. Is writing simply a job, we wonder — or is it a conjuring trick, after all?

To many novelists, the primary practical distinction is between fiction writing and anything else they do, from college teaching to book reviewing to vacuuming the rug. John Barth, for instance, writes fiction during the week in his Baltimore home and "something else" on Fridays, which he and his wife spend in their small house on Maryland's eastern shore. His forthcoming collection of essays, "The Friday Book," represents "a year's worth of Friday mornings," Mr. Barth said. He finds the arrangement both convenient — work doesn't have to be moved back and forth — and "refreshing," but notes that the schedule is only approximate: "Fiction in hand can assert its absolute priority."

Saul Bellow owns two old-fashioned Smith Corona typewriters, but they are definitely not interchangeable. "I don't like to use my fiction typewriter for essays," he said.

JOHN UPDIKE has four different studies in his Boston home, all quite small ("I work in what used to be servants' rooms") — one with an easy chair for reading; one with a word processor, good for writing essays and reviews; a third, with "an old steel desk and a view of the sea," where he wrote "The Witches of Eastwick" by hand in soft pencil; and a fourth for answering mail and "talking to interviewers from The Times." Fiction, Mr. Updike said, is so "intimate, chancy and precarious" that it requires the silence of a pencil; machinery is disconcerting because it "comes between you and the work." Worse, he added, equipment can be positively intimidating: "When I turn on the word processor I feel I'm wasting electricity; with the pencil, I'm only wasting my own time."

John Edgar Wideman, whose novel "Sent for You Yesterday" recently won the PEN Faulkner Prize, is more likely to switch paper than rooms. "Different writing requires different paper," he said. Long legal pads may be fine for essays, but "fiction is much more demanding"; generally, Mr. Wideman looks for "a mystical match between writing and format. If things are going well, I won't switch formats. I'm superstitious — I'll even use the same color pen."

Miss Oates has two studies in her Princeton home, but they represent different stages of creativity rather than different literary forms. The first is light and airy, all white with plenty of windows and a skylight; the second contains the more conventional typewriter, desk and books. Miss Oates, who is likely to amass 1,000 pages of notes before going near a typewriter, said the glass-enclosed study is "for special things, not for writing much, but for thinking and taking notes." Beginning a novel is agonizing, Miss Oates said — "I'm in kind of a white heat or fever" — and life in the glass study is not pleasant: "When my husband sees me there, he knows I'm working very hard and am miserable."

Most writers don't have four studies, or two homes, or, like Alix Kates Shulman, a deserted island, but everyone I spoke with had definite ideas about place. Some, of course, like Ishmael Reed, can work anywhere: "I write all over the place," Mr. Reed said, "on planes, in airports and hotel rooms, on match covers and napkins." Others have to be in the same place every day: Kurt Vonnegut favors the top floor of a Manhattan brownstone, Stephen King works on the top floor of an old Maine barn, Anne Tyler sits in a little room "on the same end of the couch each day." Some, like Fay Weldon, who's fond of writing in her kitchen, enjoy chaos. Isaac Bashevis Singer works in his living room despite constant interruptions: "I don't have an office. After breakfast I sit down and write in between one phone call or another. Sometimes I write a word and the phone rings, then I write another word and the phone rings." He doesn't get an answering machine, he explained, "because the people who call me want to hear it from the horse's mouth." Others require isolation. "I work as far as possible from the doorbell and phone and anything else that might be going on," said Alison Lurie, who doesn't even like to read other people's fiction when she's working on her own.

• • •

To some novelists, having the right work place is essential. "Four or five years ago," Lynne Sharon Schwartz said, "I worked under a loft bed, in a space about 5 feet 4 inches high, like a little cell. It was very uncomfortable — I felt the scope of my work was limited by the little space." Now she writes in a rented Manhattan apartment she uses just for work. "It's like going to another world. The walls are covered with little sayings and clippings — it's like the inside of my head. And there's an enormous desk with nothing on it, like the clean surface of my mind. I go there and don't think about the rest of my life."

Others, like Mr. Reed, don't care at all. "Where I work matters less to me than to anyone I know," John Irving said. "It comes from growing up in a large family — if you were going to lay claim to a whole room, you had better have something important to do, something more important than writing fiction." At the moment Mr. Irving works in his dining room — "I feel uncomfortable having a room pretentiously called a studio; I think a wall is enough" — but over the years his work space has varied. "I used to work in a closet," he said. "Then for years I worked in a garden shed in Vermont. I think I'd be uncomfortable in a large space — even a window is probably a bad idea. Why do you need anything else to look at?"

Whatever their space requirements, every one of the authors I interviewed made a distinction between their major work — the novels — and all other writing. The most common scheduling solution was to divide the day by time, with mornings reserved for fiction. As Mr. Vonnegut put it, "My spirit is fresh in the morning."

"I generally wake quite early, awakened by thoughts of my subject," Mr. Bellow said. "I lie there quietly, gradually awakening, feeling my way toward the day's work. I work until I'm exhausted — I don't watch the clock — but by one o'clock I'm generally finished; I have nothing further to say. The problem is disposing of the rest of the day." Mr. Bellow teaches a full load of classes at the University of Chicago, but schedules them only in the afternoon: "I make sure my writing gets my best attention."

According to Paule Marshall, the author of "Praisesong for the Widow," mornings are the best time for creative work, in part because "the brain is fresher." Because writing is as much an unconscious as a conscious act, Miss Marshall said, it's important to start soon after awakening "so whatever has happened during sleep is accessible, so you're able to feed on that. Especially when I'm really involved in a novel, I dream about it, and I take the dream to my desk with me."

"Is writing simply a job or is it a conjuring trick."

John Barth, who calls his "work habits very middle class," attends to fiction between breakfast and lunch: "I find if I go back after lunch I can't concentrate; I'm still glazed." Afternoons are reserved for university business — Mr. Barth teaches at Johns Hopkins — and for "fun things to do" like proofreading and editing. "I'm not a binge writer," added Mr. Barth, who believes that novelists are likely to be more patient than other people: "Novelists are used to the longer haul. That's why most novelists are middle-of-the-road politically; in the time it takes us to write a novel, we can change Presidential administrations."

If anyone *is* a binge writer, it's Toni Morrison. "If I permit novel time to operate, life is better for me," she said. "I don't write because I *can*. I wait for the image to be right — then I can't wait to get there. I might write all day every day for 15 days and then not at all for 15 days." When things aren't going well, Miss Morrison added, the only solution is Mr. Barth's prescription — patience. "At times it seems hopeless, it's just not working," she said. "Those times I used to write anything and then throw it out, but that makes me crazy. Now I just have to wait — I haven't found the right door. I can't let it make me sick. All art is knowing when to stop."

THE methodical Mr. Barth takes weekends off ("unless I've lost days during the week"), but most of the writers I spoke to were more like William Kennedy, who has "no certified day of rest" and who, in fact, since achieving celebrity by winning the Pulitzer Prize for "Ironweed," is "going berserk" and "would need two secretaries to keep things straight." To Mr. Kennedy, "all days are the same, all days are work days — I always feel I'm on constant deadline."

"I work almost constantly," Joseph Heller said. "For a novelist without hobbies, weekends don't make much difference. Most people don't enjoy weekends anyway; they don't know what to do with Sundays." Mr. Heller writes in spurts — "never more than two hours at a time." He has never written more than one draft of a novel. "I don't recommend my method," he said, "but it's the only way I can work. I almost never sit down to write without knowing the sentence in my mind — I think in very small segments."

The prolific Stephen King writes 2,500 words every day of the year except Christmas, Thanksgiving, the Fourth of July ("the only day I drink before five") and his birthday. He does his serious work in the morning to the beat of "real loud rock 'n' roll music," sleeps, reads or does jigsaw puzzles during the afternoon, and then works again for fun after dinner. "In the morning I do what has to be done," he said. "If I've promised something to somebody, I'd better be at my best. In the morning, I know what I'm going to write. At night I just goof with it — I'm on my own time, like some guy who builds ships in bottles. At night it's like playing with a thread in a mousehole. Lots of nighttime books never get done: I had 500 pages of one, but the thread just got broken."

Even Mr. King seems like a slacker, however, when compared to Joyce Carol Oates. She found my question about her working schedule incomprehensible. "I'm *always* working," she said. "That's like asking a person which days they breathe. It's like asking if I eat on Sundays. Writing is much more interesting to me than eating or sleeping."

Those of us who are more depressed by a blank sheet of paper in the typewriter than by the thought of nuclear war tend to comb literary history for tales of creative torment. The stories I remember are replete

Continued on next page

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Tics of the Trade

Continued from preceding page

with strangeness, suicide, perversity — Balzac writing in his monk's habit, Charlotte Brontë scribbling almost in a trance, Joseph Conrad who, to quote William Styron, "could scarcely approach his writing desk without feeling he was going to burst into tears." Such writers are easier to deal with than the cheerfully energetic Dickens, who reportedly entertained guests with one hand and wrote "Oliver Twist" with the other.

In fact, however, the novelists I interviewed were strikingly content. The worst part, all agreed, is beginning; the pleasure takes over later, almost of its own accord. "By now, I'm a little addicted to it," Gail Godwin said. "If I don't have my two-hour fix in the morning I just don't feel right." Miss Godwin had just finished a novel when I reached her at her home in Woodstock, N.Y., and was feeling a bit bereaved: "I loved it so much, I miss it."

Mr. Styron, who finds writing "always a terrible chore" and identifies with Conrad's daily struggle, added, "It's something I almost *never* look forward to — there's a great sense of resistance, of pain. I often have to force myself to do it. Once I've started, though, it's a pleasure. Nine times out of 10 I find it goes very well, and I'm surprised that it caused such resistance. When I finish a good day's work, there's no greater sense of fulfillment."

Miss Oates had also just finished a novel when I spoke to her and was "feeling very relaxed and happy," but said, "What's awful is beginning a new one. The early stages of a novel are extremely painful; the first month or six weeks are terrible. It's a tremendous strain. I become insomniac; my mind is always working. In that stage I take notes any time, even at midnight." The most difficult period, she said, is "when you can't yet do it, but want to desperately"; when that happens, she becomes "very compulsive, very edgy, very distracted — nothing in the world interests me but that work." Rewriting, on the other hand, is "bliss."

Perhaps Miss Shulman best expressed the paradox of creativity. "I do have to force myself, but once I get into it it's a pleasure," she said. "Why is that — why is it that it's so difficult when I *know* what a pleasure it will be? That's the question I'd most like answered."

According to Mr. Styron, the pain comes from the "extraordinary risk," from "plunging into unknown territory not really knowing whether you're going to come out alive." Both Mr. Styron and Miss Oates agreed that the best writing requires the greatest risk. "Really serious writing does come out of anguish," Miss Oates said. "The only necessity for me," Mr. Styron said, "is to find a theme worth dealing with. The best books are the ones where the theme is congruent with the writer's passion. I could no longer write for the sake of inventing a story any more than I could become an Olympic decathlon runner."

Writers who say they "love to write," Mr. Styron said, are likely to be "lying or exaggerating." Most of the novelists I interviewed, however, claimed the joy far outweighed the pain. "I don't think writers should suffer too much," Mr. Singer said. "If you hate it, why do you do it? As a matter of fact, I love it if it goes well." Mr. Bellow agreed. "If it isn't a pleasure, I'm inclined to drop it. If writing something gives more pain than pleasure, there's something wrong with the project."

In the end, writing is both chore and conjuring trick, torment and triumph. As Miss Morrison explained, when her work is going well, she's likely to write all day and night. "Once it's there it's just so glorious I won't stop until it's over."

The really telling moments, however, come on less inspired days. Miss Morrison spoke for many of her colleagues when she said, "It's not always a pleasure, sometimes I don't enjoy it, sometimes I can't even do it — but it's the place where I live, where I really am. It's home." □

Umbrellas for Puddles

MOURNING INTO DANCING
By Laurel Lee.
Illustrated. 218 pp. New York:
E. P. Dutton. $12.95.

By Betty Rollin

> *"To read about Laurel Lee is to worry about her. With reason."*

A LABEL sewn in one of my favorite dresses reads: "The unevenness and slight shadings of fine yarn sometimes cause irregularities that are the nature of this fabric and a part of its natural beauty." That dress, which is woven, reminds me of Laurel Lee's books about her life, which, like other books, are manufactured, but in the nicest way seem homemade.

There is craft here and as many drafts, I'm sure, as in the slickest prose. But in "Mourning Into Dancing" and the two volumes that preceded it ("Walking Through the Fire" and "Signs of Spring") Miss Lee writes about herself and her trials — cancer, divorce, poverty, etc. — in such a fresh, deft, ingenuous way that although you see print, you feel handwriting.

Now and then she pauses and draws a little picture — say, an umbrella with a duck's head for a handle, and on its side it says "OREGON" in irregular block letters and it's dripping. I have nothing more to say about that umbrella except that I want it, and so will most everyone who reads this original and enchanting book.

Enchanting, and I should say, painful — in the sense that to read about Miss Lee is to worry about her. With reason. She has had lymphatic cancer — Hodgkin's disease — followed by one recurrence. Naturally, she fears another and she writes about her occasional terror so vividly that any reader not made of stone will feel it too.

In addition to worrying about the author as a victim of disease, one worries about her as a victim of life's other vagaries, like rotten husbands. She's had two. Previously, we read of Richard who left her (and their three children) in the midst of her chemotherapy treatments — a likable chap compared to her second husband, Jeremy, religious-film-producer-cum-swine, whose acquaintance can be made here.

One understands (sort of) why she marries Jeremy. An intelligent writer can make anything understandable. Besides, she's a single mother and she's lonely and she wants to get married. These are unfashionable feelings for a woman to have but Laurel Lee is among millions who still have them; so when Jeremy Foster comes along and asks her to join his life, she says yes and everything's fine — for about five minutes. It could happen to anyone.

There are children who, given a wet place and a dry place to step, inevitably wind up ankle-high in a puddle. I think Laurel Lee may be like that. Fortunately for her readers, however, once in the puddle she does not simply gather up her skirts and step onto a dry curb. She does a few things first: She figures out how she feels; she lets us in on it in an entertaining (broad sense of the word) way; she rummages up a memory or two of other puddles she's been in.

Then she draws a lovely little picture of an umbrella. □

Betty Rollin's "Am I Getting Paid for This?" has recently been published in paperback.

To Ivan Doig
with my regards —
Bing

American Wests Through Autobiography and Memoir

EDWIN R. BINGHAM

The author is professor of history in the University of Oregon. This paper was his presidential address to the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association at its annual meeting in August 1986 in Honolulu, Hawaii.

The American West is difficult to define with any degree of precision. To Bishop George Berkeley it was the course of empire; for Horace Greeley it spelled opportunity; westward Henry David Thoreau went free; to the cowboy to go West was to die; Walter Prescott Webb insisted that the West was largely desert. Charles Lummis, a Yankee who turned his coat from broadcloth to corduroy, crowed that the West was anywhere far enough from the East to be "Out from Under."[1] Frederick Jackson Turner used west and frontier interchangeably, writing sometimes of direction, sometimes of locale, sometimes of process. Last fall, in a provocative paper at a professional meeting and now in a new book, Donald Worster, suggesting that water determines, advances the term hydraulic West.[2]

This essay seeks to examine several particular and personal Wests through the autobiographical writings of four un-

1. "In the Lion's Den," *Out West,* XVI (Jan. 1902), 60.

2. "The New West, the True West: Reinterpreting the Region's History" (Paper read at Pacific Northwest History Conference, Corvallis, Oregon, April 25, 1986); *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity and the Growth of the American Empire* (New York, 1986).

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usually articulate individuals—Lincoln Steffens, Mary Austin, William O. Douglas, and Ivan Doig—all of whom, to paraphrase William James (the philosopher, not Will James the cowboy) responded to the "total push and pressure" of their respective western landscapes.[3] My approach then is unabashedly elitist. I am not concerned with the rank-and-file western frontier figures, those folks who so often in the need to fulfill the harsh terms of their environment never succeeded in fulfilling themselves. Self-fulfillment did not elude Steffens, Austin, Douglas, and Doig.[4]

Although Lincoln Steffens was born and reared in California and lived the last decade of his life on the coast in Carmel, he spent most of his career wandering restlessly; to the eastern seaboard, to Europe, to Mexico, to Russia. Like Henry Adams, he was always asking questions in an unremitting attempt to understand the many individuals and institutions he encountered along his various ways. If his questing spirit drove him far from his native place, an antithetical longing for some kind of anchorage, along with the birth of a son at fifty-eight, brought him back to California and to a security that permitted him to recapitulate his western beginnings and to go on to complete his life story in the most memorable and influential writing of his career.

Sacramento in Steffens's boyhood was close to the pioneer past. His father crossed the plains by wagon train in 1862 and Steffens saw his own early life as a continuation of his father's westering. "The overland approach," according to Steffens, "is still an element in the overwhelming effect of a

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3. *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking—Popular Lectures on Philosophy* (New York, Bombay, and Calcutta, 1907), 4.

4. Among perhaps two dozen autobiographical writings originally considered were Harvey Fergusson, *Home in the West: An Inquiry into My Origins* (New York, 1944); Rodman Paul, ed., *A Victorian Gentlewoman in the Far West: The Reminescences of Mary Hallock Foote* (San Marino, Calif., 1972); Mabel Dodge Luhan, *Intimate Memories* (4 vols., New York, 1935–1937); John Muir, *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth* (Boston, 1913); and Les O. Simons, ed., *Sun Chief: The Autobiography of a Hopi Indian* (New Haven and London, 1942).

first impression of California. . . . I never felt the warm, colorful force of the beauty of California until I had gone away and come back over my father's route: dull plains; hot, dry desert; . . . the full day of sunshine in the valley; and last, the sunset through the Golden Gate. He remembers the mule trains "ringing into town, trains of four or five huge, high wagons, hauled by from twelve to twenty and more belled mules and horses." Vaqueros would come "shouting on bucking bunches of bronchos into town to mix with the teamsters, miners, and steamboat men in the drinking, gambling, girling, fighting, of those days."[5]

But for Lincoln Steffens, his own West in the 1870s was an ever-expanding landscape to be seen and explored from the back of a pony. As a boy Steffens could never decide whether the day he got his pony was the best Christmas or the worst he ever knew. He had ached for a horse and nothing else. There was nothing for him that morning and as the day wore on, the ache turned to agony. Finally, half a day late, the horse was delivered, a small bay with black mane and tail, a white foot and a white star on his forehead. The surge from despair to delight, "from broken-hearted misery to bursting happiness was too fast. A grown-up could hardly have stood it."[6]

That Christmas was the beginning of Lincoln Steffens's life on horseback. From the age of eight to fifteen, he rode out of Sacramento every day he could and in all directions. The pony took him away from town, away from the commercial world his father hoped he would join. The years on horseback nourished a restlessness that drove him most of his life and, more important, his pony carried him, "not only away from business but from the herd and the herding habits of mind." It was a life "free, independent, full of romance, adventure, and learning, of a sort."[7]

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5. *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* (New York, 1931), 6, 8.
6. *Ibid.*, 23.
7. *Ibid.*, 25, 24.

From Smoke, a black jockey, Steffens learned about "thrown" races and "suckers" who bet blind; an artist showed him that the drab, gravel and brush bottom of the American River had its own beauty in the golden glow of a setting sun; a Colonel Carter taught him to break a colt with gentleness and patience and affection.[8] Although Lincoln Steffens had an obvious talent for this kind of learning from experience, his record in formal education bordered on disgrace. He failed his last year of grammar school and was sent to a military academy. He needed two attempts before he passed entrance examinations to the University of California and he was graduated at the bottom of his class. Despite his low opinion of university learning he acquired an interest in philosophy, particularly ethics, and, in his own eyes, was becoming an intellectual—a European term that was passing into American usage.[9]

Like his fellow Californian, Josiah Royce, Lincoln Steffens left Berkeley to study in Germany. In Leipzig he fell in love with an American student, Josephine Bontecou. They were married secretly in England in the fall of 1891.[10]

From Europe Steffens wrote home frequently and at length. In one letter to a friend and fellow philosophical idealist, although Steffens was soon to desert that camp, he contrasted the "cold, damp, dull nature of Germany" with the "divine beauty" of California. "Let me now," he rhapsodized, "see the warm, red, soft brown of our forests primeval, let me get away from the grey of a German plain to the yellow and red of the Sacramento Valley. My most painful longing for home finds its cause in a yearning for our landscape."[11] In quite a different mood and one perhaps a good deal closer to his true feelings, he urged his sisters to get out of Sacra-

8. *Ibid.*, 34–41, 42–44, 86–93.

9. Justin Kaplan, *Lincoln Steffens: A Biography* (New York, 1974), 31.

10. Louis Filler, "Steffens, Lincoln," *Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement Two* (New York, 1958), 625.

11. Ella Winter and Granville Hicks, eds., *The Letters of Lincoln Steffens* (2 vols., New York, 1938), I, 57–58.

mento with its "singularly unmental" atmosphere and a sun that "bleaches all the sap out of us."[12]

By 1892, Steffens was ready to come home. Looking back more than thirty years later, and applying more than a little reverse English egotism he wrote: "I was happily unaware that I was just a nice original American boob, about to begin unlearning all my learning and failing even at that."[13]

Home again in the United States, Steffens turned his back on California and his father's prosperous business and went East to a reporter's job with the *New York Evening Post.* Steffens's subsequent complex career can only be suggested here. He rose to national prominence in the first decade of the twentieth century as an early practitioner of investigative journalism. His collection of muckraking essays published in 1904 as *The Shame of the Cities* and his skillful profiles of five reformers in *The Upbuilders* appearing five years later are but two examples of high achievement in his field. An unsuccessful attempt to mediate between management and labor in the *Los Angeles Times* bombing episode in 1910, earned him the enmity and contempt of both houses and his popularity went into sharp decline. In that same year both his wife and his mother died. Saddened and disillusioned, Steffens shifted his hopes away from the social ideals of Christianity epitomized by the Golden Rule and put his faith in men of action willing to effect change through force; leaders such as Venustiano Carranza, Nikolai Lenin, and Benito Mussolini. In 1919 he interviewed Lenin and, losing his habitual hard edge of skepticism, he came away proclaiming: "I have been over into the future, and it works."[14] At about this time he met Ella Winter, a young student in the London School of Economics, fell in love, and four years later they were married. A son, Pete, was born that same year and with fatherhood, Lincoln Steffens was drawn back to California and to the years of his boyhood

12. *Ibid.*, 60.
13. *Autobiography,* 166.
14. *Ibid.*, 799; Winter and Hicks, *Letters,* I, 463.

and youth. Lincoln and Peter (Steffens's pet name for Ella), and Pete settled in Carmel where Steffens completed his autobiography in 1931. He died in 1936 at the age of seventy and lies buried in San Mateo.

Between 1889, the year Steffens sailed for Europe, and 1927 when he went to Carmel, the American West and California had a subordinate but not insignificant place in his life. In the *Autobiography* are short chapters on Oregon timber frauds, labor and bossism in San Francisco, and the trial of the McNamara brothers for the bombing of the *Los Angeles Times* building. Also, three of the five reform figures Steffens treated in *The Upbuilders* were westerners: Ben Lindsey, the Denver juvenile court judge; Rudolph Spreckels, the financier of reform in San Francisco; and William S. U'Ren, the Oregon single taxer and architect of the initiative, referendum, and direct election of United States senators. Yet, as Earl Pomeroy points out, "it was in California . . . that Steffens most signally lost touch with reform and reformers. . . ."[15] He was more interested in eastern reformers and he never really made connections with Hiram Johnson, California's foremost Progressive.

Lincoln Steffens might have returned to his native state well before 1927. As early as 1906 he confessed: "I had long been wishing, secretly, to go home to live in California."[16] But his first wife, Josephine, disliked California and Californians. Steffens was sure that if he could ever get her there, California and the West would win her. The opportunity came when Steffens, preparing to write *The Upbuilders,* took his wife to Denver, San Francisco, and Portland. In California it rained. In Oregon it rained. Josephine fell ill in Portland. Fish did it but she blamed the rain. Steffens lamented: "We never spoke of California and the west . . . after that."[17]

Not until Steffens settled in Carmel to complete his autobi-

15. Earl Pomeroy, ed., *The Upbuilders* (Seattle and London, 1968), xxx.
16. *Autobiography,* 544.
17. *Ibid.,* 547–548.

ography and grow young with his son does the region again assume importance in his life. He bought a frame house with a sprawling, chaotic, garden in the midst of cypress trees and with a roof-top porch looking out on the Pacific not more than a hundred yards away. The house, he called it "The Getaway," gave him a sense of groundedness that had been lacking. It was an ideal place to work. The writing went well and the book was an overnight success. Suddenly Lincoln Steffens was rescued from relative obscurity. In a shrewd and relevant insight, Justin Kaplan, assessing Steffens's influence on left-leaning Americans in the depression decade, sees the *Autobiography* as providing a link to an older, simpler, more democratic time. In *A Boy on Horseback,* Kaplan argues, Steffens comes through as "so native to America . . . so deep-rooted in the Sacramento Valley that he was able to impart to the radicals of the 1930s a historical legitimacy going back to the country's great westward expansion. 'Radical,' he seemed to be reminding them, had to do with roots."[18]

By the mid-1930s Lincoln Steffens had come full circle and through his young son he could watch the map of his own boyhood unroll. In the month before he died, Lincoln Steffens wrote to Pete who was away on a ranch with his first pony reminding him that: "A boy who can swim and ride a horse can always escape in the night. Or in broad daylight."[19]

Lincoln Steffens and Mary Hunter Austin were almost exact contemporaries and Austin too came out of a pioneer tradition anchored in the Midwest. There the similarity ends. Steffens was a genuine Native Son of the Golden West and tended, for most of his life, to take his westerness for granted. Austin was a convert to the Far West with all of the intensity of feeling and drive to testify that so often accompanies conversion. She was a mystic, a Naturist and she identified with and responded to natural surroundings much as Ralph Waldo Emerson did in his famous essay, "Nature," when he writes of

18. Kaplan, *Steffens,* 302.
19. Winter and Hicks, eds., *Letters,* II, 1027.

becoming "a transparent eyeball" while the "currents of the Universal Being" filtered through him.[20] Her earliest transcendental experience, when she was six, involved a huge walnut tree in Illinois. That forecast a pattern that reappeared many times and with special force in southern California and the Southwest.[21]

Mary Hunter was born in Carlinville, Illinois, on September 9, 1868, the third child and second daughter in a family of five. At about the age of seven Austin announced to her father that she intended to write books. When asked what kind of books, the reply came "all kinds."[22] As a matter of fact, she did precisely that. At Blackburn College she majored in science, becoming deeply interested in the impact of physical environment upon plants and human cultural patterns. Although she eschewed English classes because English was a subject she could study herself, she edited the college paper and was elected class poet.[23]

Shortly after her graduation from Blackburn in 1888, Austin, her widowed mother, and an older brother travelled west by train to southern California. On this trip she got her first look at the arid lands of the American West. Forty-two years later, writing in the third person in *Earth Horizon*, her autobiography, she recalled the impact of "the marching landscape line. All that long stretch between Salt Lake and Sacramento Pass, the realization of presence which the desert was ever after to have for her, grew upon her mind; . . . something brooding and aloof, charged with a dire indifference, of which she was never for an instant afraid."[24]

Several months later, the family left Pasadena headed for the isolated northern edge of the Tehachapi Mountains south of Bakersfield where they were to take up homesteads.

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20. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," in Robert E. Spiller, ed., *Collected Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), I, 10.

21. Mary Austin, *Earth Horizon: Autobiography* (Boston and New York, 1932), 51–52.

22. *Ibid.*, 71.

23. *Ibid.*, 167.

24. *Ibid.*, 182.

They made the hundred mile trip by covered wagon and Mary rode alongside on horseback. She took notes on that six-day journey from which years later she drew in *Earth Horizon,* describing San Fracisquito Canyon where the road narrowed, winding between walls of rock tumbled and striated or sheathed in chaparral against which gleamed the polished, ruddy bark of manzanita. "Along the shallow dry beds of seasonal streams, called arroyos, dustily aromatic," she wrote, "rabbits and horned lizards scuttled . . . , road-runners perked and tilted, quail ran in droves. There was something else there . . . ; a lurking, evasive, Something, wistful, cruel, ardent; something that rustled and ran, that hung half-remotely, insistent on being noticed, . . . Beauty-in-the-wild, yearning to be made human. Even in the first impact, Mary gave back a kindred yearning; it was in her mind that all she needed was to be alone with it for uninterrupted occasions, in which they might come to terms."[25] The chance to probe the mystery of those particular arroyos never came, but over the next dozen years, despite family obligations and economic misfortunes, she came to know intimately a much larger segment of eastern California's high desert and mountain landscape.

A combination of inexperience, drought in an already arid region, and lack of capital defeated the homesteaders. Meanwhile, in 1891, Mary Hunter wed Stafford Wallace Austin, a gentleman farmer and irrigationist from the Owens River Valley near Lone Pine.[26] The next year the Austins had a daughter, Ruth, who turned out to be mentally retarded and was ultimately institutionalized. Stafford Austin failed as an irrigationist and, in his wife's eyes, as husband and companion as well. Both he and Mary taught school for a time, with Stafford rising to county superintendent in 1896.[27] In the face of financial difficulties, a foundering marriage, and

25. *Ibid.*, 187.

26. T. M. Pearce, *Mary Hunter Austin* (New York, 1965), 31.

27. Dudley Wynn, "Austin, Mary" *Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement One* (New York, 1944), 34–35.

the heartbreak of trying to rear a handicapped child, Mary worked determinedly to become a writer. She made friends with General Edward Fitzgerald Beale, who gave her the run of his 200,000-acre Rancho Tejon with his *majordomos* as guides.[28] Austin roamed that expanse exploring its contours, adapting to its climatic moods, observing its plants and birds and animals, meeting its sheep herders, prospectors, and pioneer settlers, and absorbing its native cultural life until she was ready to convert her experience into literature. She published her first story in what Ambrose Bierce called the "warmed" *Overland Monthly* in 1891, the same year her daughter was born.[29]

By this time Austin *thought* she was a writer, but she needed encouragement and tutelage. Charles F. Lummis, editor of *Land of Sunshine,* a promotional and literary monthly and autocrat of a semicircle of Los Angeles writers, provided both. He published Austin's stories and verse, advised her to submit her writing to other editors, and bolstered her confidence even though he told her that she had talent but not genius.[30] In 1903, Houghton Mifflin published Austin's southern California desert essays titled *Land of Little Rain,* echoing Lummis's *Land of Poco Tiempo* (1893). It was a financial and critical success and Mary was on her way.

Land of Little Rain was Mary Austin's first book and it turned out to be her best. In fourteen unpretentious, graceful essays she renders the high desert country stretching east from the Sierra Nevada with remarkable fidelity achieving a flawless conjunction of life, landscape, and literature. As Lawrence Clark Powell puts it, "With her feet on earth and her head in the sky, she gave voice in singing prose to the soul of a hitherto unsung land."[31] A short passage will suggest the

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28. Jo W. Lyday, *Mary Austin: The Southwest Works* (Austin, 1968), 4.

29. *Ibid.,* 5.

30. Edwin R. Bingham, *Charles F. Lummis: Editor of the Southwest* (San Marino, Calif., 1955), 156.

31. Lawrence Clark Powell, *California Classics: The Creative Literature of the Golden State* (Los Angeles, 1971), 44.

texture of her style: "For all the toll the desert takes of a man it gives compensations, deep breaths, deep sleep, and the communion of the stars. . . . It is hard to escape the sense of mastery as the stars move in the wide clear heavens to risings and settings unobscured. They look large and palpitant; as if they moved on some stately service not needful to declare. Wheeling to their stations in the sky, they make the poor world-fret of no account. Of no account you who lie out there watching, nor the lean coyote that stands off in the scrub from you and howls and howls."[32]

The Native Americans, particularly the Paiute, were central to her notion of the West and to her talent. In *Earth Horizon* she makes her debt clear: "What Mary drew from them [the Paiute basket-makers] was their naked craft, the subtle sympathies of twig and root and bark; she consorted with them; she laid herself open to the influences of the wild, the thing done, accomplished. She entered into . . . the strange secret life of the tribe, the struggle of Whiteness with Darkness, the struggle of the individual soul with the Friend-of-the-Soul-of-Man. She learned what it meant; how to prevail; how to measure her strength against it. Learning that, she learned to write."[33]

In 1905, Austin left her husband and joined the creative community taking shape around Jack London and George Sterling in Carmel. From there she embarked upon a prolific literary career that took her to New York and Europe. By 1918, she had written a dozen books or plays and scores of poems and sketches. She had also lectured extensively over her own country and in Italy, France and England as well, winning a reputation as an outspoken feminist, world peace advocate, friend of the Indian, and defender of literature and the arts.[34]

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32. Mary Austin, *The Land of Little Rain* (Boston and New York, 1903), 21.

33. Austin, *Earth Horizon*, 289.

34. Larry Evers, Introduction to Mary Austin, *Land of Journey's Ending* (Tucson, 1983), xiii, xiv.

However, by the early 1920s, Mary Austin began to regard much of what she was writing as hack work.[35] Perhaps she had been too long removed from her western moorings. As she put it in her autobiography: "California had slipped away from me. [George] Sterling's death and the vulgarization of Carmel had made of it a faded leaf, pressed for remembrance. New York . . . bemused by its own complexity . . . missed the open order of the west. . . . It lacked freshness, air and light. More than anything else it lacked pattern, and I had a pattern-hungry mind. I liked the feel of roots, of ordered growth and progression, continuity. . . ."[36]

As it turned out, Austin found what she sought in the Southwest. Acting on the advice and encouragement of friends and in response to her own inner voice, she chose New Mexico as her ultimate segment of the American West. She took that land of "sun, silence, and adobe" to her heart and absorbed it in the same fierce, searching way that characterized her literary conquest of the California desert many years before. Out of her enchantment with her new surroundings came a book, *Land of Journey's Ending* (1924), almost as good as *Land of Little Rain.*

Austin wisely settled in Santa Fe rather than Taos, the domain of her dear friend, Mabel Dodge Luhan. There she built *Casa Querida,* her beloved house, and there she wrote ten books, including *Earth Horizon.* She entered fully into the Santa Fe community, working for preservation of Indian and Spanish handicrafts and art. Her service as delegate to the Boulder Dam Conference in 1927 stamps her as an early reclamationist. She died in her sleep on August 13, 1934.[37]

This peroration to a chapter in *The Land of Journey's Ending* records Mary Austin's tribute to the western landscape that finally claimed her: "You, of a hundred years from now, if when you visit the Rock [Inscription Rock], you see the

35. *Ibid.*
36. Austin, *Earth Horizon,* 349.
37. Wynn, "Austin, Mary," 35.

cupped silken wings of the argemone [wind rose] burst and float apart when there is no wind; or if, when all around is still, a sudden stir in the short-leaved pines, or fresh eagle feathers blown upon the shrine, that will be I, making known in such fashion as I may the land's undying quality."[38]

William O. Douglas, like Mary Austin, was born in the Midwest, but that was a generation later, and although Austin remained in Illinois until she was twenty, Douglas's family moved west from Wisconsin when he was three and he grew up in Washington's Yakima Valley beneath the eastern shadow of Mt. Adams. Moreover, although Mary Austin was a woman of the desert whether in southern California or in New Mexico, William Douglas was a man of the mountains whether in the Cascades of Washington, the Wallowas of Oregon, or, for that matter, the Himalayas of Nepal, and it was the mountains that drew him and sustained him for as long as he lived.

William Orville Douglas's father died before the boy was six. At the cemetery in Yakima, Douglas remembers, he began to cry until he saw Mt. Adams towering in the west draped in its dark purple and white on that August day, its shoulders of basalt heavy with glacial snow. "As I looked, I stopped sobbing. . . . Adams stood cool and calm, unperturbed by the event that had stirred us so deeply. Suddenly the mountain seemed to be a friend, a force for me to tie to, a symbol of stability and strength."[39]

William Douglas was like Steffens in his drive to look beyond the ranges, but there was an additional incentive that Steffens never had. Before the Douglas family left Wisconsin, William contracted polio. The disease left him severely weakened, with legs like pipestems. Awareness of his frailty plagued him until he was twelve and then the derision of his schoolmates drove him to a systematic regimen of hiking the

38. Austin, *Land of Journey's Ending*, 231.

39. *Go East Young Man: The Early Years: The Autobiography of William O. Douglas* (New York, 1974), 13. The second volume of Douglas's autobiography, *The Court Years, 1939–1975*, was published in 1980, the year of his death.

sagebrush hills that rim Yakima. Using those hills as a kind of gymnasium, Douglas built up strength and stamina and in the process he gained appreciation for that spare environment.[40]

William Douglas remembers an April day when he was about thirteen that marked the start of a new phase in understanding the wilderness. Standing on a ridge he watched a sudden, short storm. As the weather cleared, the peaks of Rainier and Adams stood forth in power and beauty. "They offered streams and valleys . . . to explore, snow fields and glaciers to conquer, wild animals to know. . . . I felt the high mountains . . . were extending . . . an invitation . . . to tramp their trails and sleep in their high basins. My heart filled with joy, for I knew I could accept the invitation. I would have legs and lungs equal to it."[41]

Every summer for at least a decade Douglas penetrated the Washington Cascades, sometimes alone, more often with his younger brother Arthur or other good companions of the trail. He puts it succinctly in his autobiography: "My love of the mountains, my interest in conservation, my longing for the wilderness—all these were lifetime concerns that were established in my boyhood in the hills around Yakima and in the mountains to the west of it."[42]

Douglas also believed the Yakima years were fundamental in shaping many of the views and values he came to hold as an adult. Later, some members of the Yakima community were of quite a different mind and were not inclined to accept responsibility for their home town boy. When Franklin Roosevelt named Douglas to the U.S. Supreme Court, the *Yakima Daily Republican* carried a lead editorial under the heading, "Yakima Not To Blame."[43]

In the fall of 1916, Douglas entered Whitman College in Walla Walla with a full tuition scholarship. After graduating

40. *Ibid.*, 36.
41. *Ibid.*, 39–40.
42. *Ibid.*, 55.
43. *Ibid.*

Phi Beta Kappa, he taught English, Latin, and public speaking at Yakima High School for two years. His mother urged him to work toward a career in public school administration, but her son was more ambitious. Yakima had begun to pall. It was time to leave and Douglas decided to study law at Columbia. He was graduated second in his class, practiced briefly in a Wall Street legal firm and then went on to teach law, first at Columbia, then at Yale. From 1934 until 1939 he was with the Securities and Exchange Commission, becoming chair in 1937. Two years later Douglas succeeded Justice Louis Brandeis on the United States Supreme Court.[44]

His long, distinguished, independent career can only be sketched in exceedingly broad strokes. Douglas's position on the high court did not free him from controversy. His philosophy and his opinions were libertarian. He was, in a phrase Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes applied to Louis Brandeis, "one of those onward and upward fellows."[45] Douglas detested McCarthyism in the 'fifties, deplored involvement in Viet Nam in the 'sixties, and was appalled by Nixon's attempt to subvert the Constitution in the 'seventies. The Bill of Rights became Douglas's lodestar and he attempted to extend the concepts embodied therein to the wilderness. Four efforts to impeach Justice Douglas failed. When he left the court in 1976 he had served longer than any Supreme Court justice in U.S. history.[46]

With his appointment to the court and a residence in the nation's capital, it looked as though another westerner had gone east for good. Not so. It was quite impossible to take the West out of Bill Douglas. The final chapter in his heavily autobiographical book, *Of Men and Mountains* (1950), makes the point. It opens with an extended daydream of dry fly

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44. James C. Duram, *Justice William O. Douglas* (Boston, 1981), see "Chronology."

45. Max Lerner, ed., *The Mind and Faith of Justice Holmes: His Speeches, Essays, Letters and Judicial Opinions* (New York, 1948), xli.

46. James F. Simon, *Independent Journey: The Life of William O. Douglas* (New York, 1980), 2.

casting in the high Cascades indulged in during a dull session of the court.[47] In fact, wilderness reveries seem to have been habitual during Douglas's eastern existence whether while enduring a droning advocate, fighting insomnia, or riding sandwiched in a subway. And of course, when the high court was not in session, the East could not hold him. Elon Gilbert, long-time fishing friend, referring to the justice's seasonal return to the Pacific Northwest, said: "I always felt that Bill's residence in Washington was terminated each summer in the way a man might be held by an elastic band. Just as soon as he could, he came back. It was remarkable not that he came back, but that he stayed in the East. He was more one of us."[48]

It was not enough that Bill Douglas return to the Pacific Northwest at every opportunity, he had to pass on his affection for the region to the American people. This he did between 1950 and 1972 through six books and dozens of speeches and articles. For example, *My Wilderness: The Pacific West* (1960) is a collection of essays that suggests the varieties of Wests Douglas held dear. He begins with the Brooks Range in Alaska and closes with the Wallowas of northeast Oregon. In between Douglas blends description, character sketch, and anecdote in such disparate settings as the Middle Fork of the Salmon in Idaho, Hart Mountain Antelope Reserve in southeast Oregon, and Goose Prairie, a mountain meadow in the northern Cascades. The last paragraph in the book attests to Douglas's abiding love for the mountains and his determination to preserve them: "Lightning and I were still in sunshine when the sun left the valley. Now the shadow passed us on its way up. The meadows at my feet were no longer sharp in detail. They took on an air of mystery. Then above me came the sweetest song I know. Audubon's hermit thrush sang over and over again. Its music is to me a haunting melody. It means the Wallowas, and lengthening shadows, and a sanctuary that greedy man must never destroy."[49]

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47. William O. Douglas, *Of Men and Mountains* (New York, 1950), 1–3.
48. Simon, *Independent Journey,* 328.
49. Douglas, *My Wilderness: The Pacific West* (New York, 1960), 206.

Inherent in Douglas's love for the land was a growing dread of its defilement, and there were times when his response to his wilderness was less than lyrical. On his return to an alpine meadow he had not seen for thirty years Douglas was dismayed that it could now be reached by road. He counted twenty-seven cars ahead of him. The sight turned his stomach. "Potbellied men smoking black cigars, who never could climb a hundred feet, were now in the sacred precincts of a great mountain." "We need," Douglas insisted, "high alpine meadows which can only be reached by foot and peaks that can only be conquered by daring."[50]

In 1961, Douglas published a sequel, *My Wilderness: East to Katahdin,* carrying much the same message as the earlier book but dealing with wilderness areas in Arizona, Colorado, Florida, and ending with Mount Katahdin in Maine. Both wilderness volumes put the case for preservation clearly. What was needed was a program, and this Douglas sought to provide in 1965 with a Wilderness Bill of Rights that advocated extending legal rights to inanimate objects of nature and revealing that Bill Douglas was as absolutist in his defence of wilderness values as he became in defense of civil liberties.[51]

Before he died in 1980, William Douglas had parlayed his early devotion to the natural environment of the Pacific West to a messianic belief that the continent, if not the planet, was endangered by unenlightened and uncontrolled technological advance. In his last book Douglas put the blunt question: "Can saving the environment become as holy a cause as making a fast buck?"[52]

In the concluding lines of the preface to the first volume of his autobiography Douglas spoke directly out of his experience in the American West: "I hope [our people] will come to love the continent, the most beautiful one in the whole world. I hope that before it is too late they will develop rever-

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50. *Ibid.*, 94–95, 101.

51. Douglas, *A Wilderness Bill of Rights* (Boston and Toronto, 1965).

52. *The Three Hundred Year War: A Chronicle of Ecological Disaster* (New York), 196.

ence for our rich soils, pure waters, rolling grass country, high mountains, and mysterious estuaries. I hope they will put their arms around this part of the wondrous planet, love it, care for it, and treat it as they would a precious and delicate child.[53]

Lincoln Steffens, Mary Austin, and William O. Douglas were all born in the nineteenth century. Ivan Doig, the youngster in this quartet, came into the Far Western world of Montana at White Sulphur Springs in June 1939.[54] Of the four, Doig comes closest to the popular concept of westerner. His father was a ranch hand with a talent for managing sheep, horses, and men and the son grew up in a remote and thinly populated region among scenes and surroundings that should have turned him toward a ranching life. Why they did not, Doig's memoir, *This House of Sky* (1978), makes clear.[55]

That memoir, with its apt and intriguing subtitle, *Landscapes of a Western Mind,* is an evocative, sometimes riveting recollection of his boyhood and youth in the Big Sky country when he was part of an uneasy alliance among himself, his father, and his maternal grandmother. The book is a skillful, seemingly effortless blending of biography and autobiography. Much of the time, and this is refreshing, Ivan Doig does not hold the center of the stage. Instead, his West is double-edged, as much a matter of his father's and, to a lesser extent, of his grandmother's experience as of his own. Thus, in recounting the story of growing up on scattered ranches in Montana, Doig sets up a kind of italicized counterpoint through remembered and reconstructed remarks and conversations of his father, his grandmother, and several of their friends and neighbors. This technique permits an evocation

53. Douglas, *Go East, Young Man,* xv.

54. Frances Carol Locher, ed., *Contemporary Authors* (117 vols., Detroit, 1979), Vols. 81–84, p. 129.

55. Ivan Doig, *This House of Sky: Landscapes of a Western Mind* (New York and London, 1978).

of an older West at the same time he is dealing with the region of his own remembering.

His keen ear for the western idiom sets Doig's memoirs securely in the company of best western talking books, such as Ross Santee's *Cowboy* or the short stories and novels of Eugene Manlove Rhodes.[56] Listen: Clifford, a side-kick of Doig's father, recalling a spree in town: "*Me an' Charlie might get a little bit on the renegade side now and then*"; Charlie Doig on being savaged by a mustang: "*He kept kickin' me in the back of the head here, until he had knots comin' on me big as your fist*"; on mosquitoes in June: "*bastards're so big this year they can stand flatfooted and drink out of a rainbarrel*"; Charlie on another encounter with a cayuse: "*One hoof hit me in the ribs . . . and the other . . . just shoved all the skin down off the side of my face in a bunch*"; and a neighbor, commenting proudly on a new woven-wire fence: "*Horse-high, bull-strong, and hog-tight.*"[57]

This House of Sky opens with Doig's happy memory of his father, his mother, and himself living in the Bridger Range of southwestern Montana in the early summer of 1945: "The single sound is hidden water—the south fork of Sixteenmile Creek diving down its willow-masked gulch. The stream flees north through this secret and peopleless land until, under the fir-dark flanks of Hatfield Mountain, a bow of meadow makes the riffled water curl wide to the west. At this interruption, a low rumple of the mountain knolls itself up watchfully, and atop it, like a sentry box over the frontier between the sly creek and the prodding meadow, perches our single-room herding cabin. Alone here on our abrupt tiny shelf, the three of us eased through May and the first twenty-six days of June secure as hawks with wind under our wings."[58]

The sudden death of Ivan's mother from aggravated asthma on June 27, 1945, her son's sixth birthday, shattered

56. Ross Santee, *Cowboy* (New York, 1928); Eugene Manlove Rhodes, "The Bar Cross Liar," *Out West*, XVI (June 1902), 619–625.

57. Doig, *This House of Sky*, 39, 40, 42, 92, 93.

58. *Ibid.*, 3–4.

the safe, loving household and left the broken father to find a way to bring up his son.[59] Ivan Doig renders his father as a pint-sized, broad-shouldered, slim-hipped wedge of a man, tough as saddle leather and adept at "topping" hill broncs at weekend rodeos. For the first three years after his wife's death, the father is almost inseparable from the son. They were, in Ivan's word, "corded" together "in the hours of riding to look over the livestock, the men ing of barbed-wire fences, all the prodding tasks of the ran ." More than that, the boy accompanied his father many a ght on tours of the nine saloons in White Sulphur Springs. The reader sees these bars through the wide eyes of a small boy, and both the loneliness and the neighborliness of western small town taverns come through convincingly.[60]

Then, with little warning, Charlie married Ruth, a young ranch cook. For nearly three years the couple struggled to make the marriage hold, with Ivan sensing but not understanding the mounting tension. Only the advantage of hindsight permits him to level the curt judgment: "Ruth, Dad. They were a pairing only the loins could have tugged together. . . ."[61]

After the divorce, Charlie Doig, plagued with a stomach ailment that made him sharply aware of his own mortality, took the one way left to meet the needs of a son on the brink of adolescence. He reestablished contact with Bessie Ringer, his first wife's mother, who agreed to join Ivan and his father to improve the home environment for her grandson. The arrangement was far from ideal, but both adults loved the boy and it was a vast improvement over times past.[62]

Charlie Doig continued to drift from ranch to ranch, working on shares it was called, with Grandma Ringer (she was always "Lady" to Charlie) cooking for the hands. Ivan

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59. *Ibid.*, 13.
60. *Ibid.*, 32, 40, 54–67.
61. *Ibid.*, 71.
62. *Ibid.*, 105, 121–122.

boarded in town during the school year, spending weekends and summers with his folks. It was a hard life for all three, a "pieced-together" family relentlessly committed year after year to making do.[63] The dreamlike note that opens Doig's memoir he never strikes again. He paints Montana with stark, powerful strokes: the Castle Mountains "*poke* great turrets of stone out of black-green forests"; Old Baldy in the Big Belts "*thrusts* up a bare summit with a giant crater *gouged* in its side" where even in summer "snow lies . . . like a patch on a *gape of wound*"; the Sawtooth Range is a "steel-blue army of mountains, drawn in battalions of peaks and reefs and gorges and crags. . . . Summit after summit *bladed* up thousands of feet . . . to strike first at storm and lightning." From the Blackfoot Reservation Doig looks west to where the "Rockies *jagged* up as if they were the farthest rough edge of the world, but the other three directions flung themselves flat to grass, grass, and grass." Sometimes winter came "dragging across the spire-line of the Rockies" turning the country into "a screaming white wilderness."[64] Clearly Doig's Montana is a harsh and savage land. There is grandeur and an epic quality to his writing about his native place but precious little affection. As Kerry Ahearn points out in a perceptive essay: "In the private mythology of Doig's memories, the 'house of sky,' for all its space, will suffocate those who stay."[65]

As the reader moves through this memoir it becomes increasingly apparent that Ivan Doig will not follow the pattern of his father's life. He was a solemn child, a little "sobersides," more interested in reading than in the chores of sheep camp and ranch. Many moves and dislocations taxed his capacity to adapt. The fabric of the tiny, makeshift family threatened to rend as Charlie logged more and more tavern time. Too often climate or parasites put the flocks at risk. The ranch

63. *Ibid.*, 157.

64. *Ibid.*, 20–21, 95, 180, 204, 217 (emphasis added).

65. Kerry David Ahearn, "Ivan Doig's Self-Narratives: The West, Wilderness, and the Prophetic Impulse," *South Dakota Review*, XX (Winter 1982–1983), 12.

routine was both hard and monotonous. One exception was the seasonal birthing of lambs. "Lambing," Doig writes, "is the one stint of work on a ranch that I entirely like. There is a constant doing about it, none of the usual jerky pace of idling one minute and rebuilding the world the next. . . . Lambing's tasks are all necessities, one by one by one adding up to something."[66]

One summer, however, a crisis on the Blackfoot Reservation soured Ivan on sheep forever. Early in July, just after the Mexican crew had finished shearing two thousand ewes, half of the sheep in the family's care, a freak storm bearing freezing rain swept down from the mountains pelting the naked sheep and stampeding them toward the edge of a cliff that threatened mass destruction. Charlie and Lady and Ivan and two dogs labored in the cold, curtaining rain to divert the sheep into a coulee and relative safety. It took nearly twelve hours to "flog 3500 desperate sheep a little more than four miles." The loss of 500 head was costly but fell a good deal short of what would have been total disaster. When it was over, Ivan knew that he "wanted no part of any worse day. . . . As much as at any one instant in my life, I can say: *here I was turned*. . . ." There would be no "more seasons of sheep on that vast gambling table of Blackfeet rangeland."[67]

Ivan Doig claims not to be sure as to just when he decided to go to college but the explanation seems clear enough. Incredibly high scores on vocabulary tests in high school along with the prodding of two of his teachers lofted Doig out of Montana and into Northwestern University with a major in journalism. He was graduated in 1961 and stayed on one more year for his master's degree. Editorial stints with a newspaper chain in Illinois and on *The Rotarian*, and marriage to Carol Muller whom he met during summer journalism sessions at Northwestern, followed. Then, in the fall of 1966, Doig entered graduate school at the University of

66. Doig, *This House of Sky*, 164.
67. *Ibid.*, 221–222.

Washington where he earned a doctorate in history under the direction of Vernon Carstensen in 1969. However, he continued to make his living as a free-lance writer until 1978 when, with the critical success of his first major work, *This House of Sky,* he was, as he puts it, "elevated to author."[68]

Like Mary Austin, Ivan Doig left one West for another. He deserted the blue and white granite and high valley grazing world of Montana for the gray, green, and silver water world of Seattle. Perhaps his dedication, via Thoreau, to his wife Carol in *This House of Sky,* explains the move in a phrase: "Westward we go free."

José Ortega y Gasset makes a useful distinction between *milieu* and landscape. "Landscape," he suggests, "unlike the more abstract milieu, is a function of a specific man. The same corner of earth becomes as many landscapes as there are men . . . to traverse it." The landscape works on the individual, makes the individual. But Ortega continues: "It is not simply that the land makes man, but that man *elects* his land, that is, his landscape, that portion of the planet where he finds his ideal . . . symbolically prefigured." "Man," Ortega argues further, "is a nomadic animal, . . . always potentially migratory. This ability to leave, so basic . . . that it finds its supreme expression in suicide, forces us to explain all settling-down by an appeal to free and personal reasons."[69]

Lincoln Steffens was the most nomadic of my four autobiographers. He left California, where he learned to escape convention astride a pony, to roam the world, but toward the end he *elected* to settle at last in his native place and give his son a start similar to his own. Mary Austin's first landscape was midwestern but it was the California and southwestern deserts that inspired her finest and most creative writing and New Mexico where she chose to live out her life. William O.

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68. Locher, ed., *Contemporary Authors,* 129.

69. José Ortega y Gasset, *Phenomenology and Art,* translated by Philip W. Silver (New York, 1975), 71, as quoted in Janet Varner Gunn, *Autobiography: Toward A Poetics of Experience* (Philadelphia, 1982), 58.

Douglas conquered disability and fear in the Yakima foothills and the Washington Cascades, returning again and again to that far western landscape and launching from it a preservationist crusade that paralleled his distinguished career on the highest court in the land. As for Ivan Doig, he is still in full stride, but the landscape that chose him he came to resent and reject, electing a farther West in which to hunker down and write. However, he is currently at work on a "big and complicated homesteader novel," and the setting is Montana.[70]

The individuals dealt with here are admittedly intelligent, constructive, and successful types. There is little attempt to come to terms with the brutal, the violent, the bigoted West. Months ago when I mentioned the autobiographers I had chosen to a colleague, he exclaimed: "But Bing, you have no son of a bitch." There are those who would disagree. His candidate was John Clay, an early Montana cattleman. More recently, a prominent historian of the American West suggested that I consider Richard Nixon and his six crises. I should have told him that ever since 1946 when he "smeared" Jerry Vorhees, a promising congressman, I have been trying to forget that Nixon is a Californian.

When all is said, perhaps those of us who claim to be westerners, whether by birth or adoption, should work to define and understand and preserve our particular Wests, striving to achieve what the Californian idealist Josiah Royce called a "wholesome provincialism."[71] For surely, the unexamined West is no place to live.

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70. Ivan Doig to writer, Oct. 15, 1985.

71. This concept is developed fully in Josiah Royce, *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems* (New York, 1908).

THEATER

Hold the Borscht, Here Comes Mort Sahl

By PETER J. BOYER

MORT SAHL, A SATIRIST rooted in the comedy clubs of the urban hip, has worked the Borscht Belt only once — and that time was a disaster. There was a police convention in the house, and just as he got rolling on his Richard Nixon jokes, the officers stood up and started singing "God Bless America."

But now, in a way, the Borscht Belt has made amends.

After trying vainly for five years to interest a Broadway producer in his one-man show, Mr. Sahl finally got a bite from James Nederlander, who booked Mr. Sahl into his Neil Simon Theater, where "Mort Sahl on Broadway" begins preview performances today and opens next Sunday.

Mr. Sahl is convinced that he owes his Broadway opportunity to Jackie Mason, a prince of the Catskills whose Tony-winning one-man act, "The World According to Me," has been such a phenomenal success that it

Now that Jackie Mason has paved the way, the satirist is welcome on Broadway.

made Mr. Sahl's long-resisted proposal suddenly seem a reasonable risk. "The Mason thing, there's no doubt about it, that that gave them the courage," Mr. Sahl says. "I've been trying to get this show here for a long time, but Nederlander's guard must have been down because of the Mason success."

Mr. Mason, too, credits Mr. Sahl's engagement to his own success, and he notes the irony of the Borscht Belt stand-up having paved the way for the intellectual jouster. "It's unbelievably ironic, it's ironic to the point of being ridiculous," Mr. Mason says, inimitably, "that Mort Sahl, a guy who belongs on Broadway, couldn't get there, and the guy who doesn't belong on Broadway, me, has to be a hit to get him there. They'd have never taken a shot on Mort without me."

Actually, Mr. Sahl played Broadway 30 years ago, the young, acid-witted saloon talker about whom Brooks Atkinson of The New York Times wrote, "Name anything that is current in intellectual society and Mr. Sahl can make it look either bogus or hopeless." Three decades later, the act (as the man) is essentially the same; only the perspective has changed. Mr. Sahl used to ask his audience, "Is there anyone I haven't offended yet?" Now, he says, in the post-Vietnam, post-Watergate, post-Iran/contra world, his outrage is shared by the audience. "The things that used to be known as my aberrations and my obsessions have happened to all of them now, from Watergate to Iran. We're all inmates here now."

Martha Swope

The longtime comedian ponders a puzzling world. One thing that's changed—his audience. Now, he says, they share his outrage.

So, Mr. Sahl says, an evening with Mort Sahl will now seem less like an act of social contrition. "One of the things that has changed is that instead of being a kind of hard guy to take, but it's good for you — 'He's noble and he's on the right side and he's virtuous' — they like me a lot of the time. I never lied to them. They like me now, and so I can get away with a lot more."

But the man who skewered Ike and Nixon says he isn't in New York to do "Mort Sahl's Greatest Hits," popular roastings from the past, although he suspects that's what some of his liberal urban audience might expect of his Broadway show. "The liberals are ready to elect Bill Bradley and invade Nicaragua under his leadership," Mr. Sahl says, warming up to a favorite topic, "so they want me to make them feel better about it. How do I make them feel better? I talk to them about Nixon? I won't let them off the hook that way. Or tell them that Reagan is the Teflon President? I won't do that for them."

In fact, liberals have become a favorite target of Mr. Sahl's in recent years, and, as he worked his act in clubs and theaters on the West Coast, he went after Mr. Reagan "only

Continued on Page 8

Vintage Sahl

For more than three decades, Mort Sahl has taken on just about everyone — and just about every political belief — in his humor. At one point, he would ask toward the end of his nightclub act, "Are there any groups I haven't offended?" Here are some examples of his humor, and his targets, over the years.

1953: (The joke that got him his first job, at the hungry i in San Francisco): "Have you seen the Joe McCarthy jacket? It's like an Eisenhower jacket, only it's got an extra flap that fits over the mouth."

1950's: "If you are in the Eisenhower Administration, you have a lot of problems, like whether or not to use an overlapping grip."

1960: "Vote No for President — let's keep the White House empty for another four years."

1960: On Richard Nixon: "I admit *his* chances look good, but what about *ours*?"

1960: "I'm for capital punishment. You've got to execute people — how else are they going to learn?"

1964: "Lyndon Johnson is the first President to put the country in his wife's name."

1966: On Israel: "The only privately endowed country in the world."

1968: "You know why the liberals say we should get out of Vietnam, why it's 'a senseless war'? Because we're losing."

1968: On race riots: "I don't condemn those who steal color TV sets, nor do I condone them. I'm a liberal that way."

1968: On Hollywood's race consciousness: "In 'In the Heat of the Night,' Rod Steiger played a bigot, and Sidney Poitier played a Negro — to the best of his ability."

1981: "A liberal is somebody who will do the right thing for the wrong reasons so he can feel good for eight minutes."

1981: In Saudi Arabia, "everything is owned by one family." In El Salvador, "everything is owned by 14 families" and the country "is thus classified as a democracy."

1982: President Reagan won only because of the public's disenchantment with Jimmy Carter. "If Reagan had run unopposed, he would have been defeated."

1987: "I think Alexander Haig is a terrifically bright guy. I presume he'll throw his helmet into the ring."

1987: "Haig is the only candidate who may understand anything about foreign affairs. Cuomo doesn't have to face the allegations that he doesn't since he's left the race and can go back to talking to St. Augustine." —*Mervyn Rothstein*

A Music Man Returns to an Early Love: The Revue

By MYRA FORSBERG

IN A SMALL, SPARE STUDIO ON Lafayette Street, filled with folding

mind was the idea that I would ultimately do revues and find venues in which to put them. But then it became quite apparent that the revue as a theatrical form was disappearing. It was being usurped by television variety

Music!"; he also directed several television specials, including "George M!," with Joel Grey, based on the Broadway musical. In 1975, he flirted again with the revue format, directing an Off-Broadway production of

he, Charles Strouse and Thomas Meehan hit it big with "a musical about Little Orphan Annie that everyone thought was a crazy idea." The crazy idea ran 2,377 performances on Broadway, engendering several national

years before, which made me confront a lot of things that I had never imagined I would ever have to face. And so I said, 'All right, I think I'm going to try a revue again.' "

Mr. Charnin proceeded to conceive and di-

THEATER

STAGE VIEW/Mel Gussow

A Tip of the Hat to Bob Fosse

He was a dynamo, and his personal magnetism electrified the Broadway musicals he worked on.

BEFORE THE DAY'S REhearsal of "Dancin'," his 1978 Broadway show, Bob Fosse stopped to answer a few questions, but his mind was not on conversation; his feet wanted to work. Then he put on a pair of white gloves and faced his dancers, all of whom were wearing identical white gloves and straw hats at a rakish Fosse tilt (over one eye, as if to ward off the glare of artificial light). In imitation of the director, the cast stepped into "I Want to Be a Dancin' Man." As he danced, and as he led dancers, he was at home — and he was flowing with creative energy. Fosse, who died Sept. 23 at the age of 60, was a dynamo, and his personal magnetism electrified the dozen Broadway musicals that he directed and/or choreographed.

With Fosse's death coming so soon after that of Michael Bennett, the reign of the choreographer as director is finished — at least for now. Actually, it had already been at least partly eclipsed by the arrival in the musical theater of such dramatic directors as Trevor Nunn and James Lapine. Both Fosse and Bennett were themselves hoofers, as was Gower Champion before them, and it was their love of their performing art that inspired them as musical conceptualists. Each specialized in dancing shows.

Fosse's idol was Fred Astaire — as he was for so many other dancers and choreographers — but when one thinks of Fosse, one thinks more of James Cagney, who danced in a figurative sense even when he was not playing a hoofer. A wiry kid on the streets of Chicago, Fosse might have turned into a Cagney-type tough guy had he not found his calling. Gwen Verdon, his third wife — and herself the archetypal Fosse dancer — once said that as a 9-year-old he danced over stoops and garbage cans. Fosse explained that as a desire to dance on surfaces other than the floor.

Schooled in burlesque and nightclubs, he created theater that was jazzy, sensual and cynical. A Fosse show was stylish, but it was not elegant (he left that to Astaire or to Tommy Tune) and it did not have the humanity that Michael Bennett brought to his musicals. It was hard-driving. No wonder that people sometimes compared his syncopated movements to a piston — perhaps remembering his staging of "Steam Heat" in "The Pajama Game," the first Broadway show he choreographed. His dances, however, were not mechanical. A Fosse number had a built-in vitality; it was self-assured, cock-of-the-walk — like Cagney. More than many of his colleagues, he wore his signature on his sleeve. There was no missing the Fosse style, whether the subject of the show was a backstage murder mystery ("Redhead"), gangsters ("Chicago"), medieval legend ("Pippin") or dancers themselves ("Dancin' ").

Oddly, for someone with his gifts, Fosse was responsible for no landmark musical (in contrast to Bennett, who had "A Chorus Line"). Most of his shows were hits and some have proven to be revivable (most recently, "Sweet Charity"), not because of their book or score, but because of Fosse's dances. Those dances helped to make stars of performers he nurtured (Miss Verdon, Ben Vereen and Ann Reinking, among others).

In a profession not known for its even temperaments, Fosse was especially outspoken. He probably quit more shows than he directed. There were problems with writers and composers; his response in "Dancin' " was to banish both categories. That show had no book and the music was gathered from published sources. The Fosse approach sometimes shortchanged his own creativity. If he had allied himself more with the artistry of others, he might have produced even more durable musicals. Sadly, his last new Broadway show was "Big Deal" (book by Fosse), a project he had been putting together for many years — and one that never achieved cohesiveness.

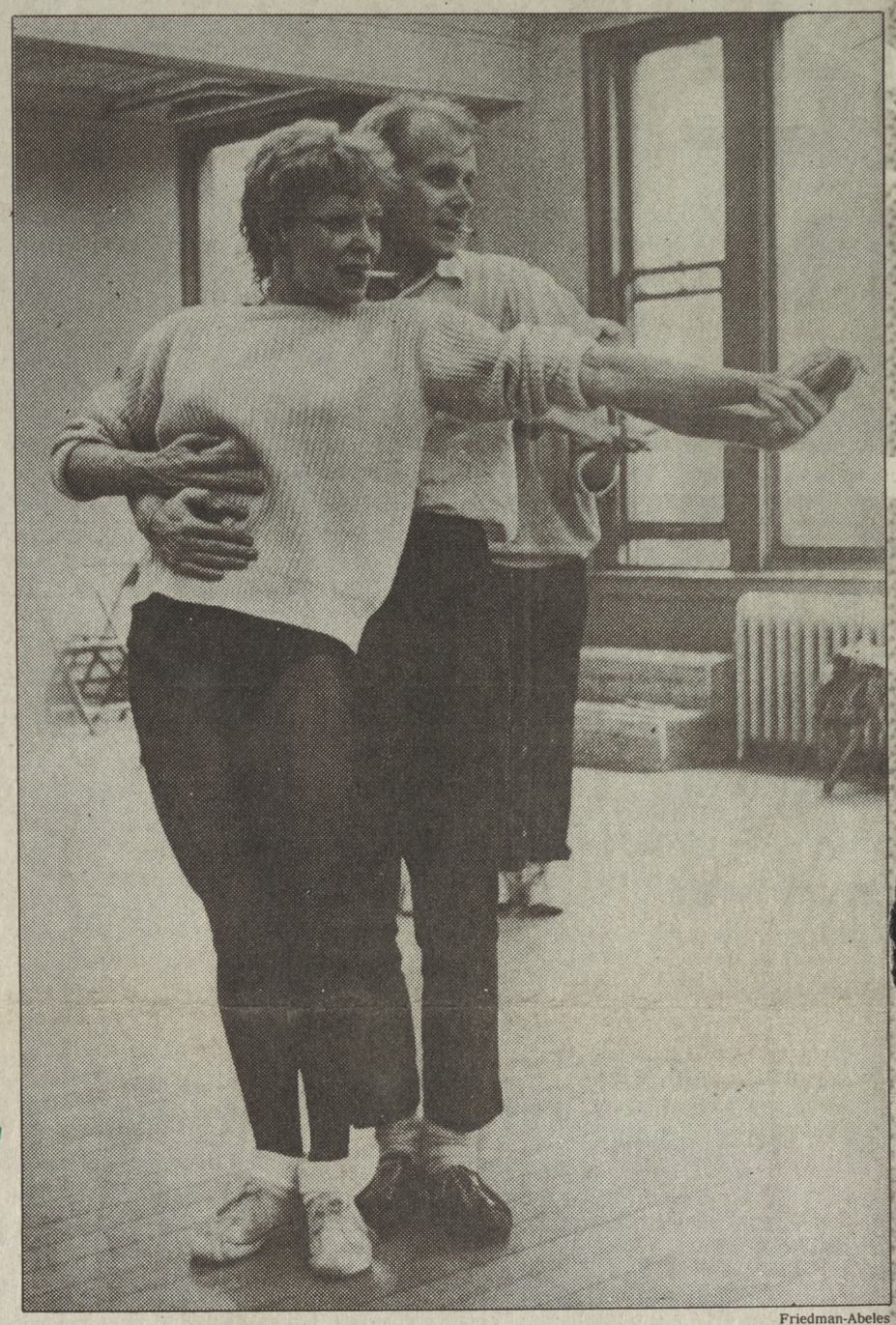
Fosse's career was filled with ideas and projects that did not reach fruition, but he also had a full quota of achievements, beginning with his dances for Miss Verdon in "Damn Yankees," and extending through his choreographic "scores" for "Sweet Charity," "Pippin" and "Chicago" (that last show included the self-mocking song, "Razzle Dazzle," which proved that Fosse could be his own harshest critic).

Deservedly he won nine Tony Awards, including one for "Big Deal." That season, 1986, his was the only credible choreography on Broadway. In 1972 he won an unprecedented directing triple crown, a Tony for "Pippin," an Oscar for the movie of "Cabaret" and an Emmy for "Liza With a Z."

There are two other sides to his art — Fosse as performer and as film maker. As a dancer, he was his own best interpreter, which was one reason he was such a valuable director: He could demonstrate. One remembers him playing the title role in the New York City Center revival of "Pal Joey," shrewd, charismatic and obsessive — a Joey after Fosse's own heart.

Fosse's filmography is brief. He only directed four movies ("Cabaret," "Lenny," "All That Jazz" and "Star 80"), and worked on another three as choreographer. But each bears his striking imprint, especially "All That Jazz." In that autobiographical film, the chronicle of his death foretold, his surrogate was Joe Gideon (Roy Scheider), a hoofer-choreographer who never stopped taking risks and always worked at the peak of intensity. Fosse took the opening line of the movie from a Flying Wallenda: "To be on the wire is life. The rest is waiting."

Like Joe Gideon, Fosse was on the wire when he died. It was opening night in Washington of his revival of "Sweet Charity." Therein lies the legacy: the thrust of the hip, a strut, a brassy chorus of "If My Friends Could See Me Now" — and a tip of the hat to Bob Fosse. □



Friedman-Abeles

Gwen Verdon and Bob Fosse rehearsing "Redhead" in 1959

Tap-Dancer Among the Literati

By E. L. DOCTOROW

THE BOB FOSSE I KNEW WAS insecure, self-doubting, tormented, tense in his victories, angry in his defeats — everything I trust in an artist.

He was also honest, confiding, profoundly considerate, and a wonderfully funny presence at a dinner table.

He liked writers, he liked to be around them, and had many writers for friends. We all admired his work and were collegially proud of his friendship, but he only felt comfortable among us posing as an old hoofer, a tap-dancer among the literati. Of course this gave him a tactical advantage during table talk that turned on our sly pretentions, for which he had a hunter's eyes and ears. The erring remark or gesture would be made; Fosse, laughing, would be off on the chase, and in a moment or two the writer's pelt would be laid on the table somewhere between the wine and the bread.

E. L. Doctorow's most recent novel is "World's Fair."

But in fact he loved good writing. As the child of a vaudevillian he had spent most of his school years on the stages of burlesque and variety houses, and he had the pious regard for language and literature, and the humility in its presence, that is typical of stars who've grown up in show business — and that makes the best of the passionate autodidacts.

Fosse loved writers also because their lives, like his, were dedicated to performance. He loved dancers because of the way they could move and actors because of the way they could look and speak, but all of them because they performed. He believed in the fraternity of performance. Living his entire life in show business, he made performing a metaphor for existence. Irremediable life was the curtain opening, and the lights coming up, and the world waiting for you to do something.

Fosse's last three films are all about performers — the stand-up comic of "Lenny," the director-choreographer Joe Gideon of "All That Jazz" and Dorothy Stratten, the centerfold actress of "Star 80." All of them die of performance, all are destroyed. They are not simply victims, however; to a certain extent they each collaborate in their doom. But the darkest of these works is the last because the performer now has no talent beyond beauty and no mind beyond innocence and no will to oppose except passively, a life of humiliation and a degrading death. "Star 80" is a despairing and absolute condemnation of the culture of sex in America that Fosse himself worked out of. It is an amazing transfiguring statement from the lithe little fellow with the choirboy face who choreographed the "Steam Heat" number in the musical "Pajama Game."

■

I think of models for his career and remember how he worshiped Fred Astaire. But Fosse was not Astaire; his life described a different arc. I think his true father was W. C. Fields. It was rumored that Fosse liked to deposit his considerable earnings in as many different savings bank accounts as possible, which is of course just what Fields did. They shared not just a distaste for complex financial undertakings, but a distrust of anything, like a bank, that did not move along with them down the road. Both men were essentially homeless except on the stage. The obvious model for a young dancer may have been Astaire, but more profoundly Fosse's career suggests the complex growth of the great comedian's: each began as the practitioner of a nonverbal skill, Fields as a juggler, Fosse as a tap-dancer, and each eventually mastered several aspects of public entertainment, including writing, to create a body of work that transcended the limits of their *tummler* tradition.

Like Fields, Fosse managed to achieve the personality of art in his conflict with the brutally impersonal criteria of commercial show business. If either of them was ever tempted by sentimentality or the banalities that pass for thought in the popular arts, they didn't reveal it. Neither man ever gave us an easy answer. Both died with their artistic integrities intact.

Today, the dancing Fosse perfected, the dancing not just of legs but of hips and wrists and elbows and shoulders and neck, the insouciant dancing from the body's joints, is visible every time you turn on television. Ironic, cybernetically informed, it seems designed for our times. Someone more knowledgeable than I will have to place Fosse in the history of American dance, but surely it was the galvanism of burlesque's bump and grind that he distributed throughout the body in a kind of satire of our sexual nature. And put it all atop the witty, elegant feet of the great black tap-dancers he revered, the Nicholas Brothers, the Step Brothers.

The Fosse dance I think of now, however, he performed himself at the funeral several years ago of his dear friend, the writer Paddy Chayefsky. It was part of a pact, he explained in his eulogy: He had promised, if he survived Paddy, to do this kind of silly thing. They used to laugh about it. He hoped it wouldn't offend anyone.

And for a few seconds, in front of the solemn congregation of mourners, Fosse danced. He did the basic time step a child learns in the very first lesson, a surrendering dance in praise of God, the old soft shoe. □

The Joys of Skiathos

TALES FROM A GREEK ISLAND
By Alexandros Papadiamantis.
Translated by Elizabeth Constantinides.
176 pp. Baltimore:
The Johns Hopkins University Press.
$16.95.

By George Economou

IN his provocative essay "The Storyteller," the critic Walter Benjamin identifies two spheres of life, the agricultural and the merchant seafaring, as the sources of two major groups of storytellers. Though he was never a farmer or a sailor, Alexandros Papadiamantis (1851-1911), the son of a Greek Orthodox priest from the Aegean island of Skiathos, grounded his tales of the lives of his fellow islanders in these two primary activities of Greek life.

Perhaps that is why, despite the fact that his work has not always elicited high praise from his country's literary establishment in the past, more recently certain poets like Constantine Cavafy, George Seferis and Odysseus Elytis have responded positively to his writings. They have especially expressed appreciation for his distinctive use of language, powers of simple narration and masterly blending of the cruel exigencies and exquisite natural surroundings of a way of life that resonates with folkways, myth and religious sensibility.

With his place among Greece's modern writers now secure, Papadiamantis merits the attention of the larger audience that translation into English gives him. His novella, "The Murderess," published in English a few years ago, should be required reading for anyone with an interest in the European prototypes of feminist writing. Now, "Tales From a Greek Island" offers 12 more astutely selected examples of Papadiamantis's depiction of late-19th-century Greek life. This selection from his nearly 200 works of short fiction, most of which deal with the hardships and joys of the insular community of Skiathos, shows the full range of his skill in combining realism and symbolism; it demonstrates, too, his ability to draw and establish characters with seemingly effortless precision, and to endow his narratives with a universality that allows some of his stories to transcend their regionalism.

• • •

By leaping back to a mythic source, his tales also often deepen their dual effect of timelessness and continuity. Elements from Greek myth and legend are so deftly introduced into his plots and characters that they seem more the result of direct observation than of literary invention. For example, in the final tale of the volume, "The American: A Christmas Story," Papadiamantis plays a variation on the ancient theme of the hero's return, skillfully deploying throughout the plot a subtle set of parallels with the second half of Homer's "Odyssey."

While the tales will challenge and delight a new readership, it is the women in these stories who most strongly claim our attention. Papadiamantis paints a vivid picture of the deprivations and severe limitations that 19th-century village customs (such as the rigid dowry system) imposed on their lives. At the same time, he portrays their courage, ingenuity and endurance with unusual fidelity and a matter-of-factness that might chill a contemporary reader. These women may be Penelope's daughters, but a different world requires that they summon and use (with greater need and poignancy than do their male counterparts) the legacy of survivorship from father Odysseus.

PAPADIAMANTIS, who divided his bachelor's life as a writer between Athens and his beloved Skiathos, reveals both conservative and traditionally religious convictions in his works. Yet, like Balzac and Dostoyevsky, he is capable of the ironic detachment that can reveal a character's inability to live up to the ideals of a deeply traditional ethos. As a writer committed to a realistic rendition of a locale and its inhabitants, he has also been compared with Thomas Hardy.

Papadiamantis wrote in a Greek that combined basically three levels of diction: the purist tongue, *katharevousa*, of the post-revolution provides the language for description and set pieces, and, slightly modified by demotic Greek, for the narration; and the spoken language, including the dialect of Skiathos, in its turn, serves for the dialogue. The translator, Elizabeth Constantinides, wisely avoids any attempt to convey this singular and inviolable aspect of the work and chooses simply to tell the stories again in idiomatic English. She does this superbly, giving us an informative and lively introduction and a well-selected set of notes at the beginning and end of the book. □

George Economou, a poet and chairman of the English department at the University of Oklahoma, is the author most recently of "Harmonies & Fits," a book of poems.

NYTBR

Simon & Schuster. $19.95.

By Jonathan Alter

YOU can take an intellectual out of New York, but it's harder to take New York — or Paris — out of an intellectual. In the middle of an essay entitled "On Friendship," Francine du Plessix Gray tries to explain how language has sanctified friendship among men but not among women: " 'Fraternity' is a word that goes far beyond its collegiate context and embraces notions of honor, dignity, loyalty. 'Sorority' is something we might have belonged to as members of the University of Oklahoma's bowling team in the early 1950s."

However valid the larger point about language, the provincial illustration is not exactly guaranteed to win her brand of feminism many converts beyond the Hudson. The millions of non-bowling, post-1950's sorority sisters, inside Oklahoma and out, might be a bit troubled that so subtle a writer could be guilty of so crude a stereotype of the dominant culture of this country. Unfortunately, that habit of mind is, and has been for many years, all too characteristic of the cosmopolitan intellectual. Book-learning simply cannot grant enough appreciation for the complexity and richness of ordinary life.

One of the most interesting dimensions of "Adam & Eve and the City," an elegant, eclectic collection of essays, is that while such trace elements of intellectual snobbery leak out occasionally, Ms. Gray seems to understand the problem. At some level, she realizes that her extraordinarily graceful writing style and exquisite literary and cultural sensibilities, shaped by her childhood in prewar France and education at the best American journalism. Several are models of how to meld point of view with reporting and erudition. When they fail, it is not because Ms. Gray is too personal and passionate — those qualities are what give her work its life — but because she has not done enough testing of those passions and political prejudices against the real world of often inconvenient facts.

By her own admission, Ms. Gray is a discursive writer, and she is at her best when meandering through a foreign land. The section called "Homelands," particularly the pieces on Hawaii and Israel, are thoughtful examples of how to probe cultural character and conflict. Beneath the sunny, seemingly boring surface that most tourists see, Ms. Gray renders Hawaii a quivering political and ethnic specimen. Her first essay on the islands is from 1971, when indigenous Hawaiian traditions were held in low regard. She returned last year to witness the inauguration of the state's first Hawaiian governor (his predecessors were of either Japanese or Caucasian descent). The changes are evoked with a penetrating eye for the interplay between identity and culture.

• • •

Other essays contain no such contemporary follow-up, and suffer for it. Ms. Gray was widely praised in the late 1960's and early 70's for her sympathetic coverage of Daniel and Philip Berrigan and other anti-war activists. It is not her fault, but these period pieces have not aged well. The passage of time raises so many new questions about that era (starting with a simple "Where are they now?") that the essay's perceptions are rendered gauzy and pointless. The notion that religion and politics are currently entwined, as they were then, is the ostensible reed of relevancy used to justify inclusion in the collection. It is too thin.

The same is true for Ms. Gray's dated essays about the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church and other cults. The language is evocative; a meeting of the that requires more reporting and more testing of old assumptions, not simply a bit of factual updating. Ms. Gray briefly mentions that legal experts like Laurence Tribe and Edward Bennett Williams have defended Mr. Moon in recent years. Why? An attempt at a complex answer would have been far more revealing than rehashing well-known details about cults.

SOME of these essays are timeless, such as the wonderfully cutting profile of Coco Chanel, the fascist founder of a fashion empire, and a beautifully limned portrait of Thomas Merton and his life beyond the monastery. In a tender and instructive remembrance of her iconoclastic writing mentor, the poet Charles Olson, who taught her during summers at a now-defunct utopian community in North Carolina called Black Mountain College, Ms. Gray recalls his advice to "make yrself yr own place, and move from that." When she does so — in reviewing women's literature, for instance — the results can be piercing. "The hero's search for transcendence has tended to be headlined in the heroine's life as a case of cabin fever," she writes. Her "place" accords her a particularly acute view of the sexual double standards of Western culture.

It also leads her back to France and the case of Klaus Barbie, the Nazi war criminal. Ms. Gray's father died while serving in the French Resistance, and she uses the extradition of Mr. Barbie from Bolivia to structure a moving examination of collective memory loss, guilt and national identity as it applies to her birthplace and own life. In this essay, the French are an enormously complex people. Are her fellow Americans really any less so? That is why, say, referring in an offhand way to Texans as "trigger-happy" saps (in an essay about a safari) is more than a quibble. Ms. Gray is an abundantly talented writer who has moved some distance toward casting off the constraints of her intellectual caste, but she should not rest yet. □

Jonathan Alter is a senior writer and the media critic at Newsweek.

resuming their joint residence in nearby River Forest.

Lesbian or not, Grace had her own obsession with sexual identity. To be sure, the fact that she dressed and coiffed Ernest as a girl for the first two and a half years of his life does not set her apart from many another turn-of-the-century mother. Perhaps that is why previous biographers have attached no importance to such memorabilia as a photograph of two-year-old Ernest in a gown and bonnet, cutely captioned "summer girl." But the biographers should assuredly not have passed lightly by the 1962 memoir written by Hemingway's sister Marcelline, one and a half years his senior. There Marcelline explained that Grace wanted the children not just to look alike but "to feel like twins, by having everything alike." As Lynn recounts, Ernest and Marcelline

> slept in the same bedroom in twin white cribs; they had dolls that were just alike; they played with small china tea sets that had the same pattern. Later, the children were encouraged to fish together, hike together and visit friends together, and after Grace deliberately held Marcelline back, they entered grade school together.

And in school, much to Ernest's disgust, Grace once forced the siblings into the same class and did all she could to make them inseparable.

Was Grace Hemingway trying to turn her son into a daughter? Perhaps the answer is both yes and no. Continually experimenting with outfits and hair styles, she created twin "brothers" as often as "sisters," and at times she showed pride in the sporting exploits of her little man. In all likelihood what Grace wanted, beyond an enactment of some private cross-gender scheme, was a boy whose sexual identity would remain forever dependent upon her dictates and whims. If so, she gruesomely got her wish. The apparent effect of all that dolling and doting was not so much to lend Ernest a female identity as to implant in his mind a permanently debilitating confusion, anxiety, and anger.

Naturally, Hemingway despised Marcelline as fiercely as he came to hate the mother who had glutted him with caresses until she abruptly turned her attention to the next sibling, Ursula. And the strong attachment he subsequently developed to Ursula carried an incestuous intensity, as if he had to validate his maleness through this other sister's love. But the idea of incest, in Hemingway's bemused imagination, was just another means of swapping identities.[11] Later, as an adult, he could only entrust himself to a woman—and

[11]See especially "The Last Good Country," a long story—really a fragment of an abandoned novel—in which Nick Adams, hiding from game wardens, flees into a virgin forest and sets up camp with his adoring young tomboy sister, "Littless" (*The Nick Adams Stories*, note 5 above). As Lynn argues, Littless is almost certainly based on Ursula. Before the story is over, Littless will have sat on Nick's lap and caused an erection, kissed him and teased him with sexual talk, confessed that she wants to grow up and marry him, and cut off her hair to please him: "Now I'm your sister but I'm a boy, too." We can surmise that the larger work remained unfinished for the same reason that *The Garden of Eden* did: it said too much. Some idea of Ursula apparently remained entangled in Hemingway's peculiarly limited but intense eroticism.

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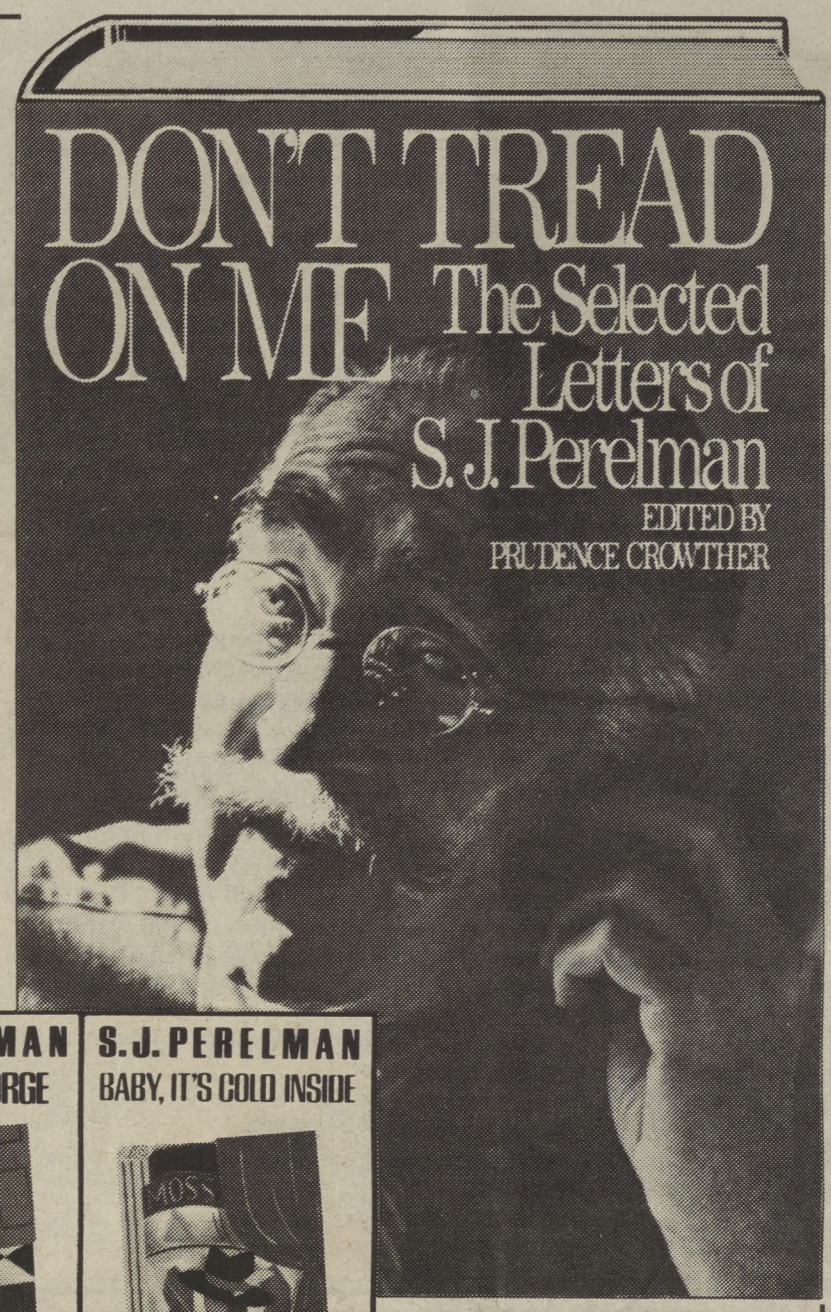

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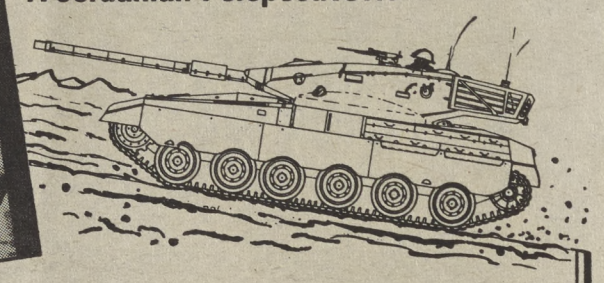

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then only provisionally, before feelings of entrapment set in—if he mentally conscripted her into the game in which he himself had been initiated by Grace. *Odi et amo*. It is little wonder that Hemingway's writings abound not only in castrating shrews and shattered men but also in sibling-like lovers whose deepest fantasy is to trade sex roles or merge into androgynous oneness.

The virtue of Lynn's account is that it brings into coherence an array of facts—from Hemingway's obsession with lesbianism and hair length through the combination of browbeating and dependency in his love relations—that have hitherto appeared puzzling, though not exactly anomalous. Many commentators have sensed that someone who was not only mesmerized by the castration-defying bravado of the *corrida* but also compelled to sneer at the squeamishness of the unconvinced had to have been caught up in a quarrel with self-doubts. And with increasing certainty after the shotgun blast in 1961, they have known that the writer whose imagination reverted to goring, maiming, crucifixion, exploded body parts, and agonies of childbirth was by no means a simple realist of the out-of-doors. No one before Lynn, however, has established the specific connections between Hemingway's family situation and his fragile personality.

Take, for example, the writer's locker-room, know-it-all side—his claim to definitive expertise on every male topic from boxing and hunting through battle tactics. Lynn shows that such assertiveness would have fit the psychic needs of a boy growing up in the shadow of an older sister with whom he was constantly paired and compared. Likewise, the man who saw betrayal everywhere succeeded the boy who, appealing to one parent for refuge from the other, invariably found the adult ranks closing against him in sanctimonious solidarity. The man who dubbed himself "Papa" while still in his mid-twenties and who sought record-sized kills of fish, beasts, and German soldiers was bent not only on outdoing his woodsman father but on magically repairing the unmanning to which he thought that father (along with himself) had been subjected by Grace Hemingway. And topping everything, the mental hermaphrodite had been systematically deprived of a stable male identity. All in all, we cannot be surprised that even in his final years, family grievances remained uppermost in Hemingway's mind. As he put it so bitterly in *A Moveable Feast*, "With bad painters all you need to do is not look at them. But even when you have learned not to look at families nor listen to them and have learned not to answer letters, families have many ways of being dangerous."

5.

The critical lessons of Lynn's *Hemingway* are chiefly two. In the first place, Lynn enables us to realize why the short story and not the novel proved to be Hemingway's suited genre. The amplitude of a realistic novel calls for broad sympathies and a conscious, integrated understanding of characters and conflicts. A writer whose professed values serve as preventatives against self-insight will find it hard to sustain his characters' development over many chapters or to avoid recourse to stereotypes and posturing. Such, on the whole, was Hemingway's predicament as a full-length novelist; he wavered between being "true to the hurt" and propagandistically disowning it. As Lynn reminds us, even the acclaimed novella *The Old Man and the Sea* seems, on rereading, like a strained and padded effort, bolted together with clunky symbols.

In contrast, Hemingway was temperamentally inclined toward the economy of phrase and gesture required by a ten-page tale, in which, as Lynn puts it, he could "make a virtue of necessity by packing troubled feelings below the surface... like dynamite beneath a bridge." Within a short story, Hemingway's characteristic shuttling between mute physical details and irritable, elliptical conversation is hauntingly suggestive. We needn't know, any more than the author himself does, precisely what lurks within the gulf that every sentence barely skirts. (We needn't even know for sure whether "Big Two-Hearted River" is obliquely "about" the war. That is our problem, not the story's.) Hemingway's tales at their best are unforgettable because their actions have the cruel finality of fate itself, without the possibility of recourse to values and theories—not even Hemingway's own.

The other benefit that discerning readers of Hemingway can draw from Lynn's study is encouragement to trust their instincts, rather than Hemingway's reassurances, when they think they have noticed deviations from the writer's macho norm. In particular, they will find that some of Hemingway's most durable works undercut their own impulse to distinguish simplistically between the he-man and the weakling, the compliant kitten and the castrating bitch.

Consider, as a seemingly intractable test case, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber." Like "Big Two-Hearted River," this powerful story has usually been read in the light of Hemingway's own summary of it, delivered a decade and a half after its composition. "Francis' wife hates him because he's a coward," Hemingway said to an interviewer in 1953. "But when he gets his guts back, she fears him so much she has to kill him—shoots him in the back of the head." That is Hemingway the famous misogynist speaking. But once again Lynn demonstrates that the tale refutes its forgetful teller. Mrs. Macomber is no murderer; in stating that she "had shot *at the buffalo* with the 6.5 Mannlicher as it seemed about to gore Macomber" (italics added), the text unambiguously establishes the killing as accidental. As Lynn insists:

> It is not wifely malevolence that brings Macomber down, but his own dangerous aspiration to be recognized as intensely masculine. Two contrasting aspects of the author are split down the middle in the story. Brutish Robert Wilson, with his double cot and his big rifle, incarnates the Hemingway of the myth, while the doubt-haunted Macomber represents the Hemingway for whom the dark had always been peopled and always would be. Near the end of the fable, the doubter succeeds in winning the approval of the brute. He becomes, in short, the sort of man he is not, and he pays for it with his life. Just as the wife in "Kilimanjaro" is finally relieved of blame by her husband for the tragic waste of his talent, so a critically important narrative detail absolves Margot of responsibility for Macomber's tragedy.

This is much more than a crux resolved; it is one sign among many that Hemingway *could* sometimes identify with a woman's point of view and thus mitigate the tendentiousness of his schematizing.

For a final and more complex example, let us consider Hemingway's best novel, *The Sun Also Rises*, whose "official" reading was laid out by Carlos Baker in 1963. "The moral norm of the book," wrote Baker, "is a healthy and almost boyish innocence of spirit, and it is carried by Jake Barnes, Bill Gorton, and Pedro Romero. Against this norm...is ranged the sick abnormal 'vanity' of the Ashley-Campbell-Cohn triangle."[12] In all probability, Hemingway would have endorsed this way of regarding his novel. Yet surely it is much too constraining. Do we in fact experience Brett and Cohn as unredeemably bad? And is the casual anti-Semitism voiced by Bill and Jake somehow "healthier" than Mike Campbell's bullying version? Unless we can find a way of approaching the book that transcends Hemingway's vulgar code, many of us will remain immune to its narrative power.

In one sense Baker was right: from its opening page, *The Sun Also Rises* makes Robert Cohn its embodiment of every trait that violates the Hemingway outlook. We know for certain, moreover, that the sneering at Cohn was inspired by Hemingway's petty but permanently injurious vendetta against his friend and benefactor Harold Loeb, whose romance with Duff Twysden, unlike his own, had been sexually consummated. Yet we now also know from Lynn's biography that technicality from being Duff Twysden/Brett Ashley's one true love.

And if Carlos Baker's "healthy" Jake escapes black-and-white categories, so does his "abnormal" Brett. According to the Hemingway code, Brett's habit of undermining men's sexual self-respect ought to be unforgivable. In fact, however, her constant yearning to be a "good chap" and mend her ways makes her one of the more appealing figures in the book—more so, surely, than the wooden Pedro Romero, who is novelistically inert precisely because he embodies Hemingway's ideal and nothing else. As Lynn points out, Brett's penitent side was drawn from life—not Duff Twysden's life or Zelda Fitzgerald's, but Hemingway's own. Thanks to his capacity for unorthodox identifications, he gave us in Brett what most of his fiction would sorely lack: an independent woman who is not automatically an object of scorn.

There is no need to go overboard here and decide that *The Sun Also Rises* is a wise and compassionate book. As Lynn shows, Hemingway couldn't afford to decide what he finally thought of the sportsman-eunuch-bigot-pimp Jake Barnes, and his novel is not just irresolute but seriously muddled. Readers who think they have found consistently humane ironies in the text—indications, for example, that the author is not crudely

everything Hemingway wanted to say about Cohn/Loeb's naive romanticism and self-pity applied at least as well to his own.

On closer inspection, as several critics have noticed before Lynn, the resemblances between the two "steers" Jake and Cohn seem more impressive than the differences. Furthermore, Jake doesn't simply take pleasure in watching Cohn get humiliated in a setting that he, Jake, has largely staged; he also shows flashes of self-detestation for that very baseness. In Jake Barnes the author has given us his most revealing, if still oblique and alibi-ridden, self-portrait. It is a picture of someone who has good reason to feel himself less than a man, who therefore waxes by turns snappish and maudlin, yet who longs for escape from his private hell into the matador's reticent and impersonal "purity of line." Precisely because Jake *is* Hemingway (indeed, his name in the earliest surviving manuscript was "Hem"), he captures not only his creator's adolescent manifest values but also his mean streak, his fits of remorse, his secret passivity, and his eventually suffocating need to be right about everything. The characterization is far more nuanced than Hemingway could have first intended when he set out to "get" Harold Loeb and create an autobiographical hero who would be disqualified only by a anti-Semitic or that his vision of excellence transcends the image of Pedro Romero in his tight green pants—are deceiving themselves. And so, I would add, are those who take this cattiest of *romans à clef* as a reliable guide to masculine values.

Yet Lynn has revealed that *The Sun Also Rises* is swept by countercurrents of feeling that neither the idolators nor the iconoclasts among Hemingway critics have been prepared to recognize. If it had been a more thoroughgoing "Hemingway novel" in Baker's sense, the final image of Jake and Brett in the taxi—together but forever apart—would have meant nothing to us. Instead, of course, it is a crystalline moment—the nearest approach Hemingway would ever make to the pathos of authentic tragedy.

In replacing the comforts of myth with acute psychological, social, and literary analysis, Kenneth Lynn has not only laid bare that "real Ernest Hemingway" whom Gertrude Stein once fathomed; he has also provided a model of the way biographically informed criticism can catch the pulse of works about which everything appeared to have been said. In short, he has made Hemingway interesting again. For many readers, of course—the potential clientele of Hemingway Ltd.—that contribution will appear superfluous and offensive. In view of the now exposed hollowness of the official cult, however, no one has done more timely justice to what Alfred Kazin once called Hemingway's "brilliant half-vision of life." □

[12]Carlos Baker, *Hemingway: The Writer as Artist* (Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 82–83.

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True Colors

Woody Allen

Let us just say that a very rich man has purchased all the films ever made in Hollywood. He calls together his staff and says, "Take all the black and white ones and turn them into color using our new computer." The technicians get right to work implementing this because they are used to following orders.

One man among them, however, is puzzled, and says to his employer, "I don't understand—why paint them over with color?"

The boss says, "Because more people will watch them."

"Really?" the underling asks.

"Yes," the boss answers. "The American public is very stupid, very infantile. In fact they're idiots. They can't enjoy a film unless it's full of bright colors and rock music. The story means nothing—the plot, the acting—just give the fools reds and yellows and they'll smile."

The worker is confused and tells his boss that for generations people have been watching and adoring films in black and white. He points to *It's a Wonderful Life*, viewed by millions every Christmas on television. He points to *Yankee Doodle Dandy* and *Sergeant York* and *Citizen Kane* and *The Maltese Falcon* and *On the Waterfront*.

"They're great films," the boss says. "But I'm going to improve them. They'll be greater when I'm finished with them."

"But the director of *Citizen Kane* is dead. Who'll tell you what colors it should be?"

"We have men to do that. It's true—they've never directed films and know nothing about it, but they sure can work computers and between you and me—does it really make a difference if James Cagney's jacket is green or yellow when he shoots Humphrey Bogart in *Public Enemy*?"

The poor underling is losing his resolve. "By the way," he asks, "you mentioned adding rock music?"

"Oh, that's in the future," the boss says. "First color, then maybe we replace the score of *Gone With the Wind* with rock. I have lots of ideas."

Now, you might get the impression from all this that I am against "colorization"* of black and white films, but you'd be wrong. If a movie director wishes his film to be "colorized," then I say, by all means, let him color it. If he prefers it to remain in black and white then it is sinful to force him to change it. If the director is not alive and his work has been historically established in black and white it should remain true to its origin. The presumption that the colorizers are doing him a favor and improving his movie is a transparent attempt to justify the mutilation of art for a few extra dollars.

The colorizers will tell you that it's proved no one wants black and white, but this is not true and if it were—if audiences who have grown up on mindless television were so desensitized that a movie like *It Happened One Night*, which has been delighting people in black and white for generations now, had to be viewed in color to be appreciated—then the task would be to cultivate the audience back to some level of maturity rather than to doctor the film artificially to keep up with lowered tastes. Not only do the colorizers have contempt for the American public but also for the artist. A large number of American movies are classics both at home and all over the world. Thinking they were making popular entertainment, American filmmakers have produced numerous motion pictures that are considered genuine works of art comparable to fine works of literature, painting, and music. But the colorizers have no regard for the men who made these movies, and when a great American director like John Huston says he doesn't want his superb mystery *The Maltese Falcon* made into a color movie because that makes this hard-boiled Bogart film

silly looking, they couldn't care less what Huston wants. The colorizers also tell us that a viewer can simply turn off the color and see the film in black and white. The fact that the man who made the film wants no one at all to see it in color means nothing to them. Finally, they say we live in a democracy and the public wants these films in color, but if members of the public had the right to demand alterations to suit their taste the world would have no real art. Nothing would be safe. Picasso would have been changed years ago, and James Joyce and Stravinsky and the list goes on.

The example of John Huston, incidentally, is particularly meaningful to me because the aesthetic differences between color and black and white are a subject that hits home in my own work. In an era of almost exclusively color films, I have chosen on a number of occasions, even fought for the privilege, to tell stories with black and white photography. Indeed, the different effect between color and black and white is often so wide it alters the meaning of scenes. If I had portrayed New York City in color rather than black and white in my movie *Manhattan*, all the nostalgic connotations would have vanished. All the evocation of the city from old photographs and films would have been impossible to achieve in technicolor. Whereas if I had filmed *Annie Hall* in black and white, all the scenes that now come off amusingly would take a giant step toward grim seriousness by mere virtue of their suddenly being grittier and less cartoonlike.

One has only to think of a film like *The Bicycle Thief* and imagine the life-and-death search through postwar Rome for the precious bicycle being in reds and yellows and blues rather than the hot whites and dirty blacks and grays to see how absurd the whole thing is. And it's not just drama—musicals, just because they are bouncy, are not helped by the addition of color where it doesn't belong either. Part of the artistic experience of seeing old Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire films is the period quality: the black and white photography gives it its entire feel. When Astaire made color musicals in a later period they took on a totally different quality that reflects beautifully their particular era. They are not better or worse—but completely different and true to themselves.

And what of the other insults—the editing, the artificial panning, the cuts made to accommodate the commercial sale of dog food and roach spray? Only in America are films so degraded. In other countries the artist is often protected by the government. No one can change a French director's film without his consent. They have too much respect for people who contribute to the society by doing creative work to allow anyone to subvert their creations at random. My personal belief is of course that no one should ever be able to tamper with any artist's work in any medium against the artist's will, and this principle can be argued justly by any citizen. It does not need a directly involved artist.

The colorizers may think they have a legal loophole, but the morality of what they are doing is atrocious. For directors with enough clout to make self-protecting contracts this is no problem. But for those less fortunate and, of course, the deceased ones, protection must be guaranteed.

If a producer insists on color and if a helpless director is forced to make a film the studio's way, despite his own feelings that it should be black and white—well, a deal's a deal. But once a film exists in black and white and has been thrilling audiences for years, then to suddenly color it seems too great an insult—even for a society that is so often more in awe of its business executives than of its creative talents.

Ultimately, of course, the colorizers will lose this battle. If not immediately then future generations will surely discard these cheesy, artificial symbols of one society's greed. They will, of course, go back to the great originals. And if we are foolish enough to permit this monstrous practice to continue one can easily picture young men and women someday discussing us with disgust and saying, "They did this and nobody stopped them?"

"Well, there was a lot of money involved."

"But surely the people could see the deeper value to America of its film treasury, of its image among civilizations. Surely they understood the immorality of defacing an artist's work against his will. Don't tell me it was the kind of nation that adored profit at any cost and humiliation."

Here I finish because it's too early to know how it turns out, but I hope dearly that I will not be part of a culture that is one day ridiculed and reviled.

What appears above is a statement given on May 12 to the Subcommittee on Technology and the Law of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Since then there have been a few new developments. On the plus side Representative Richard Gephardt introduced a bill concerning the integrity of films that goes a long way to protect a film artist's moral rights. It specifically prohibits colorization without the permission of the director and writer (the guilds representing both are strongly allied on this question) and gives them the right to pass on this right to protect their work to their families in perpetuity. According to the bill, any colorization that takes place must be done under the guidance of a competent director. In mid-July Robert Kastenmeier, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Copyrights, will hold hearings on whether the United States should accept the rules of the Berne Convention, a treaty which, among other things, would affirm the moral rights of artists, including film artists.

A less heartening, but by no means fatal, development is that the existing copyright law has been recently interpreted by the US Copyright Office to mean that a colorized film can meet the standards for authorizing a new copyright. The standard does not necessarily require uniqueness or artistic merit on the part of the colorizer; it requires only a minimum amount of creative expression "by a human being." This means, for example, that one could take *Citizen Kane*, have someone colorize it, and then copyright it as one's own new creation—obviously a ridiculous notion, but it tells you something about whose rights come first in this country. The Copyright Office's interpretation is not a new law or a final decision in the battle for moral rights, but merely an application of the existing copyright law to a new process, colorization. It is the existing law itself that we are currently fighting to change.

The President, though once an actor, has not reacted to these issues with the same outrage as the members of the Screen Actor's Guild. The guild is strongly against colorization. The President, for his part, has found merit in the new process. When asked about the issue he spoke vaguely about new life (meaning new bucks?) for old black and white films, and he has so far failed to grasp the moral issues involved. No surprise.

It would help if people who care about these issues would write Congress and make their feelings known, not only about colorization, but about the moral rights of creative artists to their work. Senator Gephardt's bill is an excellent one and should be supported, but Congressman Kastenmeier should hear from citizens who believe that the moral rights of artists must be protected. It is a position that must be adopted by this country if we are ever to mature as a society. □

* "Colorization" is a brand name like Kleenex. One colors the black and white films, one does not "colorize" them; but "colorization" is a process patented by Hal Roach, and by being first on the scene has come to be the popularly accepted word to describe the process. Those in the business of "colorization" refer to the process as "color conversion."

de Vauban, which inspired a different kind of scandal, and a treatise on the education of women, published posthumously. He died before he could begin a proposed novel extolling the joys of family life. He never profited much from his exceptional novel, nor did he concern himself much with its reception after it was published. It made him more notorious than famous, and inspired various great ladies to announce that they would not receive him should he call on them. A copy bound with a blank spine was found among Marie Antoinette's effects.

Laclos might have come out of nowhere, but the same cannot be said of his book. *Les Liaisons* is very much in the current of eighteenth-century French literature. Most obviously, its epistolary form already characterized the two most popular novels of its day, Richardson's *Clarissa* and Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. It shares other characteristics with these works as well, Valmont, for example, having more than a little in common with Richardson's Lovelace. Many of the epigrammatic citations sprinkled throughout the book allude to the period's *romans galants*. These mildly prurient novels, frequently set in a mythic Orient, were all the rage, a sort of upper-class pulp. Even Voltaire and Diderot augmented their incomes by writing in the genre. At the other extreme, though often sharing writers and readers, were the *romans noirs*, a literature of corruption and ruin that ran the gamut from Diderot's *La Religieuse* to crude pornographic pamphlets detailing the lewd activities of prominent persons. These works can be seen as subterranean heralds of the Revolution.

Les Liaisons fits firmly into this latter genre; it is simply better realized than most. The sincere and hapless Présidente de Tourvel, for example, could be the twin of Diderot's nun Suzanne Simonin, whose family has had her cloistered for convenience and who is tossed helplessly between ascetics and sensualists, all of whom want to degrade and exploit her. Restif de la Bretonne's *Le Paysan perverti* is the epistolary chronicle of a naive youth's gradual corruption by older and richer persons who eventually transform him into a hardened debauchee who specializes in the debasing of devout women. Such works made the personal political out of necessity, speaking of sexual bondage in a society whose foundations rested on bondage. The master of the genre, of course, was Laclos's exact contemporary D.A.F. de Sade, who may not have been much of a stylist but who threw himself into the abyss with unmatched ferocity. Valmont and especially Merteuil bear a distinct family resemblance to his *monstres sacrés*, and indeed the setting and initial framework of *Les Liaisons* makes it sometimes seem like a better organized version of one of Sade's interminable sagas of the pleasures of crime, in particular the first version of *Justine*, a tale of sexual martyrdom. Sade must have been aware of this, perhaps rancorously so in the light of the success of *Les Liaisons*. Even his champion Gilbert Lély finds it strange that Sade omits mention of Laclos's book in his encyclopedic survey of French literature in the preface to *Les Crimes de l'amour*, and that he shortly thereafter went on to plot out an epistolary novel of his own.

Of course, the other distinction between Sade and Laclos is that the former is constantly testing the limits—of behavior, of retribution, of logic itself. His vast novels constantly prod and dare the reader, attempting to exhaust the reader to the point of a sort of conversion. Sade's response to horror is to wallow in it. Laclos, by contrast, appears a conventional moralist, but it is perhaps this feature that is the most critical. *Les Liaisons* turns from an alarming comedy into a tragedy with the appearance of love, and with the nearly simultaneous discovery that love is impossible, since it cannot compete with vanity, or gamesmanship, or the simulacrum of order provided by manners and the rules of discourse. Obstacles of this size can be overcome by nothing less than a general upheaval.

Christopher Hampton's choice of the novel seems similarly counter to prevailing winds. The notion that love might be antithetical to order is not a popular point of view these days. It is certainly revealing that many critics of the play have accused the adaptation of betraying the novel. Fidelity to the epistolary form being manifestly impossible in the theater, this is as good a way as any of saying that the book should remain safely between boards, and probably unread. To call a work a "classic" is very often to declare it inert. □

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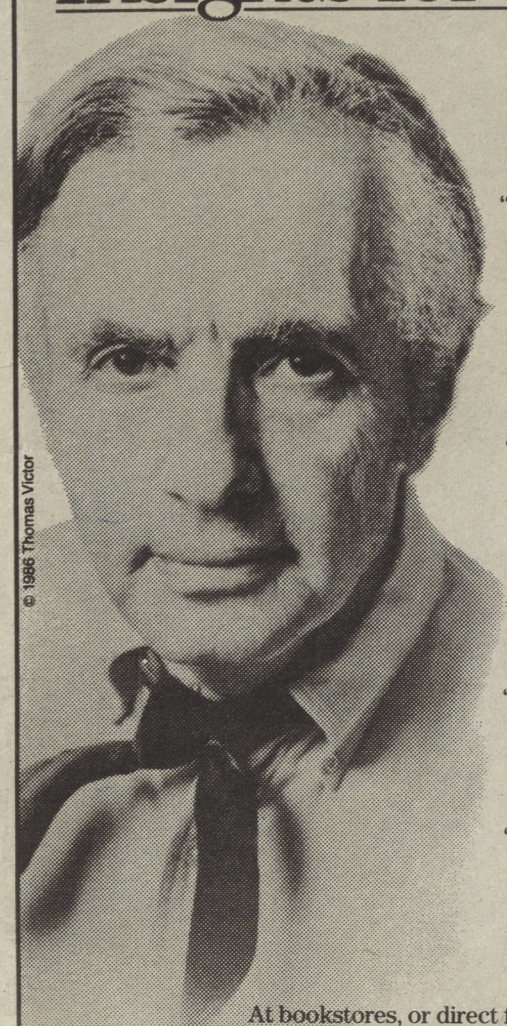

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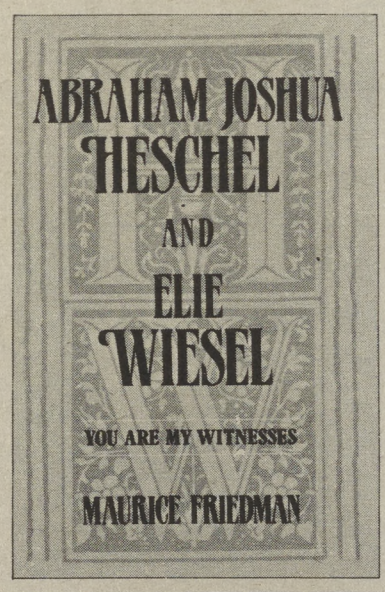

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Frederick Crews

Hemingway
by Kenneth S. Lynn.
Simon and Schuster, 702 pp., $24.95

1.

Kenneth S. Lynn's *Hemingway* is hardly a book that its subject would have enjoyed reading. If the touchy and pugnacious bruiser were still among us, Lynn would surely want to keep a bodyguard at his side for the next several years. Nevertheless, he has written not only one of the most brilliant and provocative literary biographies in recent memory, but also the study that Hemingway most urgently needs at this point in his critical fortunes.

Though superficial appearances indicate otherwise, Hemingway's literary stature continues to be subject to the downward revision that began on the day in 1961 when, depressed, paranoid, and stupefied by heavy doses of electroshock therapy, he blew out his brains with a shotgun blast. Throughout the Sixties and Seventies, feminists and others took their own shots at the tottering idol, whose cult of macho sporting values and stoic mannerisms began to seem hollow and foolish. So much insistence on correctness of attitude in the face of a melodramatically hostile fate; so much self-flattery in the creation of one autobiographical hero after another, always a god to his adoring woman; so much scorn for the weakling, the pervert, the aesthete, the castrating bitch! Wasn't the whole thing—and Hemingway's famous tight-lipped style along with it—a contemptible sham?

Today, when remoteness in time has begun to confer indulgence toward the writer's personal failings, we hear less of such talk. Instead, we find ourselves in the midst of what looks like a Hemingway boom. The Eighties have witnessed an enormous outpouring of biographies, specalized studies, dissertations, conferences, television specials, and mass-market reissues, along with further posthumous volumes of Hemingway's uncollected or abandoned work, sometimes forced into print with little regard for its quality or even its authenticity.

One may wonder, however, whether this flurry signifies a true reversal of the critical deflation or merely a scholarly and commercial feeding frenzy over the newly accessible Hemingwayana in collections at the John F. Kennedy Library, the University of Texas, and elsewhere. In large measure, what has been restored to us is Hemingway the celebrity—the figure that he himself, the supreme self-publicist of modern letters, created in the Thirties and shrewdly marketed through articles and interviews depicting a life of action, courage, and connoisseurship. It says something about our own shallow decade that so many of us are happy to revert to that trivial conception of our most influential novelist. In the long run, however, the resuscitation of the Hemingway legend will be seen to have merely postponed an inevitable reckoning. Quite simply, the legend is false; and its certain demise will leave Hemingway once again exposed to his most adamant detractors.

What Hemingway requires is an ideal reader who can discard everything that is meretricious in our image of him but then do justice to the literary art that remains. Put this way, the task sounds straightforward enough. The trouble is, however, that the reality behind the legend is so unpleasant in several respects that biographical debunkers have had no stomach for the work of critical reconstruction. From the former idolator Carlos Baker's reluctantly revelatory *Ernest Hemingway: A Life Story* to Bernice Kert's *The Hemingway Women* and Jeffrey Meyers's *Hemingway: A Biography*, those who have had the most eye-opening things to say about Hemingway the man have not cared even to attempt critical reformulations.[1]

After Kenneth Lynn's contribution, however, nothing will be the same in any

branch of Hemingway studies. Though his ambitious inquiry builds (with acknowledgment) on the work of other biographers, Lynn carries the process of demythification even farther than did Jeffrey Meyers, whose coolly objective and well-researched book has been treated in some quarters as a breach of decorum. We will see that no aspect of Hemingway's conduct, however intimate or embarrassing, escapes Lynn's clinical eye. Yet his intelligence is fully balanced by his humanity. Instead of merely refuting Hemingway's boasts, Lynn offers us our first cogent and sustained explanation of the psychological, familial, and environmental pressures that helped to make the willful yet deeply cautious author what he was. The result is an admirable combination of justice and compassion—but that is not all. In showing that Hemingway secretly entertained broader sympathies than his manly code implied, Lynn is able to return to the fiction with fresh appreciation.

To be sure, the Hemingway who emerges is a troubled and diminished figure in comparison with the mythic presence that once dominated our literary scene. But he is not the exposed fraud we have grown accustomed to meeting in ideological diatribes of recent decades. Rather, he is the Hemingway who once wrote to Scott Fitzgerald, "We are all bitched from the start and you especially have to be hurt like hell before you can write seriously. But when you get the damned hurt use it—don't cheat with it. Be as faithful to it as a scientist."

2.

To arrive at that vulnerable and exacting artist, we must first learn to forgo the Hemingway legend. But the task is not as easy as it looks. The legend, it is important to grasp, comes in two versions—in effect, one for the credulous mass public and one for relatively wary critics. If the simple version is clearly doomed, its more sophisticated counterpart still has plenty of eloquent defenders.

At the primary level, the legend says that Hemingway was a great sportsman, aficionado, and stoic, religiously devoted to maintaining poise in the face of mortal danger. This is the image cultivated by the surviving Hemingway clan for the sake of its business ventures, including Hemingway Ltd., a corporation formed to market the label "Hemingway" for use on tastefully chosen fishing rods, safari clothes, and (surely the ultimate triumph of greed over taste) shotguns.[2] In contrast, the critics' version of the legend is a limited exercise in damage control. It allows that the hero may have been morbid and fear-ridden but asserts that even his debilities were acquired in a noble, portentous manner—namely, in the traumatizing experience of being hit by shrapnel in World War I. Thanks to the wounding, Hemingway is awarded a red badge of tragic historical consciousness.

Although Lynn provides the most decisive refutation of both accounts, his conclusions about Hemingway the alleged sportsman were already implicit in other biographies. Scholars have known for some time that Hemingway—clumsy, weak-eyed, slow-footed, accident-prone, and, in the words of his third wife, Martha Gellhorn, "the biggest liar since Munchausen"—always talked a better game than he played. To hear him tell it, no subtlety of sport or combat had eluded his skills or analytic acumen. True specialists, however, were often unimpressed not only by his prowess but also by his claims to expertise.[3]

More important, Hemingway's sense of fair competition was stunted by irrational needs. As a recreational boxer, he became notorious for administering low blows and knees to the groin, mercilessly pounding smaller and weaker friends, sucker-punching one man who was still lacing his gloves, and doing the same to another—indeed, smashing his newly donned glasses—while the latter was *un*lacing a glove. After his eye–hand coordination had been sacrificed to alcoholism, he disgusted his hunting companions by claiming some of their kills as his own. And in recalling deep-sea fishing trips with the later Hemingway—who was fond of shooting at sharks with a machine gun or pistol, and who once wounded his own legs in the process—Arnold Gingrich characterized his overbearing friend as a "meat fisherman" who "cared more about the quantity than about the quality," disdained the true angler's concern for proper methods, and was all in all "a very poor sport." In his zeal to throw more punches, ski more recklessly, catch more fish, and slaughter more animals than anyone else, Hemingway was not a sportsman but a man possessed.

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[1] A conspicuous exception to the revisionist trend is Peter Griffin's *Along with Youth: Hemingway, the Early Years* (Oxford University Press, 1985), the most superficial of recent biographies. Griffin swallows the Hemingway legend so avidly that one wonders how, in his two unwritten volumes, he will manage to account for the not-so-pretty middle and late phases of his subject's life. Incidentally, the book comes with a glowing foreword by Hemingway's eldest son, Jack, the chairman of Hemingway Ltd. (see below).

[2] See Lance Morrow, "A Quarter-Century Later, the Myth Endures, *Time*, August 25, 1986, p. 70.

[3] Did Hemingway, for example, ever acquire the *afición* to which he laid claim from his very earliest days as a bullfight fan? The matador Luis Miguel Dominguín, who spent much time in his company, thought otherwise: "He knew more than most Americans but less than almost all Spaniards" (Jeffrey Meyers, *Hemingway: A Biography*, Harper and Row, Perennial Library Edition, 1986, p. 525). One thing the bloodthirsty Hemingway knew for sure, however, was that the picadors' horses ought to risk being disemboweled; he complained against the introduction of protective pads in 1928 (Meyers, p. 192).

If the writer's compulsive side is inescapable, however, its origins are still a theme of lively controversy. Under the influence of Malcolm Cowley, Philip Young, and Hemingway himself—who grudgingly came to find a certain utility in this line of argument—most commentators from the Forties until now have traced his psychic problems to the Austrian mortar shell which had allegedly shattered both his equanimity and his belief in public causes. As articulated in the backup legend, the famous incident at Fossalta di Piave at once attests to the hero's preternatural valor, imparts an agreeably leftward spin to his grandest themes (the emptiness of politicians' abstractions, the need for a separate peace), and provides a concrete external basis for the not-so-grand ones (night fears, loss of nerve, castration, impotence, nihilism).

Thanks to careful research by Lynn and, before him, Michael Reynolds, this story now stands exposed as a fiction.[4] Hemingway, it seems, grossly misrepresented the immediate aftermath of his wounding, when, with over 200 shell fragments lodged in his lower body, he allegedly carried a fellow victim 150 yards through machine-gun fire to safety, absorbing several direct hits but somehow picking himself back up and completing the herculean ordeal. The truth appears to be that young Ernest received many flesh wounds from shrapnel, that he showed solicitude for others while waiting to be evacuated, but that during his recovery he embroidered the story to compel maximum awe from parents, friends, and reporters, some of whom were even left with the impression that he had been a member of the Italian equivalent of the Green Berets rather than a Red Cross volunteer dispensing cigarettes and candy from a bicycle.

The most significant distortion, however, was not Hemingway's doing but that of critics enamored of the overworked "postwar disillusionment" or "wasteland" thesis. This banality has served to lend a darker, more mature tinge to the fiction of the Jazz Age, which at its best (*The Great Gatsby*, *The Sun Also Rises*) is thought to constitute a wise commentary on the moral collapse of the West. Since the books in question reflect scant historical analysis and are patently jejune in some respects, the critics' job has been to catch deeper echoes between the lines. In Fitzgerald's case this has been a losing cause; the carnage had ended before the would-be knight could sail for France in his custom-tailored Brooks Brothers uniform, much less get properly shot, and his novels of the Twenties exude an undisguisable combination of naive, wistful romanticism and sociopolitical indifference. Fossalta, in contrast, has provided the critics with copious servings of Hemingway helper.

Did Hemingway lose his boyish innocence in 1918, acquiring in short order a fissured psyche and a bitter sense of historical disillusionment? Lynn proposes that we need only consult surviving letters and photographs to see that, on the contrary, the teen-age adventurer was more elated than shattered by his brush with death. (One of the reproduced pictures, taken shortly after the explosion, discloses a buoyant, handsome youth, not quite nineteen, beaming triumphantly at the camera from his hospital bed in Milan.) "It does give you an awfully satisfactory feeling to be wounded," he wrote home. It was, he said in another letter, "the next best thing to getting killed and reading your own obituary"—a line that could have been spoken by Tom Sawyer. Obviously, Hemingway was trying to calm his parents' fears. Even so, the adeptness of his sprightly rhetoric sits poorly with the conventional idea of his thoroughly unnerved, shell-shocked condition.

As Meyers had already perceived, Hemingway's escape without so much as a broken bone "made him feel invincible,...made him want to challenge fate." Nothing in his subsequent conduct suggests that he returned from Italy with a subdued temper, much less a revulsion against killing or a grasp of the issues and ironies behind the war. No doubt the wounding did render him more "existential," heightening both his bravado and his morbidity. What it assuredly did not do, however, was to equip him with the insight and compassion that his friendliest commentators have wished to lend him. On the contrary, it appears to have launched him on a career of braggadocio and hedonistic thrill seeking (financed by other people's money) that would put him gravely out of touch with the social and political consciousness of later times.

For Hemingway's most compliant critics, however, thoughts of war and death are wonderfully ennobling. Consider, for example, their response to "Big Two-Hearted River," certainly an admirable work, but not necessarily one that reverberates with world-historical import. Especially since Malcolm Cowley's influential introduction to the *Portable Hemingway* in 1944, this story of a solitary trout-fishing expedition has been thought to depict its hero's struggle against an underlying panic stemming from the shell shock that figures in other Nick Adams stories written some years later. Hemingway himself belatedly claimed to have adopted this poignant way of reading his tale. "In the first war, *I now see*," he wrote to Cowley in 1948, "I was hurt very badly; in the body, mind and spirit; and also morally.... Big Two-Hearted River is a story about a man who is home from the war.... I was still hurt very badly in that story" (italics added).

In 1981, however, Kenneth Lynn had the temerity to point out that the published text of "Big Two-Hearted River" neither mentions the Great War nor alludes to it in any definite way, and that in this tale Nick Adams neither moves about nor thinks like a man who has recently undergone a physically and spiritually crippling trauma. His escape, through the satisfactions of expert camping and fishing, from an unstated preoccupation is all but complete. As for Cowley's thesis, Hemingway apparently saw in it an opportunity to put his anxieties into the past tense and assign them a public cause. Which reading requires fewer extraneous assumptions? Surely it makes sense, as Lynn urges, to be guided by the story itself rather than by the retrospective gloss that Cowley successfully urged upon the rarely veracious Hemingway.[5]

Nevertheless, Lynn's challenge to the "wound" reading has been received as a

[4]See Michael S. Reynolds, *Hemingway's First War* (Princeton University Press, 1976). This study and Reynolds's other scrupulous books, *Hemingway's Reading: 1910–1940* (Princeton University Press, 1981) and *The Young Hemingway* (Oxford University Press, 1986), have notably helped to restore the writer to human scale.

[5]Lynn maintains that the preoccupation lurking behind "Big Two-Hearted River" had to do not with the war but with

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virtual sacrilege. Two years ago, writing in *The New Republic*, R.W.B. Lewis sounded the alarm: "Lynn's critical attitude [toward "Big Two-Hearted River"], however absurd, was only incidental to a larger intention: to insist that American literature in general is and has been sun-drenched and happy, and wholly free of the dark Russian morbidity attributed to it by Cowley and his fellows."[6] This gratuitous claim can serve as a gauge of the passions that get involved not just with Hemingway criticism in general but specifically with the Fossalta question. For Lewis, Lynn's failure to be adequately pious about the crushing effects of the war constitutes nothing less than a "nativist" and reactionary program to break the links between the Continent and modern American literature in general.[7]

Hemingway's "postwar disillusionment," such as it was, proved to be a belated and derivative manifestation. *A Farewell to Arms* was published in 1929, long after the acclaimed antiwar novels by Dos Passos and Cummings and in the same year that Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* appeared in English. By then, a bitter view of the slogans of 1914 had become virtually obligatory as a token of tough-mindedness. Moreover, Lynn emphasizes that Lieutenant Frederic Henry's famous embarrassment over "the words sacred, glorious, and sacrifice" is represented not as a wartime revulsion but as a preexisting bias; that is the way he has "always" felt. Lynn's analysis concurs with a brilliant reading by Millicent Bell, which reveals the seeming pacifism of *A Farewell to Arms* to be a curiously private and psychologically regressive affair.

Similarly, Lynn reminds us that some of Hemingway's stories about the prewar Nick Adams already hint at the depressive anxiety with which the wounded Nick will have to contend. Far from maintaining that Hemingway's writings are "wholly free of...dark Russian morbidity," Lynn finds them typically saturated in a mood of indefinite resentment, pessimism, and urgency about maintaining control. Indeed, he takes that mood far more seriously than do critics who try to derive it from Hemingway's alleged awareness of failings in modern capitalist civilization. The writer's politics, Lynn repeatedly shows, were suggestible and riddled with inconsistencies. His psychic makeup, on the other hand, was invariable—and deeply strange.

3.

The prime article of faith for Hemingway's cultists is of course his thoroughgoing maleness. Already in his lifetime, however, that was a topic of considerable speculation. James Joyce saw the brash American as "the sensitive type" trying to pass for tough. A colleague on the Toronto *Star* who knew him at age twenty remarked, "A more weird combination of quivering sensitiveness and preoccupation with violence never walked this earth." "What a book," hissed the novelist's former confidante Gertrude Stein, "would be the real story of Hemingway, not those he writes but the confessions of the real Ernest Hemingway. It would be for another audience than the audience Hemingway now has but it would be very wonderful." And Zelda Fitzgerald, never one for nuances, went much farther, calling Hemingway's he-man posture "phony as a rubber check," characterizing him as "a pansy with hair on his chest," and even voicing a suspicion that he and Scott had been sexually intimate. The idea lacks credibility, but Zelda was prescient in divining that Hemingway's masculine identity was far from secure.

One of Hemingway's most constant traits was his compulsion to demean the sexual credentials of others—usually people who had wounded his literary or erotic vanity. In stories, novels, and poems he skewered friends and enemies alike, taking pains to make them easily recognizable and portraying them as impotent or homosexual. Four years after Max Eastman had publicly drawn the obvious conclusion from such sniping—that "Hemingway lacks the serene confidence that he *is* a full-sized man"—the wounded lion cornered Eastman in Maxwell Perkins's office, yelled, "What do you mean accusing me of impotence?" and physically assailed him.

But there is evidence that Hemingway did suffer from recurrent impotence in his four marriages, and his pre- and extramarital amours either quickly fizzled or never progressed beyond hand holding. As soon as he and Pauline had become spouses, he confessed to A.E. Hotchner, "I could no more make love than Jake Barnes." "I wish to hell it were true," said Mary when asked if her husband had been a magnificent lover. Throughout his adulthood Hemingway's relations with women were characterized not by the libidinal freedom of which he bragged but by a babyish, demanding dependency punctuated by sulks, tantrums, and flights to the next would-be protectress.

To say this much about Hemingway's sexual misery is to bring the story up to Kenneth Lynn's point of departure. As Lynn insists, more needs to be established about Hemingway's sexuality if we are to account for the peculiar tremulousness of his fiction. Ever since news of the *Garden of Eden* manuscripts began spreading a decade ago, it has been widely suspected that his secret theme was androgyny—and this has now become the leading motif of Lynn's *Hemingway*.

Androgyny is named just once in Hemingway's published work, in a startlingly sympathetic discussion of El Greco in *Death in the Afternoon*. The painter, Hemingway wrote, "could go as far into his other world as he wanted and, consciously or unconsciously, paint...the androgynous faces and forms that filled his imagination." Now, thanks to Lynn's carefully reasoned analysis, Hemingway's own "other world" has become sufficiently distinct to be beyond conjecture.

Exhibit A, of course, is the posthumous *Garden of Eden*, a work whose dissociated effect can be explained in part, but only in part, by the collage-like job of editing that was required to make it look like a consecutive story.[8] But even this composite text, screened by Hemingway's second son, Patrick, for any hints of the unsavory,[9] is manifestly about androgyny.

What made *The Garden of Eden* printable from the family's standpoint was no doubt the fact that two female characters, not the Hemingwayesque writer-hero, instigate the story's kinky games. All the bisexual impulses that are overtly represented belong to David Bourne's maniacal bride Catherine and their mutual friend Marita, a lesbian whom Catherine praises as "a girl and boy both." Superficially, it is not David's (or Hemingway's) fault that he and Catherine are taken for brother and sister, or that Catherine keeps cutting her hair like a boy's, or that she gets him to dye his own hair—thus turning him into her same-sex twin—or that her ultimate fantasy in bed is to trade roles with him. And of course David is just obeying instructions from Catherine—though with telltale alacrity!—when he has sex with

---

Hemingway's mother, who had expelled him from the family home after a bitter quarrel. Lynn could have added that in a rambling, subsequently canceled ending to the story, Nick does mention the war—but in a way that is the very reverse of portentous and traumatized. "The movies ruined everything," Nick muses. "Like talking about something good. That was what had made the war unreal. Too much talking." To judge from the canceled soliloquy, Nick's only nonfishing concerns in that draft of the story were his thoughts about the good old days in Michigan, Paris, and Spain and his ingenuous literary ambitions: "He wanted to be a great writer.... It was really more fun than anything." See *The Nick Adams Stories* (Scribner's, 1972), pp. 237, 238.

[6] R.W.B. Lewis, "Who's Papa?" *The New Republic*, December 2, 1985, p. 34.

[7] Ironically, however, Lewis had already accepted (from Jeffrey Meyers's biography) the largely unflattering picture of Hemingway's personality that has now been fully developed by Lynn. "With his incessant rages and quarreling, his cruelties, his stupefyingly boring literary and sexual boasting," wrote Lewis, "Hemingway emerges as perhaps the least simpatico figure in the annals of twentieth-century letters" (p. 34). It is precisely because he finds himself saddled with an otherwise monstrous Hemingway, one gathers, that Lewis wants to keep the war myth intact.

[8] *The Garden of Eden* is the most egregious example of a longstanding policy on the part of Scribner's and the surviving Hemingways: to reorder or even reconceive the writer's unfinished work, to encourage readers to believe that the resultant text closely matches the manuscripts, and to deny scholars access to those manuscripts until the royalties are safely in the bank. Readers of the published *Garden of Eden* were not told that their "new Hemingway novel" of 247 pages had been excavated by the unmentioned editor, Tom Jenks, from miscellaneous segments of a 1200-page draft containing two tragic endings, neither of which was deemed sufficiently upbeat for inclusion in the published book. (Two further abortive drafts totaling 700 pages were apparently ignored.) Nor could anyone tell from the book that in the manuscripts Hemingway's autobiographical hero, David Bourne, does not in fact remain a fresh young writer but grows to the unromantic age of sixty and touchingly suffers from the same anxieties and self-recriminations that tormented his creator in his pathetic final decade. See Barbara Probst Solomon, "Where's Papa?" *The New Republic*, March 9, 1987, pp. 30–34.

[9] "'I was so pleased with it,' says Patrick. 'I'd heard that it was full of these dark sexual secrets, but I found it to be rather a *sunny* book'" (Eric Pooley, "Papa's New Baby," *New York*, April 28, 1986, p. 60).

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the boy-girl Marita, who has recently come from a lesbian encounter with Catherine.

A gullible reader could overlook the motiveless, masturbatory quality of this transformational daisy chain and imagine that Hemingway was merely venting some of his usual misogyny. But as Lynn makes us aware, the same theme of sex-crossing and even some of the same language can be found in other fictions dating back to the Twenties. In that nominal war novel *A Farewell to Arms*, another and more celebrated Catherine proposes that she and her man get identical haircuts:

> "Then we'd both be alike. Oh darling, I want you so much I want to be you too."
>
> "You are. We're the same one."

In *For Whom the Bell Tolls* it is the Hemingway stand-in, Robert Jordan, who takes enough of a recess from preparing to kill fascists to suggest that he and Maria "go together to the coiffeur's" and be rendered indistinguishable. While cuddling they tell each other, "I am thee and thou art me." And in *Islands in the Stream* it is once again the woman (does it really matter?) who leads:

> "Should I be you or you be me?"
> "You have first choice."
> "I'll be you."
> "I can't be you. But I can try."

Such passages make it difficult to doubt that an imagined switching of sex roles constituted the heart of Hemingway's erotic ideal. And, as Lynn goes on to show, the nonfictional record is entirely consistent with the fictional one.

This is not to say that the strident homophobe Hemingway was disposed toward literally bisexual activities. Whatever he wanted from eros, he sought it from women alone. Lynn shows, however, that the sexual inclinations of women themselves were of more than ordinary interest to him. Hemingway found himself libidinally drawn to lesbians—even to the butch and burly Gertrude Stein, who told her rapt apprentice about women's ways with women and taught him how to crop the hair of his first wife, Hadley. His second wife, Pauline, took female lovers (including Elizabeth Bishop) after Hemingway abandoned her, and in happier days he gloried in her boyishness, just as he had done with his sporting chum Hadley. With all four wives he exhibited the same fetishism of hair length and color, seeking twinlike effects with himself, and in 1947 he startled his Cuban hangers-on by giving his own locks a henna rinse—a practice which, in *Death in the Afternoon*, he had explicitly and contemptuously associated with homosexuality.

As for his most intimate preferences, Hemingway evidently fancied an unclimactic fondling that evoked both infantile passivity and gender confusion. As Hadley once asked in a letter, "Remember how we both tried to be the little, small, petted one the last night on the roof?" At some later point in Hemingway's impotence-ridden erotic life, the petting seems to have evolved into what psychiatrists used to label a perversion—that is, a primary replacement for genital intercourse. In a diary entry of 1953, the writer asserted that Mary "has always wanted to be a boy" and that she "loves me to be her girls [sic], which I love to be." She had recently initiated him into an embrace that he characterized as "quite new and outside all tribal law."

Hemingway was working on *The Garden of Eden* during that period, and, as Lynn proposes, we can turn to the published text for more enlightenment. After Catherine gets her first cropping ("I'm a girl. But now I'm a boy too and I can do anything and anything and anything"), David lies beneath her and helps to guide her hand lower and lower until he feels only "the weight and the strangeness inside," whereupon she announces, "You're my girl Catherine. Will you change and be my girl and let me take you?" Lynn doesn't spell out the nature of this "taking," but we can find the answer in a mock interview (first singled out for attention by Jeffrey Meyers) that

Ernest Hemingway, a month before his second birthday, Oak Park, Illinois, June 1901

Hemingway improvised for Mary's amusement in 1953:

> Reporter: "Mr. Hemingway, is it true that your wife is a lesbian?"
>
> Papa: "Of course not. Mrs. Hemingway is a boy."
>
> Reporter: "What are your favorite sports, sir?"
>
> Papa: "Shooting, fishing, reading and sodomy."
>
> Reporter: "Does Mrs. Hemingway participate in these sports?"
>
> Papa: "She participates in all of them."[10]

The manually sodomized partner, we can infer, was Hemingway himself.

4.

If Ernest Hemingway felt himself to be in essence "a girl and boy both," how did he get that way? And what prompted him to encase his androgynous core in a suit of hypermasculine armor? Though any answers must be speculative, Lynn shows us some remarkable and touching correlations between what was done to the writer in his earliest years and the volatile and unhappy man that he became.

Lynn has realized more fully than anyone thus far that the place to begin looking for explanatory clues about Hemingway's values and predilections is not Fossalta or Paris or Pamplona but Oak Park, Illinois, where he grew up. We now know that he felt himself continually judged against the local standards of sobriety, chastity, decorum, refined culture, and Protestant altruism—standards that had been impressed upon the dutiful cello student and choirboy by both his puritanical and capriciously punitive father and his ambitious, domineering mother. Like Oak Park's other world-class maverick, Frank Lloyd Wright, the mature Hemingway dramatically flouted those standards. In doing so, however, he remained caught in an anxious, resentful quarrel with them.

If Frederic Henry has "always" gagged on words like *sacrifice* and *glory*, that may be because they were instruments of intimidation in his creator's early years; and they remained so as both parents continued to express dismay over their famous son's freedom of language and theme. ("What is the matter?" wrote Grace Hemingway upon first looking into *The Sun Also Rises*. "Have you ceased to be interested in loyalty, nobility, honor and fineness of life?") Once out of Illinois, Hemingway took pains to reverse every feature of Oak Park respectability, even to the extent of encouraging his son Gregory to get repeatedly drunk on hard liquor at age ten and of renting a Cuban prostitute to relieve his other son Jack of his hypothetical (but long departed) virginity at age nineteen. Yet no parent could have been less forgiving than Hemingway's own conscience in damning him for trading on his charm, wasting his time and talent, surrounding himself with flatterers, and marinating his brain in Scotch. Wherever he fled, Oak Park waited in ambush for him.

When Hemingway wrote about scenes from boyhood, they were set not in that priggish Anglophile suburb but in the woods and remote towns of northern Michigan where he had passed his relatively unconstrained summers. The rural outdoors was his father's masculine territory—the only area where Dr. Clarence ("Ed") Hemingway, in his teenage son's view, had found even a partial refuge from their mutual nemesis, Grace. The author-to-be saw his "Papa" as the cowed and castrated husband par excellence, broken in spirit by a woman who arrogated male authority and who squandered the family's resources on lavish, ego-preening projects. In some of his Nick Adams stories Hemingway alluded to Ed Hemingway's weakness, implicitly put the blame on Grace, and represented his own impressionable self in terms that suggested an already desperate wish to escape a comparable fate.

As Bernice Kert has demonstrated in *The Hemingway Women*, Grace Hemingway possessed several constructive traits that her son chose to overlook. She was more tolerant of boyish mischief than her husband was and, unlike him, she was more concerned to reward achievement than to lash out against impropriety and sin. Ernest's literary precocity was not just a gift but a tribute to her encouragement and tutelage. For these very reasons, however, his lifelong, virulent, well-documented hatred of the mother he always called "that bitch" must be regarded in a symptomatic light. Like his father, and in a pattern that stretched back and ahead through four unlucky generations, Ernest was constitutionally depressive. In laying his nervous melancholy at Grace's door and arming his mind against all Circes everywhere, the writer was attempting to externalize and forestall a doom that may have been imprinted in his genes.

If nature supplies the flawed clay, however, it is nurture that molds the features into a unique image. Here is where Lynn's *Hemingway* stakes its boldest claim to originality: in showing how pervasively the writer's mind was ruled by his sense of what Grace had done to him. The story is bizarre, and some readers will want to put it down to gratuitous Freudianizing on the biographer's part. But Lynn is not in fact rehearsing Oedipal universals or purporting to trace repressed infantile memories; he is merely reconstructing the inferences that Hemingway himself drew as he coped with his mother's conduct, pored over the scrapbook she had compiled about his childhood, and pondered the rumors about her that were common gossip in Oak Park.

Those rumors said that Grace Hemingway enjoyed a lesbian relationship with her young voice pupil and housekeeper Ruth Arnold, who lived with the family for eleven years until Ed, who took the gossip seriously enough to become alarmed, screwed up his courage for once and ordered Ruth out of the house. (The juggernaut Grace was safely off in Michigan at the time.) Ernest Hemingway was twenty years old and in a sullenly rebellious frame of mind when he witnessed the ensuing parental showdown and took his father's side; but throughout his adolescence he must have known what people were whispering. After Ed's suicide the two women stirred further talk, and further resentment from Ernest, by

[10] Mary Welsh Hemingway, *How It Was* (Knopf, 1976), p. 368.

Letters

NYTBR aug 23, '87

What's Left Out, and Who

To the Editor:

Charles Newman's essay "What's Left Out of Literature" (July 12) is one of the most insightful pieces on modern American fiction that I've read. I found myself agreeing with his analyses and struck by their acuity, but his interpretation leaves room for question.

Several of his observations, such as that on a "sense of diminishing control . . . and generalized helplessness," might have been made with reference to Kafka's work. Kafka was among the first truly modern writers, but the length of time between his days and ours suggests that modern literature is indeed reflecting an enduring social change. That endurance, and along with it the consistent appearance of Kafkaesque themes and even methods, belie the "oblique investigation of social class" that Mr. Newman proposes.

Mr. Newman bemoans "slide-show writing," but what he leaves out is television. Television and time have together caught up with literature, in a sense. Not only don't we want description layered on description because of our alleged attention spans, but, quite simply — *it's been done.* Hence the "withholding [of] information." There is a sense of haste in modern writers. Stopping to describe the moonlight in all its glory feels too much like mannerism in the writer and rebukes the desire to move on in the reader.

Literature will survive television, will perhaps bend, with the language, to fit our changing sense of its place. Mr. Newman writes: "If this fiction is bad, it is not bad within any of the categories of badness that we have. It is untraceable to either high or popular culture." In other words, it is *new* — or at least leading us to something new — and it *is* tracing the lines of recent change. They, like modern fiction, move very quickly. Someday history will no doubt blithely consign today's fiction to its age, for reasons barely known to us now. Mr. Newman has articulated several.

JOHN C. RICHARDS
Beverly Hills, Calif.

To the Editor:

Charles Newman's essay is riddled with bad faith and absurdities, so I'll have to confine myself to a few examples.

First, to lump Jayne Anne Phillips, hardly a minimalist, in with Ann Beattie and Raymond Carver, and to represent them all with a quotation from Bret Easton Ellis is bad faith, worse reading.

Second, Mr. Newman starts by slamming the minimalists as affecting an "obdurate unsurprised and unsurprising plain style that passes for a new realism," another "American false innocence," and concludes by calling minimalism a "chronicle of a climactic shattering of cultural bonds and social retrogression." Well, is it "passing" for realism or is it a realistic depiction of contemporary society? Does Mr. Newman dislike the teller or the tale?

And then there's the tone: "Fiction of course has its fashions," says Mr. Newman from on high. He proceeds to claim that "the self-conscious mode that drove so much interesting fiction for the last 20 years is no longer with us." Oh? Has Mr. Newman read Paul Auster's "New York Trilogy" — extremely self-conscious and quite skilled? Like so many people who write about contemporary literature, Mr. Newman makes the points he wants to make by singling out the minimalist group and ignoring the many, many others — maximalists like T. Coraghessan Boyle, say, or Vikram Seth.

Yes, minimalism has its irritating tics. But to make these sweeping statements doesn't engage the problem but takes the increasingly popular Allan Bloom approach — sneering at the modern world from the false safety of Western Civilization, the exact thing that brought us into this mess.

Writers like Jayne Anne Phillips, Edna O'Brien, Vikram Seth, T. Coraghessan Boyle and many others, even Ann Beattie, are trying to gather meaning out of this chaotic world without forcing it into some kind of box (we've all read too much Jacques Derrida or his equivalent for that). It takes many hesitations, suspended judgments and evasions to reach "truth" these days, especially for people of my generation, who are very skeptical of any claims to the absolute. To sneer at them, especially from the place of "high culture," is to deny the very thing you claim to be arguing for — which makes it obvious that what really irritates Mr. Newman isn't that culture has stopped, but that it is going on without him.

JOHN H. RICHARDSON
North Hollywood, Calif.

Librarians and Aborigines

To the Editor:

I take umbrage at Andrew Harvey's remarks in his review of "The Songlines" by Bruce Chatwin (Aug. 2). Mr. Harvey states that Mr. Chatwin influenced English writers "to mock and avoid a literary establishment that loves to reward poems to goldfish and novels about the tepid lusts of women librarians." I leave it to someone else to defend the goldfish; however, the latter part of Mr. Harvey's sentence clearly refers to Anita Brookner's fine novel about a woman librarian, "Look at Me." It is the genius of a writer like Ms. Brookner that she entrances us with her librarians and their lusts, tepid as they may seem to one too insensitive to see beneath the surface.

PAMELA ALTFELD MALONE
Leonia, N.J.

To the Editor:

Andrew Harvey's otherwise excellent review of "The Songlines" states that "we are never taken into the heart of [the aborigines'] rituals or imagination . . . as D. H. Lawrence did with the Mexican Indians in 'The White Peacock.' " Actually, "The White Peacock," Lawrence's first novel, was published in 1911 and is set in England. It is in "The Plumed Serpent," which appeared in 1926, that Lawrence gave his interpretation of the culture of the Mexican Indians.

MARGARET HAGLER
Aurora, Colo.

Going First in Large Numbers

To the Editor:

As one of the physicians described by Lawrence K. Altman in his book "Who Goes First?" I take strong exception to part of the review by Fitzhugh Mullan (June 28). Dr. Mullan represents that self-experimentation is passé because "many of the most important questions that we face are questions that will have to be answered by populations and not individuals." But populations consist of individuals, and it is individuals who are now engaging in self-experimentation in both the examples Dr. Mullan gives:

- The studies of passive smoke are being carried out on the offspring of parents who volunteer themselves and their offspring to be in the study; many parents do not volunteer. The parents and children who do volunteer are "going first."
- The relationship between alcohol and breast cancer is being worked out on 89,000 volunteer nurses in a prospective study carried out by Walter C. Willett and his Harvard associates and published earlier this year in The New England Journal of Medicine. All these volunteers are "going first."

Similarly, Charles Hennekens at Harvard is carrying out a study with 16,000 volunteer physicians, half of whom are eating each day a tablet of beta-carotene and half of whom are not, in an attempt to determine whether beta-carotene is significantly protective against cancer. We don't really know whether beta-carotene tablets are helpful, worthless or harmful; this 10-year study involves 16,000 physicians who are "going first" to find out.

VICTOR HERBERT
Bronx

A Language to Live In

THE CASUALTY
By Heinrich Böll.
Translated by Leila Vennewitz.
189 pp. New York:
Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $16.95.

By Russell A. Berman

IN one of Heinrich Böll's most famous stories, the narrator, a young soldier just wounded in the final days of World War II, describes a makeshift military hospital. From his stretcher he sees enough of the hallways to recognize that the building formerly served as a high school, a classical *Gymnasium*, for the walls are adorned with busts of Cicero and Caesar, paintings of Prussian kings and imposing portraits of Friedrich Nietzsche and Adolf Hitler.

Yet not until he reaches the drawing room, now converted into an operating room, does he realize that this is his own erstwhile school, which he had left only weeks before. Penmanship had been taught in the drawing room, and he catches sight of his own handwriting on the blackboard, the scrawled phrase that gives the story its title: "Traveller, if You Come to Spa . . ."; it is the epitaph of the Spartans who fell at Thermopylae, broken off in the middle of a word. And just as he reads the truncated verse, the surgeon amputates the hands with which he had written it, in an allegory of the writer in postwar Germany, for whom national history led directly to a destruction so cataclysmic that it thoroughly discredited the cultural tradition.

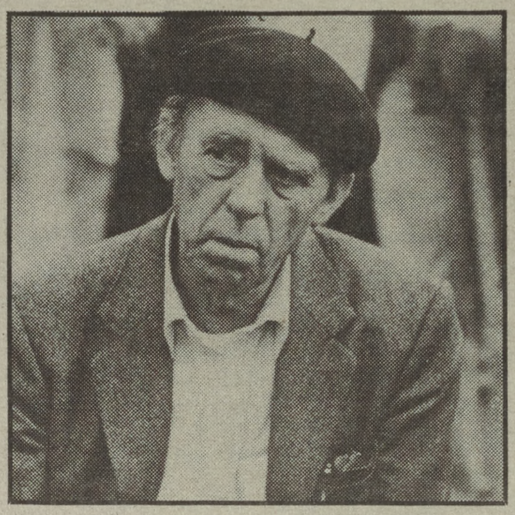
It was henceforth more plausible to assert that literature itself had become impossible than to imagine culture proceeding as it had in the past, from Cicero to Nietzsche and Hitler; or, in the words of one of Böll's unlikely critical admirers, Theodor W. Adorno, "writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric."

That allegorical writer is of course Böll himself, who commenced his literary career with an adamant rejection of the political fantasies and cultural pretenses that had led to the catastrophe that was Nazi Germany. The result was not, however, a simple tendentiousness. On the contrary, Böll avoids political exhortations and the "heroic realism" of fascist writing. Instead he opts for material from everyday life — stories of common soldiers, inhabitants of the bombed-out cities, and later the population of the West German *Wirtschaftswunder*, struggling with the problems of a new and sometimes labile democracy. Chronicling that society, he judges it, since, as he put it in his Frankfurt lectures on poetics in 1964, "morality and esthetics turn out to be congruent and indivisible."

• • •

Other authors, like Günter Grass, translated this moral urgency into activism for the Social Democrats. Böll shied away from such partisanship, since his whole literary identity entailed a moral commitment to the "search for an inhabitable language in an inhabitable country." His initial concentration on antiwar themes therefore led in the 1950's to a critique of the conservatism of the Roman Catholic Church (while his own ethical passion derives largely from the radicalism of Catholic social teaching). Later he befriended East European dissidents and West German radicals hounded by a tabloid press not concerned with the niceties of due process. Because he defended civil rights, he was accused of supporting terrorism; such attacks probably contributed to a sense of resignation in the last years before his death in 1985. His opponents labelled him pejoratively a *Sympathisant*, which translates roughly as "bleeding heart"; it does indeed point to a core of Böll's work, the capacity for human sympathy.

Russell A. Berman, who teaches German at Stanford University, is the author of "The Rise of the Modern German Novel: Crisis and Charisma."



Heinrich Böll.

The 22 stories collected in "The Casualty," written between 1946 and 1952, were not published in Germany until 1983. None of them measures up to the best of Böll's early fiction. The young author seems not yet in full control of his material. Some texts, like the title story, wander and lose their impact, while others sound overstated and hollow. Yet precisely this lack of polish makes the collection interesting, shedding light on the emergence of the major voice in West German literature. One can watch Böll explore the several literary languages that suddenly become available after 1945: fragments of Expressionist prose from Weimar Germany, Surrealist turns of plot from the European avant-garde and some of the hard-nosed realism of the American short story. Usually he was read, with reference to that last component, only as the German heir to Faulkner and Hemingway, but this early work transforms one's understanding of the later, mature fiction, in which the moments of fantasy, the grotesque and the uncanny take on a new significance: the chronicler Böll turns out to be the modern E. T. A. Hoffmann.

THESE stories, translated by Leila Vennewitz in a fine rendering, as always, of Böll's German, vividly present the two overriding concerns of the young Böll: the impact of the war on the individual soldier and the experience of poverty in the immediate postwar period. In fact, the war material assumes an uncharacteristically violent shape in two stories, "The Murder" and "Vive la France," which both describe enlisted men who, just trying to survive, assassinate their officers. It is an irony of West German history that the author who provided such compelling accounts of mutinies in the Nazi army would be accused 30 years later of aiding and abetting terrorists. Many of the postwar stories display a fundamental structure of Böll's ethical thought, the tension-alienated structures of social organization and a utopian realm of genuine human interaction, "the humanity bred by misery." The philosopher Jürgen Habermas in his work addresses much the same conflict between institutional systems and the life and world of communities, and Böll's fiction turns out to be social theory in disguise, a theory of the difficulties of German democracy and of the possibilities of human community in the modern world. □

Author's Query

For a biography of the composer Marc Blitzstein (1905-64), I would appreciate hearing from anyone who has letters, photographs, diary entries or reminiscences.

ERIC GORDON
174 West 89th Street, Apt. 5B
New York City 10024

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About New York

Manhattanites' Memorial Day Races

NYT

By WILLIAM E. GEIST May 24, 1986

Harvey Kaplan, mild-mannered Manhattan psychotherapist, leaped into a sporty black Thunderbird with red pin stripes yesterday at Budget Rent-a-Car.

He flipped on the radio, gave a little wave and put the car into — "Reverse! The car's in reverse!" yelled an attendant. Mr. Kaplan shifted gears and lurched out into a blaze of brake lights for the holiday weekend.

The manager of the Budget office on 48th Street, Bill Southerland, winced now and again yesterday as his 300 pristine automobiles left the garage for the Memorial Day weekend: Skylark after Somerset after Caravelle after Laser.

The Friday before the Memorial Day weekend marks the opening of the rental-car season, expected to be one of the busiest ever because of lower gasoline prices and the propensity this year for domestic travel. Virtually all the estimated 7,500 rental cars available in Manhattan were expected to be rented yesterday — most of them to Manhattanites who do not drive very often and who will be turned loose on terribly congested highways.

"Manhattan," the owner of the nine Budget offices in Manhattan, George Babcock, said, "has a high percentage of, shall we say, relatively inexperienced drivers. People don't drive in the city."

"What is dull routine in the rest of the country," said Jill Reading, renting a car yesterday, "is an adventure in motoring here."

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The people lining up at 7 A.M. yesterday to rent cars said that frequent escape was an essential part of living in New York.

"The place drives you bananas!" in Mr. Kaplan's professional opinion.

Those in line yesterday carried dogs, cats, birds, water skis, charcoal grills, fishing tackle, kites and inner tubes.

Mr. Southerland planned to rent all his cars and just close up and go fishing until late Monday, when his cars will return to the fold sporting nicks, scratches, bumps and dents.

Left behind in the cars will be sand, seashells, suntan lotion, beer cans, forgotten fishing tackle and the occasional fish. A few of the Lincoln Town Cars will come back with rice from weddings, and some will have the rental-car window sticker scraped off. "Those are the ones from reunions," Mr. Southerland said, "where they want people to think they own a Lincoln."

Employees of rental-car concerns in Manhattan said they had seen it all, including cars returned with drugs, pets or machine guns left in them. The risk manager for Manhattan Budget Rent-a-Car, Gina McIntosh, recalled the car returned with bullet holes in it, the car that had backed into a plane, the one reported stuck in a cave and the one they had to fish out of the Hudson River. "That," she said, "we did not appreciate."

A customer returning a car riddled with bullet holes in New York, she added, is automatically placed on ther unpreferred-customers list.

"You cross your fingers that the cars come back in one piece," said Mr. Southerland, who wears ties and sweaters inscribed "Budget," and who somehow remained unruffled amid the mayhem around him. He knows there will be the inevitable discussions Monday evening about whether the customer hit the deer or the deer viciously attacked the car. "New Yorkers get in all kind of trouble when they get out of the city," he said.

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Many do not get far, a few ramming into poles and walls in the garage before they even get out to the street. Mr. Southerland explains it as "the Manhattan Weekend Driver Syndrome."

Mr. Southerland recalled the renter towed out of a cornfield in New England last year. "He drove through the field on purpose," he said. "I think he'd had too much fresh air."

"We hear some real doozies," said Linda Carter, who works behind the counter. She recalled the man who returned a Tempo that was was "totaled," in her view, with all the windows busted out and the front end smashed in. " 'I don't know what could have happened,' " she recalled him saying. " 'I ran in the house for a minute, and when I came back out, this is the way it was.' "

"Come off it," was Miss Carter's reply.

She said another customer that day wanted a discount because there was no cigarette lighter in his Town Car and claimed he had nothing with which to light his campfires. "You rented a Lincoln Town Car to go camping?" Mr. Southerland asked.

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Some customers in lines at various rental outlets yesterday said they had complaints on occasion, too, such as an office being out of cars, even when they had reserved a car, or climbing into a car that had not been cleaned.

A good rule of thumb is that the customer will want the car in the back of the garage. When that happened yesterday, Mr. Southerland pleaded: "Please, sir, not that one. Give us some justice here. How about that nice blue one up front?"

The customer laughed, because Mr. Southerland delivers his lines like a comedian. "You gotta be nice in New York," he explained, "and keep on being nice, until gradually you wear them down.

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Home

The New York Times/Robert Levin; collage by Karen Zaremba; calligraphy by Anita Karl

an Revival daybed sets the scene in Ronald Bricke's guest room for an archeologist.

Fantasy as a Way of Life

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Henry Rutgers Marshall in a neo-Georgian style. Mrs. Ford sold the house in 1907, five years after her husband was murdered there by his brother. The Kerrigan family bought the house in the late 1920's, and gave it its many Spanish motifs.

In the late 40's, the once-romantic house was converted into small, dingy offices. But for the show house, those rooms are now filled with flowers and decorated in both tastefully subdued and exuberant styles. From turn-of-the-century England to ancient Egypt, they evoke exotic lands and periods. None are contemporary in furnishings or style, and as a whole they look backward rather than forward for inwanted to bring "the incredible detailing of the Art Deco period into the late 20th century."

There is also what Mr. Montoya called "the influence of Mayan architecture, a bit of high tech and lots of romance." Christian Granvelle, a French artist who created the sweeping fresco paintings in the room, said he tried to follow that feeling with his wall designs. Morocco, Crete, Egypt and a bit of ancient Mexico are the other locations Mr. Granvelle cited as inspiration. The glass-sided, patinated bronze bathtub was intriguing, but does it have running water? "I wish it did," the designer said with a sigh. "If it did, that's just where you would find me."

Ethereal and otherworldly in feeling, the

Hers

Mary Morris

JOHN GARDNER once said that there are only two plots in all of literature: you go on a journey, or the stranger comes to town. Since women, for so many years, were denied the journey, we were left with only one plot to our lives — to await the stranger. Indeed, there is no picaresque tradition among women who are novelists. Women's literature, from Austen to Woolf, is mostly about waiting, usually for love. Denied the freedom to roam outside themselves, women turned inward, into their emotions.

For centuries it was frowned upon for women to travel without escort, chaperone or husband. To journey was to put one at risk not only physically but morally. A little freedom could be a dangerous thing. Erica Jong chose well when she picked the metaphor of fear of flying to describe the tremulous outset of a woman's sexual liberation. The language of sexual initiation is oddly similar to the language of travel. We speak of sexual "exploits" or "adventures." Both body and globe are objects for exploration and the great "explorers," whether Marco Polo or Don Juan, have been men.

By contrast, I find it revealing that the bindings in women's corsets were called "stays." Someone who wore stays wouldn't be going far. The binding of feet in the Orient or corseting of the body in the West were ways of restricting women's movement. There is an interesting reference to stays in the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who went to Turkey with her husband in 1716. Upon visiting a Turkish bath where the women implored her to undress, Lady Mary wrote, "I was forced at last to open my shirt and shew them my stays; which satisfied them very well for, I saw, they believed I was so locked up in that machine that it was not in my own power to open it, which contrivance they attributed to my husband."

• • •

It was my mother who made a traveler out of me, not so much because of where she went as because of her yearning to go. She bought globes and maps and planned dream journeys she'd never take, while her real life was ensconced in the P.T.A., the Girl Scouts, suburban lawn parties and barbecues. She had many reasons — and perhaps excuses — for not going anywhere, but her main reason was that my father would not go.

My parents were once invited to a Suppressed Desire Ball. You were to come in a costume that depicted your secret wish, your heart's desire. My mother entered a kind of trance, then went out and bought blue taffeta, white fish-net gauze, travel posters and brochures.

She spent weeks making her costume. I would go down to her workroom and she'd say to me, "Where should I put the Taj Mahal? Where should the Pyramids go?" On and on into the night she pasted and sewed and complained about my father, who, it seemed, would have no costume at all. (In the end, my bald father won first prize with a toupee his barber lent him.)

But it is my mother I remember. On the night of the ball, she descended the stairs. On her head sat a tiny silver rotating globe. Her skirts were the oceans, her body the land, and interlaced between all the layers of taffeta and fish net were Rome, Tokyo, Istanbul, Tashkent. Instead of seeing the world, my mother became it.

For the next few weeks the Hers column will be written by Mary Morris, whose book, "Nothing to Declare," is to be published by Houghton Mifflin.

She managed to get to London and Paris a few times and once, when I was 15 years old, we rode around Europe in a bus for five weeks. But she was homesick and called my father from every major city. After that, a reason always came up why she could not travel; first she didn't want to leave my father, then my grandmother, then my great-uncles and finally her grandchildren.

I think something has always held women back, and I'm not sure this is necessarily bad. Women need and want to be connected, to be joined to other human beings. We don't easily go off alone into the wild, to the North Pole or in search of elusive beasts.

Until recently, most women who were travel writers went with their husbands. Rebecca West begins "Black Lamb and Gray Falcon" with a call

The journeys of women have long been internal ones.

to her husband, who is asleep on the train, "My dear, I know I have inconvenienced you terribly by making you take your holiday now." A few single women like Mary Kingsley, who braved West Africa in the late 19th century, had ploys for insuring their safety. Wherever Miss Kingsley arrived, the Africans would ask where her husband was. She replied, "Over there," pointing in the direction in which she was traveling. This guaranteed her safe passage.

• • •

I have traveled wearing a wedding ring in such places as the Middle East. I am not proud of this fact but in some parts of the world, it helps to appear to belong to a man. And for many women like my mother, it helps to belong — period. It is not such a bad thing to be connected. But we have paid for our dependency.

From Penelope to the present, women have waited — for a phone call, for a date, for a marriage proposal, for the man to return from sea or war or a business trip. To wait is to be powerless. Like patients and prisoners, women have waited for the freedom to enter the world.

Now the roads are open and women can travel without chaperone, husband, escort or questioning stares. I am free in a way my mother never was. She has watched me head out the door, to Bolivia or Mongolia, Montana or Tibet. You can go anywhere, she says. You can do anything.

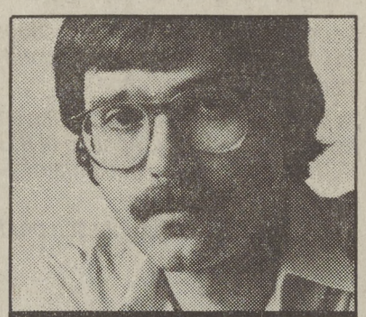
I am not without that desire to be connected, to belong. But now, if I grow weary of waiting, I can go on a journey. I can be the stranger who comes to town.

Jimi Lott / Seattle Times

Singer Ben E. King has been smiling more lately since his old-time hit, "Stand By Me," became the theme song for the movie of the same name.

Seattle Times April 14, '87

Fans stand by King when he sings his hit



ERIK LACITIS
Times staff columnist

Earlier that day he tried to guess how many times he had performed the song in concert. It wasn't easy. He is 48. There had been so many shows.

Now it was Saturday night, and it was once again time for the tune, one of the most beautiful rock songs ever written, although back in 1961 it hadn't seemed so.

He began, "When the night has come . . ." The crowd cheered and applauded as it recognized the first notes of the melody.

Earlier, Ben E. King did some mental arithmetic. An average of 200 shows a year for the past 26 years: That's 5,200 times. By now he had a pretty good idea of how the audience would react.

He smiled and continued, "and the land is dark, and the moon is the only light we'll see . . ." The 3,000 people in the sold-out theater swayed, getting ready.

"No, I won't be afraid, no I won't, be afraid, just as long . . .,"

Now the audience shouted back the lyrics:

". . . as you stand, stand by me . . ."

King looked out into the crowd. It was quite an assortment — black and white, from young teen-agers to middle-aged men and women, who used to be kids way back when.

He had been asked about the kids. Just as it seemed so accidental that "Stand By Me" had gone to No. 4 in the charts a quarter century ago, its rediscovery also seemed to happen by fluke.

All of a sudden, thanks to a Rob Reiner film about teen-agers that had taken its name from the song and had used the melody in the soundtrack, the rock stations once again had found Ben E. King.

"Originally I wrote it as a love song between two people standing by each other," he said. "The movie broadened it, and made it a buddy song, about being friends forever and ever."

King hadn't even been very happy with how the recording turned out. He had originally written the tune for the Drifters, of which he had been a member for two years. The group had hits such as "On Broadway" and "Under the Boardwalk" and is credited for its breakthrough sound in which strings were added.

King had grown up in Harlem, singing harmonies with friends on the street corners. Eventually a promoter noticed a neighborhood group he had joined, and signed them on. The promoter owned the name the Drifters.

But even after King wrote "There

Please see **KING** on E 2

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Map of running course provided on request or keep going until you get to Switzerland."

I'm not an astute observer of humor, but I think something is going on here. A groundswell, so to speak. Maybe we are still chips off the old H & R Block of the party animals at Boston.

If this is true, parties like this usually precede a major revolution. What do you wear to a revolution?

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■ Erma Bombeck appears in the Scene section of The Times.

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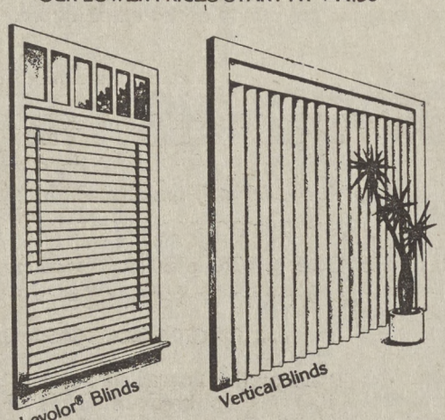
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About New York

Where Politics Is Thought for Food

By WILLIAM E. GEIST

"Madame chairperson, we know you for what you are," charged Moe Doctrow, a member of the powerful Food Committee at the Hebrew Home For The Aged. "An antifish fanatic. Because of your prejudice the stuffed flounder before us does not have a prayer."

"My dearly beloved husband was a fisherman," the chairperson, Estelle Small, shot back. "You, Moe, have no taste at all; you love everything!" She turned to the others and said: "Have you ever had a delicious glass of water? Well, *he* has."

Senators are elected every six years, Presidents of the United States every four and food items are voted onto and off of the menu every two years at the Hebrew Home in the Bronx. Senatorial and Presidential elections are considered relatively inconsequential compared with what the residents of the home eat.

"A bum Senator we can live with," said 1 of the 19 voting members making a speech at the meeting, where tasting, debating and balloting took place. "Ratatouille we cannot."

"Nothing is more important to people here than meals," said Marcus Solot, a member of the Food Committee. "It's just about all anyone talks about."

•

Members of the Food Committee had been buttonholed by constituents for days before the meeting, people who wanted to lobby for the ouster of stuffed cabbage or for the introduction of banana pudding and the like.

There are many single-issue factions who want the ear of committee members, such as those seeking less sodium in the food, less sugar, and more spices. There is the "no breakfast before 8 A.M." group, the al dente spaghetti coalition and the anticheese factions, including a "no-Parmesan" splinter group, and those pushing for larger portions.

"It is an awesome responsibility," said Naomi Schwartz, referring to making decisions concerning the daily meals served to 900 residents, 800 staff people in the home and 400 meals delivered to the elderly outside the home.

"When you're on the Food Committee," said Mrs. Small, "people pester you all the time, asking, 'Why can't we get this?', and, 'Why can't we get rid of that?' When they don't like things they take it out on us." She recalled the immensely unpopular zucchini vote two years ago.

"They cornered me on the consistency of the scrambled eggs," said Helen Goldenberg.

Mrs. Small said sometimes members think about leaving the Food Committee, but they cannot bring themselves to give up the power and prestige.

Victor Williams, director of food services, wore a white lab coat with a food thermometer in the pocket as he introduced the 13 food candidates to the committee. He told them to mark their ballots excellent, good, fair or poor on each dish. "This looks like the same ballot we had two years ago," said Helen Goldenberg, bemoaning the lack of good candidates.

He noted that the stuffed flounder was making a comeback, after being bumped from the menu two years ago. "People were skeptical about what was inside," he explained.

He made a joke about his continuing search for a kosher shrimp, and he enthusiastically introduced ratatouille as "an adventure in vegetables."

Samples of the items were served three and four at a time and the tasting began. Debate ensued instantly along with mass confusion over what was what.

"The ratatouille is delicious," said Mrs. Schwartz. "Don't try to influnece my vote," snapped Mrs. Weinberg.

"Do they seriously expect us to take this back to our constituents?" said another member, speaking of the spinach-cheese quiche.

The open-faced tuna melt sparked controversy, as expected, with many seeing it as overly casual. One committee member criticized the fish stew creole as "a triumph of image over substance," and he was in turn criticized as being a "reactionary conservative" member of the food committee who never liked anything new.

"Please stop peeking at my ballot," said someone at another table.

It was discovered that Mrs. Goldenberg was putting checks in the "poor" column that she intended for the "excellent" column. Mr. Williams told her to erase the marks and intitial them so he would not be accused of vote fraud.

•

Arguments broke out over portions, with Mr. Doctrow saying residents are "overfed" and others saying they were being starved. And Mr. Solot argued that there is a gender gap, that the minority male population of the home cannot sway women to vote for red meat dishes.

"Some dishes just didn't have the charisma to be elected," said Mr. Williams, the bland fettucine alfredo chief among them.

The ratatouille failed to pick up support, with one committee member announcing that it made her sick to look at the stuff. She was criticized for unfair electioneering practices.

It was the second time ratatouille had failed with the voters and the consensus was that ratatouille is washed up in politics.

Receiving the highest rating — 100 percent "excellent" or "good" ratings — was the stuffed flouder, which pundits said seemed to be riding the wave of "overall fish popularity".

"Some candidates win election just because they are something new," said Mr. Williams, explaining the high vote tallies garnered by the baked ziti, which will replace the similar baked lasagna on the menu."

"There is an initial honeymoom period for any newly elected dish," said Mr. Williams.

"But some don't make it to the next election," said one committee member who recalled that "We had a dessert that was impeached," but said it was not melba.

To make room for the newly elected dishes, some old ones will be knocked off the menu

.The pineapple-cheese-raisin casserole has come under wide criticism recently, and insiders said it will probably be run out of the home soon with no one expected to offer asylum.

Sources also said that the egg cutlet's days are numbered. Mr. Williams said that certain dishes lose their constituency. One member of the committee explained that most of the people who had liked the egg cutlet are gone. Another committee member, who had been sharply critical of the cutlet, said she was not surprised.

N.Y. Times 3-12-86

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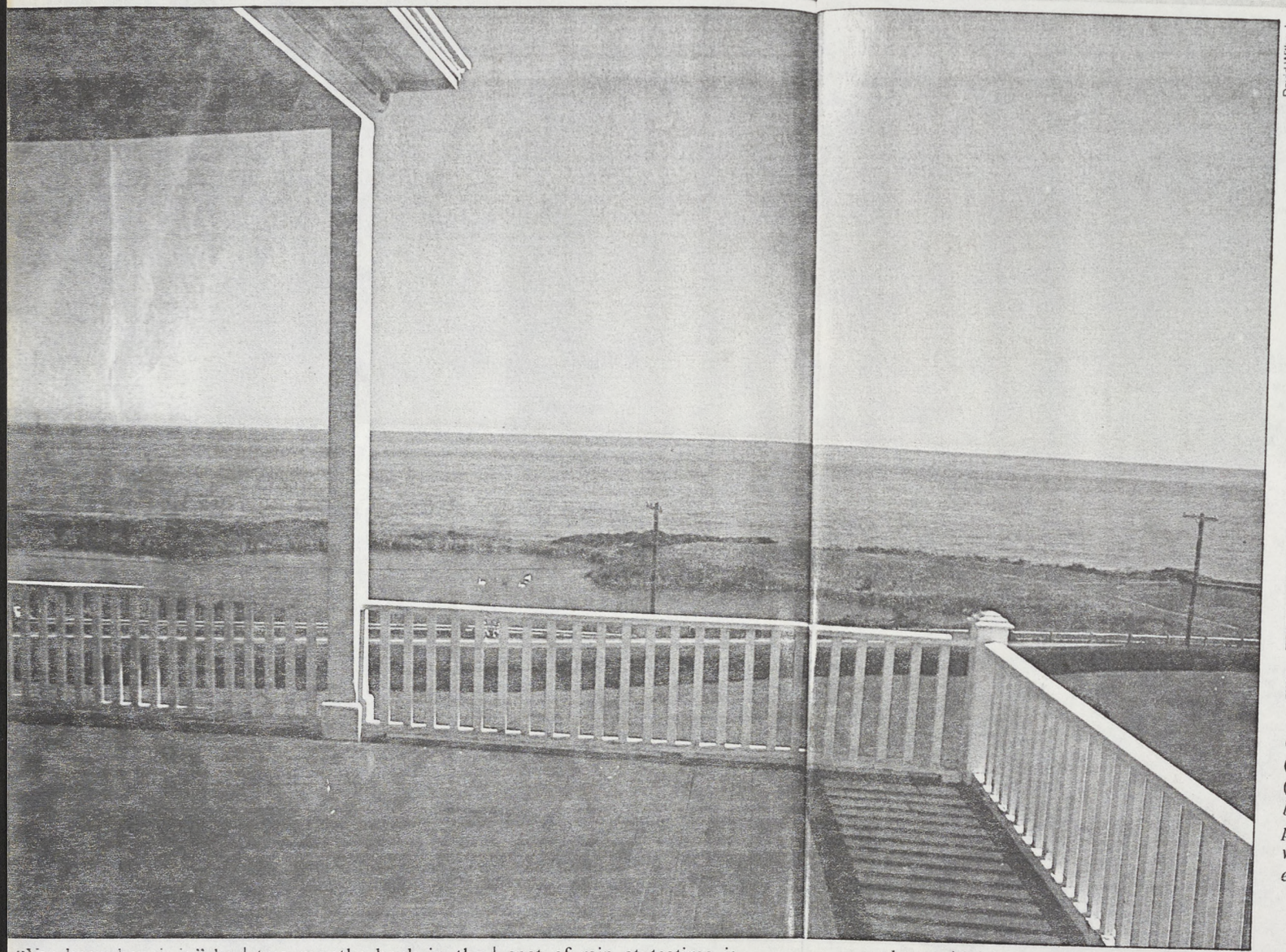
WEATHER EYE
PART FIVE

Land of One Thousand Seasons

Convention speaks of four in number, but surely we know better. by Donald Hall

NEW YORK HAS people, the Northwest damp, Iowa soybeans, Texas money, and New England seasons. Convention speaks of four; the observant New Englander numbers at least a thousand, and on a good day our spendthrift climate runs through seven or eight. Robert Frost lived his first ten years in mono-seasonal California; maybe that's why he became the laureate of weatherly mutability:



– David Witbeck

– Susan Lapides

– Richard Brown

SUMMER

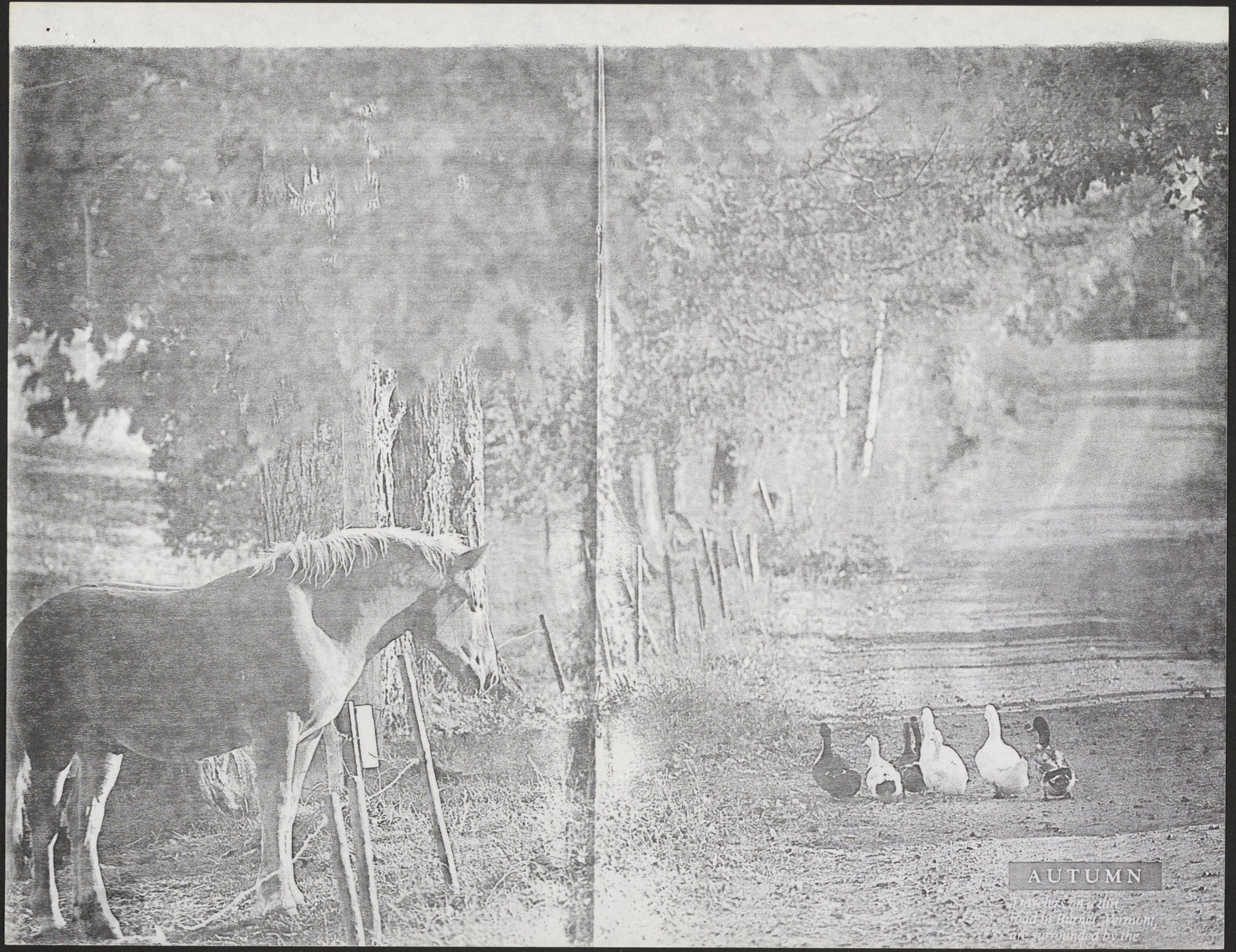
Whether a Block Island porch (left) *a Gloucester, Massachusetts, window* (top) *or a grove of Vermont birches* (above), *there are myriad images that bring the region's crop of summer people to full flower year after year, a wave of seasonal immigration that ends abruptly each Labor Day.*

"You know how it is," he wrote in "Two Tramps in Mud Time," "with an April day When the sun is out and the wind is still. You're one month on in the middle of May." Then with sudden wind and cloud. "You're two months back in the middle of March."

October may be more so. When we wake we stoke the Glenwood and scrape ice off the pickup's windshield; at noon we take lunch sitting on the porch in T-shirts; the spot of rain at teatime is cold enough to send us checking the salt in the grainshed; but sunset blooms a soft rose in the west, promising Indian summer, which we remember with chagrin when we wake at midnight to the first snowfall.

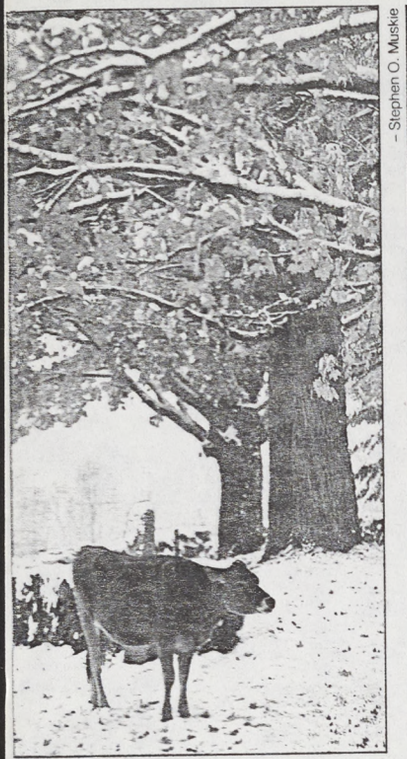
However we number them, Spring is the least of our seasons. It begins with the glorious disaster of winter's melt, periodic in March, interrupted by blizzards, continuing through April as rivers roll down hillsides where no rivers were — gullying tunnels under snowdrifts, hollowing gray scrap bulwarks as rag-and-tatter as snow in Manhattan. When snow goes, mud takes over. For a week or two we struggle in mud as we never struggled in snow. Transmissions bust, the pond road is travel-at-your-own-risk, the bridge is out, and Fred keeps revving up

(continued on page 154)



AUTUMN

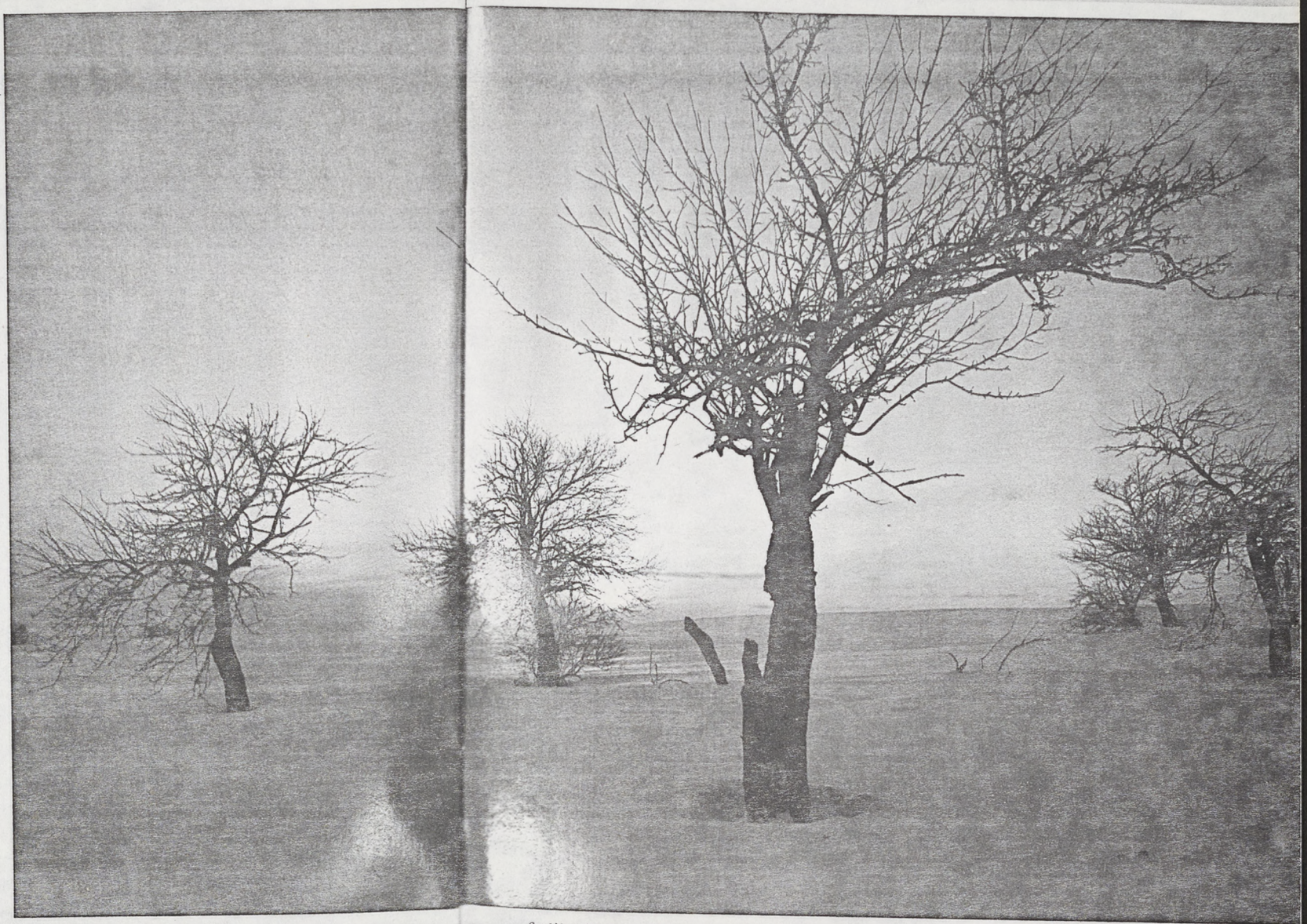
Dawdlers on a dirt road in Barnet, Vermont, are surrounded by the



– Stephen O. Muskie

WINTER

Some years, winter's first snow (above) *arrives in Vermont even before the maples have had the chance to shed all their leaves. In Caribou, Maine* (right), *the sweep of the land takes on an altogether different look, one reminiscent of an arctic landscape, in the cold light of our "truest season."*



(continued from page 151)

the tractor to haul flatlanders out of the ditch the way Fred's grandfather Fred did with his oxen.

When mud goes dry, leaving stiff ridges and warps for bumping over, we do not sigh in relief, for if we sigh we inhale blackflies. We wish the mud back; it does not sting. Now snowdrops fly their small flags in our gardens, now daffodils rise in tentative glory — always, every year, the bravest rewarded with cupfuls of snow, in *Return of the Son of Winter,* rerun on every channel — but we do not wander happily on the daffodil hillside. We express our joy from behind windows, even storm windows, looking past the last garbage snow to the sun's blossoming hill, unless we are careless of skin and rapturous of bite and scratch.

And when the blackflies go, perhaps the mosquitoes have eaten them.

But even the least of seasons is beautiful. As we drive to the store, or garden protected by thick socks and a beekeeper's mask, we swim under the frail green of beginning leaves. There is nothing so tender as new green, smoke of red and yel-

(continued on page 266)

LAND OF ONE THOUSAND SEASONS

(continued from page 155)

low buds along with pale green smoke, loosening at the branch-ends of trees released from the cold hold of winter. Whole hillsides overnight smoulder up this tenderness, leaves unfolding daily and darkening week by week toward the vigorous black-green of summer's oak and maple. Now we walk, our hands slapping the air as if we bargained for a thousand rugs in a thousand Turkish markets, and inspect the winter's waste by pond and mountainside: what popples the beaver took, what birches we lost to February's ice storm.

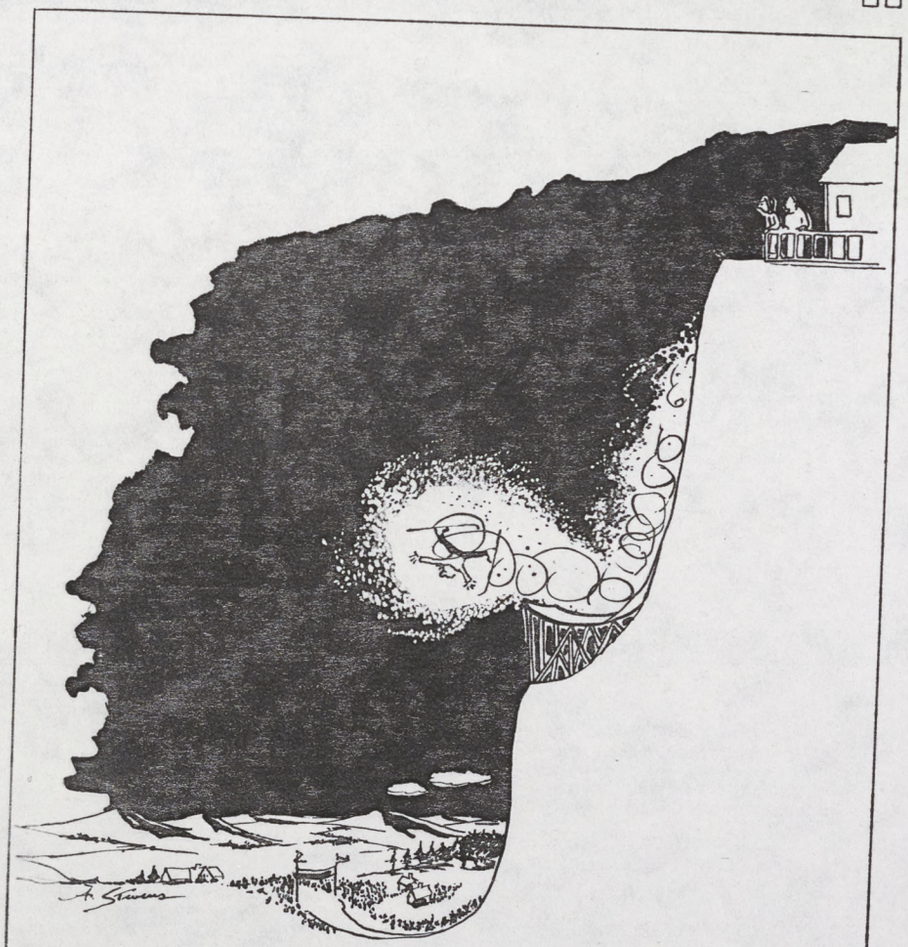
If Spring is least, it is also shortest. There are those who claim it occupies only the month of May. (Some few insist that spring occurs on May 17th, ten A.M. to two-thirty P.M.) But unless we confront a literalist of the calendar, there can be no controversy over the date of Summer's beginning. The rest of us plant our gardens, except for the peas we scatter on snow, after the full moon closest to Memorial Day — but the summer people seed themselves on Memorial Day itself. All summer, as corn inches up or doesn't, as the zucchini population of New Hampshire multiplies like Nashua, as green tomatoes wax and decide with heroic stubbornness to remain forever green, the growth of summer people outdoes every other crop. Through drought and deluge, unseasonable cold or Bostonian mug and swelter, they pop from the cracked earth of June by the hundred-thousand; they spread in July greenly up, out, and over the rural dirt of New England; they take into themselves abundancies of sun and water; they spread, thrive, fatten, elongate, swell, ripen: only, on Labor Day, afflicted suddenly by three hundred degrees of school-frost, work-frost, and duty-frost, instantly to wither, blacken, die, and vanish.

On their sudden, seasonal, and predictable disappearance — we hear of them miraculously altered, no longer tanned in the flesh but brown-suited in worsted as in Worcester, and felt-hatted in the suburbs of the ordinary life — we sigh without inhaling a single insect, enjoy the huge dark end-of-summer leaves, tidy our spent gardens, and hunker down for the best of times. The red branch on the green tree starts it off, one eruption marching to a different drummer. Then whole bogs blaze with swamp maples, dear deep reds followed by the great vulgar chorus of bellowing, billowing yellows, reds, russets, and rusts. Birch, maple, rare elm, oak, beech, ash, each in its own time and with its own pitch and tone swells the outlandish chorus. It is the London Philharmonic tripling up with orchestras from Bogota and Kuala Lumpur, Spike Jones conducting, and each shade and position contributes another violin, oboe, or triangle to the gorgeous cacophony of Autumn.

Always the persistent evergreen supplies continuo. As Autumn endures and the leaves fall, the silvery sheen of empty trunks and branches becomes an increasing theme. Everywhere we walk we gaze at yellow leaves against unpainted barns, towering enormous flame-fountains beside white houses, varicolored Kearsarge altering each day, and through the day, by variety of light. Best of all, we love the hills of middle distance, with color-patches distinct when we focus on them; when we refocus on the whole hill, its colors contract to a single insane tweed of pinks, oranges, reds, russets, and silvers. It is dangerous to drive; who can look at the road?

After the sober and noble palette of late October and November, analytic cubism with its rectangles of granite and released stone walls, New England's seasonal journey retracts to the oneness of Winter, from outrageous multiplicity to white uniformity. Usually it begins at night, the black sky flaking full with whiteness, covering brown hayfield and granite hill, boulder, road, and barn with the soft silence of its frigidity. We gather inside around the noisy Glenwood; we gather ourselves inside ourselves for the three months of our annual descent, internal Persephones of the personal underworld. On the full moon's Winter night, pewtery light reflects upward from snow to flicker against tin ceilings, ghost light.

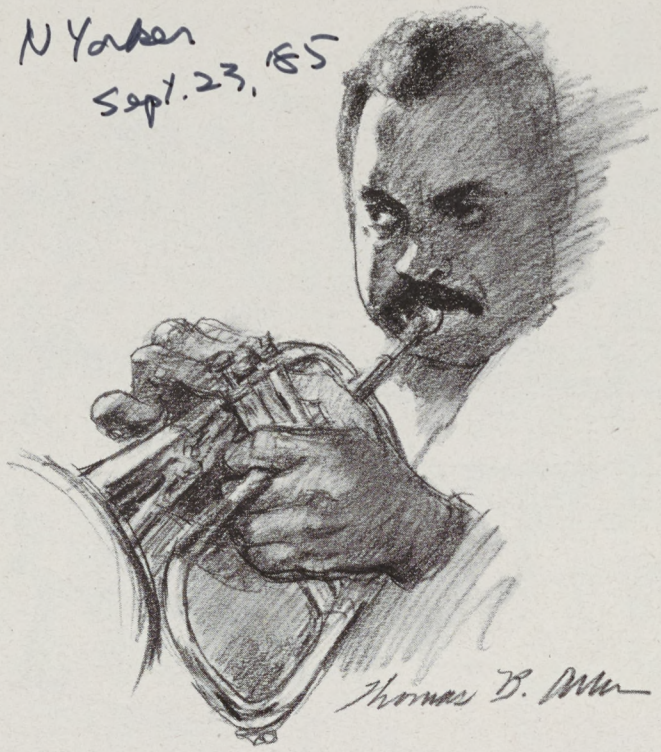
Of the one thousand seasons, Winter by actual count provides two hundred and twenty-seven. Of course, sixty-eight percent of Winter's seasons cause pain. This pain's bright side is our complaining and bragging: Every house wears two thermometers, the low one for Winter and the high one for Summer. And Winter is ours, although winter people wearing petrochemical-dollar uniforms brighten white slopes. This long Winter gives us our identity: Mixed and intense, beauty and pain together, interrupted only by January's thaw with its anticipatory melt — Miami invading from the South — it is the name of our place. We must admit: Spring is annoying, Summer is not ours, Autumn is best — and Winter is New England's truest weather. □□



"Well, he's not exactly Olympic material, but he sure is a crowd-pleaser."

PROFILES

HERE AND ABROAD



THE lucent and eloquent flugelhornist Art Farmer settled in Vienna in 1968, and is one of hundreds of American jazz musicians who have lived abroad during the past sixty or so years. This emigration began in April, 1919, when the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, a stiff ragtimey group from New Orleans, landed in London. Two months later, Will Marion Cook arrived there with his large and impeccable Southern Syncopated Orchestra, which was notable mainly for its single hot soloist—the great clarinettist and soprano saxophonist Sidney Bechet. (Bechet provoked the Swiss conductor Ernest Ansermet to write, "I wish to set down the name of this artist of genius; as for myself, I shall never forget it . . . His [music] is perhaps the highway the whole world will swing along tomorrow.") Between 1925 and 1931, a Philadelphia bandleader named Sam Wooding toured Russia, most of Europe, and parts of South America. He took with him, at various times, the reedmen Gene Sedric, Jerry Blake, and Garvin Bushell, the trumpeters Doc Cheatham and Tommy Ladnier, the trombonist Herb Flemming, and the pianist Freddy Johnson, who in the early thirties taught some of the secrets of jazz to French musicians and to the critics Hugues Panassié and Charles Delaunay. Some of the other jazz musicians who had visited Europe before the twenties were out were the trumpeters Arthur Briggs, Muggsy Spanier, Johnny Dunn, and Henry Goodwin, the clarinettist Buster Bailey, the saxophonists Bud Freeman and Adrian Rollini, and the drummer Dave Tough. (In 1926, the legendary pianist Teddy Weatherford sailed west instead of east, travelling from Chicago to China and eventually ending up in Calcutta, where he died, in 1945.) Brighter and brighter American stars travelled to Europe in the thirties. Louis Armstrong played London in 1932 and 1933, then lolled around Paris, resting his lip. Fats Waller recorded in London, and sat in on the organ at Notre Dame. Duke Ellington went to London in 1933, to great acclaim, and went back in 1939. Coleman Hawkins, already the emperor of the tenor saxophone, arrived in England by himself in 1934 and stayed five years, working his way from his romantic self to the consummate classic self who recorded "Body and Soul" (1939) and "The Man I Love" (1943). Benny Carter landed a year after Hawkins, lent his regal presence to the BBC for a time, and came home in 1938. Lucky Millinder took his big band over in 1933, and it included the trumpeter Bill Coleman, who spent most of the next fifty years in France. In 1937, the trombonist Dicky Wells arrived in Paris, with Teddy Hill's band, and recorded a dozen brilliant numbers, using Coleman and the dazzling Belgian Gypsy Django Reinhardt. Some of the other American jazz musicians who travelled in Europe before the thirties were out were the pianists Herman Chittison, Ram Ramirez, and Joe Turner, the violinist Eddie South, the trumpeters Valaida Snow, Bill Dillard, Bunny Berigan, and Shad Collins, and the drummers Tommy Benford and Kaiser Marshall. Since the Second World War, Europe has been flooded with American musicians. Among those who have stayed there for varying periods are Sidney Bechet, Don Byas, Mary Lou Williams, James Moody, Kenny Clarke, Albert Nicholas, Peanuts Holland, Kansas Fields, Mezz Mezzrow, Bud Powell, Dexter Gordon, Art Taylor, Chet Baker, Stan Getz, Ben Webster, Joe Newman, Johnny Griffin, Slide Hampton, Patti Bown, Idrees Sulieman, Benny Bailey, Ted Curson, Mal Waldron, Tony Scott, Red Mitchell, Kenny Drew, Roswell Rudd, Ernie Wilkins, Richard Boone, Joe Albany, Steve Lacy, Thad Jones, and Art Farmer.

Farmer passes through New York about three times a year, and one afternoon, in a friend's apartment, he talked about his life here and abroad. He recalled New York as it was when he first settled here: "I left Lionel Hampton's band in 1953 and moved into the Maryland Hotel, on West Forty-ninth Street. New York was incredible then—your whole waking life was music. I worked Monday nights at Birdland, and I worked for Lester Young. He called me Pres, which was his nickname, and he called other people Lady, which was short for Lady Day, his nickname for Billie Holiday. He was a very quiet, soft guy. I was late a few times, and he said, 'Pres, the man is getting on me. I don't want to hear any strife. I want everything nice. You dig, Pres?' He even wore soft shoes, and when he finished his solo and moved away from the microphone he moved sideways, and then stayed in one spot bouncing up and down in time. One night, he leaned over and said, 'Pres, there are two ladies out there shooting me down. They don't realize that I just want to go home after work.' Of course, he had his own language. 'Take another lung' meant take another chorus, and 'the George Washington' was the bridge of the

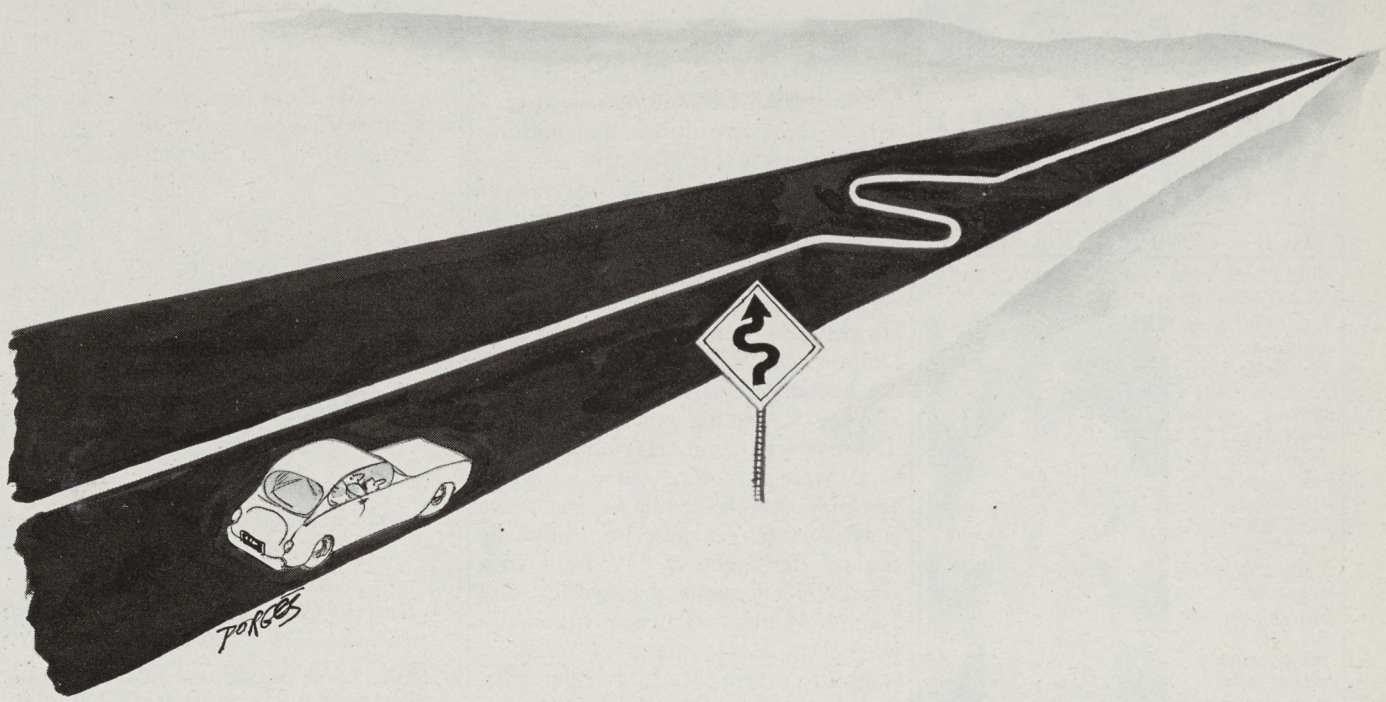
"You'd make a formidable enemy."

• •

tune. He was still playing beautifully. Every note meant something, and when I followed him I felt like a fool if I didn't make sense. He made me tighten up and tell a 'story' in each solo. He always said a soloist should tell a story. When I wasn't working, Miles Davis would rent my horn for ten dollars a night. His was pawned, I guess. I'd go wherever the gig was—Hackensack or Brooklyn, or wherever—to make sure he didn't pawn mine. Sometimes he'd come around when I *was* working and give me a hard time: 'Man, you're supposed to rent me that horn.' 'Miles, I'm working.' 'Man, you always rent me that horn for ten dollars.' 'Miles, I have a gig.' And on and on. In 1956, I joined Horace Silver's first quintet, and stayed for a year or two. Then I went with Gerry Mulligan's quartet, which was a shock. Silver is a strong piano player whose accompanying pushes you this way and that, and to suddenly find yourself in a pianoless group was like walking down the street naked. There was nothing between you and the ground except the bass line and Mulligan's occasional backup riffs. I did a lot of avant-garde stuff on the side during this period—with Teddy Charles and Teo Macero and George Russell. I got the reputation of being able to play anything, so when the music was on the verge of being abstract they'd call me. I recorded for Blue Note and Savoy and Columbia and Prestige and ABC-Paramount. I worked with Thelonious Monk, and I worked with Coleman Hawkins. I recorded for Jackie Gleason. In 1959, Benny Golson and I put together our Jazztet, with Curtis Fuller on trombone and McCoy Tyner on piano. We never got to a very successful point commercially, but the group stayed together off and on about three years. In the early sixties, Jim Hall and I had a quartet, with Steve Swallow on bass and Pete La Roca on drums. Jim is amazing. I could go in and out of the chords, up and down the chords, and he instantly knew what to do. Whatever I played, he was there. By the middle sixties, rock was beginning to be felt, and the bottom was falling out of jazz in New York. The only place someone like me could get work was at Slugs', in the East Village, or the Five Spot, on Third Avenue, or maybe out in Brooklyn. There were also a few places in Boston and Baltimore and Chicago. But that was it. Eddie Bert, the trombonist, told me about the pit bands, and I ended up in Elliot Lawrence's band in 'The Apple Tree,' on Broadway. I had gone to Europe several times in the early sixties, and in 1965 Friedrich Gulda, the Viennese pianist, asked me to be one of the judges of an international competition of young jazz musicians. It took place in Vienna, and while I was there I heard about a radio jazz orchestra that was being formed. They needed a trumpet soloist, and the job was for ten days a month nine months of the year. Considering the way things were here and that my whole life had been lived for the possibility of playing jazz music, I decided to give it a try for a year. It worked pretty well, and in 1968 I gave up my apartment on Twentieth Street and moved to Vienna."

Farmer's face is big and square, and he has large, wide-set eyes and a long, rectangular mustache. His narrow shoulders fly out at right angles from his neck and form one of the narrow sides of the rectangle that is the rest of him. He has beautiful large hands with long, squarish fingers, and his deep, hidden voice sounds as if it were coming from a cave. He is a careful speaker, and his words pass in review as they are released. He is in very good shape. A year or two ago, he took off thirty pounds, and a couple of years before that he quit smoking and drinking. He used to think he couldn't play without drinking; now he couldn't play and drink. It took him a long time to become a first-rate jazz musician. This, he said, is how he began:

"I was born August 21, 1928, in Council Bluffs, Iowa. There were three of us—my sister, Mauvolene, who is two years younger, and my twin brother, Addison, who was born an hour after me. Addison became a bass player, and he died in New York very suddenly of an aneurism in 1963. I still dream of him. We're sitting



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together and talking, and everything is the way it was. It seems there's a part of him I haven't fully gotten over. My father was James Arthur Farmer, but I have very little memory of him. He and my mother were divorced when I was four, and he died not long after in a steel-mill accident. Around this time, we moved with my grandparents to Phoenix. We moved there because my grandmother suffered from asthma. My grandfather was a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church—the A.M.E.—and we lived in the parsonage. He died when I was eight. I recall that he was very lively and agile. He could hold a broomstick parallel to the floor and jump over it. My grandmother was the first black woman to graduate from an institute of higher learning in Iowa, and she started a night school in Phoenix for blacks. She was part Blackfoot Indian —her mother, who had supposedly escaped a massacre, was all Blackfoot. My mother's name was Hazel Stewart, and she was born in Cincinnati. She was short and a little darker than me, and she was very strong. She was also kind and even. She was quite solid in form, but got thinner and smaller as she got older. She played the piano and sang gospel in church. I'd go to the church with her when she practiced, and when she was finished I'd get on the stool and play. My family was full of doctors and lawyers and teachers and ministers, and most of them played music for a hobby. One was a professional—Kenneth Stewart, a cousin of my mother's, who played trombone in Chicago in the thirties with Earl Hines and Sammy Stewart. A cousin born the same day I was took up the horn, but he got the call and gave it up.

"I went through grammar school and the first three years of high school in Phoenix. I started the piano in grammar school and, a little later, took up violin. A tenant we had gave me a violin he had in his trunk. He said to hold the neck of the violin just as if you were picking a pear from a tree. I got so I could play 'Humoresque' and 'Minuet in G.' Then I joined a marching band run by a Catholic priest named Emmett McLoughlin. I had played some bugle for flag ceremonies at school, so they gave me a sousaphone—it surprised me, because it had a mouthpiece as big as a coffee cup. I played that for a year; then they switched me to cornet. I had the mistaken idea that the cornet would be as easy as the tuba, but then I thought I had already mastered the piano and the violin and the tuba. So my ego wouldn't let me put it down. The school system in Phoenix was segregated, and there was no one in our environment who could give me lessons. All the lady in charge of music in our high school ever said to me was 'You play more wrong notes than anyone I ever heard.' I did teach myself to read music pretty well, and when I was about fifteen I joined a high-school dance band led by a tenor-saxophone player named Wesley Dotson. We used stock arrangements taken from Basie and Ellington and Lunceford, with the solos written in. We heard the big bands that came through on one-nighters—Tiny Bradshaw, Erskine Hawkins, Lunceford, Harlan Leonard, Artie Shaw. Shaw arrived for his gig a day ahead, and he had Barney Kessel and Roy Eldridge with him. We were playing in some little joint, and Roy sat in on drums. Later, he played trumpet with us. I was too ignorant to appreciate how great he was. The trumpeters I listened to were Harry James and Dud Bascomb, who was with Erskine Hawkins. We also heard the 364th Infantry Regiment dance band at the Papago Park army base, near Phoenix. George Kelly, the tenor player with the Savoy Sultans, was in it, and he'd come by our rehearsals. Once, he wrote out an arrangement of Duke Ellington's 'Azure' for us. He was a kind man. But I have never yet heard an older musician tell a younger musician who asked for help, 'Go away. You're bothering me.' Our average age in the band was sixteen or seventeen, but we had ambitions to go on the road, and when Jimmy Lunceford came through we managed to meet him and he gave us the name of a booking agent in Los Angeles. We

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wrote him, but he never answered. By this time, I knew I had to be in jazz. Two things decided me—the sound of a trumpet section in a big band and hearing a jam session. I had to be a part of those two things, and nothing else in life was that attractive.

"The summer after the third year of high school, Addison and I went to Los Angeles to look around, and we got involved in so many things we decided to stay. We met Hampton Hawes and Sonny Criss and Eric Dolphy. Our mother said, 'All right, but I want you to finish high school.' We got a room and enrolled in Thomas Jefferson High. The big bands were still going, but a lot of the best players were in the service, so we were able to get jobs we ordinarily couldn't have gotten. We went with Horace Henderson and Floyd Ray and Jimmy Mundy. Between times, we worked in a cold-storage warehouse, stacking crates of Idaho potatoes. Sometimes there was no work of any kind, but it was 'If we don't eat today, what the hell—we'll eat tomorrow.' We met Charlie Parker. I can't remember a bad experience with him. He always paid Addison back when he borrowed money. He'd stay here, there, everywhere. He slept on our couch for a while. He and Addison and I would walk up Central Avenue and wangle our way into movies that were half over, and one time we stopped at an after-hours place called Lovejoy's, and Bird sat in with this real poor piano player. I told him later that I was surprised he had done that, and he said, 'You take every opportunity you can.' I made my first trip to New York with the drummer Johnny Otis, who had a big band at the Club Alabam in Los Angeles. We were on the same bill at the Apollo Theatre with Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five. Jordan was very big then, and we were doing seven or eight shows a day. I had developed bad musical habits. I was using the strong-arm method, jamming my horn into my lip to get high notes, and I was making a terrible hole in my lip. I was playing fourth trumpet, and at the end of the first week I could no longer get a sound out of the horn, and Otis had to let me go. Everybody hung out on a corner of a Hundred and Twenty-sixth Street and Eighth Avenue, and the trumpet player Freddy Webster told me I should take some lessons from a teacher named Maurice Grupp. I took one, and told him I had to go home, because I didn't have any

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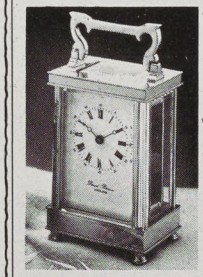

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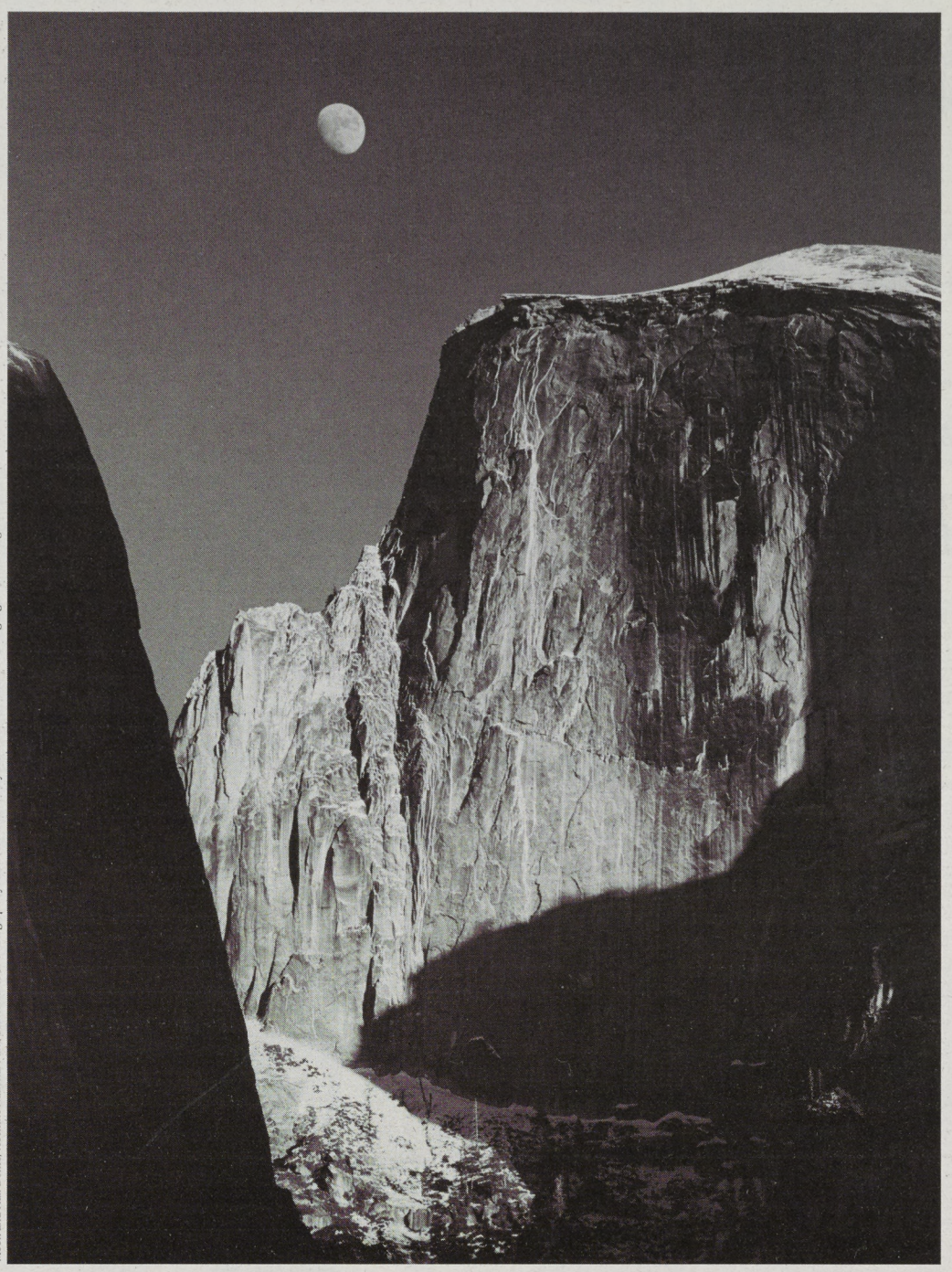

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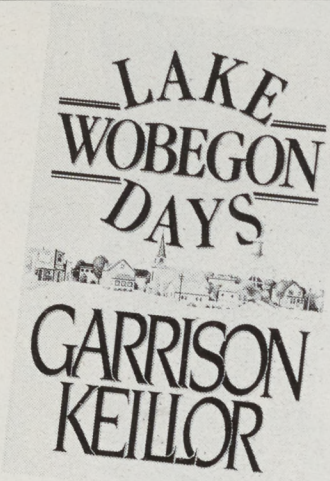

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money. He said it was essential for me to stay and continue lessons. I got a job as a night janitor at the Alhambra Theatre. I made twenty-four dollars a week. The lessons were eight dollars, and my room, at a Hundred and Twenty-ninth between Seventh and Lenox, was six. Grupp's studio was on Seventh Avenue in the Forties, and after I'd been to him I'd hang out in the jazz clubs on Fifty-second Street. I met Dizzy Gillespie, and he said he was looking for a trumpet player who could play a real singing lead in his big band, and was I interested? He had John Lewis and Ray Brown and Milt Jackson, and I sat in for three or four nights. Dizzy told me after the last night that he was sorry but the guys in the band thought I was not quite ready. A job opened up with Jay McShann, and we toured all over the South and the Southwest before ending up in Los Angeles.

"Young black musicians caught hell in Los Angeles in the late forties and early fifties. White musicians had the work at the few clubs sewed up, and it wasn't easy getting into the studios, even if you were good enough, which I wasn't. I was scuffling, real hard. I was a hotel janitor and a file clerk at County General Hospital. But I still managed to play with all sorts of people—Benny Carter and Gerald Wilson and Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray. Wardell, who'd been with people like Benny Goodman, was a big brother to me. Then Lionel Hampton came through, and I was offered a job, even though he already had five trumpet players. Wardell told me I'd be making a mistake if I took it—that they didn't play anything but 'Flyin' Home' and 'Hamp's Boogie-Woogie.' But Lionel was a gift to young musicians, and I learned things in that band I couldn't have learned anywhere else. Also, night after night Hampton played things himself that turned me around. Clifford Brown was in the band, and Quincy Jones and Gigi Gryce and Alan Dawson. There was a brotherly spirit, and we laughed a lot at the crazy things Hampton did. At the Band Box in New York, he had us dressed in shorts, and part of our act was to march out to the street, playing. One night, he tried to march us into Birdland, which was next door, but the doorman wouldn't let us in. We went to Europe in the summer of 1953, and when Hampton found out that a bunch of us had made some records on a Swedish label he blew up and told us that we'd get thrown out of the union and that he'd take our passports and our tickets home—all of which was nonsense. Another time, he got mad about something and he walked up and down the aisle of our bus for at least half an hour cursing each of us out. Then suddenly he said, 'Good night, boys,' sat down, and went to sleep."

FARMER's style is spare, lyrical, logical. It is descended from Fats Navarro and Miles Davis, and perhaps it has been tinted by such older trumpeters as Emmett Berry and Shorty Baker. It is built on silence. The silences may occur three or four times in a solo and will last from one to three beats. They gather what has come before, and prepare us for what is to come. They let Farmer's improvisations breathe, and they let us breathe. His style is also built on his tone, which has always been rich, even impenetrable. It has been even richer since he switched from the trumpet to the flugelhorn, twenty-three years ago. The flugelhorn resembles a large cornet and sounds like a deep, soft trumpet. Some flugelhornists seem to sink into their own sound, but Farmer has lost none of his agility and sharpness of attack. Indeed, he is more agile than he was twenty years ago, and so has run counter to the usual jazz brass player's progress from youthful floridity to middle-aged compression. He has no vibrato, and his notes emerge measured and almost clipped. He likes big intervals and will easily jump or fall an octave. He likes to repeat phrases, changing a note or two each time, and he likes to enliven things with quick, slanting interior runs and occasional upper-register blasts. He is a gentle, highly melodic player whose solos, with their steplike phrasing and sotto-voce passages (he has a sharp sense of dynamics), suggest sunlight on water: the blue light from the sky is the original melody, the reflected light his improvisation.

Farmer talked about his playing: "You have to learn how to use your strength properly if you are a brass player. You have to get your energy *into* the horn. It is not a question of the size of the player or his air capacity. You have to use your stomach muscles so that all the air gets squeezed into that tiny hole in the

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mouthpiece, and none of it leaks out the side. That's the most important thing about playing a brass instrument, and once you solve it you can go on to the nuances. Good tone is based in part on the size of the mouthpiece. A lot of young trumpeters use a shallow mouthpiece, which gives them a penetrating sound and makes it easier to hit high notes. A deep mouthpiece gives you a broad, warm sound, but you have to build up the muscles around your mouth to get the high notes. I switched to the flugelhorn to get the right sound. Before, I was hung up all the time trying to get that sound out of my trumpet, and ignoring everything else. Of course, you can go a little crazy on the subject of tone. I have a friend who collects trumpets and flugelhorns, and sometimes I go to his place and try different mouthpieces with different horns, and pretty soon I don't know how anything sounds. So many things go into good tone—the amount of air you put into the horn, the mouthpiece, the condition of your embouchure, the way you feel, and certainly the place you're playing in. A good room or good hall can be an extension of the horn. A bad room or hall can wipe everything out.

"When I was learning to improvise, I'd take solos by Dizzy Gillespie or Fats Navarro off records and place them against the chords to see what they were doing. Now you can go into a music store and buy books of transcribed solos, and your work is done for you. My goal is not to think about the chords of a tune at all—have them second nature, have them stored in my bones. But this gets more and more difficult, because chords seem to have more and more notes. Also, the tunes that people write now come in all kinds of weird shapes—forty bars or fifty or ninety-six, and the bar lengths may be uneven. I rarely know what I'm going to do in a solo more than a measure or two ahead, and what I do may be inspired by a note the bassist plays or by some figure the drummer gets off. You can never force what you're doing. The harder you try, the less happens. At the best times, it's as if you had been taken over by some other power. This power plays you, and you become the instrument. There are dangers everywhere in improvisation—cracked notes, forgetting a chord, having the bassist or drummer play something you don't like, hearing a loud conversation. All these things can be like a slap in the face. Of course, totally pure improvisation is very rare. Most solos are made up of old elements newly arranged. This is true of even the masters. I worked opposite Louis Armstrong once, and after the first few nights I discovered he played almost the same solo on the same songs night after night. But he somehow made the solo sound new each time. When I'm home, I practice four or five hours a day. I start with exercises aimed at the problems of range, endurance, sound. Then I do intervals and scales. Then I play songs, sometimes by myself, sometimes with tapes. I warm up for an hour before a gig. Your horn has to be warmed up, your body has to be warmed up, your lips have to be vibrating a certain way. If the horn has that proper singing sound, it leads to good things, to good improvisation. It opens your mind to creativity.

"I have a special soundproof room in my house in Vienna to practice in. I live with my wife, Mechtilde Lawgger, and our thirteen-year-old son, Georg. We live in a kind of row house that we built. It's in the city proper, in one of the green belts near the beginning of the Vienna Woods. It is very green, very desirable. If someone asks me where I live and I say the Eighteenth District, they say, 'Oh, *ja*, *ja*. Good air, good air.' The schools in Vienna are excellent, and I would never move Georg here, because of that. He doesn't get home until five or six every night, and then he has a couple of hours of homework. My wife helps him, or else he would never be able to keep up. Vienna has an element of stability that I think has improved me as a musician. I lead a very quiet life there. I'm an introvert and kind of reclusive, and I'm perfectly content to stay at home. I play in three or four different clubs in Vienna. I work with local rhythm sections in England and Brussels and Holland and Paris and Switzerland. The pay has improved, and is just about equal to what you get here. The people who go to jazz clubs in Europe tend to be more informed than they are in America. They come to hear you only if they like you, and they listen. The only drunk I can remember was in

a Swedish club. They removed him once, twice, and the third time they took him and his chair outside. That did it, because the place was packed and there wasn't an extra chair in the house. I'm in Vienna about a third of the year, and the rest of the time I'm on the road—in Europe, in the United States, in Japan. Vienna is full of chauvinism. There is a common feeling that if something doesn't happen in Vienna it's not worth happening at all. There are more songs about the glories of Vienna than about any other city in the world. And everybody has a title, a rank. If you have two doctorates, you are called Doktor Doktor. These titles are put right on the mailboxes. I have no title, but I am very well known, and I feel I have the respect of the people.

"I have not had a single bad racial experience since I have been in Europe. No one has been rude, no one has ignored me, as people will do here if they don't want to serve you or sell you a ticket, or whatever. There has never been the slightest trouble with hotels or restaurants, although there is now a slight surliness in the air in London. Sometimes people stare at you in remote Austrian towns, but they stare at you the same way they would stare at a car they had never seen before. It is always something of a shock to come back here, because nothing has changed much. The same hangups are there. A person who plays jazz can go anywhere else in the world and never feel like a stranger. There are always people who know who you are even if they have never heard you. There are always people who want you to feel at home, who want to do things for you. I can play the tiniest European town and be recognized. In an American town of the same size, or even in a good-sized American town, I would be unknown."

—Whitney Balliett

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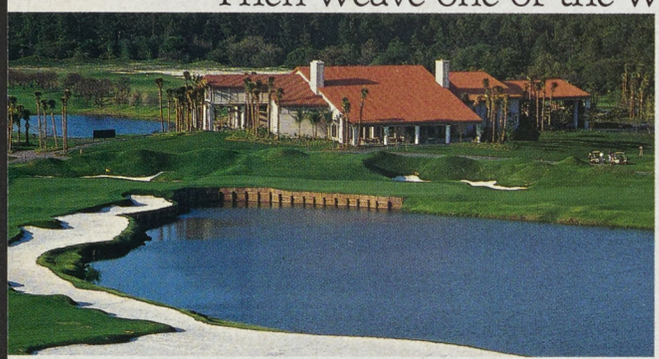

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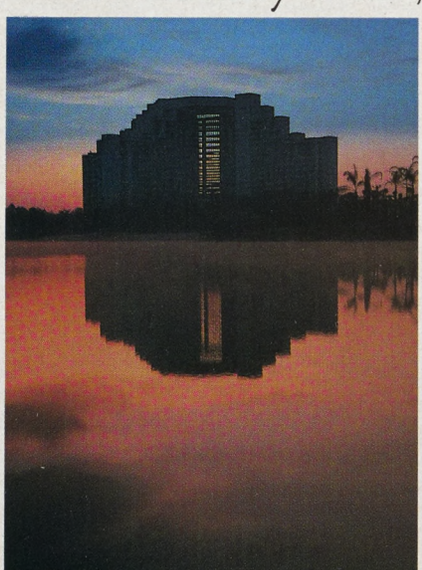

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Art Tatum

THE extravagantly gifted pianist Art Tatum died in Los Angeles on November 5, 1956. He was forty-seven, and had been born in Toledo, Ohio. John Lewis, the leader of the Modern Jazz Quartet, recently said that Tatum was "the greatest player that jazz has produced," that "maybe he was the greatest of all pianists." Such praise was prevalent during Tatum's lifetime, and continues to be heard among musicians who saw him. The pianist Gene Rodgers once said, "I met Art Tatum in the late thirties in Cleveland. I had started as a jazz pianist, but at that time I was part of a vaudeville act called Radcliffe and Rodgers. I believe we were on the same level as Buck and Bubbles. Anyway, we had just come back from England, and some people I met on the boat had told me about Art Tatum. We were booked into a theatre in Cleveland, and Art was working an upstairs room in a night club. A mutual friend introduced us. We had a beer or two—Art loved beer—and then I said, 'Hey, man, I'd like to hear you play,' and Tatum said, 'You play first.' Well, I was young and eager, so I did. When I finished, he said, 'Hey, I like your style very much,' which made me feel good. I said, 'Your turn,' and Art asked me what I wanted to hear, and I said something like 'Tea for Two.' Art was blind in his left eye, but he could see a little in his right eye, and he had these two guys escort him to the piano—that looked dramatic and got everyone's attention. The piano was an upright, and as he sat down he started playing with his left hand while he put his beer down. Then he dropped his right hand on the keyboard, and I couldn't believe what I heard. I'm about six foot four, and I was leaning against the piano and my legs just went to water. By the time he got through three more numbers, I couldn't take it anymore. I went back to my hotel, and I was in tears. I had never heard anything like that in my life."

Great talent often has a divine air: it's there, but no one knows where it comes from. Tatum's gifts were no exception; his background was plain and strict. His younger brother, Karl, who is a social worker for New York City, has said of their parents, "My father was Arthur Tatum, Sr., and he came from Statesville, North Carolina. He was a workingman, a chipper in a steel mill. He was tall and brown-skinned, and there wasn't any foolishness about him. He played some piano at home—mostly church songs and things like that. My mother was Mildred Hoskins Tatum, and she came from Martinsville, Virginia. I believe they moved North sometime just after the turn of the century. She was a housewife, a family person. She was short and medium weight, and she was brown-skinned, too." Karl Tatum's older sister, Arline Taylor, lives in the house Tatum grew up in, in Toledo, and she has said of their parents, "My mother and father were lovely people. My dad was tall and imposing. Everybody used to think he was a doctor, because of his personal blessings. He played piano and he loved the harp—the Jew's harp. My mother played piano, too, and a little violin, and sometimes they'd have a session together. Church music. My father was athletic and loved sports, as Art did. Don't let a football game get on the radio or the TV Art bought us when they first came out, and they'd sit in the front room yellin' and carryin' on, and my mother would say, 'There they go!' She was short and a very good cook. She passed after Art, but my father passed before him, in 1951. The first child they had died, then there was Art, and seven years later me, then Karl, who's two years younger.

"Art was born with sight, but he had diphtheria as a baby, and that congested his eyes some way. He was operated on when he was eight or ten, and he told Mama that whatever color he saw first he'd buy her a dress of the same color. He saw lavender, and he bought her a lavender dress from some money he'd saved. When he was in his teens and was walking home early one morning, he was mugged. He got hit in his left eye, and lost the sight in it forever, and he would never agree to another operation. He could see

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enough in his right eye to play shooters and, later, cards. After he was mugged, I was up under him and close to him all the time, I was so afraid something else would happen to him. I cooked for him and washed and ironed his shirts and took his suits to the cleaners. He was playing the piano to my remembrance ever since I was old enough to realize he was my brother. It was a gift. He could listen to anything on the radio, and in two shakes he'd have it exactly on the piano. He'd kick up under the keyboard when he was too little for his feet to touch the floor, and my mother never would let anyone touch those marks. He studied with a Mr. Overton Ramey at the Jefferson School, and he read music by Braille and by sight. After the Jefferson School, he went to a school for the blind in Columbus, and pretty soon after that he met the singer Adelaide Hall, and she took him to New York. Art was the kind of person that when he became famous nothing excited him so much he didn't know his own family. He always came home two or three times a year, and he'd go round and see his friends and play pinochle. He was married twice —first, to Ruby, and then, at the end of his life, to Geraldine, who lives out on the Coast."

Tatum left Toledo with Adelaide Hall in 1931. He was one of her two piano accompanists. Before that, he had his own group, and worked in Speed Webb's band. (Other Webb sidemen included Roy Eldridge, Teddy Wilson, and Vic Dickenson.) He had broadcast over WSPD, in Toledo, and had appeared, sometimes for money, sometimes free, at rent parties, at the Château La France, at Chicken Charlie's, and at the Secor Hotel. He joined Milt Senior's band in 1930, and when he left he was replaced by Teddy Wilson. In New York, he played at the Onyx Club, on Fifty-second Street, and made his first solo recordings for Brunswick. Between 1933 and 1935, while his fame seeped through the jazz world, he shuttled from New York to Cleveland to Chicago to Detroit. He went to California for the first time in 1936, and to England for the only time in 1938. Mary Lou Williams used to hang out with Tatum in Cleveland. "Whenever we were in Cleveland," she once said, "I stayed close to Art Tatum, who worked there when he wasn't in New York. When I had a day or two off, we played pinball in the afternoons, and at night we went to Val's, a little after-hours place, where we sometimes stayed until eleven in the morning. Tatum played, and they gave him fifty dollars. Then I played—usually some boogie—and they gave me five dollars. Tatum taught me how to hit my notes, how to control them without using pedals. And he showed me how to keep my fingers flat on the keys to get that clean tone. Of course, he didn't *show* me anything. He just said, 'Mary, you listen.' But once I showed *him* something. Buck Washington—of Buck and Bubbles—had given me a little run in Pittsburgh, which I used one night at Val's. Tatum said, 'What's that run, Mary? Where'd you get that? Play it for me again, please.' I did, and he developed that run—it covered just about the whole keyboard —and used it until the end of his life."

Tatum was always kind to young musicians. Jimmy Rowles spoke recently of meeting him in the early forties in Los Angeles: "I was playing solo piano in a little place at Eighth and Vermont. One night, when I was on the stand and the place was practically empty, the front door opened and closed and somebody came in and sat at the bar. It was very dark. I got this funny feeling—shivers, really funny vibrations. I finished what I was playing and got off real quick. Tiny, the owner, said, 'I want you to meet somebody,' and it was Art Tatum. He said he had enjoyed what he had heard, and asked me if I'd like to walk him back to where he was playing, because his intermission was about over. He was the kindest and most gentlemanly of people, and he became a marvellous friend. He loved piano players, and he listened to everybody. He'd show me things all the time. In fact, he showed me so much I could barely absorb it. I used to listen to him all the time at an after-hours place called Alex Lovejoy's. I heard him play 'In the Still of the Night' there for almost three hours. Non-stop. At a fast tempo. And all the while he'd drink his shots of whiskey and his beer chasers with one hand and keep playing with the other. To make things interesting, he kept changing keys, until he had run through them all. Two pianists he mentioned who influenced him were Fats Waller and Lee Sims. Of course, Tatum knew how good he was, and when he had to wipe out another pianist he'd lower the boom

and let 'im go. Anybody who thought —or who thinks—he can replace Art Tatum is out of his mind."

FROM the late thirties on, Tatum moved ceaselessly between the two coasts, with side trips to Chicago, Cleveland, and Toledo. He played in night clubs, which often depressed him, because they were so noisy. Jazz pianists rarely gave concerts in concert halls, and jazz festivals hadn't been invented. By the mid-forties, his style —if, indeed, he had a style—had formed. The pianist and teacher Felicity Howlett says this about Tatum's style in her first-rate dissertation, done in 1983 for Cornell:

> He did not pilot a single style as much as he piloted his musical genius through the available styles—refining some areas that he touched and setting flares to illuminate other areas for further exploration as he moved along.

Tatum did not fit comfortably in jazz, for his playing, which was largely orchestral, both encompassed it and overflowed it. And his playing jarred with classical piano, because of its improvisational nature. He occupied his own country. His playing was shaped primarily by his technique, which was prodigious, even virtuosic. Tatum had an angelic touch: no pianist has got a better sound out of the instrument. He was completely ambidextrous. And he could move his hands at bewildering speeds, whether through gargantuan arpeggios, oompah stride basses, on-the-beat tenths, or single-note melodic lines. No matter how fast he played or how intense and complex his harmonic inventions became, his attack kept its commanding clarity. The Duke Ellington cornettist Rex Stewart, who turned into something of a writer in his later years, said of Tatum in his "Jazz Masters of the Thirties":

> Tatum achieved much of [his dexterity] through constant practice.... He did not run through variations of songs or work on new inventions to dazzle his audiences. Rather, he ran scales and ordinary practice exercises.
>
> Another form of practice was unique with Tatum. He constantly manipulated a filbert nut through his fingers, so quickly that if you tried to watch him, the vision blurred. He worked with one nut until it became sleek and shiny from handling. When it came time to replace it, he would go to the market and feel nut after nut—a whole bin full, until he found one just the right size and shape for his exercises.
>
> Art's hands were of unusual formation.... When he wanted to, he somehow could make his fingers span a twelfth on the keyboard.... Perhaps the spread developed from that seeming complete relaxation of the fingers—they never rose far

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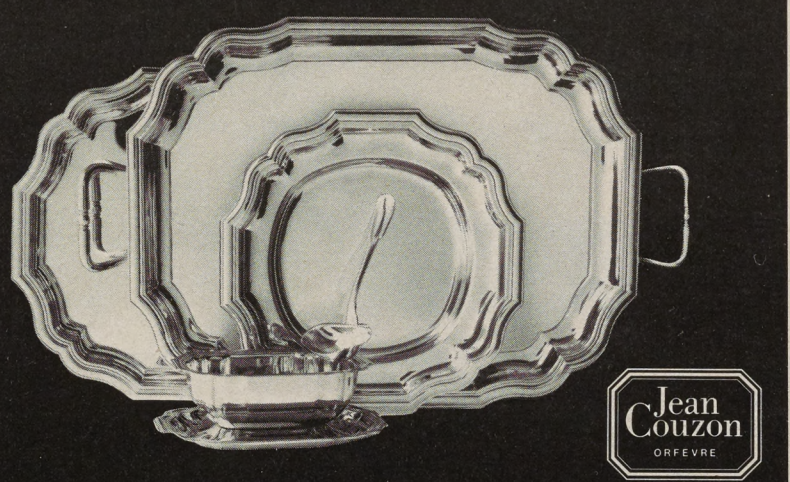

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above the keyboard and looked almost double-jointed as he ran phenomenally rapid, complex runs.

Tatum was a restless, compulsive player who abhorred silence. He used the piano's orchestral possibilities to the fullest, simultaneously maintaining a melodic voice, a harmonic voice, a variety of decorative voices, and a kind of whimsical voice, a laughing, look-Ma-no-hands voice. The effect was both confounding and exhilarating.

Tatum had two main modes—the flashy, kaleidoscopic style he used on the job, and the straight-ahead jazz style, which emerges in fragments from his few after-hours recordings and from some of the recordings made with his various trios (piano, guitar, and bass), which seemed to galvanize him. (Tatum did not have an easy time playing with other instruments; he tended to compete with them, then overrun them.) He offered the first style to the public, which accepted it with awe, and he used the second to delight himself and his peers. One of his famous public numbers would go like this: He would play a four- or eight-bar introduction, made up of an oblique variation of the melody. (Most of Tatum's materials were popular songs; he wrote very little music.) Then he would go into eight bars of ad-lib melody, using single notes in his left hand and loose chords in his right, break this with a two-bar descending arpeggio, return to the melody for four more bars, insert a dense two-bar dissonance, and pick up the melody again. The eight-bar bridge would consist of a seesawing left-hand figure overlaid with a winding, ascending arpeggio, which, when it reached its top, would pause, then fall down the other side of the mountain, landing in a flush of single notes and a sudden two-bar double-time coda. In the last eight bars of the chorus, he would ease into a medium tempo, and would gently shower us with Fats Waller chords. He might approach the second and final chorus by continuing in tempo, then interrupting himself with one of the arrhythmic swirls he borrowed from Earl Hines and loved so much; by releasing a series of arpeggios, the ropes that held his music together; by rebuilding the song's harmony with huge altered chords; or by doubling the tempo, using jellying left-hand oompah chords and an interpolation of, say, "Rhapsody in Blue." During the last five or six years of his life, his public style grew increasingly congested. He seemed to need to change his attack every two or three measures. Tatum liked to dazzle his peers, but sometimes he would set aside his grandstanding and swing unbelievably hard to do it. This would take the form of long, complicated, leaping single-note melodic lines in his right hand that suggested swallows at work.

Tatum's early influences are relatively clear. He admired Fats Waller and Lee Sims, and certainly listened to James P. Johnson. He also admired Earl Hines. And he could play Chopin and possibly Bach. When Tatum was little, he listened to a good deal of player piano and could apparently emulate what he heard note for note—and piano rolls were sometimes cut by two pianists or by machines. The influence that Tatum had on other musicians is still being uncovered. His most obvious students include Oscar Peterson, Lennie Tristano, Bud Powell, George Shearing, Jimmy Rowles, Teddy Wilson, Hank Jones, Dick Hyman, and Dorothy Donegan. He reportedly turned Coleman Hawkins around when Hawkins first heard him, in the early thirties, and he did the same thing to Charlie Parker in the late thirties. He probably introduced the rococo strain that still flows so strongly through jazz.

MUSICIANS love to talk about Tatum. Here are some. Gene Rodgers is first:

"When I met Art again in Los Angeles in the early forties, we'd go around to the little after-hours rooms when we had finished work, and we became good friends. Whenever he called me on the telephone, he'd say, 'Mr. Art Tatum would like to know when he can have the pleasure of Mr. Gene Rodgers' company.' One of those times, I discovered what a memory he had. We were standing at a bar talking, and this man came up and said, 'Hey, Mr. Great Art Tatum, I bet you don't know who I am.' Art said, 'I'm with friends. Don't bother me now,' and this guy went on, 'I'll bet the great Mr. Art Tatum fifty dollars he don't know who I am.' I could tell Art was getting annoyed, but all he said was 'I know who you are, so why don't you go away and leave us alone?' I said I'd take half the bet, and another man standing with us took the rest, and Art said, 'Your name is Such-and-Such and the last time I met you was on such-and-such a day in such-and-such a year at the Three Deuces on Fifty-second Street

in New York City, and you were just as rude then as you are now.' We each won our twenty-five dollars."

MARGARET WHITING:
"I heard Art Tatum every opportunity I got—on Vine Street in Hollywood, in Chicago, in New York. He'd always play some of my father's songs and things like 'Willow Weep for Me.' I had never heard such harmony before, and I haven't heard it since. Once, in New York, I went to dinner with some relatives of my singing teacher Lillian Goodman, and Art was the other guest. After dinner, he said, 'Let's go to the piano,' which was in the next room. I sang 'It Had to Be You,' and he played for me, and we went on like that for two solid hours. It was the most memorable music of my life."

JIMMY MCPARTLAND:
"I had a group at the Three Deuces in Chicago in the late thirties, and Art was the intermission pianist. We talked a lot, and I told him about a book I'd read on this German sea captain named von Luckner. He'd cruised all over the world during the First World War on an armed ship that was disguised as a neutral tramp steamer, and he'd sunk millions of dollars of Allied shipping. I think Lowell Thomas wrote the book. Anyway, Art was fascinated, so I started going to his hotel in the afternoon and reading it to him. We'd drink beer, and I'd read, and it was most delightful. He was a great listener. Sometimes when I'd get off the stand after a set, he'd sing phrases back to me that I'd played and that he particularly liked."

JOE BUSHKIN:
"Art Tatum and I opened the Embers in 1951. We were there sixteen weeks. I had a small group, and he was by himself. Fats Waller had introduced him to me at the Three Deuces in Chicago in the late thirties, when I was with Muggsy Spanier's Dixieland band. They loved each other, and there were always these hugs. Art wasn't near as big as Fats, but he was heavy, broad. He had a gravelly, low voice, almost a basso profundo. He punctuated everything with a laugh, and he had a set way of being. I never saw him in anything but a white shirt and a dark suit and a simple tie. He was prone to catching colds. He'd call me when he had one and ask if I minded doing the first set, and, of course, I didn't. When he wasn't playing, he'd stand at the bar. He drank boilermakers all evening—V.O. and beer chasers. He'd go back to the bar after his last set and he'd always ask me to play 'Squeeze Me'—a Waller tune he never played and never recorded. He would get a little raucous after a whole evening of drinking, and he'd kind of shout, 'Play "Squeeze Me," Joey.' The Embers was a very noisy place, and when Art was cooking he'd sail right through it—if you're born with a great talent like his, you have a superior inspiration that carries you most times. But when the noise got to him he'd stop dead and wait until it quieted down. Then he would go into something soft like 'Willow Weep for Me,' and take his time getting through the rest of the set. He liked a little humor in his music, and he'd stick four bars of a march or 'America' into the middle of a solo. Leonard Lyons brought Horowitz in one night, and he heard Art fooling around like that, and he got a great kick out of it. I consider Horowitz as hip as you can get—one of the cats, the way he changes things a little here, a little there. Tatum knocked him out, and Horowitz told him so. Tatum was a complicated man. He saw with his hands and his mind. The temptation for someone like Art is to get too romantic, but he kept the romantic overhead low. When one of his slow ballads began to get a little thick—they reminded me of French Impressionists—he'd stick in a fantastic run and break the mood. He told me one of the best ways to practice is take a tune and play it in every key you can, even if you don't know some of them too well. Keep at it, he said, and suddenly all these ideas will come to you that you never imagined. Tatum couldn't stand bores or drunks. He'd just turn his back and walk away."

MARIAN MCPARTLAND:
"The first inkling I had of Art Tatum was his recording of Dvořák's 'Humoresque,' which I heard when I was still in England. I couldn't believe it. Then I saw some of his piano transcriptions, and they were even more unbelievable. I think I met him at the Embers in New York in the early fifties, and I spent some time with him at the Sky Bar in Cleveland, where he heard me play. I don't know how I had the courage, but he was very nice afterward. Once, at Olivia's Patio, in Washington, he came to hear me unannounced. I had

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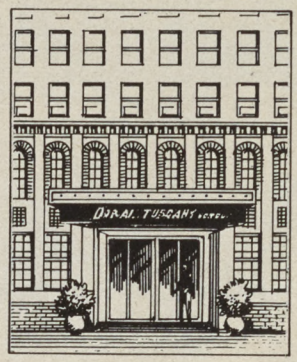

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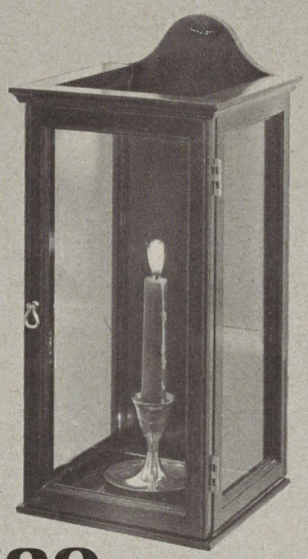

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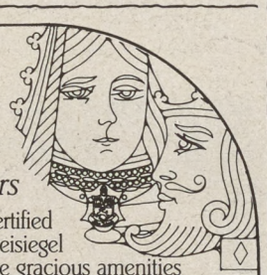

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Joe Morello and Bill Crow with me and they didn't notice him, but I did, and I was so shook up I barely finished. The last time I heard him was at the Club Tijuana, in Baltimore. It was sort of a dump, and I remember thinking, What's this great musician doing here, playing for people who aren't listening and barely know who he is?"

TATUM, like all the musicians of his generation, had gone out of fashion by the early fifties. Bebop was entrenched, and hard bop, its dull child, was around the corner. Tatum died of uremic poisoning, leaving an estate of barely six thousand dollars. His sister, Arline Taylor, talked with him the night of his death: "My husband and I were living in Milwaukee then, and the phone rang and it was my mother, calling from Toledo. She said, 'You're going to have to go to Los Angeles on the airplane. Art's sick and he wants you.' I called Art on the telephone, and he said, 'Can you come out?' I told him I'd take the first plane from Chicago in the morning, and Art said, 'I'll be looking for you,' and he began to cry. I told him not to cry—that I'd be there—and hung up. While I was doing my little packing, I heard the screen door open and shut, and I asked my husband did he hear that? He said yes and went to the door, which was latched, as always. I finished packing, and the phone rang and it was my mother, and she was crying. She told me there was no need for me to go, that Art had passed. My husband and I looked at each other and said it must have been just when that screen door opened and closed."

—WHITNEY BALLIETT

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BLOCK THAT METAPHOR!

[*From the New Orleans Times-Picayune/States-Item*]

"I warn you, find another pigeon," Dr. Thomas A. Lombardo of the Erie County Medical Society said of malpractice lawyers Sunday in an address to a doctors' meeting in Buffalo. "Your incredible greed has killed the golden goose. The egg is no longer going to be there. You've awakened a sleeping giant."

•

HYPENATION: The capability to hypenate words automatically at the end of a line. Once found only in dedicated word processors, hypenation is now appearing in disk programs for microcomputers with lots of memory.—*Suburban Features Plus, a publication for newspaper managers.*

Memory isn't everything.

What I've tried to do with my own songs is to create a bridge of understanding for people such as yourselves, who perhaps have never heard Indian music or have a very limited understanding of what it is. It's actually an extension of prayer, and a remembrance of who you are and where you come from. What I try to do in my own work is to use the traditions I come from and blend them with the language I know best, which is English. And I think the best way to illustrate this would be to present a song, to try to give you an idea of what I'm talking about. Just a little bit of background for this. In New Mexico there are many different pueblos, and the pueblo furthest north that still exists today in New Mexico is Taos Pueblo. They have a very strong social dance tradition known as the "round dance." And the traditional round dance beat is much like a heartbeat. And so I've taken this rhythm and incorporated traditional sound. Now I can't say the round dance songs are in a language, I can't say they're in a dialect, because in fact it's really a vocalization of a different kind. And I've incorporated the English language into these songs. So I'll give you an example: *

(Read across; evenly spaced drum beats, one to a column, fall on the first or only syllable in that column; a period indicates a drum beat without vocal accompaniment.)

Yaya	eney,	yaya	eney,	yawe	yahe
yowe	ha	a	a,	yaya	eney,
yaya	eney,	yawe	yahe	yowe	ha
a	a,	yaya	eney	yowe	ha,
yaya	eney	yowe	ha,	eyo	wena,
eyo	wena-ey	aweya	heyo	ha,	eyo
haya,	eyo	hay	hay,	.	.
Clouds	walking,	clouds	walking,	every	where you
look and	see	ee	ee,	clouds	walking,
clouds	walking,	every	where you	look and	see
ee	ee,	do you	see the	clouds	walking
every	where you	look and	see	ee	ee
ee	ee,	thunder	talking,	thunder	talking
every	where you	look and	see	ee	ee,
.	thunder	talking,	thunder	talking,	every
where you	look and	see	ee	ee,	do you
hear the	thunder	talking,	do you	see the	clouds
walking,	every	where you	look and	see	ee
ee	ee	ee	ee	.	.
Rain	falling,	rain	falling,	every	where you
look and	see	ee	ee,	rain	falling,
rain	falling,	every	where you	look and	see
ee	ee	ee,	do you	feel the	rain
falling,	do you	hear the	thunder	talking,	do you
see the	clouds	walking,	every	where you	look and
see	ee	ee	ee	ee	yaya
eney,	yaya	eney,	yawe	yahe	yowe
ha	a	a,	yaya	eney,	yaya
eney,	yawe	ya	heyowe	ha	a
a,	yaya	eney	yowe	ha,	yaya
eney	yowe	ha,	eyo	wena,	eyo
wena-ey	aweya	heyo	ha,	eyo	haya,
eyo	hay	hay,	.	.	Double
rainbow,	double	rainbow,	every	where you	look and
see	ee	ee,	double	rainbow,	double
rainbow,	every	where you	look and	see	ee
ee,	do you	see a	double	rainbow	every
where you	look and	see	ee	ee	ee
ee	we've all	seen the	clouds	walking,	we've all
heard the	thunder	talking,	we've all	felt	the rain
falling,	we've all	known	a double	rainbow,	every
where our	hearts've	see	ee	ee	ee
een,	every	where our	hearts've	see	ee
ee	ee	ee	ee	ee	een
.	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.	

I use that song a lot of times in working with children. You go through hand motions, you actually create the movement of the boughs, you actually make the sound of thunder through gestures, which are a very important part of language. And to create the rain falling. And for many, many peoples all over the world rain is a very significant thing, because it's like an affirmation of what that rain brings to the people. Rain heals, rain is sustenance. And so I use these gestures with the children to help them feel that. What I'm trying to do is to create that place to focus with breath in my songs. And now I'm trying to bridge it, not only within this continent, but across the Americas. I'm influenced by many, many different kinds of music, particularly music from South America and Central America. For me translation has a different sense, because I don't speak any of those languages. But by being a good listener you can reach understanding through song, through breath. And hopefully that adds to the entire community that this world really is.

Ortiz: Harold, as you were singing I was quietly thinking of a song in which a recurrent phrase is, "Rain-standing youths and rain-standing maidens, standing forth upon the land. Rain-standing youths racing quickly across the horizon. Rain-standing maidens standing forth gently, moving slowly across the horizon." It's a rain dance song for the summertime. It's the same vivid imagery, but in this case what is invoked is what looks from a distance, out in the high desert or even the low desert, like great strands of hair reaching down from the sky, where the rain is falling. Some are dark, and those are rain-standing youths. If they are gentle, gray, misty, they're maidens. The dark ones move quickly across the landscape, and they're the ones that bring flash flooding. The gray misty ones move slowly. This is the theme of many songs in Tewa, and it could well have been in your song. Rain is celebrated as both male and female. So also snow: the harsh, dry, driving snow that piles up in doorways, that skiers love, is male snow. The soft, gentle snowflakes that melt quickly after they hit the ground are female snow.

Audience Member: Are all the stories you people have been talking about old stories or folktales, or are some of them newly made, newly spoken.

Norman: Well, in the north where I work they're both. Some of the old stories with a wide framework still work; for instance three years ago I heard a Trickster story in an area near the Great Slave Lake, and it has got to be one of the oldest types of stories, but this one is basically about how Trickster made a communications satellite fall from the sky. So you have both old and new, mixed. You can usually tell something about the age of a story from how it's described. For instance, "I heard this from my great-grandmother who heard it from her great-grandmother." Well, right there you get three or four hundred years.

Ortiz: We can't underscore enough that there's creativity going on in these cultures, there's experimentation and innovation going on. They're adapting, they're perceiving new things, new possibilities out there in the world

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* This song is available on a cassette recording, *A Circle Begins: Poetry and Song by Harold Littlebird* (Santa Fe: Littlebird Studios, 1985). Transcription by Dennis Tedlock.

about them. They're undergoing changes—in the case of Mayan refugees, profound, gut-wrenching, soul-wrenching changes, the move from familiar country and climates to very unfamiliar and even hostile ones. There are new stories coming into play all the time. It goes with the fact of being alive.

Audience Member: To what extent are the stories written down, and to what extent are they passed on orally?

Tedlock: You have to go on a group-by-group basis to answer that question. For example, in Navajo ceremonies the sandpaintings are in effect texts for the chants and stories that go with them. It depends on what your definition of writing is. But even if your definition is pretty strict, the Lakota or Sioux have a written tradition running back to the 18th century, using the Latin alphabet. When you find that kind of writing it usually started with missionaries, but it always escapes—the Sioux wrote down many things that missionaries never intended for them to write down. It's the same thing throughout Mexico, Central America. The Latin alphabet was adapted to the native languages, and in Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs, there was an active alphabetic literary tradition from the 16th century on down into the 18th century, and it's currently undergoing a revival. It began with things that were taken down from oral tradition or transposed from native writing systems. Not a tenth of these Nahuatl classics has ever been translated into Spanish, to say nothing of English. The same thing in Yucatan, and in Guatemala, and in Chiapas, where the Mayan languages are spoken. People wrote down a lot of things in the Latin alphabet, often taking it directly from hieroglyphic books, as in the case of the Popol Vuh.

Audience Member: How old do you have to be to hold forth as a storyteller?

Guss: Everybody you ask to tell a certain story always defers to somebody else, saying, "He's older and he knows." And you can just keep going from person to person and they'll just keep on deferring to another person. And a younger person will never tell the story in the presence of an older person. Of course, knowing a story and telling a story are two different things. And that's the problem in trying to elicit a story and trying to discover if the person actually knows the story that you're trying to elicit.

Ortiz: I can talk about that in my area. The story is stronger if it is told by someone older. The same story exactly; it just has more strength. That's why there is deferential behavior. It's not just obsequiousness. There's a very profound cultural value involved there. It would be presumptuous for a younger person to tell a story when he knows that an older person has been telling it for a lot longer, and can probably embellish it with subtleties.

Audience Member: What's the effect of transcription or recording on a performance?

Ortiz: Again it gets back to that old idea that we are somehow trying to look at these Native American literatures as if they were there without our presence. Well, no, we're trying to translate them, we're trying to bring them into English. And so I always look more for people who have been around, who really do take into account the recording, the writing down, because they're assisting with the translation. I see that as a positive thing when it happens, rather than somehow trying to take a snapshot.

Tedlock: The fundamental issue here is the acceptance of the Native American as a contemporary. The whole notion of getting the pristine thing, as if nothing had ever happened and these cultures had been left undisturbed by Europeans, becomes an elaborate way of constructing a totally other world that we tend to think of as being located somewhere in the past. A nice thing about sound recording is that a microphone hears in every direction, it's not like a camera that can decide not to show that some ethnologist is sitting over here.

Burns: I think it's taken a long time for people to realize that there's a basic difference between an oral story and a story that's written down. In a story that's written down there's no room for responses. It's written down for a reader to read in the privacy of his own room. There's always a listener for a story, and this is always affecting the teller.

Audience Member: Does the native audience prefer that a story always be told the same way, or do they appreciate, or maybe even demand, differences from one telling to another?

Tedlock: In one and the same community there are some things that must be repeated word for word and others that change. In Zuni there's a chant that lasts four-and-a-half hours, and to make sure it stays the same, five people chant in unison. There's no way five people can simultaneously stick in something new. On the other hand, if it's storytelling by the family hearthside, or in the context of the medicine society meeting late at night in the winter, there's all kinds of room for new wrinkles, new heights of good performance, or a story that nobody ever heard before. That's a pretty good trick to pull, too.

Audience Member: To what extent are women among the storytellers you've been talking about?

Burns: In the Yucatan, the stories aren't as codified as they are elsewhere, because they are a part of conversations. You can even use the word for conversation to mean "story." Women tell stories all the time. And sometimes a male storyteller will say, "That's my part, let her tell the other part."

Glassgold: Concerning the notion of where the text resides: I read with a certain amount of amused delight, a few weeks ago in *The New York Times*, that there is now a complete Bible in Navajo, and it occured to me—given what you were saying before about the Lakota having a written tradition, and about the other classic texts that have yet to be translated from native languages into English—that maybe the very presence of a Navajo Bible indicates that there has already been a Navajo written tradition, or there will be a developing written tradition because of this. Would that be more authentic or less authentic than the kind of oral literature you've been talking about? Is this new material acceptable? I don't mean the Bible itself.

Tedlock: The Bible translations you're talking about are very curious, because they are done by people who go there and learn Navajo, in this particular case, with the purpose of eventually publishing a Bible translation in the Latin alphabet. Nobody asked them to do that except for an organization of missionary translators, using the money that goes into church offering plates to save the Navajos from themselves. But I'm trying to think of an example where the presence of a Bible translation actually had a lot of influence on what then happened in native literature. In the case of the authors of the alphabetic version of the Popol Vuh, they certainly cited or alluded to parts of the Bible they had heard in translation, in sermons. But they cited it in order to contradict and disagree with it. There's another case, too, where the

Cherokee and a number of other tribes in the Southeast accepted the idea of writing but rejected the Latin alphabet, inventing their own systems. Most of these were syllabaries rather than alphabets. Much of what the Cherokees chose to write down was religious, all right, but it wasn't the Bible.

Audience Member: How are your collections shaped or distorted by the different kinds of information that are transmitted by men or by women, and by the fact that the fieldworker was a man or a woman?

Ortiz: In the Tewa case men tell the stories of creation, of the migration, and of how things came to be the way they are, because they're in charge of religious knowledge. Women tellers are best at different kinds of stories, stories of a sociological import or content, because they are left in charge of teaching children, sometimes by example, sometimes by teaching, sometimes by stories. And mothers and grandmothers don't need to recite these hour-long orations of finding the right valley to settle in or how the world came to be the way it is.

Tedlock: It's a little bit different for the Zuni. It's true that as far as the formal rituals go, most of the knowledge is officially in the keeping of men, but men reside with their wives' families. Now let's say that the only two people who officially know something die within a month of each other. What do you do? It often turns out that the senior lady in one of those households, although she never recited this thing in public, knows it from one end to the other, because she's been hearing it all these years. Or a woman may hear men say, "Wait a minute, does it go this way or this way?" and the woman says, "Well, every time I heard it it went this way." So some people have a passive memory that just takes everything in, and then it's there when it's needed.

Audience Member: Do you worry that by putting these things into writing you are somehow changing the vital meaning in essential and inappropriate ways?

Burns: The only really honest answer any of us can give is that this is one of the central questions we worry about all the time, and what we're working toward is what Dennis calls performable texts. We'd all like to be able to put the stories on tape, and find ways to signal changes in stress and vowel length, pauses, elements of style, in such a way that they can be recreated in English. But I also think all of us feel that the people we work with have important things to tell the rest of the world. A lot of these people have said, "You're going to tell this to other people." They charged us with that. And then, finally, a lot of us have a sense of beauty when we do see things well translated, performable texts or whatever sort of texts. And there is something very magical that happens in the process of translation, when things click together from one language to another, maybe on a piece of paper, maybe on a videotape of a sung performance. Achieving that magic moment of clicking between languages and sounds to ideas and views of the world—that's what we're all about.

Translations from Six Native American Languages

This first example offers a description of the primordial world, written in the 16th century by the surviving toastmasters of the former kingdom of Quiché in Guatemala. It is part of a longer work, translated from Quiché (a Mayan language) by Dennis Tedlock under the title, *Popol Vuh: The Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985).

THIS IS THE ACCOUNT, here it is:

Now it still ripples, now it still murmurs, ripples, it still sighs, still hums, and it is empty under the sky.

Here follow the first words, the first eloquence:

There is not yet one person, one animal, bird, fish, crab, tree, rock, hollow, canyon, meadow, forest. Only the sky alone is there; the face of the earth is not clear. Only the sea alone is pooled under all the sky; there is nothing whatever gathered together. It is at rest; not a single thing stirs. It is held back, kept at rest under the sky.

Whatever there is that might be is simply not there: only the pooled water, only the calm sea, only it alone is pooled.

Whatever might be is simply not there: only murmurs, ripples, in the dark, in the night. Only the Maker, Modeler alone, Sovereign Plumed Serpent, the Bearers, Begetters are in the water, a glittering light.

In the following excerpt, Alfonso Ortiz not only translates but contextualizes the remembered words of an elder in the Tewa community of San Juan, in New Mexico. This is the opening section of an essay entitled. "Look to the Mountain Top," published in *Essays in Reflection 2*, edited by E. Graham Ward (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973).

A wise elder among my people—the Tewa Pueblo Indians—frequently used the phrase *p'in pe obi*, "look to the mountain top." I first heard it when I was seven years old, as I was practicing for the first time to participate in relay races we run in the Pueblo country to give strength to the Sun Father as he journeys across the sky.

I was at one end of the earth track which ran east to west, like the path of the sun. The old man, who was blind, called me to him and said: "Young one, as you run, look to the mountain top," and he pointed to Tsikomo, the western sacred mountain of the Tewas. "Keep your gaze fixed on that mountain, and you will feel the miles melt beneath your feet. Do this and in time you will feel as if you can leap over bushes, trees, and even the river." I tried to understand what this last statement meant, but I was too young.

On another occasion a few days later, I asked him if I really could learn to leap over treetops. He smiled and said, "Whatever of life's challenges you may face, remember always to look to the mountain top, for in so doing you look to greatness. Remember this, and let no problem, however great it may seem, discourage you nor let anything less than the mountain top distract you. This is the one thought I want to leave with you. And in that dim coming time when we shall meet again, it shall be on the mountain top."

Next comes the story of how a man from northern Manitoba received the name Turtle Wait. It was told by

Samuel Makidemewabe and translated from Cree by Howard Norman. It should be read aloud, with a short pause after each line and a longer pause for strophe breaks. The source is Norman's *The Wishing Bone Cycle: Narrative Poems from the Swampy Cree Indians* (Santa Barbara: Ross-Erikson, 1982).

He always watched
turtles. One lived around here,
the one who caused his name.

At an early age he waited for turtles
to come up on their logs.
Everyone knew this
about him. He'd wait. Wait. And one turtle
would be the last out of the water.
He had moss, mud, sometimes sticks
on his back
and he was a slow one.

Other turtle watchers gave up. But he would
wait until *that* turtle came out
to tell *him* things
and no one else.

So, in a way that turtle
caused his name.
The last one to wait for.

Up on his rock or log.

The following passage comes from a shaman's tale of the Makiritare (or Ye'cuana) of the upper Orinoco, collected by Marc de Civrieux and rendered into English by David M. Guss. The full story may be found in Guss's *The Language of the Birds: Tales, Texts, and Poems of Interspecies Communication* (San Francisco: North Point, 1985).

"Have you gone crazy, boy! That's not a woman you brought. It's an armadillo! Where've you been? Did the armadillos get you?" And she picks up a stick and starts to hit the armadillo. The armadillo woman gets out of the hammock and runs out of the house. She heads straight for the hidden path back to her own house.

The son runs after her, half-mad, screaming. He tries to follow her. He doesn't want to lose her.

"Mother, you've scared off my woman!" That's what he screams in his rage.

"That's not my daughter-in-law, son. That's not your woman. That's an armadillo. She's bewitched you. She's made you crazy."

The boy follows the armadillo's tracks. Then he loses them. He can't see that invisible path to the armadillo's house anymore. He's lost that memory of the other house, that knowledge of the armadillos. That's what madness is for humans. Now he's happy. He's free from the spell. He sees like other people.

In these next lines a possessed dancer is brought back to his village. The full story, told by Andrew Peynetsa of Zuni, New Mexico, and translated from Zuni by Dennis Tedlock, appears in Tedlock's *Finding the Center: Narrative Poetry of the Zuni Indians* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1978). Peynetsa's careful timing is shown by line breaks (short pauses) and strophe breaks (longer pauses).

The herder caught him for them:
the White Shumeekuli
(*softly*) who had run away from the Yaaya dance.
The others came to get him
and took him back.

They brought him back, and when they
tried to unmask him
the mask
was stuck
to his face.
He was changing over.

When they unmasked the young man, some of his
flesh peeled off.

Finally comes a scene from a Yucatec Maya story, told by Alonzo Gonzales Mó and translated by Allan F. Burns. The dash in "mu——ch" means that word should be stretched out; capitals indicate a loud voice. To find out whether the lovers avoid being caught, see Burns's *An Epoch of Miracles: Oral Literature of the Yucatec Maya* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983).

The man said this,
(*higher*) "Come here, woman, come here so we can
get together."
(*quietly*) "I can't yet, don't hurry so much.
I'm used to doing it with my husband and we
TAKE OFF ALL OUR CLOTHES. We get naked.
That's how I'm
used to doing it. We're used to sleeping without
any clothes."
"Oh, that's what you want me to do?"
Well, the man got up
and took off all his clothes
then he was left naked.
"Where are your clothes?" "Here they are."
She grabbed his clothes and put them in a box and
closed it.
Well then, (*higher*) "Come here, woman." (*quietly*)
"Just a minute,
man, don't hurry yourself."
It wasn't mu——ch longer when
they heard
BAH BAH BAH, they heard someone knocking.

Dennis Tedlock

Using expert advice, it seems to me, particularly in the field of literature, is a very dangerous game. Certainly in a translator one insists on competence in the original language. But one looks for the ability to write beautiful English. And I frankly think that more translators know about beautiful English than college professors. David Rieff, *editor*

Foreign Colleagues, Secret Sisters

On April 13, 1986, PEN hosted an event in New York entitled "Women Writers Read Favorite Foreign Colleagues." The public crowded the hall on a beautiful Sunday afternoon to hear Amy Clampitt read from the works of Lauris Edmond; Jewelle Gomez read Myriam Diaz-Diocaretz; Jessica Hagedorn read from Elena Poniatowska and Jacinta Escudos; Jane Lazarre read from the works of Christa Wolf; Magda Bogin read Isabel Allende and Elena Poniatowska; and Eileen Lottman read from the works of Marianne Veron. Erica Jong introduced the event with the following remarks:

How to explain the joy of finding a secret sister of the soul through someone else's words? The heart leaps in assent. The hair stands up on the back of the neck. One feels—how to say this without being banal?—*understood.* One no longer feels oneself to be out on an ice floe in the middle of the arctic. Connection has been made.

There is a special delight in finding a foreign colleague who echoes one's innermost loves and fears. First of all—and we might as well admit it—the element of competition is removed by the fact that one writes in a different language (or out of a different culture). Writers are notorious—not for wishing to be the only writer who *ever* lived, but for wishing to be the only writer who is alive at the *moment*. With foreign colleagues, the curse of competitiveness is lifted and one feels free to love and praise without reservation. Writing is not a competitive sport, but the vicissitudes of publishing and reviewing often pit writers against each other, as if it were. With foreign colleagues, one comes to the work purely, as with the safely dead. One feels as if the word had just been created and one feels the excitement of being present at that event.

Women writers have often felt, if not like a beleaguered minority, then like a secret society. We are more than half the world, yet in the world of books we are still, as Tillie Olsen says, one in twelve. Our view of experience, valid and important to us, is still often deemed trivial by a patriarchal literary world which calls the battlefield "major" and boudoir "minor"—as in fact it calls "minor" any activity performed largely by women, like having babies and protecting family harmony, making sure, in short, that life goes on. To find a woman from another culture keeping that flame is a specially poignant experience. It confirms our common humanity in a way even praise from a member of our own culture does not. To have a woman from Tokyo tell me "I am Isadora Wing"—or a woman from Belgrade stop me on the street to talk about *Fanny*—validates me as a writer in a special way. I feel that I have transcended the trap of my own culture.

The writers you will hear today are doing the same—transcending parochialism to affirm humanity, transcending language to affirm the muse. . . .

Erica Jong

Writers Watch

(Barbara Raskin, in the Spring Newsletter, asked for information about Writers Watch. Herewith a brief report by PEN's Washington representative Sidney Sulkin who was recently elected president of Writers Watch.)

In the spring of 1985, after months of preliminary involvement in its formation, PEN, by vote of the Executive Board, officially joined Writers Watch, a new coalition of writers' organizations whose members now include the Poetry Society of America, the American Newspaper Guild, the National Writers Union, the American Writers Congress and Writers Guild of America-East. Based in Washington, Writers Watch monitors Congress, the agencies of the executive branch, and the courts on issues of direct concern to writers, reporting to members regularly and in special alert bulletins when necessary. Writers Watch develops contacts with congressional staffs; identify and prepare analyses of important bills; track these bills through committees; arrange for testimony before committees on key issues; work with sympathetic legislators and their staffs, to the extent allowed by law, to initiate and influence legislation; watch the executive agencies for new rules and regulations affecting writers; follow important court cases.

Each member organization of Writers Watch has a voting seat on the Board of Directors which sets policy agenda. Membership entails no financial obligation though it is hoped that members will contribute (and some have). Primary funding is expected to come from foundations and individuals and, indeed, Writers Watch has already received and been pledged help including a matching grant.

Working with extremely limited resources, Writers Watch has begun a study of the legislative calendar and has identified more than a score of bills introduced in the 99th Congress and sure to be at issue in the 100th, including several bills to amend the copyright and intellectual property rights laws; four House bills and a couple of Senate bills to strengthen "Free Trade in Ideas," including repeal of the ideological exclusion clauses of the McCarran-Walter Act; a fistful of efforts to amend the Freedom of Information Act; at least three bills designed to limit, on security grounds, the flow of government information to writers; as well as others concerned with funding for the arts, library lending rights, libel and slander, "government-in-the-sunshine" laws, work-for-hire, and so on.

All of these issues will carry forward to the new Congress that convenes in January. Writers Watch has launched a fund-raising campaign and hopes to soon be able to hire an executive director who will be in the posi-

tion to monitor issues closely and keep members informed.

The discussion in the Spring Newsletter of the involvement of PEN members outside New York City in PEN's programs suggests that members may also be interested in these other recent representational activities in Washington. For the past two years, at the request of the Freedom-to-Write Committee, I have met from time to time with State Department officials and Congressional staff members in support of PEN efforts to help imprisoned writers in Turkey, Viet Nam, the Philippines (under Marcos) , the Soviet Union and elsewhere. In advance of the Arthur Miller-Harold Pinter trip to Turkey, a meeting with political officers of the Turkish desk and the Human Rights Division at State produced some advance briefing information, such as it was. Later, there was a good opportunity to back up the Miller-Pinter efforts when the Prime Minister of Turkey visited Washington and spoke to the National Press Club. I put two questions to him: to address publicly the issue of large numbers of political prisoners in Turkey (which he refused to do), and to account for the total censorship of the Miller-Pinter press conference in Ankara (which, he said, considering the attention now being drawn to it, he would have been astute enough *not* to censor if he had been in the country because, as it happened, he was in South Africa at the time).

On another issue, again at the National Press Club, Attorney-General Meese, in response to a question I put to him about the ideological exclusion clauses in the McCarran-Walter Act, said that no one should be excluded from this country on the basis of political beliefs and that he did not oppose amendment of the Act provided that, in revision, no "loopholes" were created to admit those who might (as he put it) "do rather than say" something harmful to American national security. What stand the administration will finally take toward the upcoming McCarran-Walter amendment bills remains to be seen. So far, the position has been that no changes are necessary. Perhaps George Shultz' comments at the PEN Congress and these remarks by Meese indicate that the pressure for amendment is having some effect.

Obviously a good deal more could be done in Washington (aside from what Writers Watch accomplishes) to backup PEN's Freedom-to-Write activities. I welcomed Lionel Tiger's comments in the Spring Newsletter and think Anne Bernays' suggestion of an April 1987 meeting in New York City an excellent one.

Sidney Sulkin

NINA TOVICH

Top row: Sam Osherson, David Heller, Ross Terrill, Frank Phelan, Eric Craft, Leslie Epstein, Sam Shem, Betty Schrieber. Middle row: Pamela Painter, William Novak, Justin Kaplan, Gail Mazur, Arthur Myers, unidentified. Bottom row: Linda Barnes, Ai, Ruth Feldman, Anne Bernays.

PEN/New England Reception for authors whose books were published from September 1985 through Spetember 1986. At the Harvard Book Store Cafe, Boston, September 21, 1986.

Letters

This letter was received by the PEN Prison Writing Program from Jerome Washington, a PEN member and an inmate at the Green Haven Correctional Facility, Green Haven, N.Y. He is author of A Bright Spot in the Yard, *is a recipient of a fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts, and has served more than 13 years of a sentence of 15 years to life for murder.*

Dear PEN Members,

This is an urgent appeal for your help!

New York State's Department of Correctional Services (DOCS) has revised Directive 4911 which outlines and describes items allowed to be sent through the mail or brought by visitors to prisoners. The revised Directive went into effect on June 19, 1986.

Section IV, #6 of this Directive states: "Books, magazines, newspapers and periodicals may be received [by prisoners] from publishers or approved distributors *only*".

Please send your letter(s) calling for the repeal of the DOCS. revised Section IV #6 of Directive 4911 to one or all of the following:

Hon. Gov. Mario Cuomo
Executive Chambers
The State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Hon. Franz S. Leichter
State Senator
656 West 181 St.
New York, NY 10033

Hon. Thomas A. Coughlin
Commissioner
Dept. of Correctional Services
State Campus #2
Albany, NY 12226

Sincerely
Jerome Washington

Copies of Washington's accompanying article, "Further Imprisoning Those Behind Bars," an op-ed piece published in the New York Times *August 30, 1986, are available upon request from Joyce Casey, staff coordinator, Prison Writing Program.*

•

To the Editor:

On March 13, 1986, at 5:42 P.M., enveloped by chants of "Books Not Bombs!" and surrounded by police and media, I made a personal decision which turned me into a criminal.

For the first time in almost ninety years, it was now a crime to study in our national library after 5:30 P.M. I had an assignment due the next day. I was researching in the beautiful Main Reading Room of the Library of Congress. Some people were demonstrating to protest the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings–induced reduction of most evening and all Sunday hours. At the main circulation desk, a speaker read a statement from PEN writers, including these words from PEN Vice President Kurt Vonnegut:

> "This teensy-weensy effort to reduce the national debt carries with it the big and unspeakably ugly message: Wisdom and information possessed by ordinary citizens are not considered in harmony with the national purpose at this point in time . . ."

This touched me deeply. A short while later, an officer came up to my desk and asked if I wanted to be arrested. I gave him a rather incredulous look, proceeded with my research, and was informed that I was under arrest for unlawful entry—trespassing.

After five years of college, four years as a professional researcher, three years specializing in mineral rights, two years of Vietnam-era Naval service, I made that one decision. I decided to remain. I made it as much in anger and frustration as in protest. Although I spent a night in jail, endured over two weeks of the absurdity of a trial, lost the largest contract of my professional career, was subsequently evicted from my apartment, and had my telephone disconnected, I've never regretted that decision.

Since that Thursday, I—and the thirteen other researchers and writers with whom a camaraderie and sense of purpose developed in the paddy wagons and jail cells of that eventful night—have worked to restore funding to the Library of Congress. We have written articles, lobbied and testified before Congress, developed national grass-roots support, and watched with pride as the LC was restored to full hours when a law went into effect that we had helped to push through. But we are criminals.

Since my release, people have treated me rather like a hero instead of the criminal I have become. Bertha, the middle-aged waitress at the local redneck bar, hugged me in support. I wrote the first article in my thirty-two-year-old life and it was published, along with my picture, in the May 19 *Newsweek*. For two months, nearly every place I went, strangers would come up to me and shake my hand or buy me a drink. *Newsweek* forwarded me dozens of unsolicited letters of support. My college newspaper did a front-page story on me and a major publisher asked if I could write a book on the controversy. Me, a criminal.

Six of us were banned—yes, banned—from the Library. I received three letters one day stating that I could no longer use any LC facilities. Eschewing lawyers, I researched and filed suit in Federal District Court. Before the case could be heard, Library officials rescinded my ban and apologized for the inconvenience. The other five took the Library to court, where Federal Judge Harold Greene renewed my faith in the checks and balances of our system.

The government started by arguing that they weren't being unreasonable, that they would allow the "protesters" to use the LC if they promised not to cause any more trouble. Greene replied, "Nelson Mandela is told that all the time." And after noting that, contrary to Library assertions, anyone can use the Library of Congress, Judge Greene said, "Perhaps in the Soviet Union or in South Africa people are banned . . . but . . . it seems to me it is utterly unconstitutional," and issued a restraining order (*Mokhiber, et al.* v. *Boorstin* CV-86-1186).

Support grew. Jesse Jackson spoke on our behalf; Senator Eugene McCarthy said, "This is not a reading administration. The Lenin Library in Moscow and the Japanese National Library are now open considerably

more hours than the Library of Congress." We testified before the Joint Committee on the Library. Appearing after PEN member Barbara Raskin, who gave a very concise account of the writing profession and how important the LC is to it, we testified on the harmful effects of reduced hours. We noted that Jefferson authorized the Declaration of Independence and Einstein developed his theory of relativity after normal working hours.

Senate Minority Leader Robert Byrd (D-WV) introduced a rider to a House-passed supplemental appropriations bill giving the Library another million dollars to restore the hours. It passed, survived the conferee session as an $860,000 appropriation, and became law on July 2.

On July 10—sixteen Thursdays after it had closed evenings for the first time in eighty-eight years—the Library reopened as we drank champagne on its steps. Yet ten of us had to endure a two-week trial; eight of us were convicted and await sentencing. I will write again for the PEN *Newsletter* about the trial; maybe I'll have to write it from jail. I am not a member, but PEN does have a writers-in-prison program.

No one is certain what will happen to the Library of Congress now. Senator Daniel Moynihan (D-NY) has introduced legislation (S.2276) to prevent further cuts, although he doesn't seem to be working very hard to get it passed. We take solace in the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson: "The highest virtue is always against the law."

Fredric Alan Maxwell
Executive Director
Books Not Bombs Campaign to Save the Library of Congress
P.O. Box 15247
Washington, DC 20003-0247

Editor's note: *On August 8 Mr. Maxwell was sentenced, along with seven other defendents, to work 150 hours in unpaid community service "not of their choice plus a year of supervised probation in the Washington area." Despite what the judge called "a very impressive" pre-sentence report which noted no criminal intent, Mr. Maxwell's refusal to acknowledge that he had violated the law earned him an additional 90 hours of such service "specifically not to be carried out around youth," implying that he was not a good example for—or might corrupt—impressionable young people.*

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PEN Notices

The Poetry Center of San Francisco State University announces its 1986 Book Award for an outstanding book of poetry by a living writer. To be eligible, books must be published and copyrighted in 1986. The award includes a $500 cash prize and the winning poet will be invited to read at the Poetry Center during the 1987-88 Reading Series. Deadline for submissions is December 31; to enter, submit one copy of the book plus a $4.00 entry fee (no application form necessary) to: The Poetry Center, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94132.

The Society of Midland Authors announces its annual competition for awards honoring outstanding works published in 1986 by midwest authors. Prize winners are chosen in six categories: fiction, poetry, biography, drama, children's books, and nonfiction. To be eligible for the $300 award, author must currently reside in the midwest. Deadline for submission is January 15, 1987. For guidelines and application forms send SASE to Susan Weston, Awards Chair, 2019 Colfax Street, Evanston, IL 60201.

The Tucson Writers' Conference will be held this winter from December 27 to January 1. Staff will include Hilma Wolitzer, Francine Prose, August Wilson, Gerald Stern, Ellen Bryant Voigt and Charles Bowden. Apply to Candace Greenburg, Tucson Writers' Conference, Tucson Public Library, P.O. Box 27470, Tucson, Arizona 85726; (602) 791-4391.

The Heartlands Fiction Collective of Kansas City announces publication of *These and Other Lands*, a collection of short fiction by midwestern authors. Proceeds are to be donated to Lalmba for their continuing work with African children orphaned by effects of drought and famine, and for medical aid in Ethiopia and the Sudan. The publisher is Westphalia Press, Loose Creek, Missouri; the book is distributed through Academy Chicago Publishers, 425 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611, $8.95 (paper) and $16.95 (cloth).

The Center for Philosophy and Public Policy at the University of Maryland at College Park invites applications for its Rockefeller Resident Fellowships. One fellowship, which includes a $22,000 stipend, is available for the 1987-88 academic year. The research project proposed must reflect applicant's record of substantial philosophical work and must focus attention on the fundamental issues involved in current public policy debate. Deadline for all materials is January 31, 1987. For application procedures contact Douglas MacLean, Director, Center for Philosophy and Public Policy, 0123 Woods Hall, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

Highlights for Children announces its 1987 fiction contest, which awards three prizes of $300 each to short stories with school settings, suitable for preschool through middle school readers. Entries accepted in two categories: 600-word stories for readers up to age 8; 900-word stories for readers ages 9-12. Deadline: March 31, 1987. Submit with SASE to: Fiction Contest, Highlights for Children, 803 Church Street, Honesdale, PA 18431.

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Dear Sirs,

In our capacity as publishers we wish to express our interest in the Greek language rights to L'ILIADE and we shall be much obliged if you will give us an option on the Greek translation rights and send us a reading copy for consideration.

Should you not handle the foreign rights to the above book, would you please let us know the name and address of the copyright holders so that we may contact them direct.

Thanking you in advance we shall look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,
POCKET BOOKS OF GREECE p.e.
7, Voulis Street
Athens 125, Greece

PEN Newsletter • Editor: Eileen Lottman • Newsletter Committee: Naomi Bliven, Judith Mara Gutman, Katherine Heinemann, Eleanor Munro, Sidney Offit, Miriam Schneir • Translation Section Editor: Peter Glassgold • Production Editor: John Morrone • A publication of PEN American Center—President: Hortense Calisher • Vice Presidents: Patricia Bosworth • Wesley Brown • Frances FitzGerald • Allen Ginsberg • Norman Mailer • Secretary: Martha Saxton • Treasurer: Georges Borchardt • Counsel: Jerry Simon Chasen, Esq. • Executive Director: Karen Kennerly • PEN publications are made possible in part by a grant from Exxon Corporation. Copyright 1986 © PEN American Center.

PEN American Center

NEWSLETTER

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#60 DECEMBER 1986

PEN and Translation: an introduction

The Translation Committee of PEN American Center was established in 1960 during the presidency of B.J. Chute. Literary translation has always been of central concern to PEN, but efforts to create an organized program were galvanized by a resolution passed at the 1957 International P.E.N. Congress in Tokyo "to raise the general status of translators" and by the successful Conference on Translation sponsored the following year by the Polish Center. The Translation Committee is one of PEN American Center's largest; its approximately 40 members, spread countrywide, include translators as well as editors, agents, and writers with a special interest in literary translation.

The focus of the Committee has never been narrow. Literary translation by its very nature is international and historical in scope, and requires, beyond a refined linguistic ability, sensitivity to questions political, social, and aesthetic, not to mention a certain canniness in matters of copyright and contract. In the past five years alone, the Committee has administered its program of annual awards, organized six symposia, prepared for publication *A Handbook for Literary Translators*, and overseen two reprintings of *The World of Translation*—the record of the 1970 Conference on Literary Translation held under the auspices of PEN American Center. At the International P.E.N. Congress in New York in January 1986, the Translation Committee, in concert with the Programme and Translation Committee of International P.E.N., proposed to the assembled delegates a "Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Translators," and it received unanimous approval.

What the Translation Committee will be able to accomplish in the course of the next few years depends in part on the availability of funds, but a major topic on recent committee meeting agendas has been the feasibility of holding, before the decade is out, another Conference on Literary Translation, reflecting the change in professional standing of translators in the general literary climate—a change effectuated in no small measure by the sustained efforts of over a quarter-century of the Translation Committee itself.

This special Translation Issue of the *Newsletter* includes the transcript of a symposium, "Literary Translation in the U.S.: A Retrospective," held on March 13, 1985, to coincide with the publication of *A Handbook for Literary Translators*, as well as comments by panelists who participated in two subsequent public discussions, on March 26 and April 3, dealing with various professional coneerns. To the text of yet another symposium, "Native American Literature: The Problems in Translation" (February 20, 1986), are appended examples of translations made by each of the panelists. This is followed by "The Social Responsibility of Translators Today," the literary keynote address given by committee chair Peter Glassgold at the 26th Annual Conference of the American Translators Association on October 19, 1985. This special issue on translation concludes with the full text of the January 1986 "Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Translators."

This issue of the *PEN Newsletter* was prepared by guest editors B.J. Chute, Peter Glassgold, Lore Segal, and Dennis Tedlock.

Peter Glassgold

SPECIAL ISSUE ON TRANSLATION

PEN Syndicated Fiction Project Update

Two newspapers—the Orlando *Sentinel* and the Albuquerque *Journal*—have recently joined the 13 participating papers in the PEN Syndicated Fiction Project, and will now routinely begin running prize-winning short stories selected by the Project's judges.

After nearly two years of development, a new radio program called *The Sound of Writing* will air on many of the 225 National Public Radio stations that carry *NPR Playhouse*. Project Director Richard Harteis acts as host for 13 half-hour programs debuting December 11 across the country. Twenty-seven winning stories have been read by actors of the Playmakers Repertory Company in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. A kick-off reading and reception was held November 19 at the University of North Carolina by The Village Group, a sponsor for this program. The North Carolina State Arts Council also provided a grant of $4,800 to help make this program possible.

On November 4, the Syndicated Fiction Project joined forces with the PEN Los Angeles Center to award $1,000 each to Judith Minty and Mimi Alpert, winners of the special all-California competition. The UCLA Extension Writers Program acted as host for the evening reading and reception where Los Angeles PEN President Malcolm Boyd and Richard Harteis presented the awards.

On December 2, the Library of Congress, for the second year, honors the authors of three of the top ten short stories selected during the previous year's competitions. The three PEN winners invited to read during the Library of Congress' evening programs will be announced officially by the Library in mid-November.

With the help of a $2,000 grant from the Montgomery County (Maryland) Arts Council, the Project has instituted an evening reading series at Montgomery College, the first of which took place October 22, with X. J. Kennedy and Florri McMillan. Three additional readings, featuring PEN Syndicated Fiction Project winners, are scheduled for later in the academic year.

The Project is accepting submissions for its Sixth Competition during the month of January 1987. Send two copies of double-spaced manuscripts with name, address, phone number and a brief biography to the PEN Syndicated Fiction Project, PO Box 6303, Washington, DC 20015. Winning stories receive $250 as well as an additional $150 each time they are selected for syndication in any of 13 major participating newspapers in the United States and Canada. For further information, contact the Syndicated Fiction Project at the above address or call 301-656-7484.

Richard Harteis

"Lost" Members

The following members' mail has been returned to the PEN office.

If you have a current address for any of the following, please get in touch with the membership coordinator at PEN Headquarters:

Bernard Asbell
John Bierman
David Bosworth
Jacob Brackman
Daniel J. Cahill
John Crowley
Suzanne Gordon
Signe Hammer
Jonathan Kozol
Harry Lewis
Malcolm McConnell
Mary E. Mebane
Craig Nova
Joseph Okpaku
Gregory Orr
Jayne Anne Phillips
Charles Plymell
Dotson Rader
Franklyn D. Reeve
Richard Reeves
Mary Robison
Linda Gray Sexton
Robert Shaw
Richard G. Stern
Frank E. Taylor
Louise Varese
Wendy Wasserstein
Dara Wier
Roger Williams

Volunteers Needed

PEN members are needed as volunteers to introduce members to one another at PEN receptions. If you are available to do so, contact Pamela Pearce at PEN Headquarters: 212-334-1660.

Forthcoming Newsletters

The door is open. Talk to the editors of the following *Newsletter* issues if you have an idea for an essay, want to start a dialogue, or put forth a statement.

Newsletter #61 (Winter 1987)
BYLAW REVISIONS
Editor: Naomi Bliven

Newsletter #62 (Spring 1987)
WRITERS ON THE OTHER ARTS
Editor: Eleanor Munro

Newsletter #63 (Summer 1987)
FREEDOM TO WRITE
Editor: Eileen Lottman

Newsletter #64 (Fall 1987)
WOMEN'S ISSUES
Editor: Miriam Schneir

All correspondence to the *Newsletter* and its guest editors should be directed to PEN Headquarters, 568 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

Judith M. Gutman

DON'T MISS

A one-hour documentary film, DO NOT ENTER: THE VISA WAR AGAINST IDEAS will be shown nationally on PBS television on Tuesday, January 6, 1987 (9pm EST). It deals with the McCarran-Walter Act and includes a PEN event in which members read from works of authors who have been barred from entering the U.S.

The Social Responsibility of Translators Today

• Literary Keynote Address, American Translators Association 26th Annual Conference, October 19, 1985 •

The theme of this conference, "Languages at Work," raises some basic ideas about the nature of literary translation, about the situation of literary translators in America today, and about the social role we are called upon to play in an age of semiliteracy.

As translators, we are concerned principally with the "how's," not the "why's," of language. *How* to turn a particular configuration of words in an alien tongue—with all its associations of time, place, and tradition; with all its semantic resonances and grammatical peculiarities—into an effective, meaningful configuration of words in our own American speech, with all *its* own associations and resonances and peculiarities.

This is very practical work, requiring both expedient judgment and finesse. A writer of an original text—call him *X*—must endure the mockery of the blank page that fills, all too slowly, with words of his own style and choosing. We must re-create those words, that style of *X* today—and tomorrow do the same with *Y*, who writes in a completely different manner. That is to say, unless we are devoted to a single author with a fairly consistent style, we have to be, in a sense, more versatile writers in our own language than the people whose writings we translate are in theirs.

As literary translators, we are specialized writers, but writers we are nevertheless. And as such, our situation in this country is essentially no different from that of other writers in the literary field: not so very good, but good enough to make us want to stay there. But in one way we are different from our fellow writers: we can even less afford to forget ourselves and feel snobbish about our work, to glory in our linguist ability and build a scale of false social values upon it. Intrinsic to the act of literary translation is the responsibility to share special knowledge. In America today, we have a community of translators such as we have never had before—a kind of "everywhere community," to use Daniel Boorstin's descriptive phrase—whose purpose, in these decades of declining standards of literacy, is both renovative and innovative.

Before I expand on this dual role of renovation and innovation, I would like to take a closer look at the present situation of the American language and the semiliteracy I have referred to, placing them in an historical and in some ways personal context.

The dynamics of American speech, at least until recently, derive from the fortuitous balance between linguistic leveling and exuberant invention—both aspects of this nation's essential pragmatism. The leveling of English provincial dialects in the North American colonies was afterward reinforced by public education and standardized spelling, as well as a profusion of newspapers and popular writing. Though not a literary country, we became a literate one. In the 19th century, the ease with which Americans invented words to fit their new circumstances was astonishing to foreign visitors. And please note: this was not inventiveness limited by social class. Further, as new words became accepted, they were properly spelled, were subject to normative grammatical usage, and were pronounced more or less in the same manner countrywide.

American speech together with American schooling, by democratizing literacy, laid fast hold of the immigrants drawn here by the millions, allowing them, forcefully but quietly, to turn their backs on the "old country" (whichever one that might be) forever.

Every American has what I call a "language history" and a "language biography"—both of which impinge upon us as translators every moment of our professional lives.

"Language history" is our personal legacy. However sophisticated the language of an immigrant family may be, by the second generation it is generally reduced to "kitchen"—"kitchen" Italian, "kitchen" German, "kitchen" what-have-you. By the third or fourth generation, what typically remains are a few terms of endearment or dislike, a swear word or two, and the names of some special kinds of food. After that, the immigrant language is lost to the family—as perhaps the family is lost to itself—though it may be temporarily revived by a solitary student through initial sentimentality followed by hard work.

A "language biography" describes the way Americans acquire speech, engage their peculiar "language history" and, in the worst instances, perceive a threat in foreign languages generally. What our forebears abandoned, why seek to recover?

As translators, we do know why. We know that American society, for all its xenophobic tendencies, is essentially cosmopolitan and interdependent with the rest of the world. We know that this interdependency runs counter to bluff posturing and not so bluff gunslinging and economic exploitation—that as time goes on and America's long postwar domination wanes, a conscious openness to fresh influences is especially called for. And where the articulation and sharing of ideas is concerned, we know that translation is culture's driving wedge: today's "global village" is a spectacular dumbshow without it.

America, however, is history-blind. Our American speech has acted as a shield against the supposed menace of the "old country" and, as a result, against historical realities as well. American literacy developed without historical perspective, to meet contemporary needs. But in the shallowness of late 20th-century contemporary life, packaged needs seem to require less and less proficiency in the written word. And history-blind, we do not understand that an illiterate society is a failing society—and that American speech and American literacy are a twin inheritance.

A conservative estimate places the number of illiterate adult Americans at 25 million. The real figure, according to Jonathan Kozol, is more than twice that: some 60 million. There are approximately 50,000 new book titles published in this country in a single year. Clearly, most of them go unread. Three percent of these new titles, some 1,500, are translated works. And on these decidedly

downbeat statistics, I will return to my discussion of the community of translators in America today and its dual role of responsibility in these sad times.

I cannot tell you precisely how many literary translators there are in America in 1985, but I can say that most of them receive honest recompense as well as public credit for their work. A translator's rights to a formal contract and a continuing share in the income from a published work are generally acknowledged. A little more than 25 years ago, there were in this country: no professional translators' associations, no major literary prizes for translation, no translation workshops or programs of any kind in our schools. All this has changed. Literary translation is no longer "hidden" writing, professionally speaking.

But for all that, what are 1,500 new translated books a year in the face of 60 million functional illiterates and a general indifference to the printed word? Without meaning to sound foolishly grandiose or hopeful, I can say that the quality of these books counts for a great deal indeed and gives them their catalytic potential. They are, on the whole, among the better-written books published in our language; they are drawn from the better writings from abroad; and among them are found proportionately more works whose influence is likely to be long range.

Again, without making extravagant claims for the curative powers of our profession in an epidemic of illiteracy, I can say that the renovative role of literary translation was recognized very early in the development of our language—and I refer now to English, not simply our own American form of it.

In the late ninth century, as a result of the Viking invasions of the east coast of England, the whole of Anglo-Saxon society came close to collapse. Alfred of Wessex, a warrior king, a skillful organizer, and a clever negotiator, was also a translator. In the last 12 years of his life, with the Scandinavian threat more or less under control, he set out to restore moral health to his country by literary means. In a remarkable open letter to Waerferth, bishop of Worcester, he made these observations on the state of literacy in England: (The translation, by Eleanor Shipley Ducket, is from her *Alfred the Great: The King and His England):*

> . . . So utterly has knowledge fallen away in England that when I began to rule there were very few men on this side of the Humber who could understand their [Latin] Mass-books and Offices in English, or even translate a letter from Latin into English; and, I think, not many beyond the Humber. So few there were that I cannot even call to mind a single one south of the Thames. . . .
>
> On all this I thought, and I thought also how, before all was destroyed and burned, I saw the churches throughout England standing full of treasures and books. We had then a great multitude of servants of God; but very few of them knew what was in their books. Not one whit could they understand of these books, because the books were not written in their own native speech. . . .
>
> Then I bethought me how the Law was first found in the Hebrew language, and how afterwards, when the Greeks learned it, they turned it all into their own tongue, and all other books, as well. And so, too, the Romans. . . . Therefore it seems better to me, if you all also think it, that we, too, turn some books, those which all men need most to know, into that language which we all can understand.

Alfred himself learned Latin and made translations into his Wessex English from the works of several medieval Latin writers: Saint Gregory the Great, Bede, Boethius, Orosius, and Saint Augustine. "Sometimes," he said, "I translated word for word, sometimes for sense. . . ." No doubt baffled, he fell back on paraphrase or "improved" the original text with his own interpolations. On occasion, too, he attempted slavishly literal renderings, trying in vain to mirror Latin syntax and declensions in his own Germanic dialect.

Alfred was, in short, the first conspicuous English literary translator, learning his craft by the familiar path of painstaking trial and error. Through his patronage, and by his personal example, he turned his Anglo-Saxon realm into the most literate barbarian kingdom of the time. As he had hoped, "all the young men of England who are of free birth and have sufficient means" did in fact learn to read. His policy of education and translation was continued under his descendants until the Norman invasion. The surviving works in Old English—not an insubstantial body, especially if one includes the many translations—owe their existence to him.

The vigor of writing in English ever since Alfred is due in large measure to a steady nourishment from foreign sources. The Norman invasion, far from destroying the English language, brought French to the soil of England, establishing an immensely fruitful and permanent literary and linguistic bond. As Paul Auster writes in his introduction to *The Random House Book of Twentieth-Century French Poetry:*

> . . . It is not simply that French must be considered an "influence" on the development of English language and literature; French is part of English, an irreducible element of its genetic make-up.
>
> Early English is replete with evidence of this symbiosis, and it would not be difficult to compile a lengthy catalogue of borrowings, homages, and thefts.

Auster goes on to cite the translations and "stolen" works of Caxton, Malory, and others, bringing his pantheon of translators down to the modernists of our own day who, in the words of Ezra Pound, "make it new"—that is, they renovate.

And renovation, as I have said, is one of the two roles literary translators must play now, in a determinedly self-conscious manner. It is a conserving, not a conservative role, and it aims to introduce the saving grace of historical resonance into American speech.

In literary translation, renovation and innovation are conjoined. It is no mere coincidence that the initial thrust of American modernism had the weight of history behind it: Pound's Provence, his medieval Paris and Italy—his China and Japan! It was the modernists who opened our ears to the East.

We can look far beyond modernism, however, for examples of conserving innovation that ultimately changed the face of the world. It was, after all, a verse translation of the *Odyssey* into Latin, made in the third century B.C. by the Greek slave Livius Andronicus for his master's children, that marked the beginning of a cultural revolution in the ancient Roman world. The Latin language itself, enriched by Greek—in much the same way that French came to nourish English—became the primary instrument of change in Western Europe.

At that same period, no one could have predicted the long-term effects of rendering the sacred books of the

Jews from Hebrew—clearly a "dying" language—into Hellenistic Greek, the popular speech of the eastern Mediterranean.

History resonates in the language of modernism. Without the *Odyssey*, without the classical, medieval, and Hebraic echoes and imitations, without King Alfred's legacy, could James Joyce have conceived his *Ulysses*? Take these words from "The Oxen of the Sun," the episode in *Olysses* in which human birth and childhood telescope the birth and development of English:

> In ward wary the watcher hearing come that man mildhearted eft rising with swire ywimpled to him her gate wild undid. Lo, levin leaping lightens in eyeblink Ireland's westward welkin!

And again:

> And whiles they spake the door of the castle was opened and there nighed them a mickle noise as of many that sat there at meat. And there came against the place as they stood a young learning knight yclept Dixon.

In literary translation, we are well aware of the insidious lure of archaism, to give high tone to low expression in a source text, to find a word at some stratum, at *any* stratum, of the target language to fit an impossible construction. But to my mind, where the purpose is both innovative and renovative, translators may well call upon the full historical resources of their language. Recall the stylistic versatility essential to literary translation, think again of *Ulysses*, and then consider this: a "Joycean" translation of the Bible.

The Hebrew Bible is not a single book. It is a national library gathered after the dissolution of the original Jewish state, drawn from the writings of a millennium. Each book of the Old Testament has a distinctive style, ranging as it were from Piers Plowman and the "Pearl" poet to Faulkner and Hemingway. The author of Job, with his full hoard of words, is the Shakespeare of classical Hebrew. Every one of the prophets worked within an accepted and received prophetic style—there were schools of prophets—but each is recognizably different from all the others. Isaiah's exaltations and Jeremiah's denunciations, the latter so infused with sexual energy, bring to mind Milton and Blake. Ezekiel records his vision with all the doggedness of a Robinson Crusoe drawing up his accounts.

Some of the writing is just plain bad. Befuddled Chronicles stands in contrast to the elegant clarity of Samuel and Kings—as Dreiser, perhaps, to Hemingway. The later psalms tend to be overwrought imitations of earlier Davidic models, with their controlled emotionalism, and of the dignified liturgy of the First Temple. Think of the hymns of a Cranmer as compared to country-western rhyming pieties.

English versions of the Old Testament, no matter how beautiful, have been stylistically homogenous from the first. The blameworthy prototype, I would say, is that Hellenistic Greek translation I have already mentioned, the Septuagint, made according to legend in 72 days by 72 Jewish scholars, without a single disagreement, for the then-reigning Ptolemy. What a shame, when you consider the innovative/renovative possibilities available even then: the early Greek lyric poets would switch dialects in midpoem to suit a change in musical mode, from Dorian to Aeolian to Ionian, and so on. The Septuagint became the translation model for the Latin texts that became in turn the common Biblical sources in the Christian West.

I do not mean to imply by this that the as yet untranslated "*Ulysses* Bible" will surely set America reading again. But it does open interesting possibilities of introducing history into the shape of American speech, by renovating our most widely studied text in a loving, lively, and innovative manner.

I mentioned earlier that in the United States today there is an unprecedented community of translators. Since our essential work is accomplished in solitude, our association is necessarily loose. But this allows us a flexibility that close-ranked organization cannot have (besides, I cannot conceive of even two translators being in complete agreement on anything, let alone 72!).

The Translation Commmittee of PEN American Centger is based in New York, still the hub of literary activity and commercial publishing in the United States. The American Translators Association and the American Literary Translators Association, with their memberships in communications and academe, radiate across the country. Translation centers—at Columbia, SUNY Binghamton, the University of Texas at Dallas—serve as our oases. I can think of three areas where this professional network can be most effective.

The first is pedagogical. There are now some 300 translation programs at the university level. A pool of potential professional translators is forming—I have met students who actually intend to become translators, not novelists or poets! This trend ought to be encouraged. Ranking high among the renovative faculties of literary translation is the natural discipline it imparts to young writers.

At PEN a few years ago, we established the Renato Poggioli Award, a yearly fellowship for an unpublished translator from the Italian. The Poggioli Award has proved to be extremely satisfying. Its recipients have all used their prize money to improve their Italian and further their skills as translators. All have continued and, in most cases, seen their works-in-progress in print. And all, without exception, are seeing their later translation work published. The establishment of Poggioli-type awards can do more good in the long run for languages of lesser currency than the proliferation of annual prizes for the "best" published translations from, say, the Macedonian or the Swiss Romansch. I would urge us all to press for practical translation studies in our schools and, wherever possible, programs of awards and fellowships to further the training of translators here and abroad.

I will turn now from pedagogy to the problem of research. As we know, there is no comprehensive, up-to-date index of published translations and translations-in-progress in this country—though it is my understanding that such an entity does exist in the Soviet Union, for works into Russian. The scholarly value of a translation clearing house is indisputable, and it would serve as well as a strong foil against unauthorized translations. The PEN Translation Committee and the American Literary Translators Association have together been working toward the establishment of a translation clearing house based, if possible, at the Library of Congress. But I must admit that, at the moment, the prospects are not the brightest, and it is wise for us to begin to consider alternatives. What comes first to mind is a nationwide network of research facilities, at university-based libraries and translation centers, linked by computer. A single librarian with a knowledge of translation matters and some organizing talent might conceivably pull the whole thing together within a year or, at the very least, join in

PEN and ALTA's efforts to sway the Library of Congress.

The third area in which literary translators can coordinate effectively is in setting international legal and ethical standards for translation. Earlier this year, PEN American Center published *A Handbook for Literary Translators*, which contains an updated version of "A Translator's Model Contract" as well as the position paper on ethics, "The Responsibilities of Translation." The *Handbook* also includes the very first document published by the PEN Translation Committee, the "Manifesto on Translation," issued prior to its Conference on Literary Translation in 1970. Now, for the 48th International PEN Congress, [held in New York in January 1986] the Translation Committee is preparing guidelines based on the essential points set forth in the *Handbook*. Should these principles be accepted, they might be enforced by PEN centers worldwide. I would hope, too, that this statement on international standards might be subsequently considered and endorsed by other literary and translation organizations, and so help bring to an end the still foreboding exploitation of translators and the unchecked existence of pirated translations.

I have touched upon a great many matters concerning the responsibilities of literary translators, but I have said nothing whatever of the aesthetics that underlie our work—an urge to beauty grounded in poignant impossibility. What we think we long for lies tantalizingly just beyond our grasp: the perfect metaphrase of sound and sense. We imagine a total system called Language, as it were a unified field of human communication, but know it does not and never could exist, unless we conceive, too, of a poetry written in mathematics. The dream of a universal tongue will surely remain unrealized in our lifetimes, and most of us, I think would not care to live in Babel. It is our pleasure to tramp the border marches of words, crossing back and forth between the boundaries, and carrying news that we hope will be believed and that will stay forever news.

Peter Glassgold

INTERNATIONAL P.E.N.'S DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRANSLATORS

Reaffirming its faith in literary translation as an essential cultural force throughout the world,

Recognizing that translation is a creative art in its own right and that the translator should be treated as an author,

Recalling the international instruments that have been adopted in the field of translation and to defend the rights of translators,

Recalling the work done by the Society of Authors, International Federation of Translators, and other organizations,

Believing in the necessity of strengthening the rights of translators and articulating their responsibilities,

International P.E.N. hereby issues its "Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Translators"

Article 1. The Translator is the primary link between the original work and its audience in another language.
Article 2. The recognition of translation as a literary endeavor must constitute the basis of any agreement between translator and publisher.
Article 3. The translator should be treated as an author, and as an author should receive due contractual rights, including copyright.
Article 4. On book jackets, covers, and title pages as well as publicity materials and library listings, the translators' names must be appropriately displayed.
Article 5. Where possible, a binding contract should be drawn up, in accordance with the laws of the countries involved, between authors/original publishers and translators/publishers.
Article 6. A translator's continuing royalty rights must be respected and payments made accordingly, with or without a contract.
Article 7. Translation of copyrighted works must not be published without the permission of the original authors or their representatives, unless they are inaccessible due to circumstances beyond their control.
Article 8. Translators should respect the original and refrain from making cuts or changes unless such alterations are permitted by the writers or their authorized representatives. Translators' texts must be respected. Except under extenuating circumstances, there should be no editorial changes without translators' consent and approval.

To further the aims of the above "Declaration," International P.E.N.

—Calls on its Centers to do everything in their power to implement in their respective countries or regions the principles articulated in the "Declaration,"

—Requests its "Translation Committee" to draft "Guidelines for Translation Agreements" and a "Model Contract;"

—Invites its Centers and individual members to create and support programmes designed to promote literary translation all over the world.

Prepared by The Translation Committee of International P.E.N. and The Translation Committee of PEN American Center, January 1986

Literary Translations in the U.S.

• PEN Symposium held March 13, 1985 •

Glassgold: I'm Peter Glassgold of the PEN translation committee. Tonight is the first of three translation evenings planned to coincide with the publication of PEN's new *Handbook for Literary Translators.* The handbook is comprised of three basic parts: A Translator's Model Contract; The Responsibilities of Translation; and a Manifesto on Translation, the last of which was drawn up by the committee in the late 1960s and has all the poignancy of a manifesto, with the high rhetoric and the high dreams of that period—but it does not lay out very clearly the situation of literary translators and literary translation in America of some twenty years ago. We've come a long way since then. I've called this first panel discussion a retrospective.

We're very, very fortunate to have a panel that has a purview of fifty-odd years, a very distinguished group of publishers, editors and agents.

Moderating it is Jonathan Galassi, who [was, at the time] an editor at Random House, the poetry editor of the *Paris Review* and a translator, from the Italian, of Eugenio Montale. To my far left is Georges Borchardt, a literary agent of 40 years' standing; his own agency, which he founded in 1953, has been responsible for about a thousand translated books, mainly from French, including works by Jean-Paul Sartre, Roland Barthes, and Samuel Beckett. Next to him is James Laughlin, the founder of New Directions, a poet, and though he would not call himself a translator as such, he has done some very fine work from German, Italian and Latin, to name just a few languages. To my immediate right is Gregory Rabassa, who is this country's preeminent translator from Spanish and Portuguese and a winner of the PEN Medal for Translation. And on my far right is Richard Seaver, the founder of Richard Seaver Books, who [at that time, was] also the president and publisher of the General Book Division of Holt, Rinehart and Winston (now known as Henry Holt and Company), and who himself has translated somewhere between 25 and 30 books from French.

Galassi: Thank you, Peter. As a junior publisher and translator, I'm very excited about the opportunity that I have tonight to hear from some of the people I most admire, who are involved in the translation and publication of translated works. James Laughlin started first, I think. Jay, what was the first book that you published that was a translation?

Laughlin: I've always been absorbed in translation, but as I look back on the early ventures, I see a series of disasters, beginning in the fifth form in the Choate School. I was trying out for the literary magazine, and I thought I would have to do something really spectacular. So I hit on the idea of translating a hagiographical fable from the works of the Venerable Bede. And I was very pleased with my results; in my art class, I drew some little tiny linoleum block vignettes of the saints. I was receiving a great deal of favorable attention, when it turned out that my great master, the famous Dudley Fitts, had also read the Venerable Bede from the works of the Loeb Classical Library, and that was the end of that.

The disaster that I remember from the early days of New Directions was the famous Delmore Schwartz translation of Rimbaud's *A Season in Hell (Un Saison en Enfer).* This made a certain stir. Delmore, as you know from the recent volume of his letters, was one of the most charming, learned, extraordinary confabulists who ever existed in this world. After we had done this first great book, *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities,* he came to see me with the translation he had done of this great Rimbaud text. I had such admiration for him, it never occurred to me to question the total accuracy of this translation. Well, he didn't know French as well as he thought he did, though *The New York Times Book Review* gave it a rave review from someone else who didn't know French and we sold out the entire edition in two weeks. Then the reviews in the journals began to get after us, and the French professors pointed out that such-and-such did not mean so-and-so, and Delmore went into one of his deep slumps, and we hastily arranged to have the work retranslated by Louise Varese, who lived here in Greenwich Village and who knew French very well. That was disaster number two.

The third disaster concerned Charles Henri Ford, who was one of the early avant-garde people, a very interesting Surrealist poet. Charles Henri had translated some poems of Baudelaire. We did this in our Poets of the Year series, and I thought that it was the editor's right—I no longer think so—to touch up things a little bit. And so I "touched up" Charles Henri's translations, and of course I didn't in those days bother to show proofs of what I had touched up. And the result was that poor Charles Henri, who was a pretty good French scholar, had his reputation ruined. He came into my office and wept buckets of tears, and said, "Jay, how could you have done this to me? I thought we were friends."

So that's how I got into translation. Let others who can be more sensible continue.

Galassi: Georges Borchardt, what was the first translation you arranged to be published?

Borchardt: I really don't remember. When I first came to this country in 1947, I was 19 years of age, and I got a job with a literary agency that represented in this country Mrs. Bradley, who was the dean of the French agents, I think actually the only French agent at that time. She channeled all the French books that had come out during the war, and I was hired to read these books and find publishers for them. I don't remember, frankly, which was the first, but I do remember that a book she had just sold to Knopf for $350 was a book by a young novelist named Albert Camus. The book was called *L'Etranger.* And I made several similar deals, mainly with Knopf, during those early years, primarily because no other publishers at the time were all that interested in doing translations. A few people even denied that they knew languages, for fear that they might receive submissions of foreign books. This is still to some extent true today.

The first book I sold after I started my own agency was a French children's book, with photographs of an

elephant, called *Mamba Kim, the Little Elephant*. I remember being very proud when I sold it to the John Day Company. I found out later that the French publisher had had so little faith in the book that he never even brought out the book in France himself. Anyway, those were the beginnings.

Galassi: How many French books were sold by the agency you were working for—just off the top of your head?

Borchardt: In '47 or '48, I would say 20 or 30 . . . a little later on, maybe more. I used to go through the French equivalent of *Publishers Weekly,* and whenever I saw something that I thought I might like to read, I would write and ask for an option. That's how I established connections with various French publishing houses, some of which were quite new at the time, and two of which we still represent today. Editions du Seuil, which had started before the war—but primarily as a publisher of songbooks for boy scouts and girl scouts—is now probably the number one printing house in France. The other is Editions de Minuit, who is Beckett's publisher, and also the publisher of most of the so-called *"nouveaux romans".* So we were involved with getting all of these people published here.

Galassi: Richard Seaver, you had some involvement with the same group. Could you tell us how you got started with translation? Was it as a publisher or as a translator?

Seaver: It was a combination of both, I guess, because in the 1950s I was living in Paris. With a motley crew of Englishmen, Scots, and fellow Americans, I founded a small literary magazine; the circulation at its apogee reached somewhere in the neighborhood of 3,500 copies. That was before returns. And that covered the world—only 1,500 were allotted to America, and there was doubt whether copies of that issue ever arrived, because at least two or three ships were sunk. It was a literary magazine dedicated to a Franco-American goal of furthering knowledge between the countries and devoted especially to the work of younger or undiscovered writers. And one of these—the first thing I ever translated—was a story by Samuel Beckett. And talk about catastrophies! I translated an earlier piece I had written in the magazine about Beckett—having discovered him, as it were, in my youthful days, the most extraordinary writer I had read at that point, and perhaps to this day. Through that connection, I had met him, and found that he had two or three unpublished short stories. We wanted to publish one of them, *L'Expulse*. He suggested that perhaps I would like to take it on. Not knowing what I was doing, I said "Sure."And it was a story eight or ten pages long. I worked on it for probably a month—a little worried. I felt I should show it to this man, because I knew that he knew some English, and so when I thought I could do no more with it, I sent the translation to him, and got a note back saying, "I suggest that we meet at the Cupole Friday afternoon, where we will look at the translation together."

We actually worked over it together for two weeks. Beckett taught me whatever I know about translation; I learned more in that time than I learned before or since. He was wonderful. There is an innate modesty that is part of his character, and so he could never look at one of my sentences and say "What the hell did you do this for?" He would say, "That's a wonderful sentence—it just seems to be lacking in a word. Let's see if we can find that word." So we would look at that word, and then we would find the second word that wasn't right, and if the sentence was, say, six words long, usually five of the six would be altered, just slightly. And then the other difficulty was that Beckett would look at the French, and he'd say, "What in the Christ did I mean by that?" He couldn't figure if the translation made any sense, because he couldn't remember what the French meant. But Beckett, to my mind, writes the most beautiful English of perhaps any writer of the 20th century. So the anomaly of having translated him into English may be the ultimate absurdity.

Galassi: Gregory Rabassa, could you tell us how you got started as a translator?

Many works—particularly many works of literary modernism—have not been translated because they are still deemed untranslatable. And yet, as time goes on, somehow we slowly begin on these works. Bill Zavatsky, *translator, editor, and publisher*

Rabassa: As in most things, it was serendipity. I sprang fully armed like a hoplite from the dragon's tooth and did Julio Cortazar's novel, *Hopscotch,* which seems strange, except that I looked back and found I had been doing something before, beginning of course in a high school Latin class. And, I realize now that during the war, I was translating English into English, which is probably the best training. In the OSS in those days we had a very, very poor cipher system which any fool could break if he had enough time to work on it, which was about a half-hour. So we had to paraphrase messages as they came in from the clear text, which meant translating them from English into English. Some years later, a few people, myself among them, put together *The Odyssey Review*; it was a rather good magazine which was ahead of its time and therefore died. We did two Latin American countries and two European countries in each issue. One of the problems was finding translators. I began chipping around, doing a story, a poem here and there, and from there came an offer from Pantheon. I had to give them a couple of sample chapters, and they liked them, and Julio Cortazar liked them, and I've been doing it ever since.

Galassi: I'd like to ask James Laughlin, was there a large or significant public eager to hear what was happening in Europe and elsewhere in the world?

Laughlin: The first book at New Directions which included translations was our first *New Directions in Prose and Poetry Anthology* in 1936. As you've probably heard from the legend, I became a publisher because Ezra Pound, with whom I had been studying in Italy, more or less ordered me to do so. Pound always said that one could understand nothing about poetry unless one knew at least three languages besides English. I was interested in getting good translations of texts which he approved, right from the start.

Those were wonderful days in publishing, because it didn't cost anything to print. And we used to have 600-page anthologies that we sold for $2.50. There was

a small, select public for translation. It would be hard to put a numerical figure on it; perhaps there were 500 people in the country interested in translations of foreign poetry. I certainly wouldn't think there were more—not a very lucrative kind of publishing. But it interested me greatly, and we continued with it. We did some rather ambitious things. We had a superb anthology—still one of the best—of Surrealist writing. We began to get interested in translating, at first standard 19th-century French texts (that's where the disaster of Schwartz' *A Season in Hell* came in); but we also did some other, much better translations, which were fairly successful. We moved from the classic figures, like Rimbaud, Baudelaire, and Mallarme, into contemporary French poets, like Henri Michaux, Paul Eluard, and Pierre Reverdy. The public for those books might have been 1,000 to 1,500. Most of these books were done in bilingual editions—in the 1940s this was a feasible program. For the books we were then selling for $2.75 or $3.00, you'd now have to charge $14.95 and up. There are now probably more interested students, because education in the modern languages is so much better than it used to be, but they cannot afford that kind of price. So we have to cut down severely on the number of those bilingual foreign editions.

Galassi: Mr. Seaver, when you became a publisher, how did you choose what to have translated?

Seaver: I started with Grove Press, which could not compete with the major houses for American writers. We did not have the financial resources, and agents were slow to recognize a new house. Knopf was the only larger, more commercial house to do translations in America, so the possibility for a smaller, newer house to look for new things seemed real. Grove was very much in the market for translations, especially from French, to some degree from German, and to a lesser degree from Spanish. It was that financial blockade in America that in a sense turned us, and also the fact that in the 1950's there was a considerable backlog of extremely distinguished and important European writers for whom the war had cut off all possibility of being published here.

An older house like Knopf was still publishing Camus and Sartre, but their sensibilities seemed less attuned to the Becketts and the Ionescos and the Genets . . . Marguerite Duras, Robbe-Grillet . . . the younger generation of writers whom we read and found very exciting and very new. At that time, the economics of publishing and the makeup of the bookstore market—the people to whom we sold our books—were so vastly different than they are today, you could feasibly (without losing too much money) publish these writers. The numbers that Jay mentioned for poetry are probably still very accurate now. Introducing a new novelist from abroad today, the audience is not much larger, but the economics are horrendous. In those days, we did a lot of the original publications in paperback, at prices students could afford. The younger professors read and recognized the value of the new writers, and began to use them in their courses.

Galassi: Dick Seaver and Georges Borchardt were already enthusiasts of French literature; the publisher himself was a translator. Mr. Rabassa, did you have to educate the publishing establishment's receptivity to Spanish and Portuguese writing?

Rabassa: Not really. The translations coincided with the so-called boom in Latin American literature. People like Cortazar and Garcia Marquez were the first authors translated into English. Publishers thought they had hit upon this motherlode to be excavated, and it was perhaps easier than with a French or German writer to approach a publisher with a new writer from Latin America, because each one thought in the back of his head that it may be another Garcia Marquez. There was not much difficulty even with the work I was doing as a labor of love for somebody I really loved and admired, Demetrio Aguilera-Malta. I was working at it on my own. Word got out, through an interview in the *Wall Street Journal!*

But I think we should tip our hats to Alfred Knopf for the boom. He made several trips and he became deeply interested in Latin American writers, including those in Brazil, and he mounted the same serious program that his wife Blanche had mounted for French literature.

Galassi: Georges Borchardt, as an agent, did you find an immediate perception on the part of the public that they had been waiting for these writers, or was it a longer process?

Borchardt: I don't think it's the public that had been waiting so long for the writers. It's usually the writers who are waiting so long for the public. When I started as an agent, I was very innocent and everything seemed to be very puzzling. I must have preserved my innocence, because everything seems just as puzzling to me today. It is true, as Dick pointed out, that a more conservative firm like Knopf did not seem very much interested in writers like Beckett, or, later, in people like Robbe-Grillet, until they proved successful. I remember that we tried to find a publisher for Beckett during a period of close to two years. We would get all kinds of rejection letters. The books we had then were *Waiting for Godot, Molloy,* and *Malone Dies,* all published the same year—I believe it was 1951—in Paris. Grove Press did not even exist yet, and we would get letters from firms like Random House and others, rejecting this as unreadable prose, or "a pale imitator of Joyce," things like that.

Sartre, I think, is a good example of a puzzling career, because when Knopf thought of publishing him, they thought that Sartre was an extremely interesting novelist and playwright. They systematically turned down all of his essays, like his essay on the imagination, his essay on anti-semitism, and also his major opus, *Being and Nothingness.* All of his major works of nonfiction were published by firms like Citadel and Philosophical Library. Sartre, too, must have felt the puzzlement I felt and feel even more now, in retrospect. Later on, Braziller started publishing him, and had a bestseller with *The Words,* but let it go out of print. Pantheon started to publish his essays, but after contracting for his book on Flaubert, *L'Idiot de la famille,* they let it go, and that book is now being published by the University of Chicago. Pantheon is publishing Sartre's war diary this spring; they turned down his letters to Simone de Beauvoir, which will be published next year by Macmillan. It's very difficlt to understand why an author of that stature would not have simply one publisher who would publish all, or most, of his writings.

Laughlin: Nausea was certainly an immediate success with us, and I think that *The Stranger* and *The Plague* were immediate successes, too. But we were, all of us, I think, a little scared of this egghead stuff that this fellow was shipping over. There's been a marked change now—any kind of "ism" can immediately get published in this country. Structuralism, deconstructionism, poststructuralism, postdeconstructionism, semioticism (which grows out of exoticism)—all of these things can be published tomorrow.

Borchardt: It helped enormously that Grove Press pub-

lished the books inexpensively, in Evergreen paperbacks. Two years ago, I was looking through some old correspondence, and I found a letter that Robbe-Grillet's French publisher had sent me. It was from Knopf, saying "We would like to take over Robbe-Grillet." And I wrote back to the French publisher, saying "I really think we should leave Robbe-Grillet with Grove, because if Knopf published him, he would sell at $3.95 or $4.95 and nobody would be able to buy him, whereas in the Grove paperbacks he sells at $1.95 or $2.25, and that's his audience." Grove went on publishing Robbe-Grillet, and has published everything he has written, as they have with a great number of their writers.

I started out as a translator. One of the things that I ran into very quickly—and I don't know if it's a particularly Latin American phenomenon—I found it was very easy to obtain rights from authors who frequently didn't have those rights, or if they did, frequently gave them away. That's the first thing that you have to determine: who has the rights? Thomas Colchie, ***literary agent and translator***

Other authors who were already very established when I appeared on the scene—like Proust and Andre Gide—I assumed that all their works had been published. But I remember in the '60s or late '50s, I would get phone calls from Arthur Cohen, who had started a publishing house called Meridian, asking whether he could publish Gide's *Pretexts,* or Proust's *Contre Saint-Beuve.* I would say, "But surely that must have been published here," and he would say, "No, no, no." And sure enough, the rights were free, and I would sell him these books. He was always right. These books were available.

Galassi: Mr. Seaver, does your house have a program for translation today? Is the American audience more receptive than it was when you started out?

Seaver: There were two questions there, so maybe one at a time. I'm not sure any house decides, "We're going to do *x* number of translated books a year." We look for books abroad, but in order to publish books from, let's say France, which is the scene I know best, you have to have a writer whose work will find an audience in America. Over the past several years, this has been harder to find. Or, maybe it is that I have not been looking as far. If we ever found an author who seemed to us the new Beckett or Robbe-Grillet, or whoever it was, the economic factors would somehow be worked out, although I think in the days when we were publishing writers from abroad at Grove, we didn't think in terms of how long it would take to establish a writer's reputation. Many or most of the booksellers were receptive to a sales representative, and if we loved the book that he was selling, he could convince that store to take one or two copies of *Waiting for Godot* or whatever it was. There are today three chains that have probably 2,000 or 2,500 stores among them. If we took that new book in to the single buyer who buys for the entire 700 Daltons or the 800 Waldens or the 300 Crowns, we would not get a single copy of any of those books into any of those stores. If you have that segment of the marketplace totally cut out, it increases the economic problems, plus the fact that the Robbe-Grillet that was $1.95 would now—even in paperback—be $8.95 or $9.95. So you have a shrinking market. Fewer books, and a bookstore market less receptive to the translated work. And less receptive to new American fiction as well, I might add.

Laughlin: These chains are essentially run by computer. Their computer has profiles of the market and tells this man what he can order. I'm told we're getting to the stage where some computers are programmed to read the blurbs of the books and give them a rating for distribution.

Some of the most important publications of foreign literature translations are now being done by the small presses, of which there are hundreds and hundreds around the country, and perhaps 50 or 60 of them are extremely good. They are producing them beautifully, at fairly reasonable prices, and their only problem at the present time for really becoming an important, if subterranean, factor in publishing is their distribution problem. I would say that the small presses are, to me, the most encouraging element in publishing today. Because the large firms have become so much bottom-line outfits—they are owned, in many cases, by large conglomerate firms who are interested in profits, and the first thing that one of the accountants who operates the machines learns is that translations, by and large, are not profitable, so let's not do many of them.

Galassi: I'd like to shift the subject a little bit and talk about the translator. Mr. Rabassa, do you feel that the publishers and, by extension, the public, are more aware today of the translator's contribution to the publication of a translated work than they were when you started out?

Rabassa: There's much more of an interest. But there's still this negative pall that hangs over it—that is, the translator, more often than not, is only mentioned when something has gone wrong. When the translation has been rather good, no mention is made, except one of those silly remarks, usually from a friendly reviewer, who will say that the translation is superb, or something like that which has no meaning as criticism. They're all taken very kindly to heart, but they don't really say much about the translation. But make one mistake and there it is! I often wonder who these reviewers are. Maybe it's Professor Horrendous—that's the person Sara Blackburn invented—who sits down and reads all 300 pages simultaneously, and on page 128 will find that the word "camel" was translated as "horse." Whenever I review a translation, I never get that deeply into it. But the atmosphere is better. We're even getting our names on the dust jacket, which is a great step forward. It may be due to the fact that more translations have been done over the past 20 years.

Galassi: Do you suggest books to your publisher friends, or do you wait to be asked to do books?

Rabassa: I do a little bit of both. In most cases, I am asked. I've been connected with certain authors, so there is a continuing flow of books. Julio Cortázar will churn out a book every so many years, and I'll sort of expect that I will do it. I sometimes get asked, or suggest myself, when I've been given a book to read and comment on. If I like it very much, and say so in the report, and

the publisher takes my report to heart, then he says, "Would you like to do it?" In the case of Aguilera-Malta, of course, his interview brought it forth.

There's a new technique (I don't know if it's been used before) that I am engaged in now, with Tom Colchie and Jorge Amado. We're going to translate the book first and then try to sell it. Or perhaps we may be able to sell it before the translation is done. We will get rid of the necessity of asking Professor Horrendous to give a report. The editor himself can read the book in English and make up his own mind.

Galassi: Georges, what is your feeling about how publishers go about selecting books that they choose to translate? Do you think that they're very scientific about this? Do you think that they're still missing a lot of good books?

Borchardt: I suspect it's about the same thing today, and probably even a little bit worse because of what Dick alluded to before, and also what James Laughlin said, that the large publishing houses, or the ones that are able to make an important investment in a translation program, are not doing so. The word "literary" in itself, I'm sure, is one that is not recommended to be used in front of salesmen. So when you're talking about "literary translation," that just doubles the difficulty. More and more, we have the publishers' request for immediate return on capital, the booksellers' policies of immediate returns of books to the publishers, the publishers' following the trend of the year.

I think the hope lies with small, independent firms that can still afford, to some extent, to publish their own tastes. When we sold Grove Press their first books, they were a small publisher. They just had a little room in a shirt store on lower Broadway. But I think that's what publishing is all about—you know, you're able to sit down 20, 30 years later, and say how marvelous things were, when there was this firm that was nothing and has now published all of these books. The other thing that has happened is that the university presses have established very vigorous programs in the field of translation. Not for fiction, obviously, but certainly in the more literary or the more valuable areas of nonfiction. Harvard has a very active program, Chicago even more so—Chicago has an incredible list of translations from French, in the fields of history, in the fields of linguistics and semiotics, structuralism—not easy fields in which to publish when they started. Even an author like Roland Barthes—it took years until we found Hill & Wang, but they've published, with one exception, every single book by Barthes.

Galassi: Jay, what do you think about the pool of available translators today?

Laughlin: Most translators in all periods have been young professors of the French or German or Italian departments of universities who knew that I was interested in a certain kind of poet, and wrote to me, sending samples of their translations. I think we were the first ones to publish Borges in this country, in our New Directions anthology, before we did his collection of stories, *Labyrinths*. And that came to us from a professor up in Wisconsin or Michigan or somewhere. He had read him, thought he was great, sent in his stories, and that led to doing the book. We very seldom accept a foreign book unless we have a sample translation. Usually, somebody has tipped us off. "Look at So-and-so." And then somebody else will say, "This person has done some translations," and we will look at them, and that will lead to the translating of an author in whom we become interested.

When I did *The Random House Book of Twentieth-Century French Poetry*, I included about 50 poets. I had, I think, 85 different translators in the book. What I didn't know, at the time that the project was arranged with the publisher, was that I was responsible for everything. In effect, not only was I the editor, but I was working as a publisher—because I was the one who had to write to all the publishers in America, for reprints; to France, to obtain permission for translations; and to England as well. Paul Auster, ***translator and novelist***

Galassi: Richard Seaver, do you feel that there's a good crop of new translators coming along?

Seaver: There are many translators who are very good, or who have the capacity to be very good. There are always (as in everything) those who rise to become stars, such as Mr. Rabassa. There are two or three whose work is really superb (although I would not use that word in a review, Gregory), but the fact is that three or four from Italian, and there are probably the same number from German, cannot, obviously, do more than a fraction of the books that need to be done. If your name appears, I hope not on the inside jacket but on the jacket itself, it is because publishers know that when Gregory Rabassa's name appears, or Ralph Manheim's, or Helen Lane's, it helps sell the book. It's wholesome, pure commerce. But there is a whole new crop becoming available, who often—as Jay says—bring work to our attention.

Laughlin: For the first time in colleges and universities, writing divisions actually do the work in translations, and that's something new.

Galassi: I think it's time now for more of an interchange between the audience and the panelists. Let's open this up to questions.

Question: Not a question, but I want to say something about the young academics coming into the field: how well can they actually write? I think that there is a certain lack of spontaneity among some of the younger academic translators; I do wish that they would serve more than an apprenticeship before they undertake the terribly difficult and unrewarding job of translating. Lots of people I know, including myself, first did it merely because we so loved the poems in the original, or it may have been a novel—in my case, it was Russian poetry—that we wanted to do the best we could to put it into English.

Question: You suggested that your audience for translation was students and academics. I know that Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* crossed over very successfully, and a good share of the South American writing as well. Who is the audience now, for a good, general work of fiction in translation?

Seaver: For *The Name of the Rose*—I guess the answer is almost everybody. But I've never been able to find out from anyone, including the publisher, why. It is not

an easy work. Obviously, the front page review in *The New York Times* had something to do with that, but there have been thousands of books that had the front page of *The New York Times* and sold 3,500 copies. I have met an awful lot of people who have tried to read that book without progressing beyond page 60, so I don't think it's word of mouth that did it. I guess it is one of the books that is the exception that proves some sort of rule. Whatever that rule may be, I haven't the foggiest notion.

When you have work in a fine translation, say a South American novel translated by Gregory Rabassa, it is as liable to find as good an audience in America as a fine novelist who is American. Because it's equally worthy in the language we read—namely, English. So I think that the potential for a translated book is proved by the audience for the South American writing. It's found a broad audience, and quite quickly, compared to the 20 years of a Michel Tournier or the untold number of years of many novelists who are wonderful writers and who are not yet in any sense popular. Samuel Beckett, in the first year or so, did not reach a thousand copies. And then the academics discovered Beckett. Of course the play, *Waiting for Godot*, was a good success, and the desire by young professors to use it in their courses—because it's a wonderful thing to teach, it's so rich—is what really opened Beckett to a much larger public. I'm very touched and moved to find my 14-year-old child studying Beckett in school. That, to me, seems the ultimate penetration, that in the ninth grade Beckett is being read.

Borchardt: It's true of many authors, including Camus with *The Stranger*, and Robbe-Grillet, that you will find one or two books that will outsell all the others, because it's the first one the academics pick to teach in their courses, and they become attached to their class notes so the same book gets assigned over and over, and then outsells all the other books by the author. Unfortunately, there must be something lacking in their teaching, since the students seldom seem to go on to other books. That is true even of Beckett. *Waiting for Godot* is really an enormous bestseller, but the other books still reach very modest figures.

Rabassa: Everything of Gabriel Garcia Marquez has now been remaindered except *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

Question: What is the role of subsidies by foreign governments in encouraging publishers and, perhaps, helping pay for the cost of translation?

Laughlin: We've often had help on translations from foreign governments. It enables you to reduce the selling price somewhat, and to guarantee a translator a sufficient advance against his share of royalties.

Borchardt: Actually, many subsidies are available now for translation from French, since Mitterand came to power. The only problem is that these subsidies are usually not granted until after the publisher has been found; in other words, the application has to be made once a contract has been signed with a publisher. So there's still a certain element of risk that the subsidy will not be forthcoming.

Galassi: Subsidies are also available from the Italian and German governments now, and there is a private foundation in Portugal. I don't know about Spanish.

Seaver: That's new in Spain. Seaver Books has published a couple of books that have just been granted subsidies from Spain. It took about a year and 18,000 forms.

Galassi: The Dutch government has a very active program of trying to promote Dutch works.

Seaver: But I think it helps. From a publisher's point of view, with a subsidy, we can price the translation more or less the same as though we were doing an original English-language book, which is a factor when you're trying to figure out how many copies you're going to print and sell.

Question: The notion that translations are more expensive than domestic books is somewhat debatable. Not that they don't cost more in care and time, possibly, but the publishers ask the authors for royalty concessions, which usually amount to 2½%. Unless the book doesn't sell at all, these concessions do make up the better part, or sometimes more, of the cost of the translation itself.

Galassi: In my experience, those percentages are applied against the advance payable to the translator for his participation in the work. And it seems only right that the translator should earn a royalty on the work.

Question: I have seen contracts, and also agreed to contracts nowadays, when both publisher and author would add a percentage for the payment of the translator, where the author still made the royalty concession of 2½% starting royalty, through, to 12½%, top.

Seaver: I agree. Unless the book is a total flop, the translation really does not cost any more to the publisher than a book that was originally written in English, because the translation cost is absorbed by this reduced royalty, and the total royalty—even the translator gets a royalty—is not any higher than what the English or American author would get. If you have a book for which you pay a high advance, and in addition you also have a translation cost to pay, and it's a flop, then of course your loss is increased by the amount of the translation cost.

Galassi: The reality of translation is that most books that are selected for translation do not earn out and they end up costing more. It seems to me that good works by relatively unknown people don't sell within the short period of time that now exists, and that's partly the foreshortened nature of the publishing process now. It's very difficult if you're going to pay everyone what they deserve to be paid for their work.

Question: About the assumption that, in the world of literary publishing, translations don't sell. In the case of New Directions, I think your biggest seller was a translation: *Siddartha*, right?

Laughlin: Yes.

Question: Siddartha, right. If you took all the New Directions titles over 40 years, I would imagine that the translations sold better than the works in English, generally speaking. And if a new, translated, Hungarian novel sells poorly, is it really selling more poorly than a new novel in English that sold poorly?

Laughlin: Hesse's *Siddartha* was kind of a freak. Henry Miller had read this book and kept writing me. He said, "This is the greatest thing. . ." And I looked at it, and I thought, this is very nice—sort of Buddhism lightly sugared over. But Henry kept writing and writing and writing; he said, "You've got to do *Siddartha*!" And I said, okay, Henry. We did *Siddartha* in a very modest way, and in the first year it sold 400 copies, and in the next year it sold 600 copies, and then the Hesse boom swept through the colleges like a kind of delightful plague. And I think at the height of that boom, we were selling a quarter of a million copies of that psuedo-"Life of the Buddha" every year. But it was a freak, and that distorts your statistics.

Question: But it helps support your Hungarians.

Galassi: Question?

Question: Why is it that, these days, if a translator wants to find work with a publisher, the best approach is to be a professor, or to have been a writer or an editor, instead of saying, "I am a professional translator. I am trained as a translator and I would like to do samples for you." I feel that the profession itself is so demanding that the translator should not have to do other things in addition.

Seaver: Most translators do other things. I don't think you can live by translation alone. Most writers can't live by writing alone. Your passion for translation is commendable, and will probably end up making you, in some part of your life, a translator. Very often translators don't have the rights to the things they fall in love with, which is a whole other problem. But I don't think there's any pro-academic bias. Very often professors don't write English very well, which is the first quality of a good translator.

Question: I'm surprised that this rather thorny subject hasn't come up; the difference between English and American translations and translators. Has the center of translation moved from London to New York?

Laughlin: I would say—I'm just guessing now—that the English-language translation is less acceptable here now than it once was.

Seaver: I think there's a real shift. When we first began, we would very often take an English translation. But more and more, I think most of what we do is done by American translators now. We think they're better.

Rabassa: I think what has happened is that the English, who until maybe 20 years ago found American English totally incomprehensible, have more and more accepted American English, so that many French characters in French novels who used to speak with a British accent to the Americans now speak with an American accent to the British.

Galassi: What happens with your translations, Mr. Rabassa, when they're published in England?

Rabassa: I think the only change they make is putting the "u" in "labour." I don't think they go through them any more, editing out "elevator" and putting in "lift," as they did in the past, and I didn't see much point in it, since we don't Americanize an English novel.

Question: Is there an interest among the panelists in the problem of inferior translations published many years ago, which if retranslated might enjoy a second life and find a wider public?

Seaver: I wonder about the question of translations being bad or inferior. Some translations 30 or 40 years old need to be retranslated because a lot of our sensibilities or terminology have changed. Some great sage (or wag) said, "All great works should be retranslated every 50 years." To some degree, I think that's true. In the next 50, I'm sure some of the works that are being translated today will merit retranslation. And in work like Proust's, however wonderful the Scott Moncrieff translation was in serving the purpose of bringing Proust to the English-speaking world, if you examined it closely with all the scholarship available, 20 or 30 years later, it did require a new translation. In some instances it was more Moncrieff than Proust. And there is a new translation, by Terence Kilmartin, that Random House has done, which is probably suited to the sensibility of this era.

Laughlin: What determines whether to redo older translations, which are either outdated or don't sound right, lies largely in the academic world, where certain classics are taught in the English language and people get fed up with the old translations. It will only get done if a classic is guaranteed a steady sale which will amortize the cost of the translation. We had that great translator, Ralph Manheim, redo one of the Cèline novels, *Journey to the End of the Night*, which greatly needed to be done. He had done *Death on the Installment Plan* previously. Now these two great classics are available in excellent translations, and we know that we're going to have a steady sale of so many thousand copies a year of Cèline's masterpiece.

Borchardt: Robert Fagels is at work on a new translation of the *Iliad* for Penguinm who have another translation in print but realize that what they have is on the way out, or should be out, and they're going to keep the two translations in print side by side, and in all probability, the new one is going to push the other one slowly out of existence.

Galassi: One more remark from the floor?

Question: I've published many translations in my lifetime, and I would like to disagree with Mr. Seaver about the retranslation of Proust. I agree with Ralph Manheim that it's a disaster. After all, we can find mistakes in Scott Moncrieff, but his was a superb and lasting translation, and I don't think that the new one is any improvement at all. I think that in recent years there have been more and more translations, because nobody studies any foreign language any more. Many translators are translating from languages they do not know, into another language they do not know, which is their own.

Galassi: I'd like to thank you all for coming.

When I used to work at the Center for Inter-American Relations, we would receive maybe every month a completed 500-page manuscript from someone who had been working away at a translation, not knowing that the translation rights were with someone else for years. . . . Clearly, we all translate for love, and not for a great deal of remuneration, but there are certain business procedures that we can know to protect ourselves. Gregory Kolovakos, *Director, Literature Department, New York State Council on the Arts*

Native American Literature: The Problems of Translation

• PEN Symposium held February 20, 1986 •

Peter Glassgold: I want to welcome you all to this evening's symposium. It was made possible by a most generous grant from the New York Council for the Humanities, as well as funds from the Mobil Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. In thinking about the subject of tonight's discussion, it occurred to me that I might find in the history of Western literature a parallel to these translation problems. And I believe I have found one in the ancient Greek poet Pindar. Pindar's lyrics, what survives of them, were written in the fifth century B.C., in the period that included the Persian Wars but preceded the war between Athens and Sparta. He was commissioned to compose victory songs for the winners of ritual athletic contests, such as the ancient Olympics. His triumphal odes drew from local clan and tribal myths, and were performed by groups of local singers and dancers to music and steps arranged by Pindar himself for the occasion. In time Pindar's type of poetry went out of favor. His language came to seem obscure. The clan associations, too, the myths he sang, were lost. His musical and dance notations became incomprehensible and were dropped from manuscripts. By the time of Alexander, Pindar's poetry, a performance poetry made for living movement, seemed esoteric and opaque— difficult for his Greek intrepreters, even more so for his translators. Recent scholarship has helped to recreate part of the missing context of Pindar's victory odes, but the music and dance are forever lost. In a similar way, the written literature of Native Americans is secondary to performance. Fortunately, in these days the means of preservation and recovery go far beyond the written word. Our panelists tonight have dedicated themselves to keeping vital a poetic and narrative tradition that may well prove remarkably tuned with modern audiovisual technology.

Dennis Tedlock, our moderator, is a 1986 recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship. Among his published books are *Teaching from American Earth: Indian Religion and Philosophy* (with Barbara Tedlock); *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation*; and just this past year, his translation of the *Popol Vuh: The Mayan Book of the Dawn of Life*.

Allan F. Burns is the author of *An Epic of Miracles: Oral Literature of the Yucatec Maya*. He also has considerable experience in the making of documentary films and recordings.

David Guss is a poet and translator of both Native American and Spanish language works. Some of his books are *Language of the Birds: Tales, Texts, and Poems of Interspecies Communication; Watunna: An Orinoco Creation Cycle*; and *The Selected Poetry of Vicente Huidobro*.

Harold Littlebird is a 1986 recipient of the Catherine H. Lamont Fellowship, as Artist in Residence at the School of American Research in Santa Fe. He is a poet, the author of *Our Mountain's Breath*, a singer and composer of American Indian songs. He has recently produced a cassette of poetry and song, *A Circle Begins*. He is from the pueblos of Laguna and Santo Domingo.

Howard Norman, a translator, novelist and maker of documentary films, has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the NEA, the NEH, the Ingram Merrill Foundation, and most recently, the Mrs. Giles Whiting Foundation. Among his books of translation are *Where the Chill Came From: Cree Windigo Tales and Journeys*, and *The Wishing Bone Cycle: Narrative Poems from the Swampy Cree Indians*.

Alfonso Ortiz has been a Guggenheim and a MacArthur Fellow. His books include *Myths and Legends of North American Indians* (with Richard Erdoes); two volumes of the Smithsonian Institution's *Handbook of North American Indians* and *The Tewa World: Space, Time, Being and Becoming in a Pueblo Society*.

Tedlock: Hom aalhasshi, hom chawe: ko'na to'n tewanan aa'teyaye? This is just a way of greeting all of you, and to start with the fundamental problem of language. It is an enormous problem, considering our resources. We're talking about a thousand-and-one or so literatures, if we divide them according to languages, and of those languages, I would guess 600 of them are spoken today, in the Americas. We're talking about separate languages at least as different as, say, Portuguese and Spanish, and some of them at least as different as Portuguese and Chinese, if not more so. You can't work on translation using a Greek lexicon that starts from Homer and goes up through the New Testament, citing all known uses of a given word. The known uses aren't finished yet. Most of us are not dealing with a finite corpus of works that are receding into the past. We are dealing with living languages, living literatures, oral—and not only oral but in many cases written literatures as well. And in some cases not only literatures that started being written after Europeans arrived here, but that were written before that. And not only things that were written in, say, the Maya or Aztec writing systems, but in other kinds of writing systems we don't seem to dignify with that name, but which are nevertheless very much like writing systems. I'm thinking here for example of the bark scrolls, the writing used among the Ojibwa and Cree people up north of us here, notation systems. So, it's not only an oral problem.

I would like at least some of the panelists, starting here with Alfonso Ortiz, to talk about some of the concrete problems in getting from a particular Native American language into English.

Ortiz: One of my personal projects is translating Tewa tales that I recorded as many as twenty years ago, on tape, translating them into English and attempting to apply all that we've learned. And some of our teachers are here

to my right and to my left, they are the people who pioneered new and ever more sensitive ways of translating, and of placing translations in their widest possible cultural context. I encountered a phrase more than once in Tewa tales that just underscores and puts before us in sharp relief the problem of translation. The phrase was *nafupi* in Tewa, and it's not used in everyday discourse anymore, but it is used very frequently in the archaic discourse that is tale telling, and especially sacred narratives of the creation and migrations and how things got to be the way they are. The important things in the world out there. Well, *nafupi* literally means, "He goes out to look, to search, to seek." But it means more than just that, it means to go out and search and seek in a formulaic way, namely by going in four concentric circles. The term implies that. It's different from *napuwaepi*, which means, "He goes out to look" in ordinary discourse. With *nafupi* one must go four times in ever-widening concentric circles, further and further away from the village. But if you grow up as a native speaker of Tewa and learn from the earliest age to sit quietly and listen to tales, it also implies that if it grows dark while you are still seeking on your second or third concentric circle around the village, you will repeat the process the next day. This is such an innocuous-seeming phrase, *nafupi*. And it gives you pause to think how many have been satisfied with the translation in pidgin English that approximated this: "went out looking for it, went out searching for it"—not the more subtle nuances that were implied by the distinction between *nafupi* and *napuwaepi*.

Burns: Let me build on that a little bit, from my work with Yucatec. It seems to me that in translation you have a choice: you can put a footnote there, or some might write four or five pages about what that meant, or you can kind of bind one language to another, and maybe put the *nafupi* and then some English words, "he went searching around." So that every time a person reading the translation comes across that particular way of looking around, he gets signaled back by seeing the word in Tewa, and maybe it shouldn't be translated. But should translation involve a long discourse about these things, and some ethnographic description, or is there some way of using the wisdom of the primary language to signal to people who may not know that language?

Ortiz: Just a further word of context. In the Tewa tales anyway, but also in other Pueblo stories of the American Southwest, you have a very frequent scenario of people getting lost, that's the main plot line, or the *kachinas* coming down from the mountains, the ancestor spirits, and whisking off beautiful maidens, or making off with something valuable, and a culture hero having to go and somehow retrieve them. So when *nafupi* fails, that's when you go seek supernatural assistance, you go all the way up to the mountains to bring back what has been stolen by the *kachinas*. This is a recurrent device that is important, so one had better get one's head straight on how to deal with it.

Guss: Regarding what Allan was saying about whether you need contextualization, or whether you can just translate a word: I was recently translating a story from the Ye'cuana, a small tribe in the upper Orinoco, and one problem is that they're a tribe of only two thousand people and there has absolutely never been anything published on their language. So that if you're not actually there, there are no resources whatsoever you can use other than what you've written down or remember or record—other than speaking to a Ye'cuana. And in a story I was recently translating, a critical story about the origin of baskets, the main point comes out as an aside by the storyteller in just one word. There's absolutely no other contextual information, yet this is the origin of all these basket designs, a one-word aside. And if you were to translate the story just as a story, it would make very, very little sense. So you get into the problem of how much contextualization you really have to bring to each story to make it a meaningful narrative, in effect making it just a part of a larger work.

Tedlock: But if you try to translate a single complicated word into a whole phrase, you always have to ask yourself at what point you're disturbing the timing, the way in which the story unfolds. If you put too much of your contextualization into the translation itself, you're changing the rate at which the events are unfolding, you're slowing everything down. This is a terrific problem, especially if you're trying to recreate an oral performance in English. Should a 60-minute story in the original language come out as something that can be read aloud in English in 60 minutes, or how much longer than 60 minutes is it going to be?

But let's shift the question, as David started to do, in the direction of broader questions of context: cultural context, social context, context of landscape. In these traditions, stories are not taking place long ago and far away in vaguely medieval castles. A lot of the stories we are talking about are set in real places with real names. Sometimes it's essential to the understanding of the story to know whether the people were going east, west, north, or south, and how far they were going, and so forth. The audience sitting there, as each of these places is mentioned, can picture a particular landmark that has a whole history to it. Do the notes go at the bottom of the page, do they go at the back of the book, do they go at the front of the book, do they go between the lines, or are they stuffed into the translation itself?

Guss: For me it has been hard to make a general solution to that problem, just because some tales are so hopelessly contextual. I'm thinking of a menstruation tale of the Ye'cuana. If you just present it as a tale, there's absolutely no way it can make any sense to a reader outside the Ye'cuana culture without very elaborate notes. But there are other tales that you can just present, and without violating the material. So for me it's ended up being a question of presenting things in different formats, in different ways, with a sense of what the readership is going to be. If it's a collection for a more general readership, then it eliminates this very complicated menstruation tale that demands a lot of notes.

Norman: On this problem I take most of my cues from the Cree people I translate from. They have several worries. One is that the anecdotal nature of these stories might be lost, so they strongly advocate that people outside the story itself remain present and keep describing the situation, whether in an introduction or material woven in and around the stories, almost the way a playwright might describe actions and gestures and voices of actors and actresses. And the other thing they're really worried about and highly critical and cautious about is the difference between synopsis and detail. If translation is to a great degree trying to find equivalents in your own language, and not substitutes, the problem is that the Algonquian language I translate from is so highly specific. There are words that not only tell you what you're eating but how you feel about it, what it feels like to eat it, and even refer to the last time you ate it or the time you might eat it

next. It's hard to get it into one English phrase the way Cree can do that. So when they read the translations, they're very suspicious of getting a detailed concept into a few English words. And they say, "You say that to me, you say that to me in English." And I say, "Well it's sort of like, eating this and doing this," and it ends up taking me 15 minutes. And they just go, "Huh?" I'm trying to work through a kind of anecodotal linguistics.

One thing that comes up over and over again is that, in narratives, another narrative will come flitting in for a line or two, or a couple of words from another story or a joke or something that somebody did, or an anecdote, or somebody's name will come in. And one way to think about handling that is to think about what the people in these communities do—they hear all these anecdotes all the time, and so when they hear an allusion that's not filled out in the story, they're thinking about the last story they heard or the last thing they wrote or something of that nature. So one solution to this problem of context is to create more of a fabric, an anthology, so that those allusions come up in other translations. Then you put a footnote that says, "Go look at the story of what happened over at such-and-such a place and this will become much clearer." That's what the people are doing when they listen to these stories.

Ortiz: Dennis earlier mentioned a problem we must never forget: that the stories we hear occur within a particular landscape, as well as in a particular time. And this just triggered something in my mind: good tale tellers in Tewa often use place names in a very ordered arrangement, usually leading from the furthest point from the speaker to the closest point to the speaker, much the way devout Catholics use rosary beads: they use them as mnemonic devices. They remember places on the landscape in a definite sequence, from distant to near, or in a circuit, or in a zigzag pattern, or from highest to lowest points. And the conclusion of the narration is to bring the action right here, right to home. And I'd like to make that point—to make it well—because some of you out there may think that this is all just unpatterned confusion. No one is less confused than the storytellers. And when you are telling a story that may go on for as long as an hour, you do need these mnemonic devices.

In my childhood we had a middle-aged healer, a medicine person, in my community, San Juan Pueblo. We were school kids at the time, and we swore that this man had a book up at the ceiling that only he could see, because we were pretty much imbued with the notion that you had to read something to be able to speak lucidly for an hour. The storyteller would roll a cigarette, light it, take one long puff, and then start talking, and the words would come in such a smooth, orderly fashion that we swore that the moment he looked up at the ceiling, pages of the book started turning. But it wasn't that at all. Once we got off this schoolchildish preoccupation with written language, we realized that this person was a master storyteller, because he commanded the cultural resources of the Tewa world, as it were—place names, ceremonial positions, and he knew all the songs, all the shrines. He had made pilgrimages to get evergreens up in the mountains, and done all the things that one should do growing up as a traditional Tewa in the 1920s, the 1930s.

And by the '40s, when I was in elementary school, if you wanted someone to tell stories, you brought a gift of a few cigarettes—people were very poor, back when everyone else was fighting World War II—a few cigarettes, a pack if you were lucky and had the money, or more likely one of these sack tobaccos, like Golden Rain. And even then, before accepting your request to tell stories, he usually took the opportunity to berate you for not slopping the hogs, for not coming home right away after school let out, for being lazy when your grandmother asked you to chop wood for the stove. "You bunch of children of the trash heap, why should I tell you stories?" then he might accept the tobacco or the cigarettes, and tell stories.

And again about context, the presence of outsiders can have an influence on how a tale is told, what is said, what is not. And in the Tewa pueblos, if it's summer you can't tell sacred stories, and the admonition is that a rattlesnake will bite you if you do. A collection that Ruth Benedict put together of tales of the Cochiti Pueblo Indians—if you look at it closely, it's a marvelously rich collection, but completely absent are stories of the creation and the migration of Cochiti people. Why? Because she and Franz Boas (as her mentor) were in Cochiti in the summer of 1924, and Cochiti people, like Tewa, don't tell these sacred stories in the summertime. Another thing that affects how stories are told is when part of a particular story is something that only people who are initiated should know about. If the uninitiated young are present, a good storyteller will weave in something in its place, or just skip over that part.

Littlebird: Both Alfonso and I come from Pueblo cultures. There's a certain protocol that is required not only of the storytellers but of the persons they are speaking to. And it's not just anyone that can go up to ask. In fact really you don't ask. It's more like you offer something first, because any time a story is told it's always in a very ceremonial way, even though there is really no direct ceremony going on. It's more a matter of well-being, of bringing that back to the community. Whenever a story is told it's not just for listening—it's for the people who hear the story to remember. It's being passed on. There will be times when songs are left out because someone present hasn't been in the community long enough. And sometimes a storyteller will use language that hasn't been heard for a while, he lets the rest of the people know that this is something not always spoken of. You never ask a question of a storyteller; instead you pay attention to what a storyteller is offering you. You may hear that story several times, and each time you hear that story it will change, depending on how you see it yourself.

Norman: With Cree storytellers there's a reciprocity, not just between audience and storyteller, but between the storyteller and the story itself. The way they talk about it, stories are animate objects with animate lives, they live. You can be taken out and shown where stories were living, and you can ask the question, "What do stories do when they are not being told?"

Burns: Let me make a contrast with something Harold said. In Yucatan the person listening to the story has to talk back to the storyteller and must ask questions. And when I started recording the stories with a microphone I was told I couldn't do that, and when I asked why, they said, "You're not a storyteller, only storytellers can do that, since only storytellers know how to talk back to a person who's telling a story." so one of the things I had to do in order to start collecting and translating was to learn a little bit about how to tell a story.

We've been talking about storytellers as if they're a

category out there, but they are real people, and they have names. And part of the reciprocity is knowing them as real people. Yucatec Mayan storytellers would begin with an announcement of my name, what I had been doing that day, and then go on to the stories. When we work in these traditions the difficulties and conflicts are not only summer and winter ones concerning when a particular kind of story can be told, but the personality of the author, the person saying the stories. When I went to Alonzo Mó's house once to do some recordings, his child had just died. So we didn't talk about any stories. Instead we had a funeral. I came back a few months later and Alonzo was in his hammock and was suffering from dizzy spells, but he wanted to talk about one story and asked his wife to help him. When I came back last year to the Yucatan, Alonzo had leaned over a well and fallen down and killed himself. So his stories aren't there anymore. We who work with Native American literature are also particular people, and our relationship with particular storytellers is a problem in our translations. We have to bring that out somehow: these stories don't just occur as if we weren't there. But this is not only a problem but one of the pleasures of translation, because it allows us to be in on a creative process.

I think American editors and agents look for two separate things. One, what they can sell; and then, if it's something they don't feel they can sell, whether it's being published for the ages, whether it's going to measure up to Proust and Thomas Mann. Deborah Karl, *literary agent and translator*

Guss: How do you decide which storytellers to translate, how do you decide which are the ones you're going to put on tape?

Ortiz: Well, we just try to get the best possible storyteller, and those tend to be, in my specific pueblo, people who have occupied almost every possible religious and political position a person of that age could occupy. But these are not the people who have never left, who have never had a chance to think about, in an objective way, themselves as storytellers. People who haven't traveled at all may not be such good storytellers.

Guss: To what extent are we dealing with authorship here, and to what extent are we dealing with something collective? It is appropriate to make much of the issue of who said what? Presenting a tradition all stitched together is another way of doing things. The problem with the Watunna, the creation cycle of the Makiritare, is that it's really told in bits and pieces, and it's forbidden to tell the sacred version except in special ceremonies. And there are occasions when some of the people who sing these stories don't even understand the language they're singing—it's sacred language. The way the Watunna was put together for publication was really a type of patchwork quilt of various bits and pieces collected over many years. My translation was a collaboration with Marc de Civrieux, who'd been doing that collecting. But I am very sensitive to the issues that are raised when indigenous cultures are presented in a kind of faceless, homogeneous, homeostatic mass, as if a storyteller were basically telling a version that everybody else would agree to. There are some basic political and intellectual ideas behind such presentations, but I think they're really changing by the day. And by now it's also clear that any collection is shaped by a collaboration between the storyteller and the person who is translating, it's just inevitably so.

Tedlock: The issue of the person who is there doing the collecting is most obvious in a case like that of the Yucatan, where storytelling is a kind of continuing dialogue rather than a monologue by the storyteller. But it's also an issue where storytelling is more of a monologue, as it is at Zuni. The storyteller will sometimes outrageously include a reference to the foreigner, the outsider who is there listening. So that you suddenly find yourself incorporated into the text you were collecting. And what do you do about this? Many of our predecessors left such things out because they had some notion that they could present what was really Zuni or Tewa or Yucatec, and that they could present it as if they had never been there except as invisible eavesdroppers. When people collected things by handwritten dictation, they just didn't write down whatever they felt was breaking the tradition such as mentions of the profane presence of the ethnographer. But with the tape recorder, unless you do a fancy editing job, there you are on the tape. The wonderful thing about a recording is that it already takes you one step toward the translation. The story is being addressed to an audience, one that potentially includes the readers of a book of translations, or listeners to taped translations. There's already a bridge, in the effects of our presence as foreigners during the original telling, right in the middle of something that is supposed to be traditional.

Ortiz: I have a funny anecdote to tell, very quickly. I witnessed, in the early '70s, a very well-meaning, well-intentioned teacher in a bilingual, bicultural education program, who was recording a Tewa grandmother, recording stories for use in the classroom, for the community's own use, and at the end of the session the grandmother had two or three grandchildren sitting there in the living room where this Anglo teacher was recording. And when the recording was finished, she turned to her children and said, "Now you listen to these stories. That's the reason I tell them here. That way you won't have to be recording them like this poor fool." She said it in Tewa, so the teacher didn't know what she was saying.

Norman: What happens with Cree storytellers is that they sometimes end by showing you something. I remember a story I was trying to find an ending for, it was about beaver—trapping beaver—and the teller stopped and said, "Well, you'll have to come back in the winter. I'll show you the end of the story." So they don't always end verbally, and then I have to talk with the teller about trying to describe the end of the story I'm translating. That's another problem. You have to be a writer as well, I guess.

Guss: Going back to authorship, and the recognition not only of the author but the recognition that there is no story without a listener, I've recorded a story about why it is forbidden to make tape recordings—which is a really remarkable story. And the end of the story is the origin of tape recordings, how tape recorders came about. Accepting material like that is an important move toward recognizing that indigenous cultures are contemporary cultures, 20th-century cultures sharing the planet. That's a really important change of consciousness.

Ortiz: And the warning for future fieldworkers is this: be careful that you don't think your generation has all

the answers, because the Indian people, through their cultures, have continued to amaze us not only with their resiliency but with the tremendous resources they have for communicating through their stories. I would just like to sound a warning: we've come far, but we may still have a long way to go in translating what we hear from another culture.

If, all things being equal, you find an acceptable translation, and other people at the publishing house, and authorities, find it acceptable, unless the author wants to take back the rights and sue you, you will go ahead with it. Because the original author is not always right. The original author does not always know what is a good translation.* Marian Skedgell, *editor and novelist

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Tedlock: I'm going to turn to some very practical questions. One of our problems in this enterprise is funding. The National Endowment for the Humanities Translations Program often asks me to review proposals involving Native American languages, and a frequent question they ask me about somebody's proposal is, "How do we know this is an important text? How do we know this isn't just somebody's tapes of some old guy, some old lady talking somewhere?" When we're applying for such grants we have to think of arguments, sometimes rather grotesque arguments, for why the thing we want to translate is an "important text" in the way traditional humanists understand that. In such a context it almost becomes an embarrassment when the people who are the source of a particular text are still alive. It's much easier to convince a granting agency that we should translate a manuscript from the 16th century than that we should work on the tapes of some old character who's just talking on endlessly somewhere out in Arizona today.

Burns: Let me turn that around a little bit. I've been working with Guatemalan refugees, Mayan refugees who have ended up in Florida in a town whose name happens to be Indiantown. These are children who have experienced the attempts at genocide and ethnocide in the highlands of Guatemala over the last several years, and a friend of mine, a psychologist, has been working with the children and trying to have them work through their experiences. And I've been helping him out with this over the last year or so. And it started me thinking, why are we working on translations? On the one hand I've been working on translations because I think it's neat to have people who speak English see the way other people think about the world. But on the other hand, what I've learned in working with these children is that the telling of the narrative—in this case what happened in their town, what happened on their journey when they left their town, how they walked through Mexico and ended up in Indiantown in Florida—is also important for *them*. It's a kind of a catharsis for these children when, for the first time, they put into words, the words of a narrative, what they experienced. You can see real differences in people's ability to cope with the world once they have told these stories. And so we also have to look at what good it does for these people to be saying these things, not only at what good it does for you to read them.

Tedlock: Another practical question I wanted to raise is this: Where does the written or recorded text reside? If you are reading somebody's translation of García Marquez, you can go and look at the original and compare it to the translation. When you start reading published works of Native American literature translated into English, that's often not possible. Sometimes you might go to the back shelves of a library and find it in a dusty Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology. The problem has gotten worse, not better, because we've got better texts than ever before—our tapes, I mean—but we've got nowhere to put them. There's not a single library or any other kind of archive in this entire country that seriously archives tapes of American Indian languages except for linguistic purposes. When they are stored it's not primarily for their art, or with the thought that somebody could bring in a translation, put on earphones, and study—or even work out a better translation. Most of these tapes remain the sole property of the person who recorded them, not because we don't want anybody checking up on us, but because librarians hate tapes. By now we've got two or three generations of people who've got tapes. At best, maybe they've deposited them in their local university library. I think Folkways could add some of these recordings to their collection, with English librettos you could follow line by line while listening to the original performance. These performances are enchanting, even if you don't know the language, as long as you've got a libretto.

We've been circling around the problem of narratives—it's almost inevitable that we would be focusing on what is easiest to translate, although we may have made it sound difficult enough. At least stories can be very expansive; storytellers can explain some things as they go along. But there are other things to translate, all the way up to that smaller, tighter, more structured event, the song. Here the contextual problem goes way up. To understand five songs may require an enormous breadth of information. One of our panelists, Harold Littlebird, has thought a lot about this and has made some interesting experiments.

Littlebird: First comes the whole idea of breath as a very important aspect of the connection not only with your physical surroundings but your spiritual surroundings. When a storyteller begins a story he will begin by breathing out, and it's the same way in song. You use your breath in this way because it's your connection to whoever is out there, and it represents your creator. And in song you use your breath to create not only an action but to create a connection with other people, because everybody breathes in, breathes out. And it becomes a thing not so much of timing, but of direction—you ease into it. And this goes back to stories, which not only have to do with human beings but with all forms of life. They have breath, too: plants, animals, everything having an animate form. Then, you use breath in a healing way with these songs. It has to do with healing, and this goes back to the feeling of well-being, and bringing back something not only for yourself but for your entire community, whatever that community is. And you can encompass the world in that.

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of Churchill's prose in his own history of the war. We learn, for instance, that he was "greatly disturbed" by Eisenhower's election to the Presidency, partly because he thought "this makes war much more probable;" mainly, we may guess, because he had to "cut much out of Volume VI of his War History and could not tell the story of how the United States gave away, to please Russia, vast tracts of Europe." Indeed, the most depressing revelation in the diaries comes in the last three years of Churchill's premiership, in the form of a startling reassessment of the Churchill-Eisenhower relationship. Most of us, I think, have gathered from previous memoirs that Churchill, having proclaimed at Fulton, Missouri, his warning about the menace that lay behind the Iron Curtain, continued for the rest of his life to nurture the worst suspicions of the Soviet Union and to shun its leaders. On the contrary, Colville details a dramatic turnabout in the feelings of both leaders, which was evidently caused by a radically different evaluation of the political consequences of the atomic bomb. At the Bermuda Conference, in December, 1953, Eisenhower told Colville that "whereas Winston looked on the atomic weapon as something entirely new and terrible, he looked upon it as just the latest improvement in military weapons . . . all weapons in due course became conventional weapons." From then on, Churchill, while nursing no illusions about the prospect of Soviet expansionism, believed that a new look in Soviet policy was bound to come. "Ike followed," Colville reports, "with a short, very violent statement . . . that as regards the P.M.'s belief . . . Russia was a woman of the streets and whether her dress was new, or just the old one patched, it was certainly the same whore underneath." Colville comments, "I doubt if such language has ever before been heard at an international conference." At any rate, Churchill persisted in his view that the bomb had changed everything (after the explosion of the first hydrogen bomb he told Colville that "we were now as far from the age of the atomic bomb as the atomic bomb itself from the bow and arrow"), and from then until the day of his resignation, two years later, he never faltered in his insistence that a meeting, or a series of meetings, with the Russians was "crucial to our survival." But at the end of March, 1955, Churchill—"a sad old man"—told Colville he "did not re-

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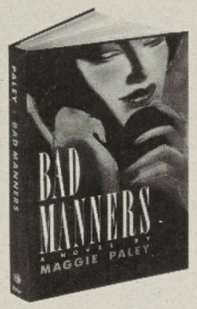

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ally think there was much chance of a top-level conference" with the Russians, "and that alone would be a valid reason for staying." Six days later, he "put on his top hat and frock coat, which he always wore for audiences, and went to Buckingham Palace to resign."

If Sir John has a fault, considered as a Foreign Service officer, it is one long embedded in the British diplomatic establishment. It is the dormant virus of anti-Americanism, which flares into activity on contact with American politicians, but only on the occasions when they are to be considered negotiating equals. (It ought to be said that the virus is even more deeply, if forgivably, rooted in the British Labour Party, whose postwar leaders never forgave Truman for his abrupt termination of Lend-Lease only seven days after the Japanese surrender—an act that threw the new Labour Government, and the exhausted British people, into a period of austerity more severe than anything they had known during the war itself.) Anti-Americanism runs, like a chronic cough, through the diaries of Sir Harold Nicolson, of Sir Alexander Cadogan, of almost anyone I can think of who was trained in the British diplomatic establishment before Britain had, as Acheson infuriatingly put it, "lost an Empire" and "not yet found a role." Thus, in these diaries, Colville did not think Acheson "anything out of the way," and appears to have shared Churchill's view that Truman was "a novice, bewildered by the march of events." Eisenhower, though a man of "real goodness of heart," was a "genial and dynamic mediocrity." For a lawyer, Thomas E. Dewey "seemed to have a remarkably inaccurate memory for dates and places." Personal charm was "not among [the] attributes" of John Foster Dulles, whose "grasp of foreign affairs was slight . . . It would have been better if he had stuck to the law." (To be truthful, it has to be said that both the British and the French view of Dulles ranged from distaste to detestation, and Churchill in old age recalled him as "the only bull I ever knew who carried his own china shop around with him.") The moral stature of General Marshall went unnoticed. There are only two redeeming hints that Colville could appreciate the American political animal: he writes that Roosevelt was "America's one great international figure;" and he liked Speaker Sam Rayburn. On the whole, it is astounding that the United States, led by this dim procession of postwar mediocrities, survived as a great power into the second half of the twentieth century.

However, this characteristic lapse is far outweighed by the merits of Sir John's chronicle: the detachment; the sharp and (Americans aside) unprejudiced observation of people of all sorts and nationalities; the careful attention to facts at the expense of high drama or anecdotal neatness; the blessed absence of gung-ho propaganda. In the rewarding context of so many virtues, it is probably niggling to stress the transatlantic myopia of mid-century British officialdom. The memoirs of a later generation have other values to offer, other flaws. —ALISTAIR COOKE

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

HAWKSMOOR, by Peter Ackroyd (Harper & Row; $16.95). This novel begins under the foundations of some eighteenth-century London churches built on pre-Christian sacred sites. That it is partly a twentieth-century murder mystery is not apparent at first. Odd-numbered chapters recall Defoe's "A Journal of the Plague Year": writing in 1712, their fictional narrator, Nicholas Dyer, Assistant Surveyour at Her Majesty's Office of Works, Scotland Yard, recalls his parents' death during the Great Plague, and his own survival of the Great Fire of 1666. He also explains his fiendish plan, which dates from those days, to erect seven fireproof churches in a black-magical pattern. An even-numbered chapter introduces Hawksmoor, an eccentric detective working out of New Scotland Yard. He hopes that the "comparability factor" (forensic jargon) in a string of murders committed at various London churches will help him predict the next attempt; meanwhile, the reader sees uncanny parallels between these cases and those in the odd-numbered chapters. Mr. Ackroyd dovetails the two Londons so deftly that soon it is difficult to say which one his poor hero inhabits.

A SIMPLE STORY, by S. Y. Agnon, translated from the Hebrew by Hillel Halkin (Schocken; $14.95). A complex story, first published in 1935, by a master storyteller (1888-1970). The setting is the Jewish quarter of a town in Agnon's native Galicia, in what is now Poland,

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see p. 102

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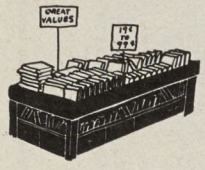
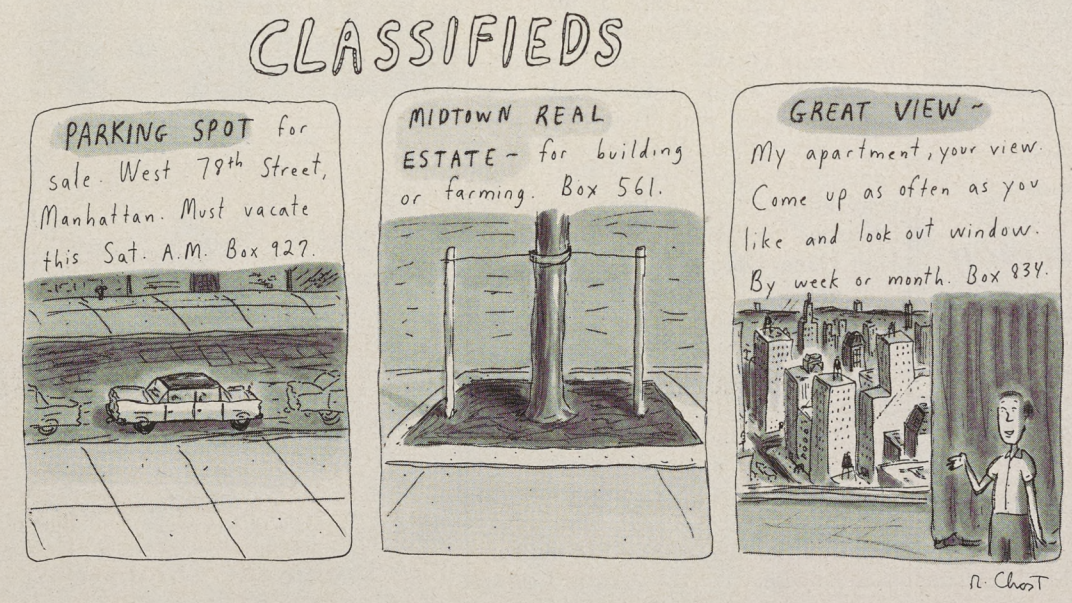


WHEN, in the summer of 1938, I was hired by the London *Times* as its special correspondent on American affairs, it was made plain to me in the gentlest way by the foreign editor that I was privileged to be entering, if not a holy order, at least an élite corps committed to certain self-denying disciplines unknown to the denizens of the vulgar popular press. It was, for example, to be understood that while no actual vow of poverty would be exacted it would be considered tasteless in the extreme to question the salary scale, which was at best, even by the current standards, penurious. The secret glow of working for the *Times* was to be compensation enough for a pinched life. Moreover, and most important, a staff correspondent was sworn not to write a book during what was referred to as his "term of duty," and even a spot of moonlighting by way of outside writing would be considered a dereliction. (The day after Pearl Harbor, my chief, the renowned Washington correspondent of the *Times* Sir Willmott Lewis, was persuaded to do a short broadcast for the BBC contrasting the congressional declaration of war with the similar scene in 1917, which Lewis had witnessed. He received overnight a reproving cable: "Gratefully request our own correspondent confine mellow recollections to the Times.")

This bizarre convention, comical and odd as it seems today—and surely unenforceable—must have been originally a method of reminding the staff that it belonged exclusively to a national institution of fierce independence: to, in fact, "The Thunderer," which, far from being an organ of what today is known as the establishment, was its most alert critic, always at the ready for blasts at Parliament, the Foreign Office, the law courts, the City, the Army, the Navy, and, not least, the Royal Family. While the *Morning Post* wrote of the dying George IV that "we have had few [monarchs] more deserving of veneration and esteem," the *Times*, in an obituary editorial of unmitigated savagery, wrote, "There never was an individual less regretted by his fellow-creatures than this deceased King. What eye has wept for him? What heart has heaved one throb of unmercenary sorrow?" But by the nineteen-twenties the *Times* was practically the voice of the Tory Party, and in the late thirties, under the appeasement-minded Geoffrey Dawson, it had become the mouthpiece of the Chamberlain Government. By then, the conception of staff loyalty could be usefully exploited as an extension, rather than—as it was—a distortion, of the stricter Foreign Office code, which kept its permanent staff loyal to the Government of the day, whatever its political complexion. This admirable tradition guaranteed that the diplomatic service was there to provide exactly the same information to every Government—to serve its superior officers, the political appointees of each succeeding administration, with equal devotion and disinterestedness.

An archetypal survivor of the type is John Colville (now Sir John), who at a casual glance seems to have been created in the blood and the bone for just such a peculiarly British form of service, or servitude. Grandson of a marquess, son of one lady-in-waiting at Buckingham Palace and later husband of another, he was appointed Page of Honour to King George V when he was twelve, and moved on to his education at Harrow and Cambridge. His two elder brothers went into banking and stockbrokering, respectively, but to young John, flushed with a first-class honors degree in history, the Foreign Office beckoned, although he has admitted to being well aware even then that "the honour of belonging to the Diplomatic Service was thought to outweigh the need for reasonable remuneration." However, such lofty credentials did not, and do not, automatically grant a passport into that wing of the establishment. Eighteen three-hour papers and four interviews were required of all applicants, and fluency in two foreign languages was presumed. Colville came through at the first attempt, and in 1937, at the age of twenty-two, he arrived in Whitehall and was immediately assigned to the Eastern Department, which just then was busy with the plan to partition the territory between the Arabs and the Jews—a plan that managed to enrage both parties. It was an early baptism, of cold water, in the facts of imperial life. Colville was soon required to keep a watchful eye on Iraq, on Saudi Arabia, on Persia, and on Turkey. He later said that he found Persia "just a little tiresome, as the Shah, Reza Pahlevi, was a temperamental despot." There were more exciting goings on in Turkey, whose own despot, Kemal Ataturk, while equally temperamental, was being diligently and successfully seduced away from the Germans by a British Ambassador who gave his



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for the discovery: it had been a Chicago case. Bernard Sandow, who is the head of Systematic Recovery Service, a local collection agency, and who, by his own admission, has laid out a couple of hundred thousand dollars in bribes to the P.V.B., decided last year to expand his profitable way of doing business to Chicago. Within a few months, the federal authorities there had apprehended him. The information was relayed to Giuliani, and Giuliani persuaded him to try for a lenient sentence by wearing a wire when he dealt with P.V.B. operatives here, which is how the local scandal started. Some New Yorkers have speculated about what things would have been like if Sandow had stayed in New York, where he had been operating for years without interference from the forces of law. Ameruso, and perhaps McGinley, might still be in office, and the P.V.B. conducting business as usual; the Friedman contract for hand-held computers might still be in effect; people might still be referring to Manes as the King of Queens; and the atmosphere at City Hall might now be just as serene and self-congratulatory as it was on Inauguration Day, less than nine weeks ago.

Last month, visitors to Koch's office noticed he had a new sign on his desk, a translation from the Latin. Some years ago, when a century-old garden structure was being dismantled at Yale, it was found to have a Latin inscription very different from the happy-passing-hours messages to which those who select such passages are usually partial. It said "*Vulnerant Omnes Ultima Necat*," which was translated as "Each Hour Injures. The Last One Slays." Though there may have been days recently when the Mayor felt that such an inscription was surely appropriate to his circumstances, the Latin sentiment he chose for his desk was from Horace: "*Dimidium Facti Qui Coepit Habet; Sapere Aude; Incipe!*" The usual translation of these lines from the "Epistles" is "He Who Has Begun Is Half Done. Dare to Be Wise: Begin!" The one Koch chose was "Begin, Be Bold, and Venture to Be Wise." He had ordered the sign about two weeks before—or soon after the corruption crisis began. It seemed noteworthy that in his ninth year in office he would choose a slogan whose first word was "Begin." In any event, in the days ahead he will have many opportunities to venture—or even dare—to be wise.

—Andy Logan

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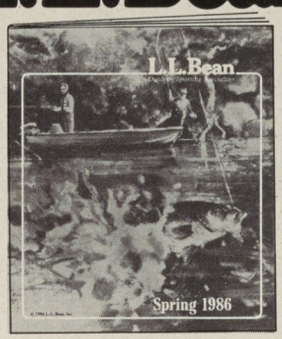

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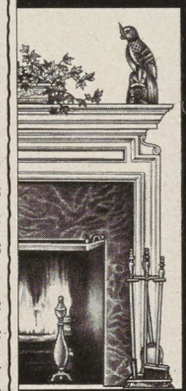

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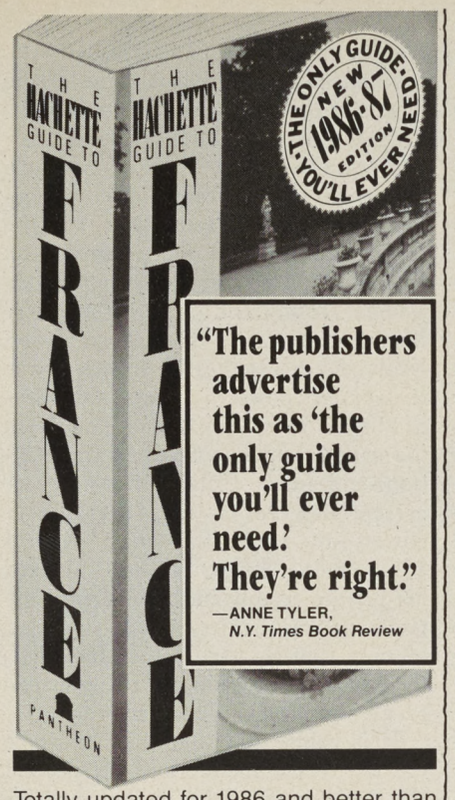
all for his country by sharing Ataturk's all-night sessions of drinking and gambling.

Thus in the course of a year the young Colville learned some of the various resources and trials of diplomacy. The shattering of this newfound knowledge by Adolf Hitler, a despot who recognized none of its niceties but only, as Churchill put it, the "formalities of perfidy," came shortly, and suddenly, when Colville was shocked out of his immersion in Oriental intrigue by the Munich Agreement. Within a month of the outbreak of the Second World War, he was invited to become an assistant private secretary to Neville Chamberlain, thereby unwittingly establishing the firm tradition that the Prime Minister's small secretariat should always include a man from the Foreign Service. In this job, which entailed a good deal of drudgery, relieved by the zest of "being in the know," he served Chamberlain until the following, fateful tenth of May, which in twenty-four hours saw the Nazi invasion of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, the resignation of Chamberlain, and Churchill's arrival at 10 Downing Street. From that day on, except for a two-year absence with the Royal Air Force, Colville stayed with the new Prime Minister throughout the war; and, again, through Churchill's second administration, in the nineteen-fifties. When, as a result of the 1945 general election, Clement Attlee replaced Churchill as suddenly as Churchill had replaced Chamberlain, Colville was surprised to find himself private secretary to Attlee. His surprise was nothing compared with that of Truman, Stalin, and their counsellors at the Potsdam Conference, which had been adjourned for a few days to allow Churchill and his Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, to fly home for the election and then fly back again. Instead, it was Attlee and Ernest Bevin who arrived in Potsdam, to the stupefaction of Stalin, who had assumed that Churchill would have "fixed" the results. Only slightly less astonished, but for another reason, were the Russian and American conference teams, who saw, trooping behind the new Prime Minister and the new Foreign Secretary, thirty-three assistants—exactly the same team that had served Churchill and Eden: yet another example of the curious British practice of training a diplomatic corps that may be trusted, not alone through its "desk" men but through its highest ranks, to provide a continuous expert service to heads of government of any political party. It is as if Reagan had taken to Geneva exactly the same team that served Nixon at Peking, Ford at Helsinki, Carter at Vienna.

There is a case to be made against this system: the arrogance that can come from long familiarity with the same problems; the attractions for temperamental fence-sitters; the danger of growing insensitivity to the moral issues of politics. But much that is best in the system—the presence of a body of informed opinion, the value of a continuity of expertise addressed to the main questions, the advantage of having always on hand as objective a commentary on the shifts of events and opinions over the long haul as a dispassionate human being can muster—is exemplified in Sir John Colville's "The Fringes of Power: 10 Downing Street Diaries 1939-1955" (Norton; $25). A week after the invasion of Poland, Colville began to keep a diary (in violation of wartime regulations). He ended it in April, 1955—when Churchill resigned, in his eighty-first year, completing, not without a wrench, nearly sixty years in public life. Shortly afterward, Colville, having just turned forty, left the Foreign Service and went into merchant banking, where, for a change, "the need for reasonable remuneration" was no doubt better understood.

The title of the book is a modest misnomer, reflecting the author's deceptively humble status in the political hierarchy. A man in his position was no more on the fringes of power than the regular caddie of a world-champion golfer is on the fringes of golf. On the contrary, while he is expected to have boned up on the hazards of the battlefield and to advise on the choice of weapons, he is silently present at every moment of pride, every twitch of anxiety, loss of concentration, tactical blunder, strategic guess, concern for the enemy's plans. Colville shared as much as anyone around Churchill, including his wife—and more than his cronies in and out of the Cabinet—the ups and downs of the war and of the moods of the man who was running it; the machinations of colleagues and ill-wishers; the private thoughts and ambitions of the milling politicians and civil servants in Westminster; and the fusses and fears of the generals and admirals and air marshals and Allied leaders around the globe. It was the Montgomerys and Eisenhowers and Hulls and de Gaulles who were on the fringes of power, though doubtless privileged to receive the signals from the center which concerned their actions and duties. Colville was an ever-present observer at the very hub of power—the resident fly on the wall of 10 Downing Street. He has unlocked his private record and published it after a silence of thirty years—a period of time that is, hardly coincidentally, the new statutory limit of the embargo on all secret official documents.

It is being said that these must be the last of the memoirs of the Second World War. Probably so, but they are unlike, in valuable ways, practically all the other war memoirs, not to mention the memoirs of contemporary politicians, which are rushed into print as soon as one administration is voted out of office, or even (*vide* Alexander Haig) soon after the author has left his government job. There is in Colville no chop-licking paying off of old scores, no testy insistence on the rightness of a policy that was not adopted, no floating of favorite political theories, except in tentative asides. Everything is well tempered, judicious, and —though frequently tart and wry— fair. An omen, this. For the reader might fear in a well-bred civil servant the planing effect of "good form" on such natural protuberances as indignation, enthusiasm, indiscretion, bad taste, mean rumors, and malicious gossip. The fear is unfounded. Colville allows full play to most of the quirks and intimate blunders and absurdities of the hundreds of characters he came to observe. He confesses at one point that he has set down some things he perhaps ought not to have written—a penitential note that should not excite anyone's taste buds in the expectation of juicy scandal. He is simply admitting that from the perspective of seventy years the diaries of a man in his twenties and thirties "contain views on people and events which now seem to be dubious." Happily for all of us, he decided not to tamper with the text of the diaries. Many footnotes record a



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change of mind about initially unsympathetic types. And this must surely be the only book dedicated, with apologies, to a lady (Mary Churchill Soames) who did not take to him and who is first described in the text as "rather supercilious."

An ultimately more drastic change of mind, and heart, about the character and abilities of Churchill took time. Colville had great "esteem," if not affection, for Chamberlain—"this austere man" of "such integrity, such devotion to duty and such high ideals and standards." But on that dreadful evening of the tenth of May, 1940, when the Low Countries had been overrun, the refusal of the Labour leaders to serve in a coalition government under Chamberlain, and Churchill's refusal to serve under Lord Halifax, made it certain that the King would send for Churchill (as he did with great reluctance). Colville and his Foreign Office intimates drank a toast to the ousted Chamberlain and bemoaned, with the Conservative R. A. (Rab) Butler, then Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the fact that the country was about to be abandoned to the leadership of "the greatest adventurer of modern political history . . . a half-breed American." Three days later, Colville had bought himself a new suit, "cheap and sensational looking, which I felt was appropriate to the new Government." Within forty-eight hours, he was already deep in Churchill's correspondence, announcing new appointments and conducting embarrassing dismissals over the telephone, finding himself on call night and day at the whim of his new master, and discovering that "patience is a virtue with which [Churchill] was totally unfamiliar." Unlike Chamberlain, however, Churchill "treated his Private Secretaries as part of the family," and Colville came to find him lovable, exasperating, kind, irascible; depressed over small slights but bristling with courage and pugnacity when everybody else was resigned to the doom of invasion; totally inconsiderate of secretaries and servants, yet always touched by the plight of poor people; relishing in many a barbed remark the discomfiture of people he disliked, but magnanimous—a man who "hated vindictiveness above all things." Most of all, through the harassments and frustrations and conflicting recommendations that besieged the leader of a wartime coalition, Colville marvelled at "a quite inexplicable facility for reaching the right decision on faulty logic and against all the best advice."

Because Colville served with Chamberlain for only seven months, and for less than three months with Attlee (a man of "total honesty, quickness, efficiency and common sense"), Churchill, faithfully attended for most of seven years and watched unblinkingly during the last fifteen years of his political life, is obviously the central character of the book, which, of course, is peppered with fresh anecdotes, not, as in biographies and essays, as illustrations of character traits but as the ripples and snags of the stream of a life—the life of a statesman, a father figure, a card, and a tolerated nuisance. And because Colville is not seeking or celebrating a hero or a guru but observing and reporting on the boss he was assigned to, the accumulation of all these remarks, tantrums, jocularities, and small and tremendous decisions amounts to a continuing portrait of Churchill that, even measured against the vast body of Churchill memorabilia, is incomparably intimate and vivid. It is as if Churchill were a permanent legend of British history and had been reincarnated for the ordeal of the Second World War. His presence so transcends that of the hundreds of characters he moves among that it has the effect G. K. Chesterton ascribed to the great Dickens characters: "a peculiar quality as of celestial pre-existence . . . Not only did they exist before we heard of them, they existed also before Dickens heard of them."

Apart from the obvious pleasures of fresh insights into the old cast of characters, the sheer completeness of the diaries—their daily clinical chart of the advances, setbacks, maneuvers, disappointments, pleas, rebukes, initiatives, second thoughts—confirms as few other sources do Henry Kissinger's rueful assertion that "rather than the dramatic peaks of the public imagination" high office "usually means an accumulation of seemingly endless pressures and tensions in which every apparent solution proves to be only a ticket to a new set of problems." The book reveals, too, that many of the great man's judgments of men and events were arrived at with nothing like the processional majesty

Books of The Times

By John Gross

IMPORTANT NONSENSE. By Lionel Abel. 232 pages. Prometheus Books. $22.95

IN the preface to his new collection of essays, Lionel Abel tells us that "there is a wonderful drawing by the surrealist painter Roberto Matta, entitled *Beware, A Fool Is Coming*. The drawing is of a window, through which one sees approaching a man with the most fondly foolish face imaginable." A harmless enough creature, by the sound of it — why should we be on our guard?

Well, supposing he stopped smiling and began giving us advice? Mr. Abel praises the artist's insight in perceiving the danger, and adds a characteristic reflection of his own: "I have noted that persons with bad judgment are most insistent that we do what they think best."

In setting out to combat the "important nonsense" of his title, Mr. Abel makes it clear that he has nothing against nonsense that accepts its own nonsensical condition — the nonsense of comedy or high spirits. His quarrel is with solemn, pseudo-profound nonsense, nonsense that is important because of the damage it can do: at the very least, it gets in the way of better things.

But all this is rather vague. What exactly does Mr. Abel have in mind?

The title essay of the collection opens with a rousing call for more light, a reminiscence of Bertrand Russell giving a talk in Paris in which he assured his audience that the kind of philosophy most liable to exert widespread influence was bad philosophy: "One can't overrate the power of nonsense."

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The actual subject of the essay, however — the psychohistorical gospel of Norman O. Brown, as set forth in his books of the 1960's, "Life Against Death" and "Love's Body" — turns out to be narrower than the opening paragraphs promise. However pertinent Mr. Abel's criticisms, Mr. Brown's work seems to me too idiosyncratic, too much of a one-man show, to serve as the occasion for a general checkup on our cultural discontents.

Mr. Abel gets to grips with a much broader, more oppressive problem in an essay on the reigning fashions in academic literary criticism, agreeably entitled "It Isn't True and It Doesn't Rhyme." One says "literary criticism," but, as Mr. Abel observes, "the important thing today in connection with any book" — in the seminar room, at least — "is to be able to dominate it with some idea drawn not from literature but from some other discipline": anthropology, psychology, semiology or whatever.

Related to this demotion of literature are other forms of domination — the belief that the commentary ought to be more interesting than the text, for example, and the notion that the ideal reader ought to be a kind of rewrite man, deliberately distorting the words on the page in the light of his own preoccupations. Mr. Abel points out that when you refer to a poem or novel or play as a text, you have already begun to "deconstruct" it, and he shows by example how thoroughly destructive the process of deconstruction can be.

Elsewhere in the book he takes issue with what he sees as a drift toward cultural nihilism, with "the high regard for everything low now favored in intellectual circles" (this from an essay on pornography), and with a variety of current fallacies and confusions. In a fine defense of Lionel Trilling against his detractors, he talks of Trilling's criticism centering on a critique of moral, literary and political hubris, and it is a critique with which he plainly feels a good deal of sympathy.

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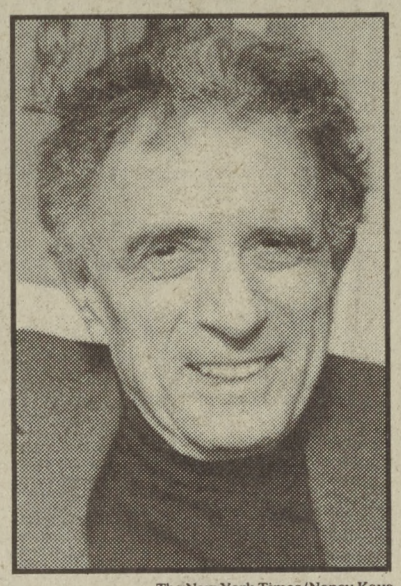
It must be conceded that Mr. Abel is not the man to go to for a sustained, slowly unfolding argument. He has a way of getting from Point A to Point B by way of Point Z; but jumping around is one of his charms, and you never know when he is going to come up with something arresting.

One of his weaker essays, for instance, is devoted to examining the political ideas of Lyndon H. LaRouche Jr. The exercise hardly seems worth the effort; but I am glad to have read the piece for the sake of Mr. Abel's comment on whether Mr. LaRouche's followers really believe in the grotesque allegations they fling around, about Henry Kissinger being a British agent and so forth: "These accusations, of course, are not believed. They are not really disbelieved either; they are enjoyed."

Mr. Abel's hostility to the deconstructionists and their colleagues doesn't mean that he is indifferent to literary theory as such. On the contrary, in the course of the book he frequently addresses himself to theoretical issues — in a discussion of the principles of comedy, for example, and in an account of Dostoyevsky considered as a philosophical novelist, which turns on a useful distinction between characters in literature who are "refuted" (like Raskolnikov in "Crime and Punishment") and characters who are "defeated" (like Iago or Shylock).

Nor does he shy away from the idea that a critic's tasks, or privileges, may well include the unearthing of meanings in a work of art of which the artist himself was unaware. One notable essay, on Sophocles, is largely taken up with the whole question of "the hidden," the gap between a writer's avowed intentions and unexamined assumptions.



The New York Times/Nancy Kaye

Lionel Abel

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At the same time he never loses sight of the fact that even the most illuminating explanation has its limits. By way of a warning, he cites Martin Heidegger's gnomic but far from nonsensical observation that "where there is disclosure there is also concealment" — meaning that in order to find out something we usually have to ignore something else.

Mr. Abel is almost invariably stimulating, and often entertaining, too: I applaud anyone who can begin a sentence, "In our own time, and I am not talking about the last fifty minutes but about the last fifty years ..." The writers he discusses in "Important Nonsense," apart from those already mentioned, include Sartre, Jean Genet, Edmund Wilson and Arthur Koestler.

TV WEEKEND

'Two Mrs
Based on

By JOHN J. O'CONN

NBC's four-hour prod
"The Two Mrs. Grenvilles
broadcast this Sunday and
is a good television movie
touch more gumption,
been terrific. Based
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arnegie Hall Recital

g was the slow movement of the opin sonata, which is marked go but sounded in this performe like Largo Ponderoso.

ll, there is a large talent there where, hidden under the fondof exaggeration and the self-con- effort to be an original. And s Van Cliburn height and rockullenness, the Yugoslav is e an audience cannot easily He presents a vivid picture with his long, spidery fingers of attacking the keys that racula about to descend on a succulent neck. No one sleeps through Mr. Pogorelich's performances, at least.

Two Scriabin piano pieces, "Poèmes" (Op. 32), offered Mr. Pogorelich a rich opportunity to do what at this point in his young life he does best: to play with lyrical sweetness one moment and brutal violence the next. A section simply marked "with confidence" by the composer became an excuse for whacking the piano so heavily and heartlessly that it had to be retuned at intermission.

eported to Agree to 'Amerika' Disclaimer

Special to The New York Times

TIONS, N.Y., Feb. 5 — s been criticized by the for its mini-series agreed to run a disginning of the show utions portrayed in source involved in he network said to-

i-series, which is Feb. 15, depicts s 10 years after th the help of that wear unilar to those of

run before each episode of the series, the source said. He said the network had also agreed to broadcast a panel discussion on Feb. 23 about the mini-series that will include a United Nations representative, as part of the network's "Viewpoint" series.

ABC has also agreed not to show the United Nations emblems while advertising the program and make a "good-faith effort to take into account concerns of United Nations," the source said.

ABC News officials said a decision to run a "Viewpoint" discussion of the series had not yet been made.

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movies came second." He brings them together here in a lighthearted way. It's a little reminiscent of the use of music in "Easy Rider," but it's more of a rap. The singing voices keep talking back to us in the way that they often do from car radios and tape decks, or at noisy parties. I like the doubling up of the energy sources; it turns the film into a satirical joyride. "Something Wild" is a road movie, and car music is primal American pop. How else could we live through the distances we travel? Shallow entertainment helps keep us sane. This kind of music is, in its way, the equivalent of the genre movies that are often just what we want and all we want.

"Something Wild" is rough-edged. It doesn't have the grace of Demme's "Citizens Band" and "Melvin and Howard" or the heightened simplicity of his "Stop Making Sense." It has something else, though—a freedom that takes off from the genre framework. And Demme has used it to weave the stylization of rock videos into the fabric of "Something Wild." Probably no other director could have performed this feat so spontaneously or unself-consciously; the doubling up works integrally for him—it fulfills impulses that were there in Demme right from the start of his career. And he's made something new: a party movie with both a dark and a light side. —Pauline Kael

•

Carter got up and slapped a passing teammate's hand, the Mets' five-high sign, a herd gesture that is seen as insufferably arrogant round the League.—*Dudley Doust in the London Sunday Times.*

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Coronita residents who wish to fight the annexation are going to have to work quickly and in union. If they sit back and wait for a vocal few to carry the ball on this one, annexation foes will find themselves outnumbered. It is likely Custer faced better odds at the Alamo.—*Editorial in the Corona-Norco (Calif.) Independent.*

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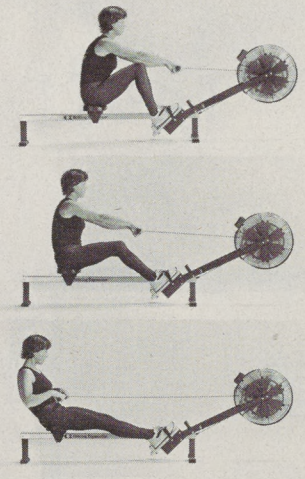

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BOOKS

New Yorker
Nov. 17, '56

The Heart of Matter

NO country, no society I know crystallizes sensuousness as does France. The Provence light; the ring of the cobblestones in the Auvergne; the market smells in the Rue de Buci, in Paris; the tang of flint and dark in the Gigondas grapes on the serrated hills above Avignon play to the senses incomparably. Like no other place, it seems, France lives to one's touch. The commerce between roof texture and air, between poplar and light is palpable. The effect can be sentimentalized and made precious, precisely because it is so pervasive and so difficult to rationalize. But it will not be denied.

Cross from sullen Dover on a sodden morning. Calais is, God knows, no Arcadia—especially after its wartime damage. Yet as the ferry nears, the diffuse light across the dunes and sea flats quickens to vivacity. It mimes, unmistakably, the veiled intensity of Monet's Norman studies. The voices on the quay are instinct with life, with urgency—polemic, slanging, cynical, rhetorical—as English speech tones are not. The shed is dreary enough, but as you leave it, and just to the left, there is a café, open before dawn, from which drift smells and savors of *filtre*, of hot chocolate, of herbal omelettes, of fresh bread (in recent American argot, "bread" meant money, a distortion wherein lies a peculiar ugliness of spirit): smells and savors and inferences of touch—the chill on the little pots of fresh butter in a Rouen bistro —such as no other culture produces. How many varieties of earth and dung odors does Rabelais detail? How many cheeses are catalogued by Zola in his novel about Les Halles, "Le Ventre de Paris"? Just across the river from Bordeaux is Libourne. No metropolis, and the principal hotel is no gastronomic star. But the *carte des vins* runs to more than three hundred labels. Here are growths known to the Romans, stocks tended by the first Cistercians, château-bottled vintages too fragile or from too restricted an acreage to make export beyond the region economic. I know a hamlet in the Franche-Comté, thirty roofs, perhaps, under Courbet's wind-lit skies. When the church bell coughs the hours and offices, the sound blends with that of a small, trout-thronged river—a sound at once soft and turbulent. In the hills of the Franche-Comté, even in the spring and the reluctant summer, the leaf mold, the glebe exude a curious, secretive scent. It is that of game. There are boar tracks not a hundred metres from the keep—once temporary prison for Mirabeau, one of the free spirits and inspired libertines of the Enlightenment—at the center of the village. Time and flesh, history and the life of the senses meet as they do nowhere else I have stood. The local cheese is so pungent as to try friendship; a *vin jaune* goes with it which is cultivated in no other vineyard, anywhere: William Blake's "holiness of the minute particular" of which France, its genius of place, is compacted.

The artists have responded from the very outset. There is a carnal exactitude, a pressure of visual and tactile sensation in the miniatures of the early and medieval French illuminations, in those *très riches heures* (the name itself tells the story) painted for the abbots, princes, royal liege lords of Aquitaine or Burgundy. Candle sheen and darkness, the fabric of cloth and of bone are palpable—are dense to the imagined hand—in La Tour as, perhaps, in no other master. The program of Impressionism is a universalization of the sensory. Compare the Cubist paintings of Picasso with those of Braque, exactly contemporaneous: even in the most abstract and reductive of Braque's experiments, the warmth and weight of the material experience persist. It is, however, in two masters that the singular sensuousness of "the matter of France"—the shaping insistence of sensual perception in French thought—is wholly rendered. The one, of course, is Paul Cézanne; the other, Jean-Siméon Chardin.

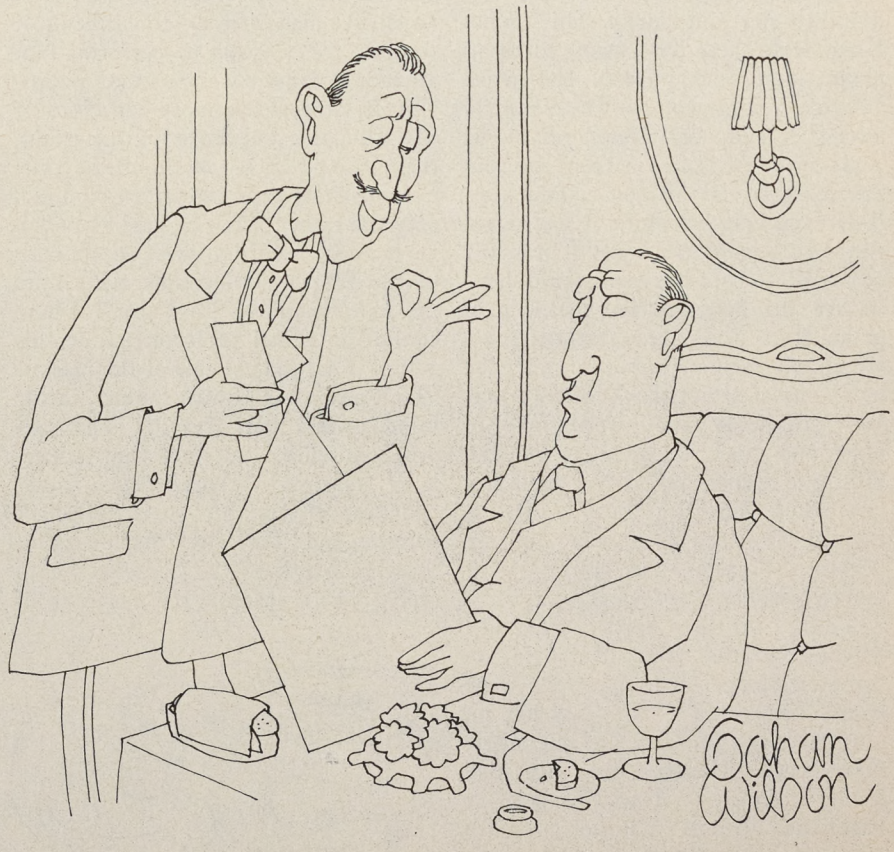
Professor Philip Conisbee's "Chardin" (Bucknell; $55) is the most complete monograph on the painter as yet produced. Its approach is scrupulous and self-effacing. (The latter quality is, alas, shared by a good many of the plates.) Chardin's life was uneventful except in its creations. Born in 1699, he seems to have spent his entire life in Paris, save for one visit to Fontainebleau. Though official recognition came only slowly, in the early seventeen-fifties, Chardin worked peacefully

DANCING

In Town and Out

MAY 30TH, New York City Ballet. Balanchine's choreography for Paul Taylor, which formed the penultimate part of the Webern ballet "Episodes," is presented for the first time since 1961, when Taylor himself last danced it. A six-minute solo of enormous difficulty, it has been reconstructed by Taylor from his own notes. Peter Frame, of New York City Ballet, is the performer, and his physical resemblance to the Taylor of the early sixties creates a flash of recognition as he walks out from the wings. Tall, with brawny musculature and fair coloring, Frame looks like the same kind of uncomplicated, bland, good-natured guy that Taylor so deceptively seemed to be, and he has a soft, easy way of moving; you can see why Taylor chose him for the part. But he isn't the demon of articulation that Taylor was. The point of the solo—it closes a gap in the logical development of the ballet—is clearly made, but the *points* whereby it exercised its dreadful and absolute anarchic power are unexpressed.

The Taylor solo, composed to the Variations, Opus 30, was Balanchine's most radical statement of the knotty extremes to which Webern's music reduced the human body. It followed the Concerto, Opus 24, in which Allegra Kent had with her own incomparable aplomb set logic on its ear. And the section that followed Taylor was a complete break in continuity—an abrupt return to order by way of Webern's arrangement of the Ricercata from Bach's "Musical Offering." Taylor just this season staged for his own company a setting of the "Musical Offering," and he used the Webern Ricercata. There may have been more than passing references to Balanchine in his choreography. Like "Episodes," Taylor's "A Musical Offering" is a pure-dance discourse on modern dance and its evolution or derivation from earlier dance forms. Taylor's forms appear to originate in primitive dance, and they come out roughly Germanic or Denishawn-anthropological in inspiration. Balanchine begins and ends with images of the classic court dance; his subject is less the generic modern dance than modernism itself. Though "Episodes" was made to stand by itself, it can scarcely be forgotten that the original production was a joint presentation by Balanchine and Martha Graham, whose mentor, Louis Horst, taught a then influential course in the court dances of the Renaissance. Only after Graham had performed *her* Webern ballet (on a Renaissance court theme: Elizabeth Tudor and Mary Stuart were the main figures) did Balanchine offer his, clearly intending its five sections as a kind of progressive atomization à la Webern of traditional classic dance, beginning with the Symphony, Opus 21, in which we see an Alice in Wonderland treatment of the Elizabethan court, and culminating in the Variations, Opus 30, and their exposition of dance energy as a thing by and for itself, with no regard for sense or sentiment. High-concentrate phrases begin and end invisibly, explode like crystals, sprawl and scatter, shrivel and retract. Peter Frame parses this material tidily, finding verbs and sentence structure in every outburst of actionless action. (With Taylor, there seemed to be no points of stability but his two blazing blue eyes.) He is reassuringly solid, and the solo passes off cleanly, twice as long, in effect, as it ever was before. As a Balanchine construction, it relates to the "Variations" of Stravinsky performed exclusively by Suzanne Farrell; it is choreography for a special dancer, indivisible from that dancer's performance. And the Taylor choreography is more special yet in that it is full of Taylorisms, which he consciously or unconsciously contributed. It might have been better to have had a Taylor dancer in the part—more in the historic pattern, too. (Taylor was at the time one of Graham's dancers.) But this is to presuppose an accuracy of which current Taylor dancers aren't capable even when they dance Taylor's old roles in their own repertory. One could make the case that Balanchine's choreography for Kent was just as personal to Kent, and that without her the Concerto loses much of its force. The facts are that Balanchine elected to preserve the Concerto without Kent but not the Variations without Taylor. This isn't to say that the revival of the Variations is an outright failure; only that, while such a revival can complete the explication of Balanchine's ideas in "Episodes," it can't embody them—can't



"Perhaps Monsieur would care for something more expensive?"

make "Episodes" happen again as a totality. With Frame in Taylor's part, Samson is back shaking the temple, but it doesn't fall down.

JUNE 1ST, the Kirov Ballet. If you never saw Taylor or Kent in "Episodes," you may not miss them, and if you have never seen Altinay Asylmuratova you may not suspect the things that can still be done with ballerina style at the Kirov. The company possesses formidable technicians in Chenchikova, Kunakova, and Terekhova. It is not that they lack beauty or delicacy. It is that once you have seen Asylmuratova the technique exemplified by these other women looks like mere efficiency servicing an expressive ideal that is hopelessly out of date. Today's Kirov is led by dancers who perform a pointlessly amplified, coarsened version of the style of a generation ago—the style of Kolpakova and Makarova and Sizova. Asylmuratova dances on the huge scale currently in vogue but without distorting the old values, and she brings to them her own quality of poetic illumination. She would have been a wonder among wonders then; now she is just about all the company has got. Some impressive young soloists, male as well as female, who were seen on the recent American tour did not diminish her singularity. She's what Kirov style these days wants to be all about, and I emphasize the word "Kirov." The company's technical strengths and weaknesses reflect its years spent in isolation from any but the most trivial Western influences. The technique on which it has raised Asylmuratova is not what I or many other Western observers would have wished for her, and the methods of promotion and presentation from which she suffers cannot be defended by claims of seniority. At twenty-five, she is still being passed over in favor of older and mightier ladies at the top. Still, she stands out, and I have the impression that Oleg Vinogradov, the current director, does what he can within the caste—and casting—system to give her every opportunity.

Today, on this hastily scheduled matinée at the War Memorial in Trenton, she performs again the scene from "Esmeralda" I first saw her in, four years ago in Paris, and the magic floods back. Memory does not play tricks in dance—not on this level of experience. I note that her presence has ripened. Aside from that, she is the same phenomenon of lucidity she was then, with the same ability to evoke known excellences in her art and startle with unknown ones. She wins an ovation and is whisked away. The program, a combination of miniatures and repertory extracts, follows the pattern of Paris: in general, the older the choreography, the better, and the better the dancers look. The modern stuff, which includes two excerpts from Vinogradov's newest ballet, "The Knight in the Tiger's Skin," is ghastly, but it is balanced by fragments of reconstructed Petipa, Ivanov, St. Léon, and Fokine. All the principal dancers on the tour manage to get on in one capacity or another. Zaklinsky, Asylmuratova's husband, is confined to partnering Terekhova in the Act II adagio from "Swan Lake." The spotlight falls on two other young men, Lunev and Vicharev, who weren't in Paris, and who represent the rising male generation—for this tour, anyway.

New York City Ballet. I get back to the city in time for the evening performance. It's another world. "Divertimento No. 15," the Mozart ballet, gets one of those serenely bright, tenderly true performances it has benefitted from all this season; the stars are Ashley, Calegari, Hauser, Kistler, and Saland, partnered by Lüders, Castelli, and Frame. "Divertimento" used to be an elusive masterpiece—too difficult, it seemed, for mortals to perform. Not anymore. How strange that Balanchine's dancers are more conscious of his principles and more willing to put them into practice now that he is gone. Perhaps it is only family psychology: defy the father while he is alive; when he is dead, keep his laws. In contrast to the fragile "Divertimento" comes the indestructible "La Valse." There cannot be a bad performance of this ballet. That may be one of the reasons "La Valse" has always ranked, in my mind, as less than great. It is dancer-proof, surefire, and somewhat suspect if by "surefire" we mean that it trades on cheap effects. But so is "Giselle" surefire, and "La Valse" may be one of those ballets that (like "Giselle") both typify and transcend the fashions of their period. The mood of irony that used to cling to "La Valse" doesn't seem so insistent these days, and it's unimaginable to me now how I could ever have viewed it, as I seem to have done in the sixties, as a piece of camp. Saint-Georges, the librettist of "Giselle," was approached by the ballet's author, Gautier, with instructions to arrange a "pretty death" for the heroine. This so that they could go ahead with Act II and the graveside dances that are the raison d'être of the ballet. Posterity has taken the frivolously morbid "Giselle" more seriously than its makers did, and something like the same fate may be in store for "La Valse." Although who knows? Balanchine could have been completely serious.

JUNE 4TH and 5th, the Kirov Ballet in "Chopiniana," "La Bayadère," and "Paquita." You have to be pretty agile to see Asylmuratova on the American tour. She did one unscheduled "Swan Lake," in Los Angeles. In Philadelphia, she was replaced, unannounced, in the first performance of "La Bayadère" by the egregious Mezentseva; people went home thinking they'd seen Asylmuratova. Here at Wolf Trap, the program lists the same two names for Nikiya in the Shades scene of "La Bayadère." It is Asylmuratova who actually appears, and who appears again in the repeat performance, the next night. But that first appearance is such a surprise that she is well into the adagio before I can believe that it is she. If she startled me before, she shocks me now with this image of an obdurate, implacable Nikiya. She is not spiritual like Makarova, grand like van Hamel, or refined like Fonteyn; and she isn't hard or icy. She's simply a killer beast, warm-blooded and deadly. Berezhnoy, her excellent partner, seems to cower when he kneels before her in homage. She never sees him, but as she lifts a long arm on high the hand relaxes, and we know she can forgive. The idea of a wrathful Nikiya is, of course, to be understood in the context of the complete ballet, which I hope to see on the Kirov's next visit. But who has ever performed the ballet like this? What Shade, no matter how provoked, would have risked the staccato sweeps of the arms, the fierce attack on élancé, the hard-edged dead stops in fifth plié that characterize this Nikiya? And what other Kirov ballerina, having drawn so clear a picture, would erase most of it in the next performance?

Here she was again, implacable as before, launching her fine high split-grand jeté in second position, and landing in tight fifth with the same unnerving pounce. But the rest of it—the overemphatic firm stops and staccato attack—was gone; she had softened her delivery without changing her characterization.

With her large, rangy frame and small sleek head, Asylmuratova strides like a Bengal tiger through the role of Nikiya. It's as much a triumph for her as "Le Corsaire" was for Nureyev twenty years ago; she even has the ease and rapacity of motion that Nureyev had. One could wish that she also had Nureyev's or Makarova's version of the "Bayadère" choreography. But she is the most musical of the Kirov's ballerinas, and she uses her musicality to create effects that aren't in the steps—for instance, the big, bouncing lifts that the Kirov performs without leg beats to mark the accent. She makes the crest of each lift higher and wider, and you hear the up-up-up in the music as if the beats were there. Kirov-style musicality, which I generally find uncongenial, I find refreshing in her. And she's exceptional in yet another way—the way she takes her bows. In contrast to company custom, Asylmuratova's curtain calls aren't even grand; she comes straight out of character and looks girlishly eager and happy. At the peak of the applause, she will take fifth position on point, fling up her arms, and lift a wide, smiling face to the gallery. Since it is a face of shattering beauty, she could probably limit her appearances to this one pose and still be a star. But Altinay Asylmuratova is a dancer, one whose range has yet to be presented in full to the American public. We may hope for the experience soon.

So as not to seem too starstruck, I will add the names of dancers who also impressed me. Chistyakova, Sitnikova, and Ayupova, who danced the Three Shades, seem to be the best of the under-thirty generation. Terekhova, superbly strong and clean in a "Paquita" variation, continues to be the fairest of the senior ballerinas. Young Lunev was the most pleasing of the male dancers; he did wonderfully soft split jumps and sissonnes in the pas de trois of "Paquita," that lumpiest of Petipa grab bags. The "Bayadère," which looked so shabby in Paris, has regained its form. (It was "Chopiniana" that seemed drab this time.) The corps's descent to the stage is not straight down a ramp but around a corner and then down. Each dancer faces the public as she lifts her arms, and is immediately supplanted in that pose by another dancer. The silhouette then switches to profile and dips into arabesque. This entrance, probably improvised for the tour, had the grand effect of highlighting not the ongoing port-de-bras/arabesque sequence but the fact that there were numbers upon numbers of Shades to perform it. You saw the first port de bras, then instantly another one right behind it, and another one, and so on. Infinity appeared in a flash.

JUNE 6TH, Pennsylvania Ballet. A new production of Balanchine's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" should look better on the stage of Philadelphia's Academy of Music than this. The standard Hays-Karinska décor, which has long needed replacing in New York, is reproduced, none too kindly. (Another change in attitudes toward Balanchine involves his visual taste, universally criticized while he was alive. Now when a company acquires a Balanchine ballet it almost invariably takes the costumes and scenery, too.) Staged by Richard Tanner, the production goes pretty far toward cementing the conversion of the witty lovers' quarrels into low comedy and the elegant Puck into a stock buffoon. But Melissa Podcasy is a charming, twinkly Titania, and Jeffrey Gribler has the toughness and resilience that are built into Oberon's choreography. He and Marin Boieru both play the roles of Oberon and Puck, and I am told by a company spokesman that I have come on the wrong night. But Boieru, directed away from the boisterousness that marks his portrayal (and in which he himself does not believe), could be a fine, feline Puck. And on another night I might not have seen Tamara Hadley and William DeGregory in the second-act pas de deux. The cantilena line of the adagio, which is as perishable as anything in "Divertimento No. 15," comes through intact.

JUNE 7TH, Martha Graham Dance Company. The first member of the cult of Ruth St. Denis was evidently St. Denis herself. In "The Incense," one of her earliest solos, the self-mystification is of a near-stifling order. Revived this season by the Graham company along with two other Denishawn solos, it gives us a picture of the nebulous foundation on which Graham was forced to base her

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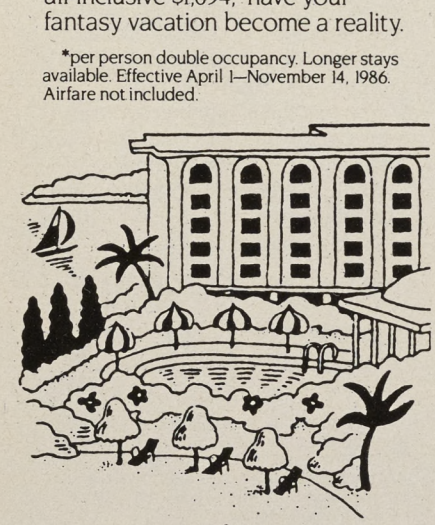

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art. "Serenata Morisca" is a woman's solo, devised by Ted Shawn, that Graham herself danced many times. It is robust, professional, nothing more. "Tanagra," an early attempt at choreography by Graham, is some business with a veil, very much in the Denishawn mode. But, like the name "Denishawn," it is a perfect synthesis, combining the mystique of St. Denis with the professionalism of Shawn. Graham's theatre sense is beginning to operate. Then, in "Lamentation," the functional veil becomes a functional tube of stretch jersey, and we have one of the key Art Deco theatre works of the thirties. The last of the solos is "Frontier," with Noguchi's fence. It is 1935, and the Graham persona is fully pronounced.

The company had earlier in the season revived "Heretic." Five minutes long, it is a study in theme-and-variations form for a female soloist and group. The history books call "Heretic" (1929) a breakthrough, and it may well have been. In it one can recognize a cell of the living organism that we know as "Primitive Mysteries" (1931). But only one cell. The real question is how, from such morose and monolithic constructions as "Heretic" and "Lamentation," Graham could have broken through to the configurations of "Primitive Mysteries." The revival of "Heretic" was staged by Yuriko. It is to be regretted that with her services on hand, and with the company back on the hospitable stage of the City Center, an opportunity was missed to bring back Graham's most significant early piece.

JUNE 8TH, New York City Ballet. "Piccolo Balletto" is Jerome Robbins working in a Balanchine vein. With its Stravinsky music (the "Dumbarton Oaks" concerto), its theatre-auditorium set and its costumes in Easter-egg colors (Santo Loquasto, designer), and its playful, inventive choreography, the little ballet is reminiscent of "Danses Concertantes." But there are other reasons to like it besides that. It is good to have Robbins back in a sunny mood after two gloomy in-memoriam pieces in a row. "Quiet City," which was given earlier this season in tribute to the dancer Joseph Duell, was Robbins at his most sentimental. Its hero was Robert La Fosse, formerly of American Ballet Theatre, and La Fosse dances the lead in "Piccolo Balletto" opposite Darci Kistler. The two go well together. Robbins blesses this star marriage with the kind of image-building roles that he fashioned for Farrell and Peter Martins in "In G Major." The audience buys it, and so do I.

The matinée begins with "Mozartiana," danced by its original cast: Farrell, Ib Andersen, and Victor Castelli. Robert Irving conducts, and things happen. Farrell, who now dances a small selection of relatively untaxing roles (she had done "La Valse" and "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue" earlier in the week), performs her choreography in "Mozartiana" on a reduced scale but with no loss of detail: a luxurious performance. The two men are fine, the four other women are fine, the four little girls are ecstatic, and the ballet ends in a festive calm.

This evening, Balanchine's choreography for "Swan Lake" is given with a new set and new costumes by the French artist Alain Vaës. I had liked Vaës's quasi-surrealistic backdrop for Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux's "Shadows" a season or two ago, but not his ashen hilltop for Martins' "Songs of the Auvergne." "Swan Lake" is another striking bit of quasi surrealism —a great Gothic vault dripping with icicles and, in the distance, a deep-blue fjord (not a frozen lake) rimmed with mountains of ice and pouring mist. To the playing of the overture, the dummy swans enter on their track—a white queen and, behind her, a flock as black as jet. And the transformed swans who arrive on the stage are in full black tulle tutus with winglike panniers; only the queen is still in white. All this might seem too fanciful if Balanchine's thirty-five-minute "Swan Lake" were just the second act of the ballet. Instead, it is a composite of Acts II and IV, and as such it's like no other "Swan Lake" that can be seen. Balanchine prescribed the black dresses—he even ordered the tulle. And five years ago, for all the ballets of the Tchaikovsky festival, he installed an "ice palace" setting of white plastic tubes. Ice-blue, swan-black, the glamorous new "Swan Lake" is to Balanchine's taste.

—ARLENE CROCE

•

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

[*From the Bonners Ferry (Idaho) Herald*]

Received a midnight report of an apparent fire on the Katka ridge from Officer Jack Parker. At 12:13 a.m. Parker reported that upon further investigation he'd determined that the apparent fire was in fact the rising moon.

Objects of Desire

BRINA CAPLAN

THE PROGRESS OF LOVE. *By Alice Munro. Alfred A. Knopf. 309 pp. $16.95.*

All happy and unhappy families are alike in that they have stories to tell. Growing up we learn the family myths: How Mama and Papa met and immediately loved or despised each other. How Great-aunt Edna faced down the neighborhood bully. How cousin Max nearly killed off the whole clan the first time he sat behind the wheel of the Hudson. We hear about fortunate meetings and lucky escapes, about characteristic and characterizing events that satisfy the family's need to see in the way things are the way things had to be.

A family story is never purposeless: If it toys with grim happenstance or annihilation, it's only in order to dismiss those possibilities as outcomes for us. A family version of historical inevitability works to shape the past so that it respects the present. And, as a result, the young Max or Edna or our courting parents are seen from a kind of auditorium perspective. They become remote, dramatic figures whose gestures are stereotyped and whose choices follow a well-plotted course. Although we may know these people intimately as they are now, the confused immediacy of their young lives is lost to us.

When an Alice Munro story knocks you back in your chair—and several in her new collection, *The Progress of Love*, have the power to push on you good and hard—it's often because she's upended this perspective. Munro writes across generational lines, making the past so vivid it undermines our belief that the present is the true locus of experience. She writes histories of lives that ought to seem foreign. Many of her characters come of age in a world of wing collars, outdoor plumbing and icehouses. Yet Munro's people are contemporary with their own choices, uncertainty and pain, and that makes them our contemporaries. If their decisions have come to look inevitable from their grandchildren's point of view, from within the lives of the actors themselves, they are nevertheless urgent, risky and up for grabs.

In the title story, a city-dwelling real-estate agent, the divorced mother of two boys, carries a childhood memory, a fantasy really, of the moment forty years before when her mother burned up a $3,000 inheritance while her farmer father just stood by. As Euphemia—or Fame as she now calls herself—reconstructs it, this is a love scene. Her mother, Marietta, needed to reject what she saw as a tainted gift from her own father. And although their cash-poor farm could easily have absorbed every penny, Marietta's husband regarded the money as hers and therefore none of his say. It's the restrained and unencroaching loyalty of her father's love that impresses Fame—a quality she's found hard to come by in her own more intense but temporary relationships. (After her divorce, one fellow asks, "Fame . . . just what is it you are famous for?" Her reply: "I don't know, unless it's for wasting my time talking to jerks like you.") This story compares styles of loving: the modern way of moment-by-moment engagement to "those old marriages, where love and grudges could be growing underground, so confused and stubborn, it must have seemed they had forever."

A comparison isn't the same thing as a conclusion, though; it only acknowledges differences. It would be wrong to suggest that Munro comes to a judgment about whether love in our time has been progressing, regressing or just barely holding its own. Conclusive judgments aren't her strength, and in this her fifth collection of stories they are always secondary to a dramatic evocation of events. Rather than an interpretation of lives, *The Progress of Love* offers a rich involvement in their particulars.

The particulars are complex, sometimes calling for more than one point of view. Fame, for example, comes to possess two versions of the story that explains why Marietta so hated her own dead father that she would burn his bequest bill by bill. In childhood, Marietta had watched her mother struggle to hold a straying husband. During one crisis of jealousy, the girl was sent to find her father while her mother stood in the barn on a teetering chair with a rope around her neck. Marietta tore

Brina Caplan writes about literature and psychology.

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desperately through muddy streets, exhausted herself, but failed to find him. She then raced home in fear:

> A train was coming into town. Marietta had to wait. Passengers looked out at her from its windows. She broke out wailing in the faces of those strangers. When the train passed, she continued up the hill—a spectacle, with her hair uncombed, her feet bare and muddy, in her nightgown, with a wild, wet face. By the time she ran into her own yard, in sight of the barn, she was howling. "Mama!" she was howling. "Mama!"
>
> Nobody was there. The chair was standing just where it had been before. The rope was dangling over the back of it. Marietta was sure that her mother had gone ahead and done it. Her mother was already dead—she had been cut down and taken away.

Marietta is brought into a neighbor's kitchen. There her little sister is playing with the cat, while her mother is sitting at the table, having a cup of coffee and laughing. Marietta faints.

Her mother was laughing: Had she actually been about to kill herself? "Her heart was broken," says the grown-up Marietta, passing on to Fame a now consolidated myth of men's easy cruelty. That's too simple an accounting, though, and this version becomes suspect when Fame's city-sophisticated Aunt Beryl makes a one-time visit to the farm. She tells her twelve-year-old niece that the rope was never tied to anything; it was merely flung over the barn beam. "She meant to get a rise out of Daddy," says Beryl, "that was their whole life together." There's no final truth to be ferreted out here. Munro doesn't resolve contradictions, she layers them, building her stories from an accumulation of hard-edged emotional scenes that slide against and over one another like shuffled cards.

Although she can usually make this method pay off, in *The Progress of Love* the results are uneven. Several stories are teasing rather than satisfying. In "Lichen," "Fits" and "The Moon in the Orange Street Skating Rink," something is missing. Not an ability to envision reality: Munro provides dazzling and intensely felt incidents. And not mastery of form: the incidents in each story are technically well related. What's missing is deep structure, the understanding that sustains resemblances between one incident and the next, making of them a meaningful whole. If old family stories risk boring us because they insist on prescribed meanings, Alice Munro stories run the opposite risk, that of frittering away our interest, because they refuse to develop any specific meaning.

Munro sometimes tries to avoid the problem by attaching to the end of a story a tag that explains how to assimilate what's been set before us. "White Dump," the last story of the collection, closes in this way with two dour lines from *The Poetic Edda* (a major character is a Scandinavian linguist): "Seinat er at segia;/svá er nu rádit," which translates, "It is too late to talk of this now: it has been decided." As rhetoric, this dose of Nordic pessimism is effective. But the lines polish off a story of domestic disintegration in the 1960s, rather than drawing its elements together. In "White Dump" there are no *Götterdämmerung*-style events, so an ancient vision of universal doom has little to do with what Munro actually shows us—the irritations, strains and emotional wounds of family life.

"White Dump" is another of Munro's cross-generational stories, taking place not only in the 1980s and 1960s but also in the remote past of a grandmother's childhood. It begins with Denise, director of a women's center, paying a visit to her father and his new wife at the family's summer home. Her return revives memories of the birthday surprise she had arranged for her father some seventeen years earlier. That July day, Denise's family—all except her mother, Isabel—went up for a ride in a small, chartered plane. In their utter delight, the family drew together. Laurence, Denise's father, left off his usual sniping at his daughter and his contentious wrangling with his mother, a strong-willed academic, whom he once called the "Old Norse."

There are intimations of disintegration, though, at the very moment of family unity. Laurence's mother, Sophie, senses her own death and something beyond—perhaps the meaninglessness of all human designs:

> The little plane seemed not to be moving at all. . . . They hovered in the air, a thousand feet or so off the ground. Below were juniper bushes spread like pincushions in the fields, cedars charmingly displayed like toy Christmas trees. . . . That toylike, perfect tininess of everything had a peculiar and distressing effect on Sophie. She felt as if it was she, not the things on earth, that had shrunk, was still shrinking—or that they were all shrinking together. This feeling was so strong it caused a tingle in her now tiny, crablike hands and feet—a tingle of exquisite smallness, an awareness of exquisite smallness.
>
> . . .
>
> Still shrinking . . . but not vanishing, she held herself up there. . . . and said to her grandchildren, Look here, look there, see the shapes on the earth, see the shadows and the light going down in the water.

More immediately disruptive to the family than the nothingness Sophie fears, however, is Isabel's marital restlessness.

When the plane lands, Isabel comes face to face with the charter pilot, the man who will break up her marriage. Isabel's is one of those marriages that holds together because she manages everything all the time: her husband's temper, her children's needs and the stew for dinner. She finds herself sometimes nostalgic about her working-class childhood and oddly anxious about the pres-

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goes to slime and earthy smell. Dangle a pink worm
speckled with dirt crumbs and count its pullups,
its liquid oozy going, its wrinkled fattening coming back.

The grass, you will find, is nearly white.
Pull your tragic faces, loving the chance to make it
green again, loving the black Kordite
roughed plump with a load of lightness.
Love the final spin you give it, the stiff
yellow twist to keep death in its place.

Ron Smith

ent: "It seemed all the time that she was having to provide a little more—in the way of attention, enthusiasm, watchfulness—than she was sure she had." It's as though a once simple path between desire and the objects of desire had become impassable, overgrown with contradictory claims, compromises and commitments.

A symbol for what has been lost is the unambiguous sweetness of sugar candy. Isabel explains that when she was a child, her elementary school bordered on a cookie factory. Every now and then, she says,

> they'd sweep up these quantities of vanilla icing and nuts and hardened marshmallow globs and they'd bring it in barrels and dump it back there and it would shine. It would shine like a pure white mountain. Over at the school, somebody would see it and yell, "White Dump!" and after school we'd all climb over the fence. . . . It was something about the White Dump—that there was so much and it was so white and shiny. It was like a kid's dream—the most wonderful promising thing you could ever see.

Her affair with the pilot begins in a small white hut on the deserted airfield, where physical passion renews her sense of promise. But the outcome is difficult and ultimately uncertain. She divorces; the pilot remains with his wife. She goes on to a series of relationships the last of which her daughter calls "troubled."

Is this a story about the impersonality of fate? That's what Munro's closing lines suggest. But doesn't Isabel's plight have more to do with glittering promises of domesticity, with what the 1960s expected of wives and mothers, with the bafflement of childhood yearnings? Although "White Dump" provokes these questions about responsibility and destiny, the story line is not developed in a way that allows answers. Instead of how things got to be this way, "White Dump" presents how things are—the characters' own experience of themselves as creatures in time. And this is a short story with a long time perspective. It includes Sophie's Edwardian childhood at the lake house in an era of privilege and largesse, Denise's very different, anxious girlhood in the same house and Isabel's solitary growing-up in a poor city neighborhood. Throughout the story, the point of view shifts with the ease of reminiscence from character to character and from the far past to the near past to the present. The result is an illusion of real time that's rare in short fiction—an almost sculptural dimensionality.

In fact, Alice Munro is very much a sculptor, and these new stories might best be regarded as bas-reliefs, where the artist has won from resistant material lively scenes of human activity. As an art form, bas-relief is always technically astonishing: the figures are caught in mid-motion, the sensations of depth and distance are evoked although little of either is permitted by the medium. You wind up wondering how so much can go into such a small space. If Munro's short fiction shares the virtues of bas-relief, though, it also shares the limitations of this form. After all, viewed from certain angles, those just barely three-dimensional figures suddenly look incomplete, not fully disengaged from the raw substance. And that's the problem within *The Progress of Love*, where the meanings of many characters' lives remain unclear, waiting, in effect, for Munro to extract them from the stone. □

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 474*)

an "AIM Report," not a letter to ABC (the error is mine, not Robert Siegenthaler's), the charges are no less vague and unsubstantiated. Here's a sample: "ABC doesn't raise the question of why the U.S.S.R. during the détente of the 1970s engaged in the most massive arms build- .p in history." Try assigning a fact checker to research that one.

As for the spat with Capital Legal Foundation, my article does give Irvine's side, noting that "the immediate dispute came over Irvine's demand that the foundation provide documentation for how the money was spent." Much to Irvine's discomfort, my account goes beyond that statement to describe Capital Legal's real problems in working with AIM.

Irvine criticizes *The Nation* for not mentioning that AIM's second TV documentary "has been praised by President Reagan as a film that all Americans should see." I refer him to the very first page of my article, which quotes the President as noting that the documentary "was just great and is something all Americans should see."

I really do wish Irvine had taken up my more substantive points: Why does he take money from corporations he's involved in defending? Why does he regularly rush into print with allegations before proving them? Why does he engage in partisan political causes? Why does he insist on disrupting

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stockholder meetings? And why doesn't he bother to get the other side of the story, as common decency would demand?

Michael Massing

WOLFE REPLIES

Larchmont, N.Y.

Reed Irvine's response to the articles written by Michael Massing and myself is typical of his approach. The two "inaccuracies" he finds in my article, for example, are completely without foundation.

First is the matter of Bella Abzug. I cited Irvine's repeated efforts to drag up her political memberships of the 1940s when writing about her today. Irvine's response is to say that in his newsletters he has mentioned her only four times and cited her past only once. Yet Irvine's "humble efforts" include more than publishing a newsletter; he writes a column, gives speeches, makes telephone calls and talks to editors. In his syndicated column published on March 1, 1978, Irvine criticized *The New York Times* for writing about Abzug without noting that, in his words, "she has long worked hand-in-glove with those whose thoughts and deeds have been responsive to the totalitarians in the Kremlin." I leave it for the reader to judge whether language of this type is an effort to be accurate or to leave implications of treason.

Irvine's only other point is that I misrepresented—indeed turned upside down—his support for the F.C.C. In fact, Irvine has, as I suggested in my article, long supported F.C.C. efforts at regulation. During the Reagan years, of course, the F.C.C., like so many other agencies, has been staffed by people who are trying to overturn its historic mission. Thus anyone who supports government regulation of the airways, as does Irvine, would become a critic of the F.C.C.—but only since Reagan came to power. Irvine knows that. I know it. To raise the matter in the way he does is to engage in junior-high-school debating tactics.

Irvine had every chance to correct any perceived inaccuracies in my article, but he refused to respond to both letters and telephone calls. When he follows general rules of courtesy and journalistic convention and talks to people like me, he will make a more convincing case that accuracy is more his intention than ideological attack.

Alan Wolfe

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I recall Mao's similar homilies. I'm struck once again by the attraction so many in the far right and beyond-right feel toward holistic and naturalistic practices traditionally associated with a very different ideological set. "The right wing should have seized upon the environment as a cause, instead of letting the left steal it," Miles says.

Not getting shot is the first step in a healthy regimen. "I have cautioned our members repeatedly not to take on the Federal forces," Pierce says. Butler preaches now about "a battle for the minds of men" rather than more literal combat. Violence, Miles proclaims, is the way of the establishment, not the movement. "It is their sexual completion. Stay away from it!"

Such exhortations are pragmatic rather than philosophical, however. No one publicly urges the Aryan Nationalists to follow the short path of the Order. But Butler plays tapes and reads letters from its imprisoned members, who are referred to as fallen heroes and "prisoners of war." He says serenely that the movement just keeps on growing, and he claims that seventy-five to eighty active Identity congregations have drawn "at least 18,000 to 20,000 members," plus "a quarter of a million who are acquainted with it." That's at least triple outside estimates of membership. Kootenai County Undersheriff Larry Broadbent has made nearly a full-time career of keeping tabs on the local extremists. He says Butler's following is down from a peak of no more than seventy-five in the nearby counties four years ago. "Now, if he's lucky, there are thirty-five. It's particularly down since 1983, when all the violence started. His average church attendance is down to twelve or less."

But Leonard Zeskind, research director of the Atlanta-based Center for Democratic Renewal, (formerly the Anti-Klan Network) avows that the broader Identity movement "is doing very well." Its more militant sects such as the Klans and Aryan Nation have dwindled—but more and more they've come to consist of hard-core zealots.

Butler reports that this year's congress drew a record 417. According to Broadbent, fewer than half (and fewer than in 1982) were "Aryan warriors"; the rest were children and women, who, as a couple of women in the compound told me, are decidedly second-class citizens in this club.

The danger of violence rises, in the view of some authorities on extremist movements, not when their hopes and numbers swell but when they shrink, and frustration explodes. That seems farfetched here, at least for the aging gurus of the white separatist churches. But then there are always loose screws. Last Christmas Eve in Seattle, Charles Goldmark, a prominent Democratic attorney, and his family were brutally murdered by David Lewis Rice, a troubled ne'er-do-well. Rice heard loose talk about Goldmark's father, a Washington legislator falsely Red-baited in the early 1960s. He confused the son and deceased father and embarked on a mission to "get the top Communist."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Gene Wilson sees the essential danger of the far right in "sporadic instances of violence . . . rather than anything organized like the Order. Other people loosely connected to groups and loosely connected to reality are influenced by the writings and speakings to do something like what David Rice did."

Will those who come to Butler's party stay to contribute to the 10 Percent Solution? Not likely. For one thing, notes Broadbent, the employment opportunities in Kootenai County and most of the rural Northwest are just too meager. The 10 Percent Solution is an inspirational rather than a realistic goal, Butler admits. "So many of our people have to put up with such misery. They need a dream." Sort of what Zion was for all the Jews who couldn't get to Palestine? "Yes, very much so," the Aryan pastor concurs. So extreme American anti-Semitism attempts to appropriate not only the Old Testament and the House of David, but the dream of Zion as well. Suddenly I'm struck by an idea of what lies at the root of it: jealousy. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Natural Facts

ALICIA OSTRIKER

THE HAPPY MAN. *By Donald Hall. Random House. 79 pp. $12.95. Paper $7.95.*

DREAM WORK. *By Mary Oliver. Atlantic Monthly Press. 90 pp. $14.95. Paper $8.95.*

To the New England poet, the book of nature must be a dense text. For here is landscape on a relatively intimate scale yet lettered with complexity—the dramatic seasons, the extraordinary variety of wildlife, the press of domesticated and wilderness terrain against each other, the adjacent spread of meadow, elevation of mountain, depression of ditch. It is a land dense with a history legible in its gravestones, and a moral literature that includes the luminous sermons of Emerson, the witty and grounded parables of Thoreau, Dickinson stitching her subversive prayers and Frost stubbornly making sentences in the woods and pastures of loss. "Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact," announces Emerson. "Nothing gold can stay," concludes Frost.

In Donald Hall's resolute New Hampshire as in Frost's, a daily round of farm life and village life occupies the foreground while wilderness within and without recommend a constant vigilance. Hall is wonderfully writerly in the way that some painters are painterly, favoring a longish meditative line in the vicinity of pentameter by which he can render the materiality of his subjects tenderly, stroke by stroke. He paints scenes with the reverent earthliness of a Dutch master, getting all the textures right. He is especially adept at weather, and paints time as well as space:

> After two weeks of heat pressing on sweetcorn—
> haze dropping on hay, opaque air—this morning wakes
> cool with a bright wind, and the mountain
> clear, Kearsarge blue under transparent
> running air, cold rapid energy sharp as pitchforks.
>
> ("Twelve Seasons")

I love the slowness of those opening rhythms yielding to quickness, the sensuous aspirates and assonances of "weeks," "heat," "sweetcorn," "haze" and "hay" transformed to the crispness of "cool," "clear" and "Kearsarge," of "transparent," "rapid," "sharp" and "pitchforks." Sound is this poet's medium as pigment the painter's.

At the same time, one hears the biting worldliness of the Latin poets behind his voice as behind Frost's, and more than ever in this book. The title of *The Happy Man*, Hall's ninth volume of poems and his first since the remarkable *Kicking the Leaves* (1978), is something of a trick, a noose. For the book's epigraph is from Tolstoy, who described himself as "a man happy and in good health, hiding the rope in order not to hang myself . . . no longer shooting, lest I should yield to the too easy temptation." Mortality is a constant in Hall, and *The Happy Man* continues the last book's motif of a farmer grandfather's solid old age; a father failed and dead at 52; a son, the witness, come to dwell in the grandfather's house. But where *Kicking the Leaves* was elegiac, this book begins to grapple with monsters: fear, guilt, despair. In the long central poem, "Shrubs Burned Away," a middle-aged man sits with his bottle, daydreaming "to build the house of dying" much as Lawrence felt he must build the ship of death, only without the romantic afflatus. The man's desolate memories braid with a woman's—his wife, a stranger? Drained by the failure of others, the inadequacy of self to perform the duties of love,

> We take comfort in building this house which does not exist,
> because it does not exist, while we stare at the wrist's
> hair, drinking Scotch in a yellow chair.

In "Merle Bascom's .22" we see how anyone may be subject to the impulse Anne Sexton called "wanting to die." Having missed a curve at seventy, headed toward a stone wall, Merle Bascom finds "joy fired through my body." A good pun. Afterward he leaves the firing pin of his father's handsome Mossberg .22, a lifelong possession, safely with a friend in Boston: "I cannot throw it away; it was my father's gift." The gift of fathers to sons is the bitterness and joy of death.

Of several powerful and expansive poems on nature's cycle and man's lifespan, my favorite is the magical "Great Day in the Cow's House." The day is a kind of judgment day, for the seven huge Holsteins Hall describes "are long dead." The day is also "great" because it lasts a year, and, perhaps, because existence is:

> Now it is warm, late June. The old man strokes
> white braids of milk, *strp*, *strp*, from ruminant beasts
> with hipbones like tentpoles, the rough
> black-and-white hanging crudely upon them.
> Now he tilts back his head to recite a poem
> about an old bachelor who loves a chicken named Susan.
> His voice grows loud with laughter and emphasis
> in the silent tie-up where old noises gather.

At the end the old man is found by his neighbors,

> his head
> leans into the side of his last Holstein;
> she has kicked the milkpail over, and blue milk drains
> through floorboards onto the manure pile in the great day.

The device here is one of focus. We view the bucolic through the zoom lens of a mortality which is maybe, after all, immortality.

Besides the impressive large poems in *The Happy Man*, there are several charming short ones, like the ink drawings of an accomplished painter. Here in its entirety is the trickily entitled "Couplet," subtitled "Old Timers' Day, Fenway Park, 1 May 1982":

> When the tall puffy
> figure wearing number
> nine starts
> late for the fly ball,
> laboring forward
> like a lame truckhorse
> startled by a gartersnake,
> —this old fellow
> whose body we remember
> as sleek and nervous
> as a filly's—
> and barely catches it
> in his glove's

Alicia Ostriker is the author of Stealing the Language: The Emergence of Women's Poetry in America *(Beacon). Her new book of poems,* The Imaginary Lover, *will be published by the University of Pittsburgh in the fall.*

tip, we rise
and applaud weeping:
On a green field
we observe the ruin
of even the bravest
body, as Odysseus
wept to glimpse
among shades the shadow
of Achilles.

A master's hand is present in light touch as in grave: the poem is a single sentence, holding coupleted youth and age, joy and grief, life and art, our America and Homer's Greece, deftly capped with its absurd and poignant rhyme.

Where Hall's line is classically conversational and descriptive, Mary Oliver's is intensely lyrical, flute-like, slender and swift. Where he gathers detail, she will fling gesture. Her poems ride on vivid phrases: "the click of claws, the smack of lips" outside her tent turns out to be a bear's "shambling tonnage" in "The Chance to Love Everything." In a poem about an oncoming storm emblematic of human disaster, "the wind turns/ like a hundred black swans/ and the first faint noise/ begins." She dreams the memory of past lives in the Amazonian landscape of "The River," a poem of the soul's birth and rebirth:

Once among the reeds I found
a boat, as thin and lonely
as a young tree. Nearby
the forest sizzled with the afternoon
rain.

Behind Oliver's New England is Ohio—not the sorry Ohio of James Wright, but a frontier still untouched by cultivation and corruption, where you enter to find "your place/in the family of things," with a real hope of success if you work hard. Woodland and marsh are Oliver's kingdom, animals and plants her kin and alternative selves. There are some dazzling poems of deer, bear, geese, turtle, of trilliums and sunflowers. She is as visionary as Emerson, and is among the few American poets who can describe and transmit ecstasy, while retaining a practical awareness of the world as one of predators and prey, "the rapacious/plucking up the timid/ like so many soft jewels."

Quite a number of the poems contain advice that is both right enough and rooted enough to be called (it's an old-fashioned term) wisdom. "Dogfish," the opening poem of *Dream Work*, describes a dogfish with its chin "rough/ as a thousand sharpened nails," coming in on the tide:

"He writes a fine, clear prose—some of the best, in fact, now being written by anyone."
—*New York Times Book Review*

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—*Boston Globe*

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And look! look! look! I think those
little fish
better wake up and dash themselves
away
from the hopeless future that is
bulging toward them.

And probably,
if they don't waste time
looking for an easier world,

they can do it.

"One or Two Things" hovers between the mobility of a butterfly and the poet's own immobility, which feels to her like an iron hoof she can't lift from the center of her mind unless she has "an idea." The poem concludes:

For years and years I struggled
just to love my life. And then

the butterfly
rose, weightless, in the wind.
"Don't love your life
too much," it said,

and vanished
into the world.

Dream Work, coming after Oliver's 1984 Pulitzer-Prize-winning *American Primitive*, is an advance on her earlier writing in two ways, which are probably connected. Formally, her verse feels increasingly confident, smoother, and thus bolder—the work of someone able to take risks, take corners faster. At the same time she has moved from the natural world and its desires, the "heaven of appetite" that goes on without much intervention or possibility of control, further into the world of historical and personal suffering. In a half dozen or so poems she sketches a past burdened by trauma and breakdown, the temptation to die, the resolution to recover, the actual work of insisting on sanity: "I began to take apart/the deep stitches/of nightmares." In one poem the poet makes herself walk away, though the night is wild, from voices crying "Mend my life!" In another she is building a larger house, a daily labor.

She confronts as well, steadily, what she cannot change. In the climactic piece of *Dream Work*, a meditation on the Holocaust, there are two adjacent pictures linked by a half-refrain. "Oh, you never saw/such a good leafy place" introduces an anecdote about meeting a fawn while walking with her dog; neither fawn nor dog knew "what dogs usually do," so they "did a little dance,/they didn't get serious." Then the line "Oh, you never saw such a garden!" brings a new picture, a Jamesian scene of a hundred kinds of flowers, cool shade, garden furniture and a man peacefully finishing lunch and lifting wine in a glass of "real crystal"—but "It is the face of Mengele." At the end of this poem the people have gone and the doe enters, sniffing the air where her fawn has been: "Then she knew everything." In her own garden of knowledge Mary Oliver moves by instinct, faith and determination. She is among our finest poets, and still growing. □

Pomp and Circumstance

EDWARD W. SAID

Reading the brief but intelligent article on festivals in Grove's *Dictionary*, you become aware of the deep divergence between premodern music festivals as symbolic rituals connected with religion and agriculture and modern music festivals as commemorations of great composers or as commercial and tourist attractions. From the great theatrical festivals of fifth-century Athens to the druidic Eisteddfod and the thirteenth-century Puy in France, the first type has now receded into a dim anthropological past. The second type is very much with us, too much so. With a few exceptions, its extraordinary proliferation and degradation have further weakened a musical life that seems to be getting more disablingly eccentric as time goes on.

Modern musical festivals began during the nineteenth century as worshipful commemorations of great composers—Handel, Mozart, Bach, Beethoven and, later, Wagner. Wagner's Bayreuth Festival, which opened in 1876, was unusual in that it was originally planned as a revolutionary celebration, not as a monument to the high bourgeoisie and its authorized cultural memory. In a review of Wagner's letters, Thomas Mann noted that the composer's intention was to

> proclaim the necessity of putting a torch to the whole of bourgeois civilization along with its commercialized theatre industry. In the wake of this fiery cleansing, an isolated enthusiast here and there (like [Wagner] himself) might summon together the survivors of this despicable world and ask them: "Which of you would like to help me put on a drama?" Then only men of truly disinterested motives would come forward, since it would no longer be possible to make money out of the enterprise. They would then gather together in a rapidly erected wooden building to show people what art really is. . . . The building was to be placed on a hill, a temple of art visible for miles around. The people would come together from the four corners of the land to be edified by a beauty pure and sublime. Only the most sublime works were to be given, in productions of the very highest standards.

After the sublime performances ("with no charge for admission, of course") the project would end, and the theater would be torn down.

No such thing happened. By the end of the nineteenth century, Bayreuth was a place of social pilgrimage—Proust's unworthy Odette, not a knowledgeable music lover at all, irritated Swann by wanting to attend and to rent one of King Ludwig's castles as a nice place to stay—and by the 1930s the festival had become a symbol of the 1,000-year Reich. When it was reopened by Wilhelm Furtwängler in 1951, with a cleansing performance of Beethoven's Choral Symphony, it was quickly established as the standard by which all performances of Wagner are measured. Directed by Wolfgang and Wieland Wagner, Richard's grandsons, Bayreuth attracted such major conductors as Hans Knappertsbusch, Andre Cluytens, Karl Böhm and, more recently, Pierre Boulez. If performance standards have slipped in recent years, the festival nevertheless remains an extraordinarily durable and expensive one; to get in during July and August for a complete *Ring* cycle (no easy task) is to incur ticket and hotel expenses in the thousands of dollars.

Salzburg's Festival, begun in 1877, is no less durable, expensive and mortuary, although the charms of little Mozart—who in his day seemed to detest nearly everything about the place: its notables, its horrid *Gemütlichkeit*—have been superseded by the Mercedes-like power and efficiency of Herbert von Karajan, the General Music Director of Europe. Although Salzburg

Edward W. Said is a professor of English and comparative literature at Columbia University. His book After the Last Sky, *with Jean Mohr, will be published by Pantheon in the fall.*

Parents and Purple Prose: Let's Give Them a Break

By Anatole Broyard

IN August, a 13-year-old girl in Tustin, Calif., turned in her parents to the police because they were using drugs. Early this month, a 5-year-old girl in Beacon, N.Y., reported her mother for the same reason. While the course of the second case is not yet known, the first one brought offers for the child's story from at least a dozen movie production companies. The parents in the case have been released in their own recognizance and have agreed to seek counseling. The 13-year-old girl, who was described by the police as "a little misty-eyed, a little reluctant to do this to her parents," was sent to a shelter for abused and abandoned children. When she said she missed her parents desperately, the authorities weighed the possibility of reprisal and then allowed her to go home.

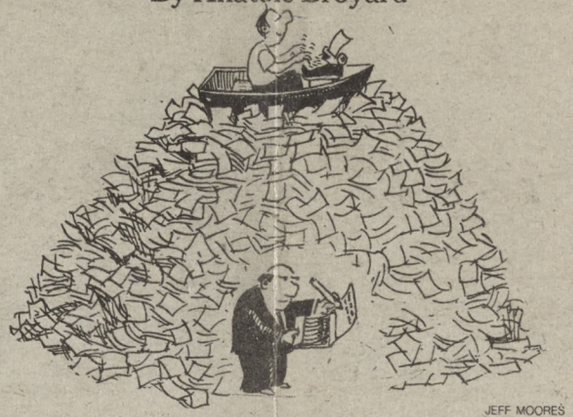
Struck by those offers for the child's story, I found myself wondering how a novelist would feel about all this — a middle-aged New York novelist, for example. I could almost hear him warming up to his subject:

"Why, that's nothing new — we've been turning in our parents for at least a century. They're all heavy drug users, every one of them. Love, ambition, ideals, fear — you name it, they use it. And imagine what it does to the child.

"While these poor kids' parents might be described as under- rather than overprotective, who can say which is worse? It seems to me that parenthood *drives* people to drugs of one kind or another — either the all-too-legal kind, the crack of runaway emotions, or the other sort. Actually, I think it would be nice if novelists were a little more misty-eyed and reluctant about turning in the old folks. Remember too that the public is not as forgiving as the courts, who released the parents in their own recognizance. The public rarely gives parents a break. They get very little recognizance.

"Who shall we send poor Mom and Dad to for counseling — a psychoanalyst? God? The book reviewers? The California parents pleaded not guilty, but can the novelist's parents do that? Aren't they always found guilty as charged? In a way, those children in the newspapers were lucky to come to terms with their parents' weaknesses so soon, before the damage could spread, before the situation could attract metaphors, develop a rhetoric. On the other hand, they may never become novelists now."

Anatole Broyard is an editor of The Book Review.



JEFF MOORES

• • •

Poetry may have come at last to the end of its long quarrel with love. In "Louise Bogan: A Portrait" (a paperback from Columbia University) Elizabeth Frank quotes a letter from Bogan in which she lists some of the things she needs in order to write poetry in peace: "One or two friends, no acquaintances, and even no lover, if a relationship including a lover also includes tiresome incompatibilities and deadened perceptions."

It was just a matter of time before we realized that love can't stand up to poetry. The tender passion has been losing ground for some time, its constitution undermined by more than a century of irony. It may be, too, that love needs all those obsolete devices like rhyme both end- and internal, meter, couplets, assonance, enjambment, alliteration and sprung rhythm. It needs sonnets both Shakespearean and Petrarchan, villanelles, roundelays, aubades and epithalamiums. It depends on ballads, odes, epics, madrigals, staves, strophes and quatrains.

Without some kind of formal dissembling, the truth will come inevitably out: tiresome incompatibilities and deadened perceptions. Did Matthew Arnold know what he was asking when he said "Ah, love, let us be true to one another"?

• • •

There's a new biography of Thomas Wolfe, coming in February, and perhaps it will settle our uneasiness about him. We've been using him as a whipping boy, holding him up as an object lesson, a peculiarly American mistake. Made dyspeptic by a minimalist diet, critics have been treating Wolfe as if he were a barbarian invader pulling down the noble structures of literature.

You can't write like that, they say — we've outgrown that sort of thing. Because most of us once felt that way ourselves, we're embarrassed by Wolfe's provincialism, his naïveté, his reckless enthusiasm. If Ezra Pound was, as Gertrude Stein said, "a village explainer," Wolfe was a village exclaimer.

Critics sometimes behave as if they were pursued by their adolescence, by the shame of it. They're nervous about regression unless it has a sociopolitical motif, like Allen Ginsberg's "Howl," or William Burroughs's "Naked Lunch." What is *behind* Wolfe's emotion? they ask. What is it in the name of? The image now is minimalist; critics praise economy, understatement and restraint. We're ashamed of our old uncouthness. Murmuring is the fashion now, so much so that we can hardly hear what is being said. Poor Wolfe talked too loud.

There's still a tinge of Marxist austerity in our literary criticism. Someone said of Joyce that while he had lost his religion he kept his categories, and the same is true of some of our critics. They're still vaguely loyal to the idea of economics, or economy, as if a richness or exuberance of speech was somehow capitalistic and irresponsible. They can bear qualitative — i.e., experimental or radical — excess, but not quantitative.

Understatement carries a connotation of egalitarian compulsion, a reluctance to let literature enjoy its high privileges. The word "restraint," another critical favorite, suggests that the author has opposed, thrust back, fought down or subdued all sorts of primitive impulses that threaten the chaste integrity of art. But an author may be praised for his restraint when in fact he hasn't made much of an effort.

Minimalism offers itself like a telegram or dispatch from the social sciences or the political climate. This is the clipped tone of emergency, the clenching of our teeth against hope, the mutter of our disillusionment with illusion. The mad dog of literature no longer foams at the mouth: we like to believe we've tamed it.

But Wolfe, poor fellow, wrote not telegrams or dispatches, but love letters — long, often silly ones with splendid flashes here and there. While we're laughing at him, or condescending to him, we might also ask ourselves: How did we get to be so strict? Do we have a right to it? Why are we so afraid of the superfluous? □

THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

Coole" by William Bat[illegible] collection of Randall Jarrell's poems in 1967, and she covers many novels, biographies and critical studies over five decades.

It is not, as she herself observes of Cervantes, that Moore needs to be rescued from oblivion. She has been celebrated for her achievement in poetry. Unfortunately, however, even the two volumes of her work that did include some essays have been out of print for some time. This new volume of prose is more or less complete, and it is dazzling. In it we find her attending to literature and also covering art, music and dance with an expertise born of tireless research.

She writes with an exuberance for real places and things; the neighborhood schools, the library and the cinema are elevated to excitement in a later essay, "Brooklyn From Clinton Hill." In her rapture for ordinary experience she resembles Williams and, especially, Pound, who felt he adhered to an American poetry of the commonplace inaugurated by Whitman. Her own enthusiasm was ignited by two prose craftsmen — Sir Thomas Browne, for whom, she points out, "small things could be great things," and Henry James, whom she describes in a major essay of 1934, "Henry James as a Characteristic American." "Things for Henry James glow, flush, glimmer, vibrate, shine, hum, bristle, reverberate," she exclaims. "Some complain of his transferred citizenship as a loss; but when we consider the trend of his fiction and his uncomplacent denouements, we have no scruple about insisting that he was American; not if the American is, as he thought, 'intrinsically and actively ample, ... reaching westward, southward, anywhere, everywhere,' with a mind 'incapable of the shut door in any direction.' "

• • •

New York is her territory. In The Dial from 1921 to 1929, she praises prints by Dürer and his contemporaries, notes Alfeo Faggi's masks of Noguchi and Dante and records "the bellows-warbled, now high, now low, hollow music of the circus" at Madison Square Garden. For Dance Index in 1944 she comments on the buoyancy, strength and "uncontaminated innocence" of Anna Pavlova. For The New York Times in 1967 and Women's Wear Daily in 1965 she examines fashion and manners with an elegance reminiscent of Castiglione's "Courtier." In Dance Index in 1946 she tells of "The Elephant Ballet," an odd combination of George Balanchine's ballerinas and Ringling Brothers' elephants; her gaze fluctuates between the two, and she merges them finally when she sees "the spiral of the elephant's trunk repeating the spirals of the dancing. ..."

Many similar perceptions appear in her poetry.

Grace Schulman is the author of "Marianne Moore: The Poetry of Engagement." Her latest book of poems is "Hemispheres."

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Marianne Moore in 1966.

George Grosz, the caricaturist, as calling for "endless curiosity, observation, research, and a great amount of joy in the thing." In an essential essay, "Idiosyncrasy and Technique," she reveals: "One writes because one has a burning desire to objectify what it is indispensable to one's happiness to express."

It was as editor of The Dial, a position she obtained largely through the support of Pound, who was early to praise her poetry and her prose, that she came into her own as an essayist. In fact, her work at The Dial clarifies why she published no poetry (and claimed she wrote none) from 1926 to 1929, the years when she was editor. "A genuine achievement in criticism is an achievement in creation," she writes in a review of Eliot's book of essays "The Sacred Wood." Just as she diminishes the importance of a division between prose and poetry, she writes criticism that is, like her poetry, an art of exactitude. She looks at her subject from all sides, and examines her own attitudes.

Her principles are stated in key essays such as "Feeling and Precision," "Humility, Concentration, and Gusto," "Idiosyncrasy and Technique" and the James piece. In the first she observes: "When writing with maximum impact, the writer seems under compulsion to set down an unbearable accuracy." Of clarity, which depends on precision, she writes: "We must be as clear as our natural reticence allows us to be," believing that the greater the emotional force is, the stronger the reserve and the drive to be exact will be. In rate observation and a homogeneous color sense are joint phases of unequivocal faithfulness to fact." Admiring Elizabeth Bishop for a lack of wordiness and unforced endings, she declares that Bishop is "spectacular in being unspectacular. Why has no one ever thought of this, one asks oneself; why not be accurate and modest?" Writing of Williams, she points out in 1934 that "he is at times almost insultingly specific, but there is in him — and this must be our consolation — that dissatisfied expanding energy, the emotion, the *ergo* of the medieval dialectician, the 'therefore' which is the distinguishing mark of the artist."

Contrary to her wish to consider only those books she respects, she is occasionally acerbic. If she celebrates repeatedly Yeats's imaginative power, she rebukes him, in 1918, for the occasional "drooping line," the stanza that is too tidy. Justly she chides Vachel Lindsay for a lack of esthetic rigor. At times her individuality leads to subjective evaluations; one wishes she had more judicious reasons for disliking Robert Frost's "Masque of Reason" than her statement, "One does not parody the Book of Job." But that is rare.

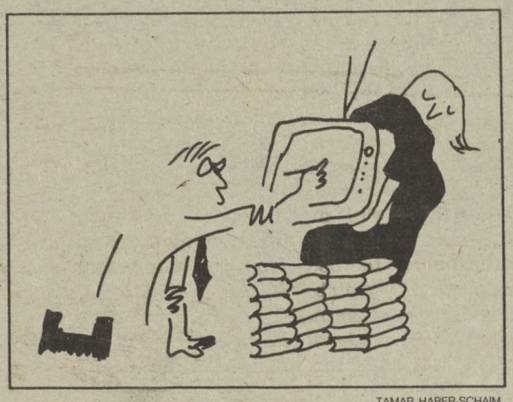
THERE is in her prose the democratic sense of mingling things, people and works of art. In 1951 she names in one breath Casals, Soledad, E. McKnight Kauffer, Hans Mardersteig, Alec Guinness and the Lippizaner horsemen as being among the artists of the time. While her most honored writers include Plato, Seneca and Plutarch, she is enchanted also by Christy Mathewson's "Pitching in a Pinch" and "My Garden" by the Duke of Windsor. This amassing of the ordinary and the unusual, the common and the great, creates an air of adventurous inquiry in her work like that she detects in Henry James's. With exclusive standards and an inclusive acceptance of anything that is exhilarating in its own way, she conveys fairness and the morality that is her mark. Her standards for prose are the same as her standards for life; she focuses on small objects to see beyond them to larger matters.

From 1929 on, especially during World War II, she writes of her wish for an end to violence and a peace built on affection. She commends Wallace Stevens for disparaging the lust for power and honors Conrad and Williams for their awareness of responsibility. In 1947 she applauds W. H. Auden for his emphasis on moral choice and his conviction that faith and purity are antidotes to fear and greed. She admires Confucius for his belief in sympathy: "What you don't want yourself, don't inflict on another" is, in her words, his command.

Finally, her humor, ranging from wit to hilarity, is understated, wry, epigrammatic. "Mr. Auden is not ashamed of seeming to have done some reading," she offers; or, " 'Incredible,' 'fabulous,' 'rapturous,' used more than once in a lifetime, lose force." Her lightness indicates joy in the deeply serious, life-sustaining task that literature is for everyone. □

Noted With Pleasure

No, but I Read the Autograph



TAMAR HABER-SCHAIM

Promotion tours are a practical means of bringing an author who has been buried in literature back into reality. In his autobiography, "Here Lies" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), Eric Ambler discovers that reading is only one of the ways of appreciating a book.

At an autographing session in a Chicago department store I was approached by a woman who had bought ten copies of my new book. She wanted me to write in all ten, inscribing each one to a different person. She produced a list from her bag and read the names out for me at dictation speed. As I wrote she explained that the books, "personalized" by my writing in them, would make great stocking presents for Christmas. When I asked her which name on the list was hers, though, she seemed surprised. "Oh, I never read books," she said with a smile; "I haven't read a book in years. I saw you on the *Today* show."

A Terrorist of Sweetness

Yehuda Amichai is one of Israel's leading poets. This poem, "The Sweet Breakdowns of Abigail," is from "The Selected Poetry of Yehuda Amichai" (Harper & Row), translated by Chana Bloch and Stephen Mitchell.

Everyone whacks her with tiny blows
the way you peel an egg.

With desperate bursts of perfume
she strikes back at the world.

With sharp giggles she gets even
For all the sadness,

and with quick little fallings-in-love,
like burps and hiccups of feeling.

A terrorist of sweetness,
she stuffs bombshells with despair and cinnamon,
with cloves, with shrapnel of love.

At night when she tears off her jewelry,
there's a danger she won't know when to stop
and will go on tearing and slashing away at her
whole life.

Tedium for Art's Sake

Jane Austen understood that tedium, not excitement, is the novelist's greatest challenge. This is from an essay by John Bayley in "The Jane Austen Companion" (Macmillan).

The key to her characters, therefore, is their immersion for art's sake in the tedium of existence. Where most novelists have to heighten the feeling of living in the interests of their art, Jane Austen deliberately lowers it and, by doing so, gives its quotidian dullness an unexampled vitality. Her lively sense of the ridiculous makes all kinds of tedium amusing. . . . Not the extravagances but the deprivations of being are the deepest spring of her comedy, and she realized this in the ways an artist does. When she remarked to her sister that *Pride and Prejudice* wanted light and shade, had too much brilliancy about it, she professed the intention of writing on more serious topics, questions of "ordination" and of "principles." . . . What actually takes place is the installation of dullness in the place of honor, the foreground of the next novel. From this solid posture it makes everything else in *Mansfield Park* as real and solid.

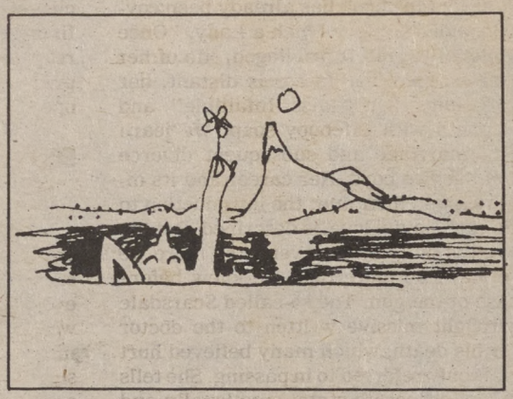
NYTBR Aug. 24, '86

The Intricate Noise of Poetry

While teaching is generally considered the kitchen or scullery of literary criticism, Yvor Winters is said by his students to have raised it to a high art. In "The Occasions of Poetry" (North Point), Thom Gunn describes Winters's classes.

Most teachers and critics, even quite perceptive ones, speak about poetry in terms of its subject matter, its ideas, its "themes," and its imagery, as if it were all just a piece of condensed but tuneless prose. Winters was one of the few people I have ever come across who has spoken — spoken at all, let alone intelligibly — about the way meter works and about the way poetic movement (whether in metrical or in free verse) influences poetic meaning. He would discuss, in fact, what actually happens in the sounds of some famous line in a Shakespeare sonnet, attempting perhaps for the first time to describe what has attracted generations of readers. . . . He realized that a poem is the sum of components that bear relationships of almost infinite complexity toward each of the other components; the relationships moreover are not static — they vary in relation to the other relationships; and they continue to vary as the poem moves on from line to line. . . . He went further: his was an examination of technique that became, ultimately, also an examination of the way in which knowledge is simultaneously discovered and transmitted.

Floating Down the River



While Siberia generally suggests hardship or punishment, that was not George Kennan's experience when he traveled there in the 1860's. This is from his "Tent Life in Siberia" (Peregrine Smith).

I think it was Gray who said that his idea of paradise was "To lie on a sofa and read eternally new romances of Marivaux and Crebillon." Could the author of the Elegy have stretched himself out on the open deck of a Kamtchadal boat, covered to a depth of six inches with fragrant flowers and freshly cut hay; could he have floated slowly down a broad, tranquil river through ranges of snow-clad mountains, past forests glowing with yellow and crimson, and vast steppes waving with tall, wild grass; could he have watched the full moon rise over the lonely, snowy peak of the Kloo-chef-skoi volcano, bridging the river with a narrow trail of quivering light, and have listened to the flash of the boatman's paddles, and the low melancholy song to which they kept time — he would have thrown Marivaux and Crebillon overboard. □

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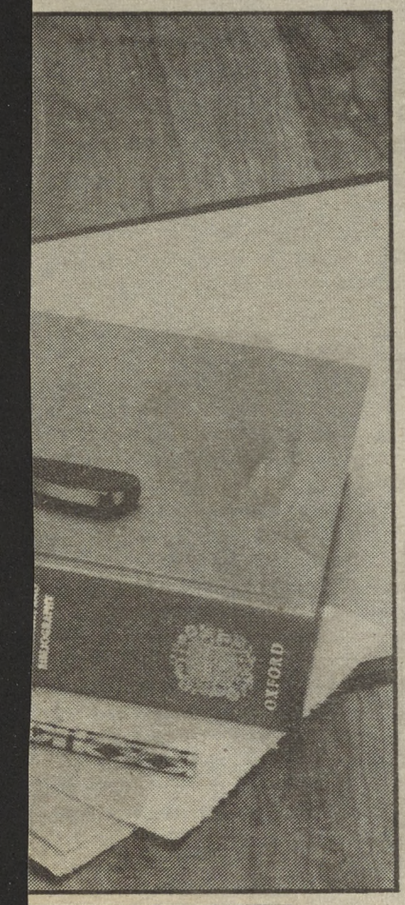

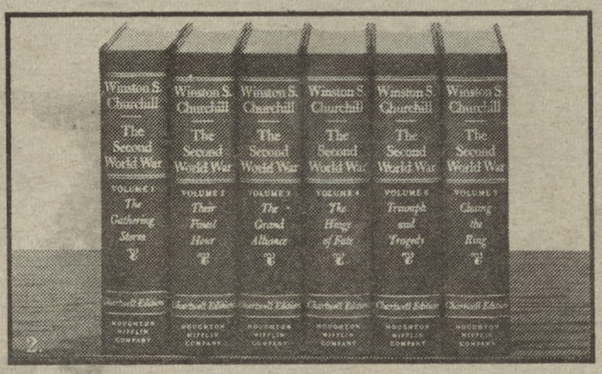

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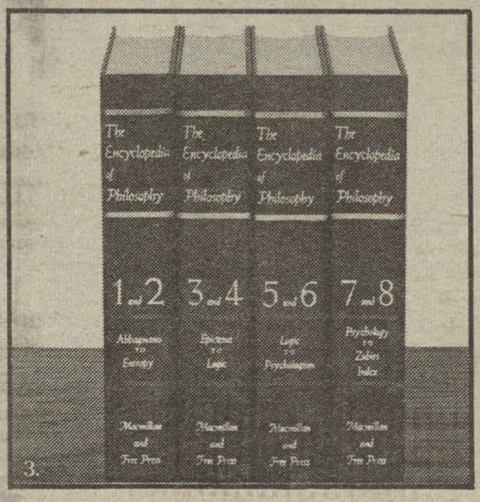

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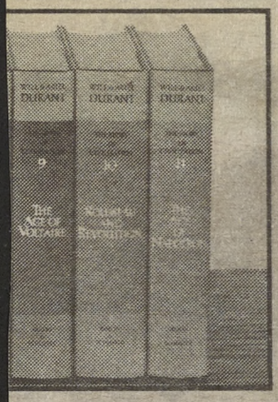

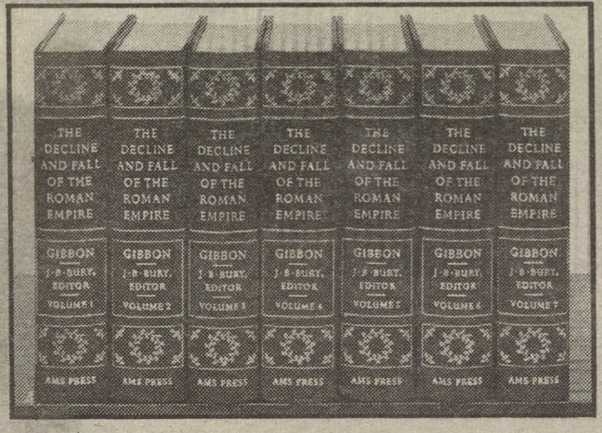

N THE CLUB.

1. The Compact Edition of The Oxford English Dictionary for $27.95 (Pub. price $175). The original 13-volume set reproduced, through photoreduction, in 2 volumes. Includes a Bausch & Lomb magnifying glass.

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The Costs of Living

NIGHTS IN THE GARDENS OF BROOKLYN

By Harvey Swados.
381 pp. New York: Viking. $19.95.

By Josephine Hendin

HARVEY SWADOS' death in 1972 deprived American writing of a voice as mordant as it was compassionate. Although known for his socialist perspective on contemporary life in "On the Line," with its stories of auto assembly workers, in the essays of "A Radical's America" and in his novel "Standing Fast," Swados was not narrowly political. His gift was for championing the embattled self against the damages of time and necessity. "Nights in the Gardens of Brooklyn" teems with people fighting to preserve their humanity against that tricky nemesis, circumstance. In this collection of stories, characters live according to a personal economy that could be rooted in Thoreau's theory of value: "The cost of a thing is the amount of what I will call life which is required to be exchanged for it, immediately or in the long run." In this economy, Swados' lovers, artists and proto-yuppies discover that the cost of living can be figured in gains and losses of heart and morale.

"Nights in the Gardens of Brooklyn," the title story, is a dense and beautiful tale of three friends in New York at the end of World War II: the narrator, who prizes emotional generosity, Dante, who greedily exploits others, and Barney, who betrays himself. Fresh from the Army, the narrator becomes a census taker, accepting the stories of his clients like gifts. He finds love in his desirable wife and visions of indomitability in a kind old woman bereft of everything but her apartment in a condemned building: "As long as she was there I could not be soured on the city, with its grinding drive for money and place, or frightened by the rank growth of ambition among my friends." The narrator's world is shattered when he finds the old woman has been evicted. Rushing home for consolation, he learns that his wife is pregnant and that his nights in Brooklyn have begotten a future in fatherhood and suburbia.

Barney, a mathematician who worked in military labs during the war and whose dream is to earn enough money to finish his doctorate, is fired from job after job as a security risk despite his apolitical life. Dante, an aspiring actor, exploits his despair to "steal" Barney's girlfriend, whose looks and social contacts he covets. Losing heart, Barney gives up mathematics for a career in toilet fixtures. Selling out his heart, Dante becomes a successful actor. Only the narrator keeps from toppling into bitterness or betrayal. In his balance, he sees his city in memory as "an internal capital aflame with romance" even if it is also "infected with disillusion." This prismatic sensibility enables him to accept his future. The best weapon against circumstance, Swados implies, is moral poise.

Swados' characters are seekers of balance in a teetering world: He draws on common experience to produce explosions of insight. In "A Question of Loneliness," a young couple's attempt to revive their marriage with an evening away from their baby's cries and diapers ends in a revelation of enmity. In "The Man in the Toolhouse," a writer who commercializes his novel for his family's sake instead enfolds their lives in harrowing ironies even as the money rolls in. In "A Glance in the Mirror," a composer who wins success by cheapening his talent hopes to regain his self-respect by visiting the former wife and daughter of his youth. Needing their contempt, which might recall his better self, he finds in their admiration only a more numbing despair.

• • •

In the dazzling story "My Coney Island Uncle," a sailor reeling from the effects of war seeks to regain the "seamless innocence" of childhood from the bachelor doctor whose life has been spent healing the poor. Instead, the sailor is oddly recalled to adult stability when he finds, in the old man's grotesque loneliness, that the doctor's good deeds have not gone unpunished. Ironically, what afflicts Swados' men is what also sustains their humanity: the compulsion to know the cost of being true to oneself and to measure moral stature by the willingness to pay the price.

"Nights in the Gardens of Brooklyn" is filled with people who lead examined lives. Although its stories are sometimes flawed by too facile equations of success with self-corruption, it bristles with revelations. It returns us to that humane economy Emerson had in mind when he wrote: "The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul." □

Josephine Hendin, a professor of English at New York University, is the author of "Vulnerable People: A View of American Fiction Since 1945" and the forthcoming novel "The Right Thing to Do."

By Mark Mathabane

THIS surreal, impressionistic tale set in colonial Kenya explores a young British mother's irresistible desire to claim her housemaid's black son and the consequences of the extraordinary bond that grows between them. Isaac calls Ursula "Mummy"; she calls him "son." Ursula feels almost relieved at the sudden and unexplained deaths of her own baby daughter and husband, which leave her a lone white memsahib on a barren plantation surrounded by what she feels are conniving, irresponsible black servants and her beloved Isaac, with whom she even shares her bed. Ursula teaches Isaac to paint, count and read, and dresses him in her dead child's clothes, while her servants look on in perplexity and white neighbors glance away in horror and disgust.

"Cradle Song" is a bold, poetically written attempt to explore the tension, taboo and tenderness involved in the sometimes close, sometimes abusive relationships between whites and blacks, masters and servants — especially during colonial times. In many cases, Ms. Rawlinson's petty, status-conscious white masters and madams behave far more ignobly than their black servants, who swap mates, pilfer food and giggle in the shade when they should be working.

While reading this second novel — Ms. Rawlinson's first was "The Lion and the Lizard" — one watches images of white smiles on black faces, black hands on white lace, a milk-white baby suck-

Mark Mathabane is the author of "Kaffir Boy," an autobiography about growing up black under apartheid.

tic style, which [illegible] all five senses and allows us to feel the arid heat of Kenya, smell the impending torrential rains and see the birth of a black child. Ms. Rawlinson writes, "Ursula ... saw the baby's head a darker shadow between its mother's legs, advance and recede with each contraction like sodden driftwood caught in the tide's edge."

Like a poet, Ms. Rawlinson seems engaged chiefly in creating impressions rather than explaining events or developing characters. The reasons behind actions, words and attractions are often left to the reader's imagination, as are Ursula's obsession with the housemaid Ayah's black son and Ayah's longing to have a white child despite her black skin.

The poetic imagery and lucid writing compensate for the unexplained gaps in the plot, which could easily make a reader lose interest. Instead the reader is pulled along in the hope that all the ambiguities will be cleared up at the end of this unique and fascinating book. □

Author's Query

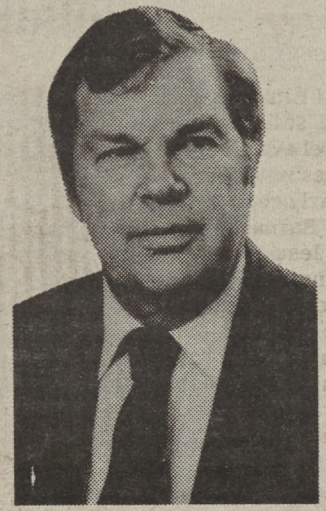
The Metropolitan Museum, La Réunion des Musées Nationaux de France and the National Gallery of Canada are organizing the first large retrospective exhibition in over 50 years of the work of Edgar Degas (1834-1917). It will be held in Paris, Ottawa and New York in 1988. For a *catalogue raisonné*, the organizers would appreciate hearing from anyone who has information regarding letters to or from Degas or any original photographs by the artist.

GARY TINTEROW
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Fifth Avenue at 82d Street
New York City 10028

going on in this country bear watching...

Watch for Tom Wicker's 'In The Nation'

Friday and Sunday on the Op-Ed page



The New York Times

BR World Oct. 19, '86

Ann Beattie: The Surface of Things

WHERE YOU'LL FIND ME
And Other Stories
By Ann Beattie
Linden Press/Simon and Schuster
191 pp. $14.95

By Jonathan Penner

MOST OF THESE 15 stories, like the works of a painter's blue or green "period," have a family resemblance. Hanging in a row, they seem familiar as you sidestep by, and what you recall in the cab home is partly a prototype.

That essential story begins with a vivid, briefly mysterious line of dialogue ("Don't think about a cow," or "My feeling is that for whatever reason you duck your head and slam on the brakes, it's *mad* to act like that in the Holland tunnel"). Within the first paragraph several people are named, the warp of a social web. You start calculating who is whose what and what to whom.

You transit representative passages in the lives of clever people, who are pursuing guiltless but disappointing love affairs and live between complacency and despair. Background (especially an ex- or absent lover) predominates over foreground: nothing now, nothing new, can prick or please like memory.

The story loosely assembles observations and meditations, often delivered in dialogue of inspired accuracy. There is charming portraiture—"Sometimes I think I'm falling in love with Coop. He's always on top of things. He can get people off the phone in less than a minute"—and detail of maddening pointlessness, such as the biographical minutiae of characters who never appear.

In the closing lines, examination becomes compulsively microscopic, leaving a sense of exhaustion or disconnection. Not even a ripple reveals the story's intended final effect, its emotional meaning, as the author somehow steps out of the tub without disturbing the water.

This essential Ann Beattie story takes human nature seriously. People are understood to be complex. The author is not cynical, never bored with us. And yet the events of the story are not caused by its people, but rather happen to them, drastically reducing the role of character. The women and men have personalities, not characters.

BY THOMAS VICTOR

Ann Beattie

Something begins to seem wrong. No line is badly written, no detail dimly observed. If the plot is perhaps slight—two people discussing old love affairs, or an unnamed narrator preparing breakfast for an unnamed spouse—a story need not reside in a plot. Still, it needs to reside somewhere. And though its absence, like God's, is hard to conceive or demonstrate, one reads and rereads these stories with a growing sense of emptiness beneath a crowded surface.

THE STORIES have little organic necessity, few working parts. Their internal order is not systemic but serial. Accurate observation follows accurate observation without regard to literary value, to whether the story is *using* it. You begin to understand the author as she understands one of her characters:

". . . She knew that people and things never really got left behind: you'd be surprised into remembering them; your thoughts would be overturned." It's as though much of the material finds its way in through just this sort of involuntary mental operation. Thus rises a haunting sense of inconsequentiality.

The 15 stories include two that depart from Beattie's usual manner. In "Janus," a woman falls in love with a bowl. She becomes obsessed with it, as no Beattie character ever becomes with a human lover. Normally an associative writer, continually thinking of something else we ought to know, Beattie treats this weird romance with an unaccustomed exclusivity. The beloved bowl becomes a psychoanalytical symbol, odd as an archaeopteryx in Beattie's post-Freudian world.

The other surprising story, "Snow," is the collection's only dramatic monologue, a reminiscence of a long-dead love affair, declaimed by the woman to the absent man. This story is also the most adventurous in its diction. Usually Beattie's language seems deliberately ordinary, avoiding clumsiness and evading beauty with equal care. But the narrator of "Snow," speaking in the privacy of her mind, risks a lyricism that would embarrass the hip citizens of the other stories. She tells the man that their love affair was "as hopeless as giving a child a matched cup and saucer."

Many of the stories seem like letters written to an intimate friend: here's what I did and said and saw and heard and (though too seldom) felt. The writer is dependable, ours sincerely; these stories tell the truth. What they don't do, won't do, is try to make any sense of that truth. And this refusal will disappoint readers who want everything from fiction—to see how we live, but more—to learn when we matter, and to feel why. ■

Jonathan Penner, author of the story collection, "Private Parties," and the novel, "Going Blind," teaches fiction writing at the University of Arizona.

Coming Tuesday in the Health section:
**SCHOOL'S OUT
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Mysteries

When a Body Meets A Body

By Jean M. White

HERE IS a mystery that begins with finding no bodies — 133 of them are missing from a cemetery.

It is on this deliciously ironic note that we meet Jenny Cain, the narrator-heroine of Nancy Pickard's **No Body** (Scribner's, $13.95). We have had meter readers, book dealers and baseball players as amateur sleuths, but Jenny surely must be the only one who is the director of a charitable foundation.

Yes, some warm bodies do turn up in *No Body*. One too many is found in the crowded coffin of a man being prepared for burial. But this comes later. *No Body* opens with a mudslide as Jenny's retired sixth-grade teacher is making a springtime pilgrimmage to Union Hill Cemetery to inspect the plot where her great-great-grandparents are buried. The mudslide reveals only a hole in the ground. The grave is empty. No coffins. No bodies. And the bodies—133 in all—also are missing from the other grave sites in the Civil War-era cemetery, closed since 1898.

Jenny persuades the trustees of the Port Frederick (Mass.) Civic Foundation to fund a research project to trace the cemetery's history and, coincidenelist Stephen Dobyns' wonderfully different private eye series set in Saratoga Springs.

In **Saratoga Snapper** (Viking, $15.95), Charlie is moonlighting as night manager at his mother's hotel, newly refurbished and restored to its late 19th century grandeur with her winnings at the racetrack and Atlantic City gambling tables. Mabel Bradshaw may be an Auntie Mame-like figure with her red silk dressing gown trimmed with ermine, but

"Notice all the computations, theoretical scribblings, and lab equipment, Norm. ... Yes, curiosity killed these cats."
FROM "THE FAR SIDE GALLERY 2," BY GARY LARSON (SEE NEW IN PAPERBACK, PAGE 12)

Bk World Jan. 11, '87

The Way We Live Now: The Fiction of Andre Dubus

THE LAST WORTHLESS EVENING: Four Novellas & Two Stories
By Andre Dubus
Godine. 214 pp. $15.95

By Jack Sullivan

IN AN AGE when short stories all too often mask human suffering with self-conscious cleverness, material clutter and bland irony, the short fiction of Andre Dubus is a tonic to the spirit. His characters usually feel their suffering, sound its depths, and talk about it, sometimes, expansively—and even share what they learn with the reader. They draw us directly into the burning center of their thoughts and feelings.

The Last Worthless Evening, Dubus' newest and perhaps finest collection of novellas and stories, has many of the elements his readers have come to admire since the publication of *Separate Flights* in 1975. Aching loss and disappointment are still dominant motifs; his characters are still lonely, ordinary middle-class people, most of them New Englanders or expatriate Southerners, many of them lapsed Catholics (although Dubus has Louisiana Cajun roots, he does not often write about the South); they suffer from insomnia, alcoholism, bad or broken marriages, and stultifying jobs.

In "Molly," the adolescent heroine sees in blue-collar children "some predetermined life, some boundary to their dreams, enclosed as tightly as their bodies were by their lawns and small houses." Teen-agers suffer "a dullness . . . sculpted by years of television, of parents who at meals and in the evenings had nothing to say to them, nothing to teach them." Molly's mother, who becomes a real estate agent after her husband deserts her, has plenty to teach, most of it disheartening. She has learned how much of themselves her clients "would give away for money or simply to avoid standing their ground . . . You could see in their eyes the cages they had built between their lives and their beliefs."

Yet the heroes in these stories have a way of breaking out of their cages. The mother summons a hidden "moral energy" and passes it on to her daughter to help her through her first sexual experience, even though by doing so she hastens Molly's growing up and leaving her. In earlier Dubus pieces, this sense of "a choice made with courage" was often not available. "Separate Flights," for example, features a similar mother/daughter scenario, with a bad rather than broken marriage as a backdrop, captured with a similar tenderness and exactness, but the story collapses into boozy self-pity, the mother denouncing the disappointment of love and marriage as a "farce" that "just happens" and "doesn't matter."

In this collection, love and marriage in America are still often a farce, but one that does matter, and characters continually resist, even if futilely the notion that life "just happens." The clearest exposition of the book's moral landscape is offered by the narrator of "Rose," who discovers each year, "with the awe of my boyhood, a part of the human spirit I had perhaps imagined, but had never seen or heard." In the narrator's grimmest but most inspiring story within a story, a young working-class woman who is so unhappy her heart has "ceased its signals to her" must suddenly defend her children against the murderous onslaught of her husband, a man who before going mad stares mutely at drying diapers "as if they were not cotton at all, but the whitest of white shades of the dead, come to haunt him, to assault him, an inch at a time, a foot, until they won, surrounded him where he stood in some corner of the bedroom, the bathroom, in the last place in the home that was his." The terrible violence that erupts in this story of entrapment is commensurate with the suppression that precedes it, and the mother pays an awful price for her action. But she does act, reentering "motherhood and the unity we must all gain against human suffering."

Jack Sullivan, editor of "The Penguin Encyclopedia of Horror and the Supernatural," writes frequently about contemporary fiction.

PHOTO BY PEGGY RAMBACH
Andre Dubus

"Dubus' characters continually resist, even if futilely, the notion that life 'just happens.'"

SINCE these stories have the rather unusual contemporary quality of being *about* something, and developing what they are about, it is easy to overlook their often quiet technique. Yet the book is full of magnificent writing. The descriptions of sexual initiation in "Molly" are both coarse and strangely beautiful; the dialogue of a genteel, condescending racist in "Deaths at Sea" ("The Southerner wants most of all to leave people alone . . . we *know* the Negrahs") is insidiously accurate; the descriptions of mental breakdown in "Rose," "After the Game," and "Dressed Like Summer Leaves" are terrifyingly precise; the portrait of compulsive female dieters and their hidden lives in "Land Where My Fathers Died" (an elaboration of Dubus' haunting earlier story "The Fat Girl") is heartrending.

That the obsessions of dieters is only a subsidiary motif in the latter story—which is basically about the arrogance of wealth and power—is characteristic of a new thematic richness in Dubus' work. Although he has said he writes stories rather than novels because he can deal with only one idea at a time, the longer pieces here are meditations on several interlocking ideas. "Deaths at Sea," to cite another example, is a somber reflection on racial injustice, but it is also a meditation on the "true laughter," "true loneliness" and true friendship men experience at sea. Virtually every page in this collection plumbs unexpected depths, revealing another life being lived beneath a fragile surface.

"We like to believe that in this last quarter of the century, we know and are untouched by everything," says the narrator of "Rose," "yet it takes only a very small jolt, at the right time, to knock us off balance for the rest of our lives." Andre Dubus records these tiny, eternal jolts to our existence with unerring accuracy and eloquence, but the jolt he gives his readers is of another order. By confronting us with the way we live, or fail to live, he strikes at our moral passivity and complacency. In this period of gentrified fiction, that's a noble achievement. ■

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Book World

AMERICA'S "MOST ENJOYABLE" BOOK REVIEW IS AVAILABLE BY SUBSCRIPTION WORLDWIDE

When the Los Angeles Times asked people in publishing to rate the nation's book review sections in December, 1985, Book World was named the most interesting and enjoyable. When compared to the New York Times Book Review, many in publishing found Book World "better written, better edited, more provocative, more attuned to popular taste and more attractively designed. Most important of all, many publishing executives say, The Post does an excellent job of matching interesting reviewers with good books."

The Third Indochina War

BROTHER ENEMY
The War After the War
By Nayan Chanda
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 479 pp. $24.95

By Arnold R. Isaacs

Nayan Chanda

ON THE LAST DAY of 1977, the official radio station in Pol Pot's Cambodia suddenly began broadcasting an extraordinary denunciation of Cambodia's neighbor and former ally, communist Vietnam. Declaring that the Vietnamese were committing "ferocious and barbarous aggression" against "the innocent Kampuchean people," the broadcast announced that diplomatic relations between the two communist states were being broken until the "aggressor forces" withdrew from Cambodian territory. Thus was revealed to the world a conflict whose seeds were sown, as Nayan Chanda documents in *Brother Enemy,* even while the Vietnamese and Cambodian revolutionaries were still partners against the U.S.-backed South Vietnamese and Cambodian governments.

A year almost to the day after the Phnom Penh broadcast, border raids gave way to a full-scale invasion by Vietnamese tanks and infantry. That war, the first in history between rival communist movements, has already lasted about as long as the American war in Vietnam, and seems, if possible, even more excruciatingly difficult to resolve.

It is difficult enough, for that matter, just to get at the story of what has come to be called the Third Indochina War, not just because its causes and circumstances are so complex but also because both sides operate in a totalitarian tradition of secrecy, shielding their actions and policies from public view. For that reason, the thoroughness and coherence of Chanda's study become all the more impressive.

The author of *Brother Enemy* is a meticulous and diligent journalist who has reported on Indochina since the early 1970s for the respected Hong Kong-based magazine, *Far Eastern Economic Review.* During that time, Chanda has had unusual access to leaders and diplomatic observers in Hanoi and Peking, as well as in Washington and the noncommunist capitals of Southeast Asia. He was also able to visit the scenes of most of the important post-1975 events and to interview eyewitnesses, and he had many hours of conversation with one key actor in particular, Cambodia's Prince Norodom Sihanouk. Those labors have resulted in a comprehensive, authoritative, lucid and admirably balanced account, measured and persuasive in its judgments and thoroughly disproven by everything that followed our defeat. "Instead of being the cutting edge of Chinese Communist expansion in Asia that U.S. planners had anticipated," Chanda writes, "Vietnam has proved to be China's most bitter foe and rival. The Khmer Rouge, long believed to be Hanoi's tool, revealed themselves to be Vietnam's mortal enemy." And in the end the result became "one of the great ironies of history," as Chanda observes: "more than the United States it was China who lost the Vietnam war. The American pullout in 1975 seemed to bring about all the Chinese policymakers' nightmares about Vietnam—a strong, reunified Vietnam challenging China from the south in cahoots with China's bitter enemy in the north"—that is, the Soviet Union.

IF THE American leaders in the 1960s had had a clearer vision of the Asian realities, they might have seen Vietnam's war more clearly for what it was: a local struggle for mastery of Indochina, rather than a proxy East-West struggle for control of the entire region. And that might have led to a more accurate perception of the limited U.S. interests in Vietnam—interests that could not even come close to justifying the enormous cost of our

Army Dismissed Eight Women On Sex Charges

Military Police Accused Of Lesbian Activities

By JAMES FERON

Eight military policewomen stationed at West Point have been discharged from the Army for what officials said were homosexual activities, the United States Military Academy said today.

The women, who were not cadets, were "administratively discharged at various times during the summer," as investigations were completed, according to Col. John P. Yeagley, a West Point spokesman.

Most of the women were young, about 20 years old, and had served less than a year, he said. "In some cases, they had arrived here only a month or two before the investigation began."

Colonel Yeagley declined to comment on reports that some of the women claimed they were intimidated during the investigation, that they were forced to incriminate each other, and that some denied being lesbians but were discharged anyway.

Women Lived on Grounds

"The investigation included witnesses and other evidence," Colonel Yeagley said, and was not just a case of individual interviews. The women lived in barracks on the academy grounds and were the first, he said, to have been discharged under those circumstances.

There are about 800 soldiers at West Point, providing logistical and administrative requirements of the military academy. The military police company had 153 members, 35 of them women, before the eight accused were forced to leave.

The women were discharged under chapter 15 of Army regulation 635-200, which deals with separation as a result of homosexual activity. They were given general discharges under honorable conditions, which fall short of honorable discharges.

Army officials declined to provide details of the investigation, which was conducted by a contingent of the Ar-

Rain Delays the Making of an A

Keith Haring, the artist, on a ladder at Harle
park, Second Avenue and 128th Street in Manh
Parks Commissioner Henry J. Stern offere

2 Lawyers Assail

By JOSEPH P. FRIED

Lawyers for John A. Zaccaro and
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Film: 'Playing for Keeps,' A Rock-and-Roll Resort

By CARYN JAMES

In the genre of "Fame," "Playing for Keeps" is a movie about teenagers with a dream, backed by a soundtrack that aspires to the Top 40. In this case, three street kids from New York, wondering if there's life after high school, try to turn a broken-down country hotel into a rock-and-roll resort, a kind of hip Hilton where there are no parents to tell them to turn down the music.

In order to refresh this already-tired form, "Playing for Keeps" ought to have the visual sophistication of today's state-of-the-art music videos, or some ironic distance on the kids' dream to create a palace where there is "MTV in every room," including the Mick Jagger suite and the Prince suite. It can't get away with little-red-hen lines like, "Well, if we don't get that backhoe I guess we'll just have to dig that leach field ourselves."

The heroes are a too-perfectly balanced mix — a blue-eyed baseball slugger named Spikes, a musically talented black called Silk and an intense go-for-the dream type named Danny D'Angelo. And though the actors are appealing, they're too unformed to raise the film above its cliché-ridden script. Spikes is played by Matthew Penn, who is not related to Sean but has some of his just-into-manhood appeal. Leon W. Grant's Silk is a bit too eager, and Daniel Jordano, as Danny, acts out sincerity in every scene. They don't have the outrageous comic sense needed to save the scene where they masquerade as Boy Scouts and sell enough boxes of candy to pay off $8000 in back taxes.

Even though there are big names like Pete Townshend and Peter Frampton on the soundtrack, they're wasted on the unimaginative scenario. Phil Collins's sentimental "Don't Look Back (Hello, Goodbye)" is a straightforward comment on leaving home, heard while the heroes' red van drives out of the city. Sister Sledge's "Here to Stay" sounds tougher musically, but accompanies one of the film's mercifully brief stabs at choreography — a group of teen-agers dances up the side of a roof, carrying hammers and paint cans.

For all its superficial hipness, this is at heart a hokey film that never grows beyond the level of a kids' fantasy. The characters are playing grown-up, with a big house and a small town as props, but their dream is a slightly older version of children's wanting to be the Hardy Boys or Nancy Drew. You know they'll win over the belligerent townspeople and save the community from the bad businessmen who want to turn the land into a chemical waste dump.

"Playing for Keeps," which opened yesterday at the Loews State Twin and other theaters, is so low-budget innocuous that it resembles a below-average episode of the television series "Fame." It probably should have bypassed theaters altogether and gone directly to videotape or television, where its staleness might have been less conspicuous.

"Playing for Keeps" is rated PG-13. There is some strong language and a glimpse of nudity.

The Cast

PLAYING FOR KEEPS, directed by Bob Weinstein and Harvey Weinstein; screenplay by the Weinsteins and Jeremy Leven; director of photography, Eric Van Haren Noman; edited by Gary Karr and Sharyn Ross; music by George Acogny and Daniel Bechet; produced by Alan Brewer and the Weinsteins; released by Universal Pictures. At Loews State Twin, Broadway at 45th Street; Orpheum, 86th Street between Third Avenue and Lexington Avenue; Art Greenwich Twin, 12th Street and Seventh Avenue. Running time: 105 minutes. This film is rated PG-13.

Danny	Daniel Jordano
Spikes	Matthew Penn
Silk	Leon W. Grant
Chloe	Mary B. Ward
Tracy	Marisa Tomei
Steinberg	Jimmy Baio
Rockerfeller	Harold Gould
Marie	Kim Hauser
Cromwell	Robert Milli
Sheriff Billy Sullivan	John Randolf Jones

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of his own, or slightly change it, or anything like that. He *hated* that." According to Time magazine, on opening night of the play's 1961 tryout at the Bucks County Playhouse "Perelman was horrified to hear star Bert Lahr forgetting half his lines, filling in the gaps with Chinese proverbs of his own invention."

Obviously Perelman's satiric portrait of his father has offended John Lahr and caused him to bear the humorist an undying grudge.

DOROTHY HERRMANN
New York

John Lahr replies:

In Bert Lahr's household there certainly were names it was wise not to mention (F.D.R., Alan Schneider, Milton Berle), but S. J. Perelman's wasn't one of them. Dad always spoke respectfully of Perelman. I too harbor no grudge against him. I merely interpreted the facts Ms. Herrmann's biography provided, something she herself would not do. As my review states about Perelman's "Beauty Part," "Lahr thought the material the best he'd ever had." And his refusal to go to England with the show is noted in the review as "regrettable." If this sounds like a family vendetta, then gallstones are jewelry.

My criticism was not so much of Perelman as a writer (the review refers to him as "indisputably in the vanguard of modern

S. J. Perelman.

NYTBR Oct. 5, '86

American comic writers") but as a man. On the other hand, Ms. Herrmann may be a nice woman but she writes with her elbows.

Jean Gonick Defended

To the Editor:

I suspect that Marcia Froe
Coburn, the reviewer of
Gonick's "Mostly True C
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Eighties" (Sept. 14), was
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into the Stone Age" — as quoted in "Mission With LeMay," the General's 1965 autobiography, published soon after his retirement as Chief of Staff of the Air Force. The trouble, Mr. Coffey says, is that General LeMay didn't write the book; his collaborator, MacKinlay Kantor, did, and the general "failed to catch" the phrase in the manuscript. Surely some proof is in order, but none is forthcoming. Mr. Coffey doesn't quote General LeMay himself as denying the quotation, nor does he provide any documentation. We don't learn why 21 years elapsed before the Stone Age quotation was disowned.

• • •

"Iron Eagle" often ponders how a small-town Ohio boy from a dirt-poor family could reach the heights that Curt LeMay scaled. He worked his way through Ohio State University but flunked his senior year and had to go back three years later, after he became an Army Air Corps pilot, to earn his civil engineering degree. By hard work he got a reputation in the 1930's as the best navigator in the Air Corps, but he was still rated only an average pilot when World War II started just after he turned 35. He was then a major.

Like Herman Wouk's naval officer, Pug Henry, in the novels "The Winds of War" and "War and Remembrance," General LeMay had a way of turning up where the action was — for example, at the 1948 Berlin airlift and the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, when President Kennedy resisted the suggestion of General LeMay (now Air Force Chief of Staff) to invade Castro's island. In October 1942 he led one of the first bomb groups of B-17's to England and became known as a hard driver, tough but fair, who ordered his crews to prac-

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Lahr and Perelman

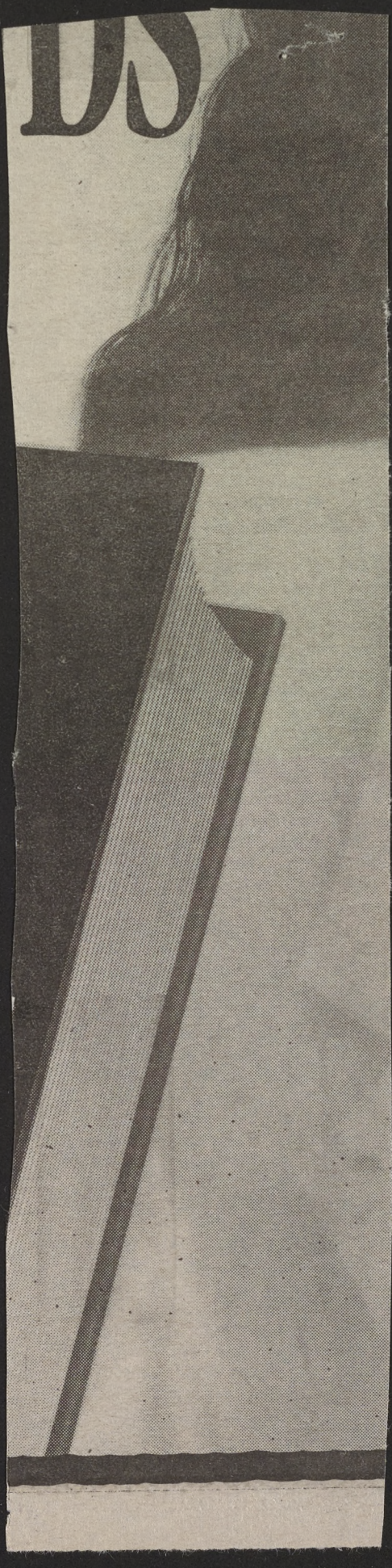
To the Editor:

John Lahr seems to be harboring a long-lingering resentment against S. J. Perelman on behalf of his father, the comedian Bert Lahr. As a result, he is incapable of judging the humorist's life and work with the impartiality of a professional critic.

In his review of my biography, "S. J. Perelman: A Life" (Sept. 7), John Lahr wrote that after his father refused to star in the English production of Perelman's 1962 play, "The Beauty Part," "Perelman turned on him in print." This is a distortion of the facts. The reason Bert Lahr at first declined to appear in the London production was that the English couldn't pay his price. In 1966 he agreed to star in it, however, after he was guaranteed the sum of over £500 a week, at the time the highest salary ever offered a performer on the English stage. But at the last minute the project collapsed, to both Lahr's and Perelman's disappointment.

A year later, S. J. Perelman wrote about his experiences working with Bert Lahr (whom he called Smiley Grimes) in a piece entitled "Dear Sir or Madam" in the June 3, 1967, New Yorker (later included in the collection "Baby, It's Cold Inside"). Most of the profile was devoted to a hilarious account of Bert Lahr's attempts to pick out a costume for his role as a female magazine editor, according to Perelman the first time the comedian had "ever played anything in drag." In the same piece Perelman accused Lahr of "wrenching my lines out of recognition." Evidently the comic's well-known habit of inventing his own dialogue had been a source of conflict between him and Perelman.

In an interview with the critic Marilyn Stasio, Noel Willman, the director of "The Beauty Part," noted: "Often, to Perelman's rage, [Bert Lahr] would suddenly take lines and change them. Perelman hated Lahr to change a line, or to substitute one

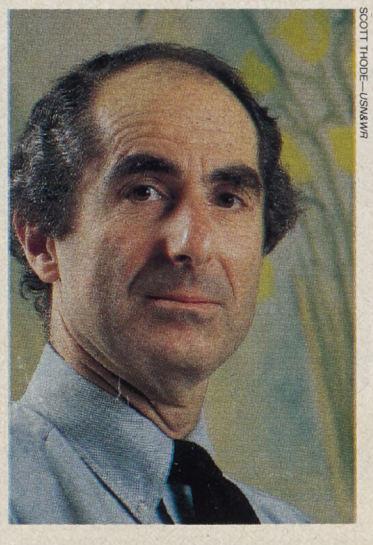


Philip Roth is one of this country's most distinguished novelists—and one of its most controversial. Called a comic genius by some critics, he has been attacked by others because of the obscenity and explicit sex in his work. Roth's newest book is *The Counterlife*

'Writers have a third eye'

I wouldn't want to live with a novelist: Writers are highly voyeuristic and indiscreet. But the writer should be no more ruthless with others than with himself. If he's indiscreet about others and discreet about himself, then it's a mug's game. The same intensity of focus should be turned inward as outward.

Needless to say, people get angry if they feel they've been misrepresented even if it's in fiction. As one of the characters in my new book says: It isn't that his brother the novelist used the facts; it's that he distorted them. What galls him most is where the line is thin between the invented and the real and everything has the most distorted meaning. I can understand how the relatives and friends of a novelist must feel.



SCOTT THODE—USN&WR

Struggling against shame

My colleague John Updike said very aptly in a memoir he wrote recently, "Shame is not for writers." He's right. It's not that one doesn't feel shame or that one is shameless, but it's to be struggled against.

Fiction has an obligation to be about those things that we're too ashamed to talk about with those we trust the most. It isn't a matter of what we're ashamed to say in public; why shouldn't we be ashamed to say things in public? Why should we make revelations to people who have nothing to do with us? But it's the things you don't even want to say to the people you trust that constitute a big portion of your real life. And I think fiction—at least my kind of fiction—is about that.

Writers always have a third eye that's watching, a third ear that's listening, a judge who seems to be working for the writer in you and isn't working for the husband, the lover, the son, the father that you happen to be. There is an act of self-removal writers are capable of that may look inhumane.

Self-renewal: "Leitmotif of middle age"

My new book is very much a work by a middle-aged writer. It is about "counterliving" in all its aspects. By that I mean the desire for renewal. In one way or another all the major characters are involved in the drama of self-renewal and transformation. The ideas of renewal and the possibility of change are a kind of leitmotif of middle age.

For me personally, the act of renewal does not come from changing my life in a dramatic way, as some of the main characters do. My renewal comes through abandoning the last book to go on to write a different kind of book. As I go through each of my books in my mind, I see a lot of abandonment of narrative positions—using up and discarding the way I tell a story, the way I seize hold of the material, dramatize it and use language. I salvage what I can from each book, and the rest is discarded.

The Counterlife feels like the most complex narrative position I've taken. I keep changing my angle of vision from book to book because I'm trying to sink my claws deeper into the material. In this book I decided to keep changing the angle within the book. The novel wanted to go every which way, and I let it, not knowing quite what was going to turn up. For a long time, I was in a deep state of confusion, uncertainty and frustration. That's par for the course in the first year of a book. But this was even more confusing than in the past.

After about a year I had this pile of what I could best call contradictory narratives, by no means really resembling the finished book. I thought: "Well, the confusion is the issue. Don't worry that the narratives contradict each other. The story seems better this way."

The form was both the most troubling and the most exhilarating element. The material you have; it sits there. Everybody in the subway has a subject they can write about. But what you do with the subject—how you treat the material—is what writing fiction is all about.

I'm very bad at guessing what the reaction to this book—or any book—will be. To begin with, when I'm writing, I studiously try not to think about that. In fact, it's very easy not to; I have my hands full just writing. When the book comes out I'm generally surprised by virtually every reaction—not because I'm innocent. I'm not. It is simply an astonishing phenomenon. The reactions are never quite what you think they will be. But you can assume that somebody is going to be scandalized by some element.

"You can't treat the new patient like the old one"

Writing every book has been difficult since I did the first—*Goodbye, Columbus.* Frustration has mostly been the problem. The writing all happens so slowly, and there's no way of forcing it. I've no desire to produce books any more quickly. It's just that you're carrying this thing with you all the time and you're not quite sure what it is you're carrying. You're sort of like a busboy in a restaurant, loaded up with dirty dishes—and blindfolded. The guy says, "Find the kitchen." Well, you may or may not have an accident on the way. If you get to the kitchen and get to the dishwasher, it's an enormous feat.

There is a typical process I follow in writing. I sit down and stick with it and put in regular hours and regular days. But each book throws up its own problems, and the previous book is not much help in solving the problems of the new one. In that way, writing is a

singular profession. Other professionals who have been doing their jobs diligently for 25 or 30 years aren't faced with that dilemma. When the dermatologist opens the door to his waiting room where there are 10 people, I imagine he feels that he can handle everything that's there. If he can't, then it probably can't be done, especially after 25 years or so of practice.

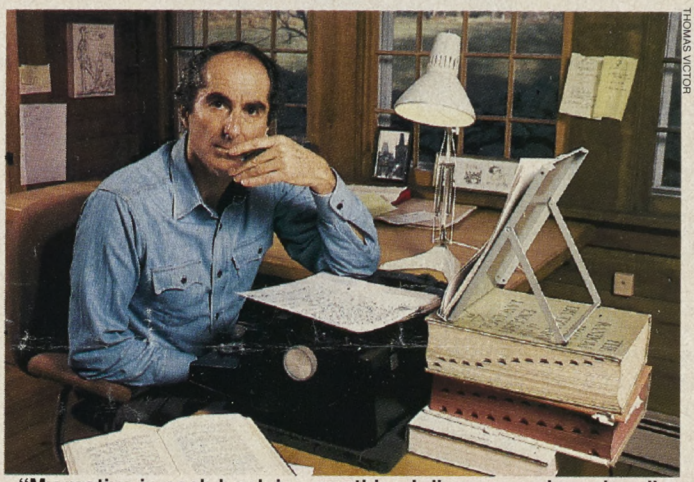
But, in writing, when you begin a new project you really get very little help from all you've done in the past. You're accustomed to the discipline. You know what your process is, and if you follow it you're probably going to get through. Aside from that, there's very little to go on, because in a way you're trying to throw off the way you did it before. You can't treat the new patient like the old one.

There are writers like Trollope who more or less did it the same way from book to book. I wouldn't disparage that. He was so confident in his perception; he had so much authority in his manner. But I, from book to book, have different motives that seem to require drastically different narrative positions.

"Feed the book"

My motive in each book is something I discover as I go along. It doesn't have to do with something I want to say; it has to do with the way I want to present things.

For instance, it only dawned on me along the way in this book that I was discussing at much greater length than ever before the relationship between two brothers. In fact, I never really had done that previously, touching upon it only glancingly in *Zuckerman Bound.* I said: "Well, then, this is a subject here. Go after it. Sink your teeth into it."



THOMAS VICTOR

"My motive in each book is something I discover as I go along"

In real life I do have a brother: He's five years older and a retired advertising man, who is now an artist in Chicago. But my relationship with him is nothing like the one between the brothers in the book.

It's interesting that when I was writing I suddenly discovered which of my friends had brothers. Normally, people tell you about their families and, by and large, you don't listen. But when I'm writing and have two brothers as characters, I listen when someone mentions his brother. Writing makes you a very good listener. Similarly, when you think you're going to write about Israel, then everything in the newspaper that's about Israel is alive to you, every Israeli you meet is of interest to you. You're voracious. You want everything to feed the book. Much does, and then you move on. It's amazing how little you care about who has a brother or who is an Israeli when the book is finished.

"Details you can take care of later"

I like solid ground under my feet when I write. Once I have that, then I can leap. Sometimes I invent something, and then luckily I meet somebody to whom it has happened. But generally I first have to read about it in a newspaper or in the *New England Journal of Medicine,* and then I think, "There's something there."

When I did *The Anatomy Lesson,* I went down and spent a day—from about 6 in the morning until the evening—with a surgeon. I just wanted to hang around and be sure I was getting things right. It isn't that I do research; mine is really after the fact. I spin the story out, not constrained by facts, and then frantically run around to find out if I made a terrible error. It lets me be freer. By and large, you can use your head and figure out if you've got it right or wrong because what you're involved with mostly is the sense of the event. The details you can take care of later.

When I finished this book I gave it to two English friends to read to see if I got the language of Britain right. I don't know in how many places the language was wrong. It can be something important, or it can be something small—such as the word "smart," which we use in America to mean clever or intelligent and they use to mean elegant. I had a British character say somebody was smart, meaning clever, and that wouldn't do.

"Power of a voice"

When I was a student, virtually every writer I read influenced me. As an undergraduate, I suppose the most telling book was *Catcher in the Rye.* I think in a way I discovered narrative voice by reading it and *Huckleberry Finn*—not that I wanted to copy either writer, but I discovered what the power of a voice was. Then in 1954, my last undergraduate year, I read *The Adventures of Augie March,* Saul Bellow's book, and that dazzled me. It seemed to me that Bellow had thrown off all the constraints. He wasn't bound by the academic sense of literature that I, for one, had begun to get into my head as an undergraduate. I suppose a few years later I thought Bernard Malamud's first short stories and his book *The Magic Barrel* were very special. He came at material that I vaguely had some sense of and brought it to life in a completely original way.

The arguments, personalities and language of Bellow and Malamud are very vivid to me. But how was I going to handle it? What approach to take? I saw in Bellow a very big approach, and I saw in Malamud another approach—not bigness but a very singular and extraordinary voice. I didn't care to imitate either man, but they certainly were powerful stimulants.

Then, as the years went by, others came to mean a great deal to me. I only came to read Kafka seriously in my late 20s. At about the same time, I began to read Céline. I could also mention James, Flaubert and Chekhov, all of whom have meant as much to me as a reader as they have as a writer. There is no separation between the two. One is always reading for the writer, and one is always reading as a writer.

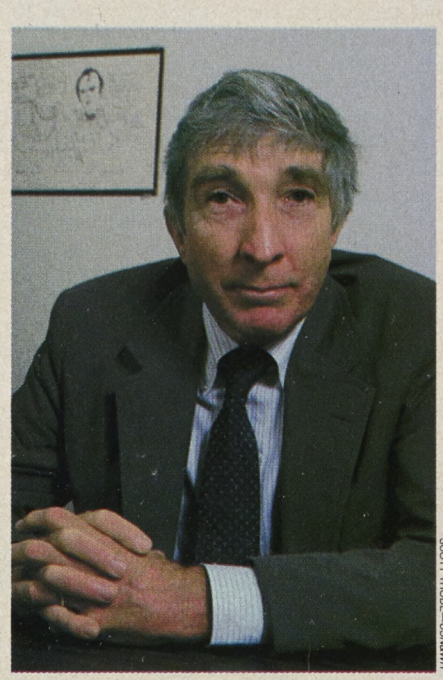
Conversation with Alvin P. Sanoff

A conversation with novelist John Updike, who talks about science, religion, growing up in Pennsylvania and writing. Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize for *Rabbit Is Rich,* Updike has just published his 30th book, *Roger's Version*

Writers 'are really servants of reality'

Tension between science and religion is a major theme of my new book. People who pretend the tension isn't there just haven't paid any attention to the history of science since the Middle Ages. Religious authorities have tried to combat every basic scientific fact about the cosmos; they correctly perceived the facts as a severe threat to the view of the universe their religions were constructed upon.

Science has made human beings feel less significant: It has diminished our faith. How could it not? It tells us that we're specks of organic matter on an obscure planet in the middle suburbs of a galaxy that's one among millions. Just the scale of the universe that has been revealed to us is truly daunting. If you try for a moment to internalize these numbers, it's very hard to see yourself as a hero or heroine of a cosmic drama—which is, after all, what the great religions tell us we are.



SCOTT THODE—USN&WR

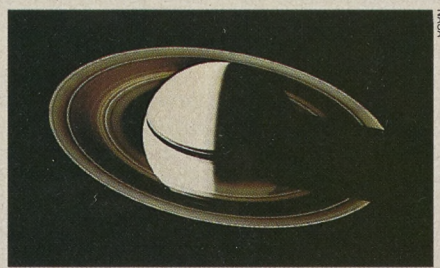
In the conflict between science and religion, I'm very much my father's son. He was a teacher of mathematics and a man of great hardheadedness, in a way, who believed that facts can't be ignored. On the other hand, he was also a churchgoing man of a certain piety. I seem to have inherited both strains, and they somewhat awkwardly coexist in me.

I do follow—maybe more than your average newspaper reader—the new developments in science. I think, for example, the entire Voyager sequence of photographs of planets is astounding. The close-up photographs of Jupiter, Saturn and now Uranus represent for me the most exciting intellectual adventure of the last 15 years. I'm interested in science aesthetically, really, and because it tells us who and where we are. We may not like what we're being told, but I don't think you can argue with it.

"I need a dose of church now and then"

At the same time I find that just to be human I really seem to need a dose of church now and then. I need some sort of otherworldly point of reference. I go to an Episcopal church about once every three weeks. I was raised as a Lutheran, and in a way every service that is not Lutheran seems a little strange to me.

But all church services have this wonderful element: People with other things to do get up on a Sunday morning, put on good clothes and assemble out of nothing but faith—some vague yen toward something larger. Simply as a human gathering I find it moving, reassuring and even inspiring. A church is a little like a novel in that both are saying there's something very important about being human.



NASA

Voyager photos: "The most exciting intellectual adventure" in 15 years

Insofar as I have Christian faith, it has helped me as a writer, keeping me from becoming unduly obsessed by commercial or critical success. Writing, after all, is an otherworldly thing to do—for rewards that may or may not be material. I try to write the best book I know how rather than to write a best seller. This, in a way, relates to having faith that things will work out, that there is purpose to your life. My purpose has become very Gutenbergian-text related. It enables me to function and to, I hope, not become too distracted by the accessory aspects of authorship—such as doing interviews.

There is danger for a writer in doing too many interviews. Too much talk can make you fatheaded: You get the idea that everything you say is worth being recorded and that you are in some sense a wise man and an interesting person. The more an author thinks of himself in that way, the less attentive he's going to be to the business of trying to transcribe reality.

We really are servants, basically, of reality, aren't we? We're trying to get a little piece of it into print. And so—partly to avoid more attention than I can absorb—I have spent my life in small towns where I'm more or less accepted as another citizen and householder and not made much of as a writer, as I might be if I lived in New York.

"Creativity should be, in a way, play"

An author today isn't the cultural superstar he once was. The middle class has, to a degree, phased out of reading and watches television instead. So there's no comparing the position of Saul Bellow to that of Sinclair Lewis or Ernest Hemingway in their heyday. The print culture is just more restrictive and academic—and the world of writers and readers somewhat smaller.

But I'm not complaining. Given these limits—and let's not kid ourselves that people have ever in great numbers rushed to books—I've been gratified by the number of readers my own books have reached. Maybe the lesser importance of the print world can be taken as an opportunity to do your own thing in a way that a superstar—the hot center of a culture—isn't allowed to: You are a bit in a side room. But within that side

room maybe you can be more honest and creative. Creativity should be, in a way, play. Perhaps you can have a little more fun if you're not asked to tote the bales of the society the way others, including Lewis and Theodore Dreiser, felt they should.

"A kind of magic" in youthful impressions

There's something about the impressions gathered in the first 18 or 20 years of life that I think have shaped almost all writers. There's a kind of magic that is very hard to attach to later impressions that you voluntarily attach to your first ones. The world is more wonderful to you. The people look bigger. The smells are sharper. The sights are more vivid. Also, a child sees a relatively unguarded world. The things around him aren't defending themselves against him.

Pennsylvania, where I spent my first 18 years, is a place of vivid impressions even after more than 30 years away. When I sit down to write about the area of my youth, somehow I'm excited by returning—if only in my mind—to those rather pedestrian streets. I grew up in the Reading area. It was a grand place—thriving downtown, factories pouring out smoke and textiles and steel and pretzels and beer. It was a town that made things. It was a muscular, semitough kind of place. Now the downtown is a sort of empty, sad shell.

I was brought up in two houses within one county. And so I've had a more stable early life than most young Americans now, when there's a lot more moving around and a kind of placelessness that you feel in fiction written by young people. There's not that sharp sense of locality that you get in the Southern writers, who—above all others—are regionally attached.

"I grew up in the Reading area. It was a town that made things—a muscular, semitough kind of place"

"I'm just a portrayer of the modern world"

My parents were very loving and encouraging, and if Freud is correct, those initial favorable impressions of the world stick with us a long time. So I have a kind of buoyant, optimistic nature. An optimistic person is perhaps better able to entertain pessimistic premises than somebody who is truly down. In other words, being somewhat up—from my name on—I'm able to look at the down side with the faith that maybe, in the end, up is stronger.

The people in my books are often driven by the wish to make connections, to explore their own potential, to be both safe and free at the same time. My characters are very fond of both safety and freedom, and yet the two things don't go together quite, so they're in a state of tension all the time. But I think of my novels as basically having happy endings. A book such as *Couples,* which was taken to be a distressing, ugly view of contemporary sexual behavior, was for me a kind of romantic book in which guy meets gal, guy gets gal against a background of the nuclear family breaking up. I didn't create this breaking up; it was in the society around me. After all, I'm not responsible for the modern world. I'm just a portrayer of it.

I don't claim to be a proponent of the nuclear family. I think a lot of horrible things were and are done within it. In relationships, I vote for mutual respect that recognizes that there are areas of each other that we cannot possess and that each person should be given the dignity of certain kinds of freedom—and that includes spouses. But in my own life I've not found any better way to live than within a family. It gives me stability, companionship and the basis I need to do my work.

"I distrust prolific writers"

Some people think of me as a prolific writer. I'm sorry that I give that impression, because I distrust prolific writers. I think that if they'd write half as much, they might be twice as good. I think of myself as writing at a stately pace—a few pages a day. That's really less than a thousand words—a very modest quota compared with that which many writers have set for themselves. Evelyn Waugh was once asked how long a novel should take, and he said, "Six weeks." I take about a year. It's really two years between conception and publication of a novel. Since I'm a bit of a book reviewer and still try to write short stories, I generally have something to produce in between.

I do try to be a steady producer. You don't live forever, after all, and you're not going to know what you can do unless you sit down and try to do it. You don't learn much by sitting and thinking about writing; it's really in the act of writing that the design—the figure in the carpet—emerges and your own real feelings come out and are allowed to shape imaginative stories.

You begin with some notion of the overall milieu. In a way it's less important to have the characters in mind than a setting—some feeling of the place you're going to be writing about or the thematic concern. You should know where you're headed—if not exactly the last sentence, at least the last paragraph or so. Otherwise a book will seem to not quite end. In the middle you must hope for the unexpected. You can't plan it in advance, because you don't exactly know what parts of your subconscious or your memory bank are warm and which are cold until you begin to dip into them.

Once embarked on a novel, I keep at it until truly frustrated. Otherwise I run the danger of not writing, which is rather pleasant. If I let not writing become a habit, it might be the way I proceed all the time. Occasionally I have to stop and do some more reading or rethink what I'm aiming at. But the general trend is to keep it rolling for this reason:

A novel is going to be consumed by a reader in a few days. He will be aware of things fitting, of characters behaving in a consistent way. He will also be aware of a kind of music that the images make together. If you work too slowly or over too long a period, it's harder to weave this music in. Your book is going to be more chunky, more in pieces, and this will be noticeable to the reader, who consumes it at a rate 100 times as fast as you wrote it.

Conversation with Alvin P. Sanoff

Books of The Times

By John Gross

THE STORY OF ENGLISH. By Robert McCrum, William Cran and Robert MacNeil. Illustrated. 384 pages. Elisabeth Sifton/Viking. $24.95.

WHERE might you hear someone speaking like this? "A no wahn a ting tu du wid yu bika yu kom ... lang taym an yu no kom luk fu Titi" — meaning, "I want nothing to do with you because you have not come for a long time to see Titi." Answer: in Nicaragua, among the Miskito Indians. And what exactly is this? "Oure vaader fho yarth ing heaveene, ee-hallowet bee t'naame." The opening of the Lord's Prayer in Yola, a form of speech used by the descendants of Anglo-Norman settlers in County Wexford, in the southeast corner of Ireland, that survived until the middle of the 19th century. And what do the two sentences have in common? They are both couched in varieties of English.

The reach of English is larger than that of any other language; the story of English is more complex. And Robert McCrum, William Cran and Robert MacNeil leave us in no doubt that it is a success story of astonishing proportions. "In AD 450," they write, "the odds against English becoming a world language were about a million to one." But what was once an acorn is now the mightiest of oaks; the language of an obscure Germanic tribe has developed into the mother tongue of some 350 million people, and we live in a world where if you eat too much *aisu-kurimu* (Japanese) you may not be able to get into your *tajt jeans* (Swedish).

"The Story of English" is a companion volume to the television series currently being shown on PBS, in which the three authors have all been closely involved — Mr. McCrum as originator and scriptwriter, Mr. Cran as executive producer, Mr. MacNeil as presenter and co-author; but though it has an unmistakable touch of television streamlining about it, it is very much a book in its own right. It covers a great deal of ground skillfully and economically, and manages to remain highly enjoyable at the same time.

The main emphasis is on the way English has fanned out across the world, but there is nothing perfunctory about the treatment that the earlier history of the language receives. This is a work that offers hospitality to William Caxton, puzzling over which forms of English he should adopt as a printer ("And thus bytwene playn, rude, & curyous, I stande abasshed"), and Cab Calloway, singing the praises of "Mister Hepster's Jive Talk Dictionary." It finds room for the interplay between Anglo-Saxon and Old Norse, the spread of West African pidgin, and the Australian passion for abbreviations (including the case of the Australian woman who was overheard, or so it is claimed, discussing her hysterectomy — "she said she'd had a *hizzie* in the *hozzie*").

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In a compressed chronicle of this kind, clichés are hard to avoid; America enters World War I, and you know that you are going to be told about sauerkraut and "liberty cabbage." But on the whole the authors have done a good job of drawing on unhackneyed sources. Their account of Cockney, for example, quotes from a 16th-century diary written in a "London language" with characteristics startlingly close to those that can still be recognized, and from Herman Melville's representation of Cockney speech (a good deal more accurate than that of Dickens) in his novel "Omoo." They also tell the story, passed on to them by a contemporary Cockney, of the father who was reading a picture-book with his child: "That's an 'edgeog. It's really two words. Edge and og. They both start with an aitch."

In the interests of liveliness, the authors sometimes devote a disproportionate amount of space to anomalies or picturesque survivals. But at least this enables them to quote some eloquent observations we might otherwise never hear, like those of the 70-year-old woman living on an island off the South Carolina coast who still speaks the Creole language Gullah: "I can speak other language, but I love my Gullah language. If you disown that, you're disowning your parents. . . ."

"The Story of English" is stronger on narrative than analysis. "It is one of the iron laws of this story," the authors write, "that language is always on the move." In practice this means they tend to favor change for change's sake. True, they don't welcome absolutely every new development; one or two predictable targets, such as the doubletalk of the White House during Watergate, come in for routine denunciation. But for much of the time they seem to be arguing against an invisible opponent, a diehard pedant who believes that language can and should be permanently frozen.

No doubt such tiresome types exist; but they shouldn't be used as an excuse for disregarding the arguments in favor of stability and continuity (very different things from blind conservatism), or the arguments against changes that make for coarseness or shallowness or that add to the world's stock of inanity.

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The health of the language — which is not automatically guaranteed by its being "always on the move" — has, after all, been a recurrent concern of many of our greatest writers. But "The Story of English" confines itself, at best, to the criticisms of those contemporary journalists whom the authors call "the high priests of correct English usage," commentators like Edwin Newman and John Simon; and even then it doesn't make much of an attempt to engage with them. Can the tone of John Simon's writing about language really be called "anxious," for example? I would have said that it was rather robust.

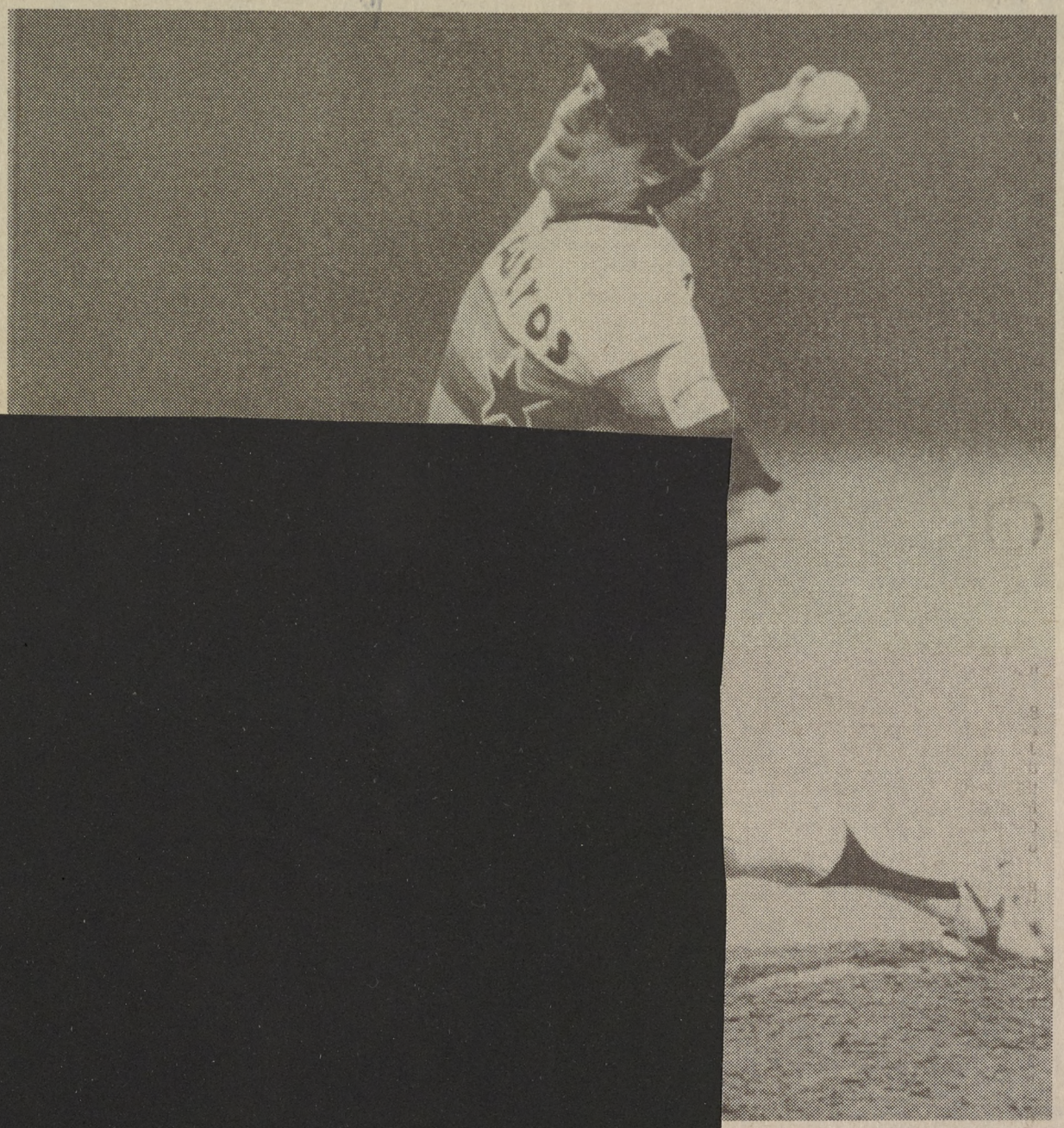
It would be a pity, then, if the underlying assumptions of "The Story of English" were regarded as being established beyond reasonable dispute. But with that proviso, the book provides a first-rate introduction to one of the most fascinating of subjects; and even readers who have outgrown the need for introductions will probably find that they have a lot to learn from it.

linch Title on No-Hitter by Scott

spoiling Scott's brilliance came in the eigth when following a walk to Phil Ouellette, Harry Spilman pinch-hit a sharp grounder toward second base, where Dickie Thon was able to field the ball and get the force at second base for the second out of the inning.

The final out of the inning came when Scott got Mike Aldrete, who spoiled Nolan Ryan's no-hit bid Tuesday, to hit a fly ball to deep centerfield, where Billy Hatcher caught the ball on the run just before he reached the fence.

The performance by Scott, who retired 19 successive batters during one stretch, capped a tremendous week of pitching by the Astros, whose staff has not received nearly as much publicity as that of the Mets. In their two previous outings Astro pitchers



Associated Press

t clinched the division title.

and Danny Heep doubled in two more runs as the Mets tied a team record with their 100th victory of the season. The 1969 Mets, who won the World Series, also won 100 games.

Hernandez singled off Ed Lynch (5-5).

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broadcasting systems or superstations that own baseball teams and carry their games across the country

NYTBR
Sept. 14, '86

Lett

The Present Tense

To the Editor:

Present-tense narrative — the subject of Ben Yagoda's essay "No Tense Like the Present" (Aug. 10) — has been an integral part of English fiction since its 18th-century origins in Samuel Richardson's "Pamela," in which Pamela's epistolary account of her master's indefatigable efforts at seduction captured the immediacy of continuing action. It was Richardson's contemporary Henry Fielding, however, who in his parody "Shamela" most memorably and adroitly mocked Richardson's manner (and matter): "Mrs. Jervis and I are just in bed, and the door unlocked; if my master should come — Odsbobs! I hear him just coming in at the door. *You see I write in the present tense.* . . . Well, he is in bed between us."

JOAN GLUCKAUF HAAHR
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No Tense Like the Present

NYTBR 8-10-86

By Ben Yagoda

NO attentive reader could fail to be aware that the present tense is in ascendancy. Jay McInerney's "Bright Lights, Big City," Italo Calvino's "Mr. Palomar," Margaret Atwood's "Handmaid's Tale," Bret Easton Ellis's "Less Than Zero," Carolyn Chute's "Beans of Egypt, Maine" and Richard Ford's "Sportswriter" — these are just some of the dozens of recent novels composed in the present. And it has become the norm for one sort of contemporary short story. To pick a single example, Marian Thurm's "Secrets" begins this way:

"There are four of us at the barbecue, two married couples. Eric, who is married to my younger sister, Lauren, and in charge of the chicken, accidentally tips a plateful of white meat into the grass. Eight pieces lie there, skin side down, and we stare at the patches streaked red with barbecue sauce, all of us momentarily horrified and unable to move. Then Eric takes up the garden hose and rinses each piece off delicately, with a fine spray of water."

The present tense was pretty much a novelty item until a half-dozen or so years ago, primarily because the fiction writer's most precious tool is the illusion that what he is describing actually happened. The past tense helps sweep us away in the story; the present tense subtly reminds us that it is artifice after all. Fairy tales, to name a prototypical kind of narrative, start "Once upon a time," and proceed in the past tense because their listeners insist on surrendering disbelief.

Where writers did haul out the present, it was

Continued on page 30

Ben Yagoda, a freelance writer, is the media critic for Philadelphia Magazine.

diverting the wages of sweepers and cleaners (for

majesty of Spain. Velázquez wore rich Milanese silver-point lace with the red badge of Santiago and a heavy gold chain enameled with the insignia of the order. His first biographer found him indistinguishable from the high nobility there. At least on this occasion, as Mr. Brown says, the artist had become his own work of art.

Velázquez returned from the French frontier on June 26 and took up the routine of his duties. On the last day of July "a burning sensation . . . obliged him to retire . . . to his apartments," and on Aug. 6, after a long sermon from the Archbishop of Tyre, he died.

Mr. Brown's conclusion is so wise that I plunder his uneven yet admirable book for one last enlightening formulation: "Rewards eventually came to Velázquez, and it must be accepted that he considered the price of fame and fortune to be worth the sacrifice of time for painting. But time was all that he sacrificed to his ambitions. Required by the consequences of his choice to paint but few pictures in the last decades of his life, he made every picture count in his quest to redefine the medium of which he was the unsurpassed master."

The Yale University Press has provided Mr. Brown

The Ultimate Interior Decorator

"Adolescent infatuation," he says, led Jonathan Brown, the Carroll and Milton Petrie Professor of Fine Arts at New York University, to become a student of Spanish art. He has written seven books on Spain's art and artists, "but Velázquez has always been my favorite," he said in a telephone interview from his home in Princeton, N.J.

SANDRA BROWN.

Jonathan Brown.

The core of his book "Velázquez" derives from eight lectures he gave as the Slade Professor of Fine Arts at Oxford University in 1982. While he was writing the final manuscript of the book two years later, "Las Meninas" was being restored in Madrid. "A grimy varnish had dulled the colors and the brushstrokes," Mr. Brown

In the book he puts Spanish painting "in a European perspective" that throws new light on Velázquez' place in art history. Spain dominated Europe politically and socially, but not in art, Mr. Brown said. Flemish painters were greatly admired by the Spaniards, and "Titian and the Venetian painters were coveted."

Half of "Velázquez" concerns the painter's role as he became King Philip IV's interior decorator, in which his accomplishment nearly equaled his achievement as an artist, Mr. Brown believes. Velázquez oversaw the formation of the royal collection, the greatest in Europe. He had little time for his art, yet his masterpieces

No Tense Like the Present

Continued from page 1

for quite specific ends. Most frequently, they have used what has been called the "historical present" to create a sense of immediacy. This is found in portentous March of Time documentaries ("Capone stays in hiding for three years") and in "Hamlet," when the Player, quoting from an imaginary drama, describes Priam's slaughter: "Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide, / But with the whiff and wind of his fell sword / Th' unnervéd father falls."

THE present can also serve to heighten the rhetorical quality of a work, to *emphasize* the artifice. Faulkner occasionally uses it this way, and so does Dickens. In the chapters of "Bleak House" narrated in the third person, he devised a taunting, compelling present-tense voice whose very tone flaunted a chilly contempt for society (and was so strong that the rest of the novel, narrated in the past tense by Esther Summerson, sometimes appears conventional almost to the point of tedium):

"My Lady Dedlock has returned to her house in town for a few days previous to her departure for Paris, where her ladyship intends to stay for some weeks, after which her movements are uncertain. The fashionable intelligence says so for the comfort of the Parisians, and it knows all fashionable things. To know things otherwise were to be unfashionable."

For Whitman, writing at about the same time, the present was one element of a very nearly biblical diction; it suggested that the events he described in "Song of Myself" did not merely *take* place, but were in a mysterious and transcendental way *taking* place: "The machinist rolls up his sleeves, the policeman travels his beat, the gate-keeper marks who pass, / The young fellow drives the express-wagon, (I love him, though I do not know him.)" Ring Lardner's narrators, like the ballplayer in "Alibi Ike," talk to us in the present, as does John Updike's supermarket checker in "A&P" ("In walks these three girls in bathing suits"), because that's the way uneducated people often tell a story.

Mr. Updike wrote "Rabbit, Run" and its sequels, "Rabbit Redux" and "Rabbit Is Rich," in the present as well. The tense suits the unmeditated life of his protagonist, Harry Angstrom; things *happen* to Harry, so fast that he's left bewildered. In Walker Percy's novel "The Moviegoer" and Joseph Heller's "Something Happened" we sense that the alienated narrators, Binx Bolling and Bob Slocum, speak in the present for similar reasons — to describe what has happened to them in the past tense would somehow be to imply that they've understood or accepted it.

Literary innovators, like Thomas Pynchon in "Gravity's Rainbow" and Calvino in "Mr. Palomar," have periodically been drawn to the present, for much the same reason that we describe dreams in that tense — to invoke a context distinct from everyday life. It can also stop us from contentedly lapping up the fiction as a "story." Donald Barthelme began "Alice" this way: "twirling around on my piano stool my head begins to swim my head begins to swim twirling around on my piano stool twirling around on my piano stool a dizzy spell eventuates twirling around on my piano stool I begin to feel dizzy twirling around on my piano stool."

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A writer who helped make the present tense fashionable is Ann Beattie. Ms. Beattie recently told me that she used it in the short stories she began publishing a dozen or so years ago, and continues to call upon it frequently, for no reason other than that she imagines her scenes so vividly; she merely puts down on paper what she's "literally seeing in front of my eyes."

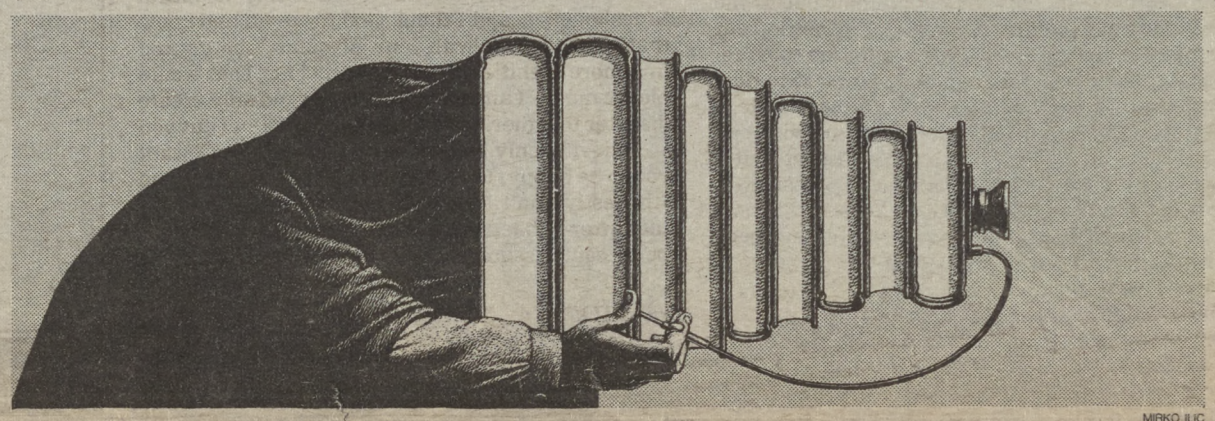
But that is not the whole story. If it were, so many other writers would not have picked up on her style. It is a whole school now, sometimes called "superrealists," short story writers and occasional novelists whose work tends to appear in the New Yorker: Frederick Barthelme, Elizabeth Tallent, Mary Robison, Bobbie Ann Mason and others. Once in a while these authors write in the past tense, but only, one senses, to make sure that it still works.

You need only read a film treatment (a literary form always composed in the present) to realize that a key influence on this school has been the movies. The present tense lends itself to dialogue, to scenes, to the impartial observation of detail, and not to Henry James style exegesis — circumstances not lost on a generation of authors that has spent more time looking at screens than pages.

Somewhat less obvious is the influence of journalism — specifically the New Journalism, that collection of stylistic and thematic concerns that has had so substantial an impact on nonfiction writing. The key man here is Tom Wolfe, who, beginning in the early 1960's, was drawn to *scenes*, and usually present-tense ones. From a 1964 Wolfe profile of Baby Jane Holzer:

"Inez, the maid, brings in lunch on a tray, one rare hamburger, one cheeseburger and a glass of tomato juice. Jane tastes the tomato juice. 'Oh, — !' she says. 'It's diet.' "

Mr. Wolfe went on to refine the technique, notably in his 1968 book "The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test," large chunks of which are in the present tense, and in the long article "Radical Chic: That Party at Lenny's," a present-tense account of a Black Panther benefit at Leonard Bernstein's apartment. And soon Mr. Wolfe's innovation began to trickle down to other journalists, who used it in less conscientious ways. Before long, the present tense became pro forma for slick magazine articles. In a recent issue of Us there were five celebrity profiles. All were written through present-tense scenes.



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Why did Mr. Wolfe's innovation prove to be so influential among both novelists and journalists? In "Simple & Direct: A Rhetoric for Writers," Jacques Barzun writes that "motion" is "the prime virtue of prose. Knowing the value of movement, some writers fall into the present tense to narrate events in the past." In the TV age of shortened attention spans, perhaps the main challenge of writing is keeping a reader's interest. These writers try to meet it by approximating movies and television in their very readable prose.

But the real power of this way of writing springs from what's implied and not explicitly stated. Mr. Wolfe made the remarkable discovery that journalism perpetrated in scenes, and especially present-tense ones, suggests through a peculiar equation that what's being described is *significant*. In his essay "The New Journalism," Mr. Wolfe said one of the genre's main techniques is the recording of what he called "status details": "everyday gestures, habits, manners, customs, styles of furniture, clothing, decoration, styles of traveling, eating, keeping house, modes of behaving toward children, servants, superiors, inferiors, peers, plus the various looks, glances, poses, styles of walking and other symbolic details that might exist within a scene." And so it is. The assumption that the reader will understand the significance of these details is unstated but all-important flattery. Yes, yes, we're supposed to nod to ourselves, we know exactly what *that's* all about.

Mr. Wolfe claimed that New Journalists borrowed this posture from 19th-century novelists. Now, 20th-century short-story writers are borrowing it from New Journalism. There is the same reliance on scenes, the same attention to status details (how many K Marts have we read about in Frederick Barthelme's and Bobbie Ann Mason's stories?) and seemingly trivial ones (like Marian Thurm's character washing off a piece of chicken).

Putting this style in the hands of many of the journalists who use it is like giving an atomic bomb to Kuwait: you immediately want to close your eyes and jump under the dining-room table. But even when used by a master such as Tom Wolfe, it is something of a shell game. To describe an event in the past tense means taking a kind of responsibility for it; the I-Am-a-Camera present tense gives the unearned illusion of pure objectivity. It also obscures a highly questionable assumption: that, merely because something occurred and a reporter happened to see it, it is significant. The writer implies that he knows more than he is saying, and that the reader is smart enough to understand it, implications that are more often than not unjustified.

In fiction, too, the recording without comment of status details allows the author to wink at the reader in their shared knowledgeability. But there are other effects as well. We know that the writer has *chosen* these details over everything else he could have invented; by presenting them, and not telling us What It All Means, he distills a kind of polymorphous irony. On the one hand, he implies that the events represent a pattern that the characters are endlessly repeating. At the same time, we are frequently given to understand that beneath the surface is something that cannot be said — a trauma, perhaps, like an incipient divorce, or a more general sense of desperation — and is all the more palpable for being unstated. (In this these writers are all descendants of Hemingway, who in "The Sun Also Rises" mocked himself through the character Bill Gorton's railing against "irony and pity." " 'Never mention that,' " Bill says when Jake Barnes talks about his "accident." " 'That's the sort of thing that can't be spoken of. That's what you ought to work up into a mystery.' ")

THE use of the present goes beyond technique to philosophy. Indeed, it can be seen as the logical last step in the progression of the kind of stories Chekhov and Joyce invented: stories that proceed on the assumption that expounding on meaning is no longer appropriate in fiction, rather that mundane circumstances (like washing off that soiled piece of chicken) can reveal a life in epiphany. The past tense assumes a belief in the possibility of interpretation, in the orderliness of the world, beliefs that are apparently ever harder to sustain in an age of randomness. All that these authors feel comfortable with is the cinematic presentation of data. They usually don't even give their characters last names — somehow, they wouldn't ring true, would sound too "fictional." By writing in the past, an author makes a tacit statement about his writing (it resembles the world); by writing in the present, he makes a tacit statement about the world (it resembles a movie, or a dream).

Such logic is certainly legitimate, and in the hands of the writers mentioned has produced outstanding work. Unfortunately, others use the technique without comprehending the underpinnings. They give us randomly and unimaginatively chosen details and events, signifying nothing.

Whitman tells us, "I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there," and we respect his moral and literary authority. Writers who gravitate toward the present tense don't seem to want that burden. They don't want to tell us what *happened*, no matter how urgently we want to be told. We want plots; they give us plot summaries, much like those we might find in the pages of TV Guide. This is not an illegitimate position to take. But sometimes it seems that they could try a little harder to pass beyond it. □

Science Fiction

By Gerald Jonas

"Infuriating" is the word for **KITEWORLD** by Keith Roberts (Arbor House, $15.95) — one of the best science fiction novels of recent years, with one of the worst "surprise" endings I have ever read. Mr. Roberts is the author of "Pavane," a brilliant alternative-history novel (set in a world in which the Spanish Armada defeated the English fleet in 1588), and "The Chalk Giants," a strong post-nuclear-holocaust story. "Kiteworld" is also set in a wounded world of survivors, a truncated England known as the Realm, controlled by a Church that itself controls the principal technology — huge kites that fly day and night along the borders of the Badlands, manned by observers who keep an eye out for Demons. As described in the Church's litany, these Demons sound like guided missiles of the previous era, now enshrined in a myth that dominates the lives of the inhabitants of the Realm.

If this comes across as an ironic comment on today's superpower standoff, I suppose it is, but "Kiteworld" has none of the thin, brittle quality of allegory. Mr. Roberts is interested in both character and process. His detailed explanations of how the kites work are integral to the gripping stories he tells of people like Kitecaptain Manning, whose beloved sister is mute (a sign of possible taint by "vapours" from the Badlands); and Kitecadet Raoul, marked by a Badlands encounter with a creature whose skin is an "almost translucent blue" and whose eyes glow not with "the hate he'd read about, but love; a horrifying, eternal love."

The inhabitants of the Realm are preoccupied with love in all its forms, including the perverse, and with love's inevitable concomitant, loss. Mr. Roberts's finest achievement is the Realm itself — a richly imagined paranoid culture with real enemies but fatally misdirected defenses. The plot line that holds the various stories together has to do with religious and political conflicts, but most of these take place offstage, and why the author thought it necessary to resolve this plot with an unbelievable *deus ex machina* is beyond me. But that finale takes up only three pages, and however disappointng the ending, I urge readers not to deprive themselves of the extraordinary pleasures to be found in the first 285 pages.

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TRIAD by Sheila Finch (Bantam, Paper, $3.50) begins as a routine alien puzzle story. Are the vaguely humanoid Omareemeeans sentient? Why do they keep changing their color with the seasons? Why is their language so hard to decipher? And if they have no technology, who wrecked the large alien spaceship on their planet? The human crew that tries to answer these questions comes from an Earth dominated by women, run by computers and subservient to the never seen but enormously powerful aliens known as the Sagittans. I am giving nothing away to note that far more is at stake here than meets the eye, or ear.

The unraveling of the mystery offers genuine surprises for the careful reader. Sheila Finch writes persuasively about the controlled use of mind-altering drugs to gain insight into a nonhuman culture, and she provides a fascinating scientific commentary on the traditionally religious category of innocence. This is an intelligent book about the fruitful interplay between intelligence and emotion. It is also a playful gloss on such science fiction classics as Arthur C. Clarke's "2001," Samuel R. Delany's "Babel-17" and C. S. Lewis's "Perelandra." All in all, a highly satisfying performance by an author whose previous work was unknown to me.

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If Kurt Vonnegut had collaborated with Jonathan Schell on an antinuclear novel, the result might be **THIS IS THE WAY THE WORLD ENDS** (Holt, $18.95). This is Armageddon once over lightly, a flippant tour through the inanities of mutual assured destruction. The book was actually written by James Morrow, a novelist who lives in Pennsylvania with his wife and daughter. The antihero of the book, a 35-year-old tombstone engraver named George Paxton, has a wife and a daughter, but they are atomized in Chapter Five, along with most of humanity, and Paxton and a handful of other survivors are made to stand trial for the extinction of the species.

Paxton is a kind of Everyman, representing all the ordinary people who failed to speak out against the impending holocaust. The prosecutor, judge and jury are representatives of the "unadmitted," unborn people whose future lives were rendered null by the final nuclear exchange. The trial, which is described in great detail, gives Mr. Morrow an opportunity to summarize the arguments for and against disarmament, and to his credit, he manages to make *both* sides sound more sensible than the average newspaper editorial on the subject. If propaganda with a smile (and a good cry or two) does not raise your hackles, if you think that the end

BARTEK MALYSA

of the world is a subject more fit for soap opera than for tragedy, if you have trouble distinguishing throw-weight from kill-capacity, this might be the book for you.

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As one might expect from the woman who signs her science fiction James Tiptree Jr., **THE STARRY RIFT** (Tor, $14.95) is a tricky piece of work. On one level, it presents itself as a latter-day space opera, replete with daring heroes, plucky heroines, nasty villains, inscrutable aliens, nonstop interstellar action, life-saving (and life-threatening) technology and a general air of wide-eyed wonder at the vast playground we call the universe. At the same time, the author has placed all this familiar material in a series of narrative boxes within boxes, so the space operatics are viewed through layers of distancing devices, fictionalized reports of transcribed tapes of official debriefings and so on.

Curiously, this apparatus serves an entirely different purpose in science fiction than it does in contemporary experimental fiction. Instead of drawing attention to the story as linguistic artifact, it adds verisimilitude by solving one of the oldest problems of far-future narration — how to fill in the reader on indispensable background information without cluttering up the telling with facts that the characters already know. Mr. Tiptree is aware that when people talk into machines, they not only speak more slowly and formally, they typically rehearse familiar knowledge, as if to make sure that the doubly distanced auditor (removed in time and in space) doesn't miss anything. Reading "The Starry Rift" is like listening to a long message left on an answering machine, telling you what someone did on an action-packed trip to the other side of the galaxy. □

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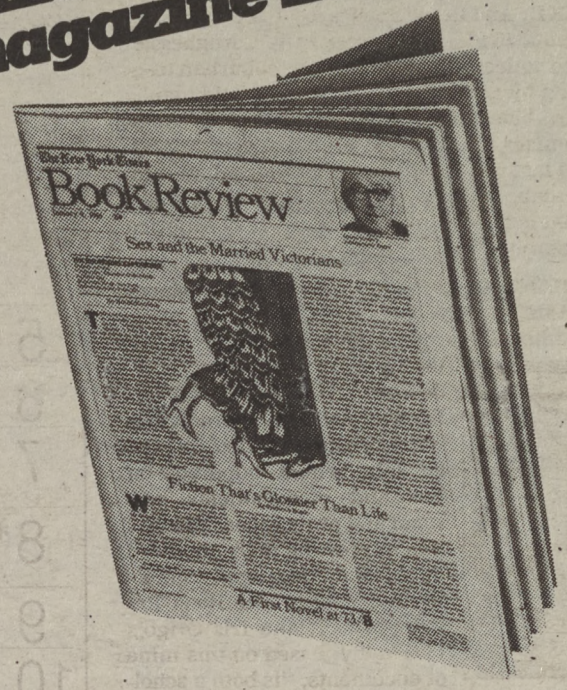

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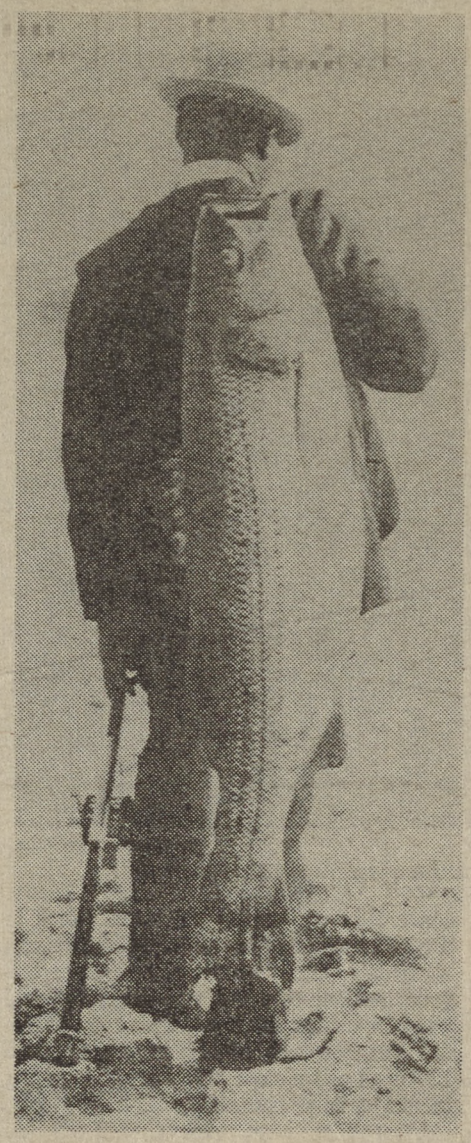
Zen and The Art Of Fishing

NINE-HEADED DRAGON RIVER
Zen Journals, 1969-1982
By Peter Matthiessen
Shambhala. 288 pp. $16.95

MEN'S LIVES
The Surfmen and Baymen Of the South Fork
By Peter Matthiessen
Random House. 339 pp. $29.95

By Duncan Spencer



FROM "MEN'S LIVES"

PHOTOGRAPH BY DANNY LYON FROM "MEN'S LIVES"

© BY HANS TEENSMA

Peter Matthiessen

PETER MATTHIESSEN is a prodigious purveyor of expertise. He imports it, he discovers it, he revels in it. Turtle fishing? Just check into *Far Tortuga,* a previous work of fiction. Himalayan travel? There's the award winning *The Snow Leopard.* And of course if you like white sharks, you'll love *Blue Meridian.* The point is that Matthiessen is a writer with a great deal of confidence. Who else can bring out a book from either side of the world examining two states of art in the same year?

Nine-Headed Dragon River is a book about Zen. Zen, which is short for Zen Buddhism and short, too, for "*zazen*" which means sitting meditation, and which is the most familiar expression of it to us Westerners, did not die with the '60s. It just dropped out of sight, where it is probably a good deal more comfortable.

Men's Lives is a book about the indigenous fishermen of the far eastern tip of Long Island, a part of the world now dominated by the superwealthy of New York. The remaining fishermen and clammers are the area's white trash, not to quibble about it; their natural prey is the white-fleshed striped bass.

Crude-spoken, sometimes offensive, sometimes anti-Semitic, always disreputable (to the increasingly upscale inhabitants who have claimed this New England-oriented part of Long Island), the fishermen, known as "Poseys" and "Bonakers" among themselves, depending on their relations and birthplace, are the salt of the earth to Matthiessen, who himself fished professionally—and later as a sideline—during the early '50s.

Both of these books are remarkable, memorable nonfiction. They are what nonfiction can be when the author lets his subject speak, and when he has gained enough knowledge to write with confidence about subjects which are not well known. Matthiessen's prose is as strong and pure as ever.

Take Zen. *Dragon River* is a Zen book, as the author warns, "A Zen book composed against the best instincts of its author, who has no business writing upon a subject so incompletely understood—far less a subject such as Zen which is fundamentally impossible to write *about.*" However, Matthiessen reports in the next sentence, he has practiced this intellectual's religion for 15 years; these are his journals, the diary of an amateur enthusiast and more than that, and he was introduced to Zen through the shared experience of the death of his wife Deborah Love from cancer. That death was tormented, as such things are in this country by lies, chemicals, radiation, drugs. ("I could not clear my nostrils of the stink of flowers in the cancer ward, the floor shine on that corridor of death," he writes.) Yet he and she were sustained by Zen.

He later went on a pilgrimage to Japan (which is the source of U.S. Zen, though itself a late inheritor of the religion from China and the Indian subcontinent) to meet and see the temples and the persons of great practitioners. Forty-eight pages of this journey are lifted straight from *Snow Leopard,* which was published in 1978 to wide acclaim.

His is the enthusiasm of the West for the East. He believes; he plunges into the lore; he longs for a great experience; he meditates, learning the painful "*zazen*" discipline of sitting absolutely still for hours; he tries to subdue his old weaknesses ("greed, anger and folly"), and for a time achieves a state of grace: "In the midmorning sittings, I become a sapling pine, warmed by the sun, swaying in the wind, inhaling wind, water, minerals, exhaling warm, fragrant amber resin. Tough roots budge subterranean rock, the trunk expands, sinewy limbs gather in sunlight far above, new needles shining in new sun, new wind, until the great pine is immovable, yet flexible and live, the taproot boring ever deeper into the earth. Then the tree evaporates and there is nothing, and nothing missing, only emptiness and light."

To many, Zen will always be an annoying import. They are truly foreign to the Western mind, these "nonlinear Eastern perceptions." These endless, sententious Haiku (three lines, 17 syllables) poems and veiled pronunciamentos: "All are nothing but flowers/ In a flowering universe."

Luckily, we have the profoundly Western mind of Matthiessen emptying out his notebooks in beautiful sentences, or else this book might be far more than anyone ever wanted to know about Zen. The link, and the theme which joins *Nine-Headed Dragon River* to *Men's Lives,* is the idea of personal discipline.

THE THOUGHT that work, the digging of flowerbeds, say, or the hauling of nets through the surf, is valuable in itself, and not just as a means to get something (flowers, fish) is what Matthiessen is really talking about in both books. With Zen, he is attempting to learn a discipline; with the disappearing fishermen of Long Island, he is celebrating a discipline now almost lost.

No one knows when the first nets were laid off the windy tip of Long Island or along that vast beach which stretches from Montauk to the end of the New York City subway line at Coney Island; but all that is left now is a small community of fishermen at Montauk, Amagansett, Springs, and Threemile Harbor, all just east of East Hampton. Matthiessen is their memorialist and advocate.

What's going on in that part of the world is that it has been "discovered." The glitter people have "discovered" the dunes, hardwoods, ponds, etc., and have bought them, leaving little room for the fishermen who have lived there, and their families before, for generations, since about 1660 when the place was settled by a band from the Massachusetts Bay colony. Matthiessen is a queer hybrid, a native to the place himself, yet certainly in any accounting would be considered a rare catch for dinner at one of the Hamptons' summer palaces.

What separates Matthiessen from the chorus of tree-huggers and whale-huggers and literary log-rollers now bewailing everything at the shoreline is that he has spent three years as a commercial fisherman (in the mid-'50s) and has lived the life. The result is that he knows the work, knows the people, and tells the story from their point of view. What gives this story edge is that the netters are considered almost outlaws by "sportsmen" who prefer to use rod and line to catch their "stripers." To the shallow view of summer people and the new squires of Long Island, the sportsmen are in the right, the "commercials" are despoilers.

Matthiessen is one of the American prose poets. He writes with apparent ease the most beautiful, flexible and simple descriptive passages. He is as good at description in his American way as D.H. Lawrence was in his English way. He uses language in its musical realm, and he never gets it wrong when he's talking about the ocean. When he discovers a whale skull in early December it is so: "The beautiful form, crouched like some ancient armored creature in the wash, seemed to await me. No one else was on the beach, which was clean of tracks. There was only the last cold fire of dusk, the white birds fleeing toward the darkness, the frosty foam whirling around the skull, seeking to regather it into the deeps."

But besides beauty, Matthiessen has something important to say. The fishermen he chronicles, like the Zen monks, are men in tune with nature, men who submit to its discipline, men to whom money is less important, and position almost incomprehensible; yet they have secrets—they are somehow blessed in their lives of hardship, their unceasing routines dictated by nature or custom. They are real, their work is real while we, perhaps, have lost our way. The monks of Zen are obscure, the fishermen are members of an unimportant underclass soon to be pushed aside by designers, architects, decorators and their clients, the important upper middle-class people who own things.

This is Matthiessen's hidden program, to celebrate the people from what he called in *Far Tortuga,* the "back time." They are the experts: the South Fork fishermen, for instance, who probably know more than the ecologists and scientists who study (and are baffled by) the striped bass, the Zen scholars who are seeking enlightenment in the dark before dawn.

And others who, knowingly or not, bow to Matthiessen's dictum (from *Dragon River)* that "The absurdity of a life that may well end before one understands it does not relieve one of the duty . . . to live it through as bravely and as generously as possible." ■

Duncan Spencer, the author of "Conversations With the Enemy: The Story of Pfc Robert Garwood," is at work on a study of social elites in Boston.

For Whom the Bell Tolled

AMERICAN COMMANDER IN SPAIN
Robert Hale Merriman and the Abraham Lincoln Brigade
By Marion Merriman and Warren Lerude
University of Nevada Press. 255 pp. $16.95

By Bernard Knox

PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE BOOK

Robert Hale Merriman, commander of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in 1937

THE SPANISH Civil War of 1936 to 1939 was not only a civil war, it was also a full-scale dress rehearsal for the European war of 1939 to 1945. It was a testing ground for new weapons—the Stuka divebomber and the 88mm. cannon, for example—and new tactics—German and Russian tank generals won their spurs in Spain. It was also an eerily exact preview of the lineup of national forces that were later to face each other on the battlefields of North Africa and Europe. The Nationalists had the massive backing of Fascist Italy and Germany, while on the Republican side, in addition to Russian tank specialists and pilots, there were volunteer formations of Frenchmen, Englishmen, Poles, Yugoslavs and Americans who, together with anti-Fascist German and Italian exiles, constituted the bulk of the five International Brigades of the Republican army.

The American unit, the Abraham Lincoln Battalion (sometimes referred to as the Lincoln Brigade), first went into action in Febrary 1937, under the command of a young man called Robert Merriman, a graduate student and instructor in economics at U.C. Berkeley. In 1935, together with his wife Marion, whom he had met and married at the University of Nevada, he went to Moscow on a traveling scholarship to study the Soviet system.

Like many young people in those years of the Depression, he was impressed by the Soviet claim that the U.S.S.R. had abolished unemployment; in the U.S. one third of the nation was unemployed and many of those who were employed worked in conditions hard to imagine today. In an automobile factory, for example, where Merriman worked for a while to supplement his Berkeley salary, workers were not allowed to leave the assembly line to urinate—they had to relieve themselves on the spot or wait until the end of the shift.

Residence in Moscow and travel in eastern Europe did not convert him to communism but did make him acutely aware of the growing strength and influence of the Fascist powers; Spain seemed to him, as to so many others, a place where Fascism might be given a decisive setback. Leaving his wife in Moscow, he went to Spain to offer his services; since he had completed the ROTC course at the University of Nevada and held a reserve commission in the U.S. Army, he was appointed second in command of the newly formed Lincoln Battalion, which was attached to the XVth International Brigade.

Just before the battalion went into action, its commander had to be removed as incompetent; Merriman was in command when the Americans played their part in the costly Jarama battles that blocked Franco's attempt to cut Madrid's lifeline to Valencia. They suffered heavy losses in what Ernest Hemingway later called an "idiotic, stupidly conceived and insanely executed attack in the hills above the Jarama River"; Merriman vigorously protested the orders from brigade headquarters but was overruled and went forward at the head of his men. When the battalion was withdrawn, there were 137 dead and almost 200 wounded, among them Merriman himself.

Later that year, recovered from his wound and promoted to chief of staff of the brigade, he was with the battalion in the bitter fighting at Belchite in Aragon, where he was wounded again, lightly this time, leading an assault and later in the winter fighting at Teruel. In March 1938 the Nationalists, reinforced by Italian regulars and equipped with new German artillery and planes, broke through the Republican front to reach the Mediterranean and cut the territory of the Republic into two separate zones. The Lincoln Battalion fought stubbornly but it was overrun and surrounded; when the survivors who had made their way out to safety were reunited, Merriman was not among them. He was never heard from again.

This book, written by his widow in collaboration with a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, is an account of Merriman's short life, based on her own memories and diaries, on the battle diaries of her husband which, with some presentiment of his death, he had handed over to her the last time she saw him alive, as well as on news dispatches (those of Ernest Hemingway to *The New York Times* for example) and eye-witness accounts by surviving members of the Lincoln Battalion. It is a striking portrait of an intellectual who displayed in dangerous action not only exemplary courage but a talent for command—the salient characteristics of Hemingway's Robert Jordan, the hero of *For Whom the Bell Tolls.*

BUT THE BOOK tells also another story: that of Marion herself. She did not stay behind in Moscow for long; when she received a cable, two months after her husband's departure—"Wounded; come at once"—she made her way to Spain in spite of the cold refusal of one-time friends at the U.S. Embassy in Paris to help her, and joined her husband at the hospital in Murcia. Once there she insisted on staying and was enrolled as a volunteer in the XVth Brigade with administrative duties.

She saw Madrid under bombardment and the corpses stacked in the ruined houses of Belchite; she gives vivid accounts of Hemingway and Dos Passos in Madrid and of life in the brigade hospitals and training centers. Later, sent back to the United States to help raise money for ambulances (the only form of aid to the Republic permitted under U.S. regulations) she heard the news that her husband was missing in action. In a pattern of protracted agony that was to be re-enacted later by wives of Americans reported missing in World War II, Korea and Vietnam, she lived for months between fears and hopes until finally there was no room left for either. Eventually she married again, raised a family of three sons and worked in the administration at Stanford University. When her second husband died she found herself at last able to write this moving book, which John Kenneth Galbraith, Merriman's fellow student at Berkeley, rightly calls "the story of the life and death of the first hero of World War II." ■

Bernard Knox fought in the French Battalion of the XIth International Brigade at Madrid in the winter of 1936.

The White Dove

Continued from page 3

with the tea things, for his second wife, a beautiful young American heiress, is tired at the end of pregnancy. Two prettily-frocked girls eat cakes. A cloud of servants hovers discreetly in the wings. Then the idyll shatters. A telegram arrives: Lord Lovell's beloved heir by his first marriage has been killed in France.

The family comes apart. Lord Lovell cuts himself off from his wife and children, taking instantly against his newborn son, retreating behind a wall of angry grief. Adeline consoles herself for her lost husband—first with her children, particularly her adored Richard, but then, gradually, with lovers. The two sisters, Isobel and Amy, find themselves growing up under the care of Bethan Jones, their devoted maid from the Rhonnda.

The White Dove, following in the line from Jane Austen to E.M. Forster and D.H. Lawrence, is a novel of two sisters. Isobel and Amy, particularly Amy, center the book, and Thomas handles deftly their contrasts and parallels. Isobel, the dutiful, conventional older child, makes the seemingly perfect match with a rising politician. Amy rebels: she goes to Communist Party meetings; she determines to make her life useful by becoming a nurse.

However, Peter, Isobel's husband, turns out to be less than perfect—a Nazi sympathizer and a sexual sadist who drives his wife to collapse. Amy seems more fortunate in love. At a Communist rally in London she meets the Welsh miners' union leader Nick Penry, whom she finds hostile but magnetic. Later she finds him again at Chance: the Depression has forced him to leave Wales, and he has taken a gardener's job to feed his wife and child back home. At Chance, Amy and Nick become lovers, and eventually she follows him to the Spanish Civil War.

THE PASSIONATE, rebellious peer's daughter, the Lawrentian working-class lover—these are familiar types. One of the comforting charms of *The White Dove* is that it is not original: it embraces the several genres of which it partakes. (This, however, is what distinguishes it from great bad books, which unite the conventional and the original.) One can recognize the pieces, yet still applaud Thomas' skill in assembling them. A few of the minor characters are especially well drawn. Adeline Lovell, an adoring mother and unabashed hedonist, and Richard, her flamboyant homosexual son, whose *roman à clef* scandalizes London and his father, are particular favorites.

But of the main characters in the novel, one can only say truthfully that one cares less about them than about what happens to them. This is not simply criticism: Thomas has real narrative talents which make the novel a page-turner. Catastrophes abound, at least one a chapter. There are countless deaths, a marital rape, an attempted infanticide, a suicide, and so on. All these events are gripping; several, most notably the mining explosion in the second chapter and the battle scenes in Spain, are powerfully written. Thomas is also fond of coincidence; in a sense she has to be if she is to braid two remote worlds together. Bethan Jones just happens to come from the same town as Nick Penry, where her mother, the town midwife, just happens to have delivered Nick's retarded child. This conveniently allows Amy to pay a visit and see the difficult reality of her lover's family situation.

But one must not cavil. Coincidence, after all, is in the best Dickensian tradition, and gives the little *frisson* one wants in a summer book. *The White Dove* is a delicious example of the Art of the High Obvious—perfect for the beach, the mountains, or, heaven forfend, a summer cold. ■