PEN American Center

NEWSLETTER

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Achebe and Tavernier Nominated for Next International P.E.N. President

SPRING NEWS & FEATURES

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At the 52nd International P.E.N. Congress in Maastricht, the Netherlands (May 7-12), the Assembly of Delegates will elect a new President of International P.E.N. to succeed the English novelist Francis King. The two candidates this year are Chinua Achebe of Nigeria and Rene Tavernier of France.

Chinua Achebe—whose candidacy is endorsed by the American Center—is a novelist, poet, essayist, and short story writer. One of his best-known books, *Things Fall Apart,* has been translated in 45 languages and has sold over two million copies in English. He has received numerous honors including eleven doctorates from universities in the United States, Britain, Canada, and Nigeria. Should Achebe win, he will be the first President from an African country and only the third non-European (proceeded in this regard by Arthur Miller and Mario Vargas Llosa).

Rene Tavernier is a poet, essayist, and translator. His collections of poems include *Questions au soleil levant* and he has translated the poems of the Nobel Prize-winner Czeslaw Milosz. He is winner of the Grand Prix de Poesie de l'Academie Francaise. Active in P.E.N. for many years, Tavernier is currently both President of the French Center and a Vice President of International P.E.N.

Candidates are nominated by individual Centers and each of the 88 Centers has one vote in the election. The Canadian (English-speaking) Center proposed Achebe; other Centers endorsing his candidacy include the Sydney, Perth, and Melbourne Centers in Australia, Basque, Belgium (Dutch-speaking), Chile, Denmark, England, Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic, Kurdish, Netherlands, Puerto Rico, Senegal, Serbian, Sweden, and USA/West. The Suisse Romande Center proposed Tavernier; Centers which have declared their support for him include Austria, Belgium (French-speaking), Croatian, Estonian, France, Ivory Coast, Philippines, Vietnamese Writers Abroad, and Writers in Exile.

On the following page we have published the two candidates' statements of intent. The summer issue of the Newsletter will carry a full report of the congress and the election results.

Karen Kennerly

Chinua Achebe

I wish to thank the (English-speaking) Canadian PEN for initiating my nomination, and the other Centers and individuals who gave early support to my candidacy for International President.

No matter how it goes, the nomination is a matter of serious moment and some pride to me. I must confess it took me quite by surprise when the first discreet inquiry reached me—it was coming from so far away! But I then realized that internationalism and annihilation of distance in literature were precisely what P.E.N. was created to serve. And I realized how quickly we forget that the values of the human spirit which it is our business as writers and artists to celebrate cannot be restrained behind walls and frontiers and jurisdictions. Like light itself they must travel far and travel fast and in every direction.

The international activity of P.E.N. has grown considerably in recent years, and I have nothing but praise for what has been done. What we must do now is to sustain the work and also coax it into those areas of the world where it has not yet begun or exists precariously like a small flame in rough winds. It is perhaps appropriate that I am seeking election in the same year that Nigeria—a major center of literary activity in Africa—is at last applying for a charter. I hope that the application will succeed and that the next few years will witness the emergence of many new Centers and the strengthening of existing ones in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern Europe.

Though the expansion of a good thing (and P.E.N. is clearly such a thing) is always desirable, it is also quite often attended by all kinds of problems concerning long- and short-term approaches and how to keep them consistent with fundamental objectives. In other words, while P.E.N. must speak to an increasingly universal (i.e., more not less, complex) membership, it cannot compromise on its stand that writers everywhere must be free to write; that those who live by the word may not be silenced or threatened by the sword. This is not a privilege writers seek to enjoy; it is the minimum requirement for the freedom of people everywhere in the modern world.

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René Tavernier

Dear Colleagues in the PEN Centers,

It is a P.E.N. tradition that a candidate for the International Presidency should make known his intentions. I will therefore do my best, without drawing up a program which would of necessity be incomplete and perhaps illusory, to define my objectives.

When I heard that, for health reasons, Francis King could not stand for a second term of office, I had no idea of myself becoming a candidate. Quite the contrary, knowing the importance and the value of the cultures of the Far East and their position in the contemporary landscape, knowing also that since 1945 there had been four Congresses notable in the history of P.E.N., in Japan and Korea, it seemed to me necessary that the Presidency of P.E.N. should fall to a writer from that region of the world. P.E.N. has had three International Vice-Presidents: Yasunari Kawabata (Nobel Prize winner), Mrs. Youn Sook Moh, and, in more recent years, Yasushi Inoue, who have given us valuable support.

However, when I approached the Japanese PEN Center they declined my proposal, a fact I regret deeply. I continue to hope, nevertheless, that in the near future we will have an Asian President.

It was in these circumstances that I decided to ask for your votes. In the course of my mandate, if you grant it to me, I will do my utmost to find a candidate from Asia or another continent who would be likely to obtain a consensus of support and carry out his Presidential functions in the best conditions. Such a candidate seems to me all the more necessary because tasks of great importance will have to be carried out in the course of the coming years. I will do my utmost to carry out these tasks to good effect, and I should like to define them here.

International P.E.N. must try to profit from the opportunities given to us by the opening up of Eastern Europe and must work, in particular, for the creation of a Center in the Soviet Union and for the normalization of the Centers, or the representation, of the Baltic countries. It must also pursue its struggle for human rights and freedom of expression, notably in Romania, Czechoslavakia, Cuba, and Vietnam, and in Turkey, the Middle East, North Africa, black Africa, and particularly South Africa.

It is my intention to take care that P.E.N. remains an organization of writers, and also a friendly club. Aggression, arrogance, and suspicion must disappear from our relations. The international cooperation which must be our ruling principle will be illustrated by literacy and cultural gatherings which I would like to strengthen as the focus of our activities and our attention; our initiatives on behalf of persecuted and imprisoned writers should not suffer.

To carry out such an ambitious mandate it seems to me indispensable to have participated over a number of years in the life of P.E.N. You know that this is so in my case since, as a member of P.E.N. for twenty-seven years, a member of the Executive Committee of French PEN since 1975, President of French PEN since 1979, an International Vice-President, and so on, I have been active and present at all the manifestations of our life together. I can show how much I have always been inspired since my earliest youth by a spirit of internationalism and an interest in the literature of all countries. During the course of the German occupation, I wanted to publish American writers and German writers (as well as French writers) banned by the Nazis. This literary activity has always been closely linked for me to the defense of freedom (and particularly freedom of expression), as proven by my intervention on behalf of Gertrude Stein, then living in France, for whom I procured false papers. As soon as peace returned I devoted myself to cultural dialogues on behalf of international organizations. For the rest I ask you to be good enough to consult the bibliography that has already been sent to you. In addition, I have just been named by France's Socialist prime minister to a second term on the National Consultative Commission for Human Rights.

The important thing is that P.E.N. should live and prosper, that this world association of writers, without historical precedent, should devote itself with renewed energy and unity to the fight against the perils by which culture and freedom are threatened. If you will grant me your confidence I will devote myself, to the best of my ability, to this end, inspired and guided by the great examples given to us by the famous writers who founded P.E.N. and have kept it alive to this day.

Great American Writers: Emily Dickinson

Second in a Series of Symposia, Held October 9, 1988, with Participants Amy Clampitt, John Hollander, Susan Stewart and Moderator Susan Sontag

Susan Sontag: The choice of Emily Dickinson is purely arbitrary, but of course, like many arbitrary things, it's a question of love. I personally think of Emily Dickinson as the greatest American poet. She has some competition, but that's how much I care about her work. We're lucky to have three poets to talk about her today. Amy Clampitt is an important and much-admired American poet. I'll mention her book *Archaic Figure,* published by Knopf in 1987. She is the editor of a forthcoming anthology, published by The Echo Press, of the poetry of John Donne.

Susan Stewart has published several volumes of poetry including *Yellow Stars and Ice,* published by Princeton University Press in 1981, and *The Hive,* published by the University of Georgia Press in 1987. Ms. Stewart is also a scholar and teacher. She teaches in the English Department at Temple University and has published two books that I admire very much—quite different and imaginative scholarly works, *Nonsense: Aspects of Intertextuality in Folklore and Literature,* published by Johns Hopkins University Press in 1979, and a remarkable book, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection,* published by Johns Hopkins in 1984. She's finishing a new book on the subject "crimes of writing."

John Hollander needs no introduction. He is one of America's great persons of letters, a marvelous poet, scholar, and teacher, from whom we've all learned, and whom I admire for all his various activities. He has published many books of poetry and many extraordinary works of criticism and literary theory. Because his bibliography is so long, he has given me permission to mention only the most recent books, a volume of poetry just out, *Harp Lake,* published by Knopf, and *Melodious Guile: On Pattern and Fiction in Poetry,* published by Yale University Press. Of course, he is a member of the English Department of Yale University.

The format today is simple and loose. The panelists will each speak, then speak among themselves, then respond to comments and questions. We'll start with Amy Clampitt, who has prepared a more formal statement, then have comments by Susan Stewart and John Hollander.

Amy Clampitt: We've agreed, the three of us, that Emily Dickinson is a very difficult poet. What I've tried to do is to approach her difficulty, hoping that will make a kind of sense. I'm going to begin with a letter she wrote in January 1850, when she was nineteen, to an uncle of hers, Joel Norcross. It was a long letter; I'm going to read just a part:

> Don't remember a letter I was to receive when you got back to Boston? How long or how broad? How high or deep it should be? How many cars it should sink or how many stages tip over, or the shaking of the earth when it rested? But you have sent my father a letter, so there remains no more but to fight. War, sir, my voice is for war! Would you like to try a duel, or is that too quiet to suit you? At any rate, I shall kill you. The last duel I fought didn't take but five minutes in all, the wrapping of the drape of his couch about him and lying down to pleasant dreams included. . . . Harm is one of those things that I always mean to keep clear of, but somehow my intentions and me don't chime as they ought, and people will get hit with stones that I throw at my neighbors' dogs. Not only hit, that is the least of the whole, they insist on blaming me instead of the stones, and tell me their heads ache. Why, it is the greatest piece of folly on record. It would do to go with the story I read. One man pointed a loaded gun at a man, and it shot him so he died, and the people threw the owner of the gun into prison, and afterwards hung him for murder, only another victim of the misunderstanding of society. . . .

Richard Sewell, in his biography of Emily Dickinson, sees that phrase, "only another victim of the misunderstanding of society," as the thing to focus on in this strange letter. It's easy to imagine that even as a young woman of nineteen, Emily Dickinson tended to scare people. She laughed in the wrong places. She raised the kind of question only a rebel or a misfit would raise. She had a wicked, irreverent imagination. Listen to this poem. It's number 61, written perhaps around 1859.*

> Papa above!
> Regard a Mouse
> O'erpowered by the Cat!
> Reserve within thy kingdom
> A "Mansion" for the Rat!
>
> Snug in seraphic Cupboards
> To nibble all the day,
> While unsuspecting Cycles
> Wheel solemnly away!

Or number 289, dated perhaps 1861:

> I know some lovely Houses off the Road
> A Robber'd like the look of —
> Wooden barred,
> And Windows hanging low,
> Inviting to —

*All Dickinson poetry is quoted from *The Complete Poetry of Emily Dickinson,* 3 vols., ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge, MA, and London: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 1979).

A Portico,
Where two could creep –
One – hand the Tools –
The other peep –
To make sure All's Asleep –
Old fashioned eyes –
Not easy to surprise!

How orderly the Kitchen'd look, by night,
With just a Clock –
But they could gag the Tick –
And Mice won't bark –
And so the Walls – don't tell –
None – will –

A pair of Spectacles ajar just stir –
An Almanac's aware –
Was it the Mat – winked,
Or a Nervous Star?
The Moon – slides down the stair,
To see who's there!

There's plunder – where –
Tankard, or Spoon –
Earring – or Stone –
A Watch – Some Ancient Brooch
To match the Grandmama –
Staid sleeping – there –

Day – rattles – too
Stealth's – slow –
The Sun has got as far
As the third Sycamore –
Screams Chanticleer
"Who's there"?

And Echoes – Trains away,
Sneer – "Where"!
While the old Couple, just astir,
Fancy the Sunrise – left the door ajar!

Now a somewhat later poem, number 754, which a lot of people have puzzled over. I thought of it when I came across the letter, especially the passage about the loaded gun:

My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun –
In Corners – till a Day
The owner passed – identified –
And carried Me away –

And now We roam in Sovereign Woods –
And now We hunt the Doe –
And every time I speak for Him –
The Mountains straight reply –

And do I smile, such cordial light
Upon the Valley glow –
It is as a Vesuvian face
Had let its pleasure through –

And when at Night – Our good Day done –
I guard My Master's Head –
'Tis better than the Eider-Duck's
Deep Pillow – to have shared –

To foe of his – I'm deadly foe –
None stir the second time –
On whom I lay a Yellow Eye –
Or an emphatic Thumb –

Though I than He – may longer live
He longer must – than I –
For I have but the power to kill,
Without – the power to die –

You can imagine the interpretations that "Loaded Gun" has given rise to. If it had been written in this century, it could almost, I think, be taken as a parody of these interpretations. But if it is parody, it occurred to me, might it be Emily Dickinson parodying herself, parodying one of her own poems?

Here is one whose tone is different but that seems to be about a similar experience, number 603:

He found my Being – set it up –
Adjusted it to place –
Then carved his name – upon it –
And bade it to the East

Be faithful – in his absence –
And he would come again –
With Equipage of Amber –
That time – to take it Home –

Like many other poems of Emily Dickinson, this might be read as a love poem, but it probably isn't or isn't only that. What you seem to have in this poem and in the "Loaded Gun" poem is something about perfect submission to a higher power. The line "To foe of his – I'm deadly foe" suggests how erotic feeling could be triggered into political or religious channels. In Dickinson's time, a lot of erotic feeling was being channeled into the evangelical revival: being born again, acknowledging Jesus as the redeemer of one's soul, being saved. It was happening all around her, and she couldn't go along with the program. It could be this obduracy in her own nature, which she regretted, that set her apart, that gave her the sense of being misunderstood by society. For me, the most interesting lines in the "Loaded Gun" poem are "It is as a Vesuvian face / Had let its pleasure through –." This sounds remarkably like Margaret Fuller writing her journal: "I feel all Italy blowing beneath the Saxon crust, and I shall burn to ashes if all this smoulders here much longer." The problem of feeling in excess of any available object is one you keep coming up against in these histories of nineteenth-century women who are articulate enough to tell us about it. I think of Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot, and in a different way, Dorothy Wordsworth. It's interesting to compare the problems of these women with what seems to be the trouble for Henry James, say, or T. S. Eliot. You can't imagine either of them being driven to write, as Emily Dickinson did, "You cannot fold a Flood – / And put it in a Drawer –." Her whole life seems to be made up of such hyperbolic extremes, the extremes of narrowness and immensity, of archcuteness and reaching for the sublime, the desire for fame and the withdrawal into solitude, as well as those extremes of maidenly timidity and swagger, the brandishing of that loaded gun.

From her letters, it's clear that Emily Dickinson took a great interest in war. In 1847, when she was a student

at Mount Holyoke, she wrote Austin, her brother: "Has the Mexican war terminated yet, and how? . . . Do you know of any nation about to besiege South Hadley?" In the letters she wrote during the Civil War, the tone is different. Here's part of one:

> Mrs. Adams had news of her boy today, from a wound at Annapolis. Telegram signed by Fraser Stearns, you remember him. Another died in October, from fever caught in the camp. Mrs. Adams herself is not risen from bed since then.

It has been pointed out that of all the poems we have in the chronology by Johnson, approximately half, 852 out of the 1,775, appear to have been written during the years from 1861 to 1865. Some of these refer directly to the fighting. Here is one, number 444:

> It feels a shame to be Alive –
> When Men so brave – are dead –
> One envies the Distinguished Dust –
> Permitted – such a Head –
>
> The Stone – that tells defending Whom
> This Spartan put away
> What little of Him we – possessed
> In Pawn for Liberty –
>
> The price is great – Sublimely paid –
> Do we deserve – a Thing –
> That lives – like Dollars – must be piled
> Before we may obtain?
>
> Are we that wait – sufficient worth –
> That such Enormous Pearl
> As life – dissolved be – for Us –
> In Battle's horrid Bowl?
>
> It may be – a Renown to live –
> I think the Men who die –
> Those unsustained – Saviors –
> Present Divinity –

I spent a year on the campus of Amherst College, where the best view is from the site of a memorial to the graduates who died in the First and Second World Wars, that is, wars about which Emily Dickinson knew nothing. I often sat there, on that war memorial, and perhaps that's the reason why, as I reread the poems a year or so ago, I began to be struck with how many were suffused with a consciousness of living in wartime. A number deal with wounds and weapons. Number 358 is one:

> If any sink, assure that this, now standing –
> Failed like Themselves – and conscious that it rose –
> Grew by the Fact, and not the Understanding
> How Weakness passed – or Force – arose –
>
> Tell that the Worst, is easy in a Moment –
> Dread, but the Whizzing, before the Ball –
> When the Ball enters, enters Silence –
> Dying – annuls the power to kill.

There are others on less directly related subjects that have, again, an undertone of carnage. This is number 656:

> The name – of it – is "Autumn" –
> The hue – of it – is Blood –
> An Artery – upon the Hill –
> A Vein – along the Road –
>
> Great Globules – in the Alleys –
> And Oh, the Shower of Stain –
> When Winds – upset the Basin –
> And spill the Scarlet Rain –
>
> It sprinkles Bonnets – far below –
> It gathers ruddy Pools –
> Then – eddies like a Rose – away –
> Upon Vermillion Wheels –

And here's another, number 658:

> Whole Gulfs – of Red, and Fleets – of Red –
> And Crews – of solid Blood –
> Did place about the West – Tonight –
> As 'twere specific Ground –
>
> And They – appointed Creatures –
> In Authorized Arrays –
> Due – promptly – as a Drama –
> That bows – and disappears –

I find it fascinating to see a recluse writing so repeatedly in theatrical terms. Here's another, number 595, with a theatrical metaphor, if it is a metaphor:

> Like Mighty Foot Lights – burned the Red
> At Bases of the Trees –
> The far Theatricals of Day
> Exhibiting – to These –
>
> 'Twas Universe – that did applaud –
> While Chiefest – of the Crowd –
> Enabled by his Royal Dress –
> Myself distinguished God –

There's a metaphysical grandeur here, and a vision of fame, like the one in Milton's "Lycidas": "Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil, / Nor in the glistering foil / Set off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies." It's clear that Emily Dickinson thought repeatedly about the extremes of fame and solitude, and how they might finally meet and become one, just as the very small and the infinite in her mind often seemed to be almost neighborly. In a couple of poems that appear nearly side by side in the Johnson chronology, we find her referring to "Great Clouds – like Ushers – leaning / Creation – looking on," and then to an oriole, "who sings the same, unheard, / As unto Crowd."

In the poem I'm going to conclude with, you find the same kind of thing, and also a sense of audience in dispersal, that reminds me of the ending of *The Tempest.* This is number 783. It would date to 1863, again the war years. But it's not about war:

> The Birds begun at Four o'clock –
> Their period for Dawn –
> A Music numerous as space –
> But neighboring as Noon –

I could not count their Force –
Their Voices did expend
As Brook by Brook bestows itself
To multiply the Pond.

Their Witnesses were not –
Except occasional man –
In homely industry arrayed –
To overtake the Morn –

Nor was it for applause –
That I could ascertain –
But independant Extasy
Of Deity and men –

By Six, the Flood had done –
No Tumult there had been
Of Dressing, or Departure –
And yet the Band was gone –

The sun engrossed the East –
The Day controlled the World –
The Miracle that introduced
Forgotten, as fulfilled.

That audience in dispersal: I think more might be said about that.

Susan Stewart: The thing that moves me most about Emily Dickinson is the great quarrel she had with God, and the way she, like Jacob, wrestled with an angel, and the angel lost. This sense of the spiritual in her work is always tied in with a sense of parody. It intrigues me that she used the hymn form as her dominant metrical form and even, in a letter to Higginson, referred to her work as "hymns." Of course a hymn as a communal form would not typically be sung so singly as we imagine Dickinson singing it. Also, in her work there's a kind of travesty of the idea of prayer. In one poem she says, "Of Course I prayed / And did God care?" and he didn't. I sometimes think of this poem, number 528, as another kind of emphatic prayer, demanding of God her status in the world:

Mine – by the Right of the White Election!
Mine – by the Royal Seal!
Mine – by the Sign in the Scarlet prison –
Bars – cannot conceal!

Mine – here – in Vision – and in Veto!
Mine – by the Grave's Repeal –
Titled – Confirmed –
Delirious Charter!
Mine – long as Ages steal!

That noisy prayer might be contrasted to this more quiet one, number 829, which we know as a prayer of sensuality:

Ample make this Bed –
Make this Bed with Awe –
In it wait till Judgment break
Excellent and Fair.

Be its Mattress straight –
Be its Pillow round –
Let no Sunrise' yellow noise
Interrupt this Ground –

I have to remember—because I was raised a Presbyterian—certain emphatic Calvinistic ideas in her work, like the idea of predestination, and her anger about predestination. To me the most vivid poem exemplifying that notion is number 910:

Experience is the Angled Road
Preferred against the Mind
By – Paradox – the Mind itself –
Presuming it to lead

Quite Opposite – How Complicate
The Discipline of Man –
Compelling Him to Choose Himself
His Preappointed Pain –

In this struggle, she saw the particular as her barb against the vastness of the universe. Some critics have pointed out the agoraphobic quality in her work. I see this in her references to the Civil War, in the overwhelming sense of the treading prisoner's feet that comes through, in many of the poems, with the relentlessness of a drum.

Sometimes we're dizzied by the vastness of space, as in number 1695:

There is a solitude of space
A solitude of sea
A solitude of death, but these
Society shall be
Compared with that profounder site
That polar privacy
A soul admitted to itself –
Finite infinity.

But sometimes, as we know, microscopes will do that; there's a dizzyingness in looking at the particularity of a word or the particularity of a thing in the world. One of the poems that gives me absolute vertigo is this one about the bee sinking in the sky, number 1343 (I think her bees, by the way, come out of John Bunyan's divine emblems and Isaac Watts's awful little buzzing bee, which Lewis Carroll made into a little crocodile):

A single Clover Plank
Was all that saved a Bee
A Bee I personally knew
From sinking in the sky –

'Twixt Firmament above
And Firmament below
The Billows of Circumference
Were sweeping him away –

The idly swaying Plank
Responsible to nought
A sudden Freight of Wind assumed
And Bumble Bee was not –

This harrowing event
Transpiring in the Grass
Did not so much as wring from him
A wandering "Alas" –

As often, there's a kind of coy ending, but we are swaying with the bumblebee up until the fourth stanza.

I was thinking about this idea of the word as a mediating quality in her work: a word we hang onto or grasp. Because one of my favorite poems, Elizabeth Bishop's "At

the Fishhouses" relies so heavily on the meter of "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"—to which you can also sing the poem "Much Madness is divinest Sense," by the way—I was remembering how the idea of the word comes through there. You might remember the climax of Martin Luther's hymn: "The Prince of Darkness grim / We tremble not for him / His rage we can endure / For lo! His doom is sure / One little word shall fell him." The word has this import in Emily Dickinson's work. Her work relies on the lexical level more than on rhetoric of the phrase or even, although she emphasized syntax often in her letters, more than on syntax. I think her poems are often saved by a word, specifically by words having to do with things. I made a list of some of the things I like in her poems, literally things. I'll read it as a kind of poem: "the wampum of the night," such a great American phrase; brooms and aprons coming across over and over again, especially the idea of staining her apron, or staining her domesticity, as a kind of sexual image. She knew the difference in texture from rough to fine; among muslin, broadcloth, and organdy. She talks about a soul "placing pins," as in a cloth. We have an echo of Ben Newton marking up her copy of Emerson in her notion of "little workmanships," of marking texts in their margins. She ties her hat, creases her shawls. There's this beautiful picture in number 529—one of her only social poems, I think—of people in the neighborhood haying:

I'm sorry for the Dead — Today —
[usually she's not sorry for the dead]
It's such congenial times
Old Neighbors have at fences —
It's time o' year for Hay.

And Broad — Sunburned Acquaintance
Discourse between the Toil —
And laugh, a homely species
That makes the Fences smile —

It seems so straight to lie away
From all the noise of Fields —
The Busy Carts — the fragrant Cocks —
The Mower's Metre — Steals

A Trouble lest they're homesick —
Those Farmers — and their Wives —
Set separate from the Farming —
And all the Neighbors' lives —

A Wonder if the Sepulchre
Don't feel a lonesone way —
When Men — and Boys — and Carts — and June,
Go down the Fields to "Hay" —

There are also balloons and ether, porcelain in many of the poems, staples, leaden sieves. Of course we remember her metaphor for snow: "a goblin with a gauge." There is "As if my life were shaven, and fitted with a frame," an image I think she took from Robert Browning's "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came." There's "You cannot solder an abyss with air," the railroad, a revolver, insulators, brass, sponges and buckets, hoppers in the mills, gifts of screws, and electricity. I wanted to end talking about these material things vis-à-vis the relationship of the house to the body or, in general, the construction of the soul. There are two complementary poems on that subject. One is an amazing poem about ruins. Aside from what Lord Kames said about ruins, this (number 997) is the best comment on the subject in the history of literature:

Dickinson had a great quarrel with God. Like Jacob, she wrestled with an angel, and the angel lost.

Crumbling is not an instant's Act
A fundamental pause
Dilapidation's processes
Are organized Decays.

'Tis first a Cobweb on the Soul
A Cuticle of Dust
A Borer in the Axis
An Elemental Rust —

Ruin is formal — Devil's work
Consecutive and slow —
Fail in an instant, no man did
Slipping — is Crash's law.

That's the ruin, and here's the house (number 1142):

The Props assist the House
Until the House is built
And then the Props withdraw
And adequate, erect,
The House support itself
And cease to recollect
The Auger and the Carpenter —
Just such a retrospect
Hath the perfected Life —
A past of Plank and Nail
And slowness — then the Scaffolds drop
Affirming it a Soul.

I suppose that's our Gloucester on the cliff: once again the sense of an abyss.

John Hollander: So many interesting things have been said that I could easily just talk about how interesting they were with respect to this remarkable body of work. What I thought I would talk about for a little is how difficult a poet Emily Dickinson is. I think of the two most difficult poets of the nineteenth century, who make Mallarmé look like Carl Sandburg. One is Browning—there is at most one very good book on Browning's poetry in the hundreds and hundreds of books churned out by the academic mills. He's too hard. Another is Dickinson. Whitman is also a very hard poet, but one of the ways he's hard is that he looks so easy; and so there is endless jabber about Whitman by people who can't really read him. Dickinson is very hard, but we all know this all the time. I thought I would talk about the kinds of difficulty we have. Susan Stewart commented on the fact that one thing does appear to be easy: these are all hymn meter. To be more precise, in the hymnal there are several meters. This one, called common meter, is also the ballad stanza: "Da-dum da-dum da-dum da-dum, Da-dum da-dum da-dum." It is also the meter in which Isaac Watts wrote his little cautionary

verses and into which he translated the Psalms. Since the middle of the sixteenth century, when the Psalms were put into English, the metrical versions of the Psalter have all been a kind of equivalent of Luther's chorales for a congregation singing. They were put into common meter. The other one, "Da-dum da-dum da-dum da-dum, Da-dum da-dum da-dum da-dum," etc. is called long meter, and there are a lot of hymns in it as well. But it's specifically the common meter that Dickinson adopts, not just because it's from hymnody but perhaps because of its association with popular balladry as well. The amazing array of kinds of poems she writes seems to me a difficulty first off. We might ask: What sort of book is it that is composed of *all* these poems? One of the trivial difficulties is with the text as we have it. We have been forced by her academic guardians to take everything as it came out of her pen in the fascicles. But these are not in any plausible way to be thought of as little books: there is absolutely no way of deriving any sort of pattern for their construction. The editor of these, Ralph Franklin, a learned scholar and shrewd reader, has been over them many times and assures us of this. Then also, we are stuck with those dashes—those things that are reproduced as dashes. They are not punctuation. The poems are not punctuated. One of the things we have to do is punctuate the poems for ourselves when we read them; and sometimes construing the inordinately difficult syntax entails erasing the dashes and putting in syntactical marks. For example, very often we can't tell whether a phrase is appositive to another one or simply followed in a strange paratactic way by the next remark. Sometimes we have appallingly difficult Latin syntax—which is interesting, something we aren't told to expect: "His mind of man, a secret makes." That's Latin, not English. "Man makes of his mind a secret" or "Man's mind makes a secret of him." Punctuation wouldn't resolve that, but it would a lot of other things, particularly appositive phrases. And often, in the middle of a stanza, we have a very clear sentence break. Amy Clampitt read "The Props assist the House" quite correctly with a sentence break right in the middle of a stanza: "The Auger and the Carpenter. Just such a retrospect."

Also, very often, stanzas are enjambed. Sometimes she writes them out that way, sometimes she doesn't. Sometimes she writes out the poem so that if you didn't have an ear you could say, "Oh, this is in a different experimental form." But it isn't: she's simply written out two halves of the four-beat line as two separate lines, for example. People do write things out in tentative form all the time. I was thinking of that wonderful poem (number 520):

> I started Early – Took my Dog –
> And visited the Sea –
> The Mermaids in the Basement
> Came out to look at me –

And then in the fifth stanza:

> And He – followed – close behind –
> I felt His Silver Heel
> Upon my Ankle – Then my Shoes
> Would overflow with Pearl –

Now dashes are placed in random fashion: they encode the whole hierarchy of stops and conjunctions. Yet I've been making a selection of Dickinson poems for an anthology with some kind of quasi-official status, and I was forbidden on pain of death by the scholarly establishment from repunctuating. Sometimes it's because the poems themselves are so difficult that we have to punctuate them one way to resolve them. (For instance, take the last two lines of "Crumbling is not an instant's Act": to make sense out of them we have to punctuate thus: "Fail in an instant?—no man did: / Slipping is crash's law.") This can make difficulties of another sort, because I'm sure that attentive and loving readers of Dickinson's poetry will absolutely and firmly disagree as to the reading of an ambiguous passage that could go either way (but most often not, as in Shakespeare's sonnets, both ways at once). You have to have a very strong sense of what the poem is and what it's doing to be able to resolve these matters of syntax.

The fact of the Civil War is crucial to the life that surrounds this poetry, and some poems allude to it specifically—a lot of the poetry is written under the pressure of the Civil War. (Shira Wolsky has written a fine book about this.) Dickinson's sense of the war came about because of what she had observed from some translations into German. We are very lucky about Dickinson in one regard—this occasionally happens: a very great poet has translated her into German. Paul Celan did his own versions of a number of Dickinson poems, and the angle of vision he had on them converged with hers—there was a sense of war and holocaust behind them; also her complicated estrangement from Calvinist tradition and, in his case, a kind of antithetical Judaic awareness. So he was able to take a poem that is certainly *of* war, number 301:

> I reason, Earth is short –
> And Anguish – absolute –
> And many hurt,
> But, what of that?

It's her only poem, I think with a refrain.

> I reason, we could die –
> The best Vitality
> Cannot excel Decay,
> But, what of that?
>
> I reason, that in Heaven –
> Somehow, it will be even –
> Some new Equation, given –
> But, what of that?

He translates that refrain *"ja und?"* The first stanza goes:

> Ich denk: Dies währt nicht lang,
> *ein* Ding ist, es heisst Bang,
> und weh tut Hand um Hand –
> ja und?

His sense of the cadences and his presentation of the slant rhymes are uncanny, remarkable. (And the ongoing present tense of "Im Garten Eden / Ist alles wieder eben" for the more Calvinistic "I reason that in Heaven – / Somehow, it will be given" manifests the distance, as well as the analogy, between the two poets' problematic senses of redemption.) And yet—and yet—I find myself not understanding a reading of the "Loaded Gun" that would make it a war poem. It doesn't seem to me to have anything to do with the war. The loaded gun is not a mili-

tary gun, it's a hunting weapon standing in the corner of the room. This seems to me a poem about being an agency of poetic utterance—"every time I speak for Him"—the way a gun speaks is to shoot, but another, suppressed word here for what a gun gives is "report." I think of poetry as report. And so, when ". . . I speak for Him — / The Mountains straight reply —." Starting with Virgil's first eclogue, true poetry when uttered in a landscape will be echoed by the landscape to confirm its truth. The gun, the poetic life, becomes the instrumentality through which this strange "He" speaks—this muse figure who appears sometimes as Death and sometimes as a sort of gentleman caller. On the other hand, she is herself a kind of analogous muse figure speaking for "Him," for this voice:

> Though I than he — may longer live
> He longer must — than I —
> For I have but the power to kill,
> Without — the power to die —

It is the voice of the gun speaking at this point, and the life as the gun, and the poetic life which can kill but won't die. It might outlive even the particular instance of what's giving it support. I find this a fabulously difficult poem. But saying it's a Civil War poem implies that the gun is a military gun (the term *gun* for military ordnance designates a piece of artillery). Dickinson knows what a pistol is, she knows what a rifle and shotgun are, just the way she knows different kinds of fabric. I don't think she would've meant "a loaded gun" in a military context, a piece of ordnance—this is a gun standing in the corner: it's for hunting.

> . . . now We roam in Sovereign Woods —
> And now We hunt the Doe —
> And every time I speak for Him —
> The Mountains straight reply —

I'm not forcing my reading on you, I'm just confessing to it, and thereby pointing out a number of difficulties. Some are of genre: she has parables, she has aphorisms. There are also remarkable and interesting fragments here, many, particularly later ones, that are a quatrain long. They make a wonderful meditative exercise for the reader, because like all great poets Dickinson turns every reader into a poet.

> Declaiming Waters none may dread —
> But Waters that are still
> Are so for that most fatal cause
> In Nature — they are full —

This, number 1595, is a wonderful working-out of "Still waters run deep." It's about discourse and profundity, the most ancient thought in the world—it goes back to Greek poetry—about how moving water is like discourse, and still water, ponds and pools, are like mind, consciousness. One leads to and out of the other. You have the feeling that if she had written more of it, it would have quite astonished you in that it wouldn't have simply *explained.* But there are so many of these short things, and the question is, Are they fragments? Are they the beginning of something? Or are they aphorisms, almost in the tradition of prose aphorisms? The German philosopher Lichtenberg called his philosophy, since it was all aphoristic, "a doctrine of scattered occasions," and Francis Bacon observed that "aphorisms, representing a knowledge broken, do invite one to enquire further." Take this poem, number 1569:

> The Clock strikes one that just struck two —
> Some schism in the Sum —
> A Vagabond for Genesis
> Has wrecked the Pendulum —

Those four lines show so many of her characteristic difficulties. In the first place they seem pretty much complete: I don't think we need more, although we can imagine her going on shockingly and astonishingly. Second, I can't tell whether "a Vagabond for Genesis" is appositive of "schism in the Sum" or not. And because of the nonpunctuation, she gives us no clue—that little dash doesn't mean anything. So I brood about that. Third, that wonderful phrase of the kind we all trot out for these lists of Dickinsonian goodies: "a Vagabond for Genesis." Well now, what does that mean? A vagabond from (the land of) Genesis? (Unwittingly) Headed for it? Or wandering within it? Or, mere possibly, an agent or angel of Genesis? Her "for's" and "by's" are as complex as English "of's." Dickinson uses these, and sometimes "in" absolutely originally, in a remarkable way, to put together strange metaphoric entities. You have to wonder what they're about.

This wonderful poem, number 1526, also confounds the problem of what sort of genre it represents. I suppose it's a parable you'd expect to see in prose, and here it is in *her* form. She's made it her own and given it another kind of voice.

> His oriental heresies
> Exhilirate the Bee,
> And filling all the Earth and Air
> With gay apostasy
>
> Fatigued at last, a Clover plain
> Allures his jaded eye
> That lowly Breast where Butterflies
> Have felt it meet to die —

That is marvelous—an allegory of the plain and fancy, which is always more complicated than you think, particularly for a poet who I suppose in many ways is more like George Herbert than any poet after him. Herbert of course wrote That One Book (*The Temple*) that was his book of poetry, every poem of which is in a different form. They're always protesting that in order not to be phony he couldn't write the way the phony metaphysical love poets wrote, because he was talking to God. He wasn't talking to some person he desired, or to some fiction who embodied a source of poetry that he desired and talked to as if it were an actual person he desired. Which is what poets do. But every time Herbert wrote a poem, it was in a different form. Each time the poem is talking about its own form, trying to make a parable about the way it's written. Nevertheless, Herbert, who was an Anglican priest, was writing a kind of alternative liturgy of the rectory. I think of Emily Dickinson's poems as a liturgy of the attic, internalized, radically Protestant, so that the very idea of institutionalization has been "vapored away." The "Loaded Gun" poem is a perfect Herbert lyric, although Herbert would have made it simply about being an instrument of, and speaking for, God. But you hear *her in Herbert,* which means that there is a kind of authentic poetic relation where that *preposterous* thing (in the literal

I think of Dickinson's poetry as a liturgy of the attic, internalized, radically Protestant.

sense of preposterous, "before/after") happens. From "The Quiddity" of Herbert, where he's talking about a verse, meaning a line of poetry:

> It cannot vault, or dance or play,
> It never was in France or Spain,
> Nor can it entertain the day
> With my great stable or domain.

Dickinson's voice—*something* is happening. She certainly read Herbert a lot. But there's so much to say about all this.

Now, about the grammar, again: here's a poem which is again exemplary in every way. Its genre is remarkable: it's a quest romance, a poem of the sort of Blake's "The Mental Traveller," or "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came." This is the first stanza of number 615:

> Our journey had advanced —
> Our feet were almost come
> To that odd Fork in Being's Road —
> Eternity — by Term —

I don't know what "Eternity — *by* Term" means—there's that preposition *by* again. Does this refer to what is termed eternity—whatever it is that we term or call "eternity"? Does it designate an eternity which *has* a term, which in Elizabethan English would have been called a "date"—eternity "which has a term to it," in other words not true eternity but a phase of something? Of some meta-eternity which appears to be an eternity? Or what?

> Our pace took sudden awe —
> Our feet — reluctant — led —
> Before — were Cities — but Between —
> The Forest of the Dead —
>
> Retreat — was out of Hope —
> Behind — a Sealed Route —
> Eternity's White Flag — Before —
> And God — at every Gate —

This poem has it that there are terms, periods, dates, and also "Eternity — by Term," meaning "on terms," meaning contingencies, legal contingencies, conceptual contingencies. In this remarkable poem, the journey out of one kind of self-consciousness is going to be remarkable. Things are going to be receding, ever receding. "Alps on Alps" are arising—not, as for Pope, a question of reading, but of the sense of breaking through to things. It's staggering, and yet the problematic grammar of "by Term" is necessary to think about in order to understand what this journey itself is about and what the whole sense of eternity is.

One more thing I want to raise. Susan Stewart mentioned it, and I was delighted she did—about Isaac Watts and the dashes. In order to stop taking the scholarly nonsense about the dashes seriously, in order to understand that whenever you read a poem of hers, you are implicitly punctuating it, consider Lewis Carroll's parody of Isaac Watts in *Alice*. I'm going to put in dashes where they would occur, and we're going to get an Emily Dickinson poem:

> How doth the little — crocodile —
> Improve — his shining — tail —
> And pour — the waters of the Nile —
> On every — golden — scale
>
> How cheerfully — he seems — to grin
> How neatly — spreads his claws —
> And welcomes — little — fishes in
> With gently — smiling jaws.

Of course! The spooky thing about it is that Carroll's parody of Watts is a wild, wonderful poem, whereas the Watts, "How doth the little busy bee," is not — although some of Watts's hymns are very good indeed, as good as some of Cowper's behind this. So the look of the dashes is a thing to beware of.

Last point about another kind of difficulty, this in number 1537:

> Candor — my tepid friend —
> Come not to play with me —
> The Myrrhs, and Mochas, of the Mind
> Are it's iniquity —

Now! "The Myrrhs, and Mochas, of the Mind / Are it's iniquity —." Does that mean that she's denouncing the myrrhs and mochas of the mind? Or is she promoting the mind's "iniquity" into the great and wonderful auras, aromas, sweet, mixed-up, slightly exotic things which would be the "mochas"? The syntax allows either, and the syntax is very straightforward. Whenever we say the x (good) of something is its y (bad), it hangs in very delicate balance, as it does here. She is very, very, very difficult. I just wish to underline that again.

Sontag: I suppose other people have had this idea that Emily Dickinson was the American Herbert, but I've never heard anyone say what is also so true, and a wonderful illustration of Eliot's famous thesis about how we read, which is that one hears Dickinson in Herbert. Not only does one hear Herbert in Dickinson. Because Dickinson existed, we read Herbert differently, and that's a wonderful point. Also, John Hollander did something I hoped he would do, which is to put forth what to me is quite a controversial notion. I was brought up to believe that Johnson's reinstituting of Dickinson's dashes was a great triumph of modern intelligence, and that to deprive Dickinson of her dashes or to denigrate them would be equivalent to depriving Tsvetaeva of her dashes. Clearly they're not marks of punctuation in the sense that punctuation is articulated into various kinds of stops, but it seemed to me they were essential. And now I've heard — and perhaps Amy and Susan will instantly agree with what John has said — not only that these are not some other kind of transcendental or meta-punctuation or energy signs, as they might be described for either Tsvetaeva or another user of dashes, but also that they really have to

be ignored in some ways. That the poems remain to be punctuated. Poets and prose writers are in search of ideal forms of punctuation. Certainly punctuation is critical in poetry.

Clampitt: About the dashes. I first met with Emily Dickinson in the Modern Library edition in the old style, and it was a revelation to come upon the Johnson edition and see all those dashes. It was another revelation, however, to go to the facsimile edition. The first time I saw a manuscript of Emily Dickinson I found it really shocking. There's something about the way those words go racing across the page, and yet with spaces between them, that changes your idea of everything you've read before. You have to modify those very fierce and edgy-looking dashes into marks that are undefinable. Sometimes they're just little points. Sometimes they're undefinable. Sometimes they're very gentle. The markings themselves are not fierce. The handwriting is fierce. You have to bear all that in mind in order to read with those dashes. But I think we need them, because we have nothing else — short of the facsimiles, which are hard to handle.

Stewart: I agree the dashes don't add anything metrically. But there's one thing about them that has an importance for me: I always feel Dickinson's poems are a response to something else. Someone has said something, and they're a response. To me, the dashes emphasize a kind of fleetingness and quickness of thought, especially in light of the handwriting. I see them as marking not pauses in speech but rather pauses in thought — moments of thought. They're like synapses of thought.

Hollander: In the first place, very different marks in the manuscript are solidified as dashes. In other words, there are very different marks, generated in different ways, some at the ends of lines, some just by putting the pen down between two words, in the middle of lines. If somebody is going to reduce these marks to one type of mark, the dash, the burden of the meaning is on him. Second, I am not suggesting the canonical edition ought to have punctuation. I'm saying that when you quote the poem, to print what you are quoting with just the dashes is really a little misleading, because what you are talking about is something you have punctuated. People who talk about Dickinson ought to print and put in their own punctuation, saying, "I have punctuated in this way, because this is how I construe it." It is simply a matter of syntactic and rhetorical construction. It's fine to have dashes in this standard text, because the syntax is fluid. To punctuate idiotically might mean to get it wrong, and one doesn't want the standard text punctuated by a scholar who had great bibliographical knowledge and maybe couldn't read a poem — frequently the case with scholars. So I'm not saying the Johnson text should be changed. I'm saying one should not treat it reverentially when quoting from it. Remember that dashes were used in letter writing up through the late nineteenth century as punctuation and that dashes are sometimes combined with other punctuation, even in print. Rossetti in his poems has punctuation that sometimes involves period, semicolon, or colon with dash, sometimes not. That's perfectly fine. Johnson, the editor, has implied, "Oh, they had a musical, rhythmic meaning." Sheer and utter nonsense — somebody trying to defend keeping them. I mean, you *can* defend keeping them by saying, "These may be marks she meant. I'm putting in every one. I'm going to make them all look the same. I'm not repunctuating it." Let's remember that Higginson and subsequent printed editions in the nineteenth century, which did punctuate, very often wrought other changes that were unforgivable. But the punctuations were usually right — not problematic — and forgivable, even though the person who punctuated in order to make sense according to some convention of punctuation also did some dumb things. It's dumb to say the punctuations are infected with the dumbness of dumb changes. This is why I've gotten cross about it, that's all.

Stewart: I think that traditionally we expect a proverb or an aphorism to define something. But Dickinson's aphorisms always unsettle us. That's all they do, rather than give us a certainty of a kind of social knowledge. They put us on the brink of an abyss. For example, number 305:

> The difference between Despair
> And Fear — is like the One
> Between the instant of a Wreck —
> And when the Wreck has been —
>
> The Mind is smooth — no Motion —
> Contented as the Eye
> Upon the Forehead of a Bust —
> That knows — it cannot see —

One is the call, and the other is the response, and everything seems reversed in this poem. We would think that despair would be "when the Wreck has been," and that fear would be at the instant of the wreck, but they're inversed. Then — speaking of reading backward — the final comment gives us the image that we know also from Rilke's "Archaic Torso of Apollo": we thought we were seeing, but something is seeing us, and we cannot be seen. We're caught between that gaze and that ungaze. It seems to me all Dickinson's aphorisms work this way. "When bells stop ringing," we know that church has begun. But we don't know that church has begun, except for something that's outside of it. "Doom is the House," but we know only that we're in the house or locked inside in that Piranesian way because of the bees and the squirrels outside of it. We're always on a boundary that's just a space. It's a difference and nothing else. That might be my deconstruction disease, but I still see it this way.

Hollander: Isn't it funny, though, to find an aphorism that we might expect cast in one context suddenly cast as one of her stanzas — which means she has taken it over and thereby meant something very different. I'm thinking of this stanza, number 1770, which we can imagine simply as a sentence of Emerson's, one of those sentences sitting on his page. It's about induction triumphing over deduction:

> Experiment escorts us last —
> His pungent company
> Will not allow an Axiom
> An Opportunity.

Marvelous! And you could imagine that being a very Emersonian move in the middle of something, because a page of Emerson decays into a paragraph of Emerson, which decays ultimately into a sentence of Emerson. She takes the lines out of that context, out of any possible notion that this might be part of an argument (which Emerson himself is always implicitly falsely claiming to provide). I think this is a wonderful aphorism, all by it-

self. I don't think that "Will not allow an Axiom / An Opportunity" will itself allow a next Isaac Wattsian stanza — "An opportunity to do this, or then, again, that," you see. No. She stops, that's it. But it is: "Experiment escorts us last" — semicolon — "His pungent company / Will not allow an Axiom / An Opportunity" — even as this very axiom is not allowed an opportunity for expansion.

And what about her rhyming? That's another area of difficulty for readers. I think the official machines of interpretation have done all sorts of things with it. I suppose it's fair to call it "slant rhyming," quoting her about "slant truth": "Tell all the Truth but tell it Slant."

Clampitt: There is a kind of irregularity about it that lends itself to some critics' saying she was incompetent. Perhaps it would have been different if she had known other poets. She might have written smoother verses. Whether they would have been any better or more arresting I'm not sure. But there are many poems that seem to have wandered off someplace. They're totally obscure, or they're not finished, or she didn't know how to end them. Things happen to these poems that suggest someone who's all by herself, with no one to talk to. No one to ask, What should I do here? She did talk to Sue, her sister-in-law, for a little while, but that's about all the help she got. When she wrote to Higginson, he said, "Well, it's not really ready for publication. But he didn't, I think, tell her anything she could use.

Actually, I find much more endearing the poet who couldn't quite get it together, I think about Wordsworth. I think *The Prelude* is wonderful because he never quite figured out how to do it. You like Wordsworth better when you see how he's struggling with this great mass of material. I don't think it's quite the same with Dickinson, but she wrote a great deal, and she wrote in solitude, and she was doing things the like of which the world had never seen. So there is a kind of roughness and irregularity that sometimes I find disturbing and sometimes I think is wonderful. I think sometimes the poems end lamely, because she just did not find a punch line.

Stewart: One thing that intrigues me about the rhymes: sometimes there's a phonological slant, but there's also a semantic connection. Some examples: "fuzz" and "gauze," "plumes" and "drums," "form" and "being," "bells" and "calls," "coronal" and "funeral." You realize the way the meanings of the words rhyme. The sound is a little off. . . .

Hollander: But that's true in all good rhyming. It's true in Pope. In any stretch of Pope, you'll be able to see that a rhyming couplet is telling some complicated story, as a parable, about what the lines are saying.

I agree with Amy that a lot of the poems aren't finished. Dickinson didn't know what to do with them and wrote them down in that form, thinking maybe she'd go back to them. But I think if a lot of people who loved and knew her work well got together, they'd pretty well decide which ones weren't finished and which ones . . . I don't think that's so much a problem. And I don't think slant rhyming is part of any roughness — it is her voice. It's the way she does what she does. You could say that originally, when she started writing, she was moving away from perfect hymnody, roughing it up a little. But then that itself becomes a convention — that is smooth. There's an extraordinary instance of this (number 1600), in which you don't hear a full rhyme as a rhyme. On the other hand, you hear the slant rhyme as the Emily Dickinson rhyme, giving it closure.

Upon his Saddle sprung a Bird
And crossed a thousand Trees
Before a Fence without a Fare
His Fantasy did please
And then he lifted up his Throat
And squandered such a Note
A Universe that overheard
Is stricken by it yet —

"Squandered such a Note" — that's the heart of the matter. But . . .

And then he lifted up his Throat
And squandered such a Note
A Universe that overheard
Is stricken by it yet —

The rhyme "Note"/"yet" is what Susan Stewart was talking about. Plucking "yet" out of "Note" is the creating of the overhang, the continued echo, the resonance of that note, which has stricken the universe. Nevertheless we feel the "Note/"yet" rhyme as complete, as closing up. The "Throat"/"Note" rhyme almost isn't a rhyme, almost isn't there.

If you have a front-vowel-plus-consonant rhyming with back-plus-consonant — *oat/it,* for example — you feel as if you're going from something larger to something smaller. For speakers of English and Germanic languages, back vowels connote a larger size than do front vowels. (There are two monosyllables, *big* and *small,* that controvert that. But mostly, when you have pairs of words, you'll find they line up the other way.) So we hear alternation of front and back somehow as qualitative. Clocks do not go "tick tock," they go "tick tick" or "tock tock," depending on the size or length of the pendulum, but we want to make them a little package, a reciprocal package, and that front/back alternation does so. When you have that effect in Dickinson's vowels, do you move from greater to lesser or from lesser to greater? How does she deploy these sounds? What exactly is that phonological story she's telling? I find it remarkable. I don't think anybody's ever written about it well. Critics observe just the slant rhyme. But that's a little like saying that Pope rhymes. It doesn't show what he does with the rhyme.

Question: Attention should be called to Emily Dickinson's originality. It was pointed out that one could hear Dickinson in Herbert and vice versa. That may be well taken, but then it was also pointed out that the Lewis Carroll parody of the Watts hymn also sounded like Dickinson. Now what kind of poet sounds like both George Herbert and Lewis Carroll? In other words, many critics have tried to turn Dickinson into a kind of seventeenth-century wit, but there's something about her that can never be mistaken for a metaphysical poet.

Hollander: I don't think Dickinson sounds like Lewis Carroll at all. That example was simply adduced to show how glaringly the use of the dashes has interfered. I cited the Carroll version of Watts because it's in the same meter, but I don't think it sounds like Dickinson. I just think that if you put the dashes into certain poems, constructed in certain ways with that meter, something irrelevantly familiar appears.

Now, you're perfectly right to bring up Dickinson's originality. She is staggeringly original. That's one of the things I thought I was implying by mentioning the modes of difficulty she presents. But the most original poems are the most allusive ones — it's a sad fact that a lot of

people can't recognize this, but it's the case. Let, shall we say, the original allusive buck stop with Homer and Moses — I think it's convenient to do that, although we can decompose Homer and Moses into immense amounts of history of composition, possible precursors, and so on — but let's just stop with Homer and Moses and declare them, by fiat, to be the original poems. The greater a subsequently original poem is, the more it will allude and position itself in a line going back to them. So the echo of Herbert . . . What Dickinson did was contingent on her originality. That's one of the things I meant by avowing her difficulty. She's so original that it's hard to get even an allusive handle on the work.

Question: With phrases like "a Vagabond for Genesis" you are moving from a metaphysical way of speaking toward something in fact more like Carroll. In other words, that which makes Dickinson not a metaphysical poet is what moves her in the direction of a kind of proto-surrealism, a quality that is not ambiguity, but which suggests some other quality that you don't find, perhaps, in any other poet.

Hollander: I think you do, as a matter of fact, find analogous things in other poets. I never would think of her as a metaphysical poet. My comparing her to Herbert, whom she read heavily, was only with respect to what kind of public/private dialectic is at work in the selection of the discursive mode, in, as I say, the use of the form of the communal-hymn tune for the most private discourse . . . whether a poem applies only to itself, which I tend to think it does, or whether it can be extended generally: "This is my letter to the World." No, I don't think of her at all as a seventeenth-century poet. I do think of her, however, as having a remarkable relation to scripture. If you know the King James Bible well, you see the marvelous things she is playing off, not the way Herbert or Crashaw or Vaughan would do it, but in her own way. I'm a little wary about saying that any strange verbal construction is surreal. It seems to me we say "surreal" when we're unwilling to think hard about exactly what the flavor of the strange quality is. I don't think "a Vagabond for Genesis" is like Carroll or like surrealism. The problem is: What does it mean? Try substituting one preposition for another: "a Vagabond *of* . . ." You see, the usual hard English preposition, the wonderful poetic preposition, the most poetic preposition in English is *of,* as in the phrase "*x* of *y*." There, "of" can mean any of the four Aristotelian causes: the *x* made of *y,* the *x* belonging to *y,* the *x* dedicated to *y,* the *x* constructed by *y.* It's very fluid, partially because of its use in the Bible. But "a Vagabond *for*" or "by" . . . do we translate that "for" as "in"? She uses a phrase about something "upon circumference." Does she mean *within* a circumference? Does she mean *on* the circumference? Circumference is a mighty concept for her, a staggering notion. Does she mean that circumference is actually a region, so that we would think of a dot on a circumference? She thinks of something located within a kind of space the circumference itself has. These are hard, hard things, remarkable things, not at all like seventeenth-century poetry.

Clampitt: I'm inclined not really to disagree but to want to, because I think Dickinson has certain qualities in common with a poet like John Donne. There are just as many characteristics that are opposite: for instance, I think of Dickinson as a New World writer, for whom everything seems full of light and air, whereas in the poetry of Donne you feel the world's coming to an end. It's pretty dark and gloomy. Nevertheless, there is something in temperament, a tendency toward hyperbole, that links the two. I would say Dickinson was a metaphysical poet, but perhaps I don't mean what people generally mean.

Hollander: That's just Dr. Johnson's silly term, with which to curse out a bunch of poets he didn't think much of in an essay on Cowley. He talked about poets at a certain point, before great poets like Denham — the Ezra Pound of his day — set the matter right. By "metaphysical" he meant "intellectual," and he didn't like those. What you meant is simply certain seventeenth-century poets.

Stewart: I would say also that we can trace these influences in Dickinson, certainly the Metaphysicals but also the Romantics. There's a great deal of Keats in Dickinson's poems. But also I think of these matters as habits of reading: we learn to read, we read metaphysically or romantically, and like all original writers Dickinson pushes us beyond those habits into a new way of reading. In that sense, I'd like to put a plug in for the person she called "the gigantic Emily," the other Emily. Emily Brontë has the same kind of features for me. I've taught *Wuthering Heights* many years, and I still don't know what the book is about. I feel that way about Dickinson's poems. There's an enigma that's challenging.

Hollander: And yet, interestingly enough, Emily Brontë's poems, a few of which I think are quite staggering, are not at all difficult. They're beautifully and openly accessible, like certain kinds of eighteenth-century poetry, unlike Dickinson's surprisingness. You know Emerson's phrase "Mount to Paradise / By the stairway of surprise." Emerson is the prophet in the wilderness, predicting Whitman. He couldn't predict Dickinson, but in a sense he is prophetic of her. Those lines — "Mount to Paradise / By the stairway of surprise" — have a self-descriptive quality related to what we are talking about. That's why a scholar some twenty years or more ago entitled a book on Dickinson *The Stairway of Surprise.*

Question: In the fascicles, Emily Dickinson gives alternate readings of some lines. What does this suggest about her relation to her own text?

Sontag: This is another point about the manuscripts that we have: the fact that there are several readings. Presumably this is not simply a question of drafts, of multiple drafts.

Stewart: I'm interested in why I always prefer the second reading. It has to do with a sense of revision. It's hard to remember that for Dickinson they truly were alternatives, so there's an openness to her text. I'm thinking of "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers." The second variant of that is so much more powerful than the first. It has that incredible image of dropping dots on snow, "a Disc of Snow."

Hollander: Manuscripts are full of second thoughts, over time. These versions are not prepared for publication — Dickinson didn't prepare for publication. Had she done so, they would not have looked like this.

Audience: I just wanted to say that particular poem was published, so she did have a chance . . .

Hollander: All I mean is that if somebody had come along and insisted to her that, in the local job-printer's shop, it would be nice to bring out some of these, and had her life been different and she'd decided to do it, I do not think she would have published them in this form. She would've probably done what Higginson did, rather better.

Hollander: But to return to the line "Eternity — by Term —" my problem was not simply with "Eternity" and not even with "Term." My problem is with the construc-

tion. It's a very hard, ad hoc construction. In order to read the poems, you have to decide for yourself. Is it eternity "by term" in the sense of "by degrees"? Is it that use of "by"? You see, there's a funny thing about English prepositions. All our idioms — we have so many idioms in English, very often borrowed from French — when you think of them hard enough, they cease making sense. That's because the French preposition will have been translated literally into English, but the idiom in French means something else. I think Dickinson takes advantage of that by coining new idioms in this way, so you have to say, is it "by term" in the sense of "by degrees" or is it in the sense of "by midnight," or is it in the sense of . . . ? Which sense of "by" is it? This seems to me extraordinarily powerful and new and original, to do it that way.

Sontag: Did she want to mean all of those?

Hollander: Quite rightly. All or some or which ones, and the interplay of them. When you have a possibly ambiguous reading, then you have the interplay of the ambiguous readings, such as: This means Reading A, or this means Reading B, or, more likely — as in Milton, and probably in Shakespeare's sonnets but not usually his plays — this means A and/or B. Her lines are very packed. The variant readings of them are resonant. But I think sometimes to construe it at all, to make that "Term" mean anything, "Eternity — by Term," you've got to start somewhere. Then maybe put the alternate readings back together again. ■

"A Beautiful Alchemy"

Tess Gallagher Remembers Raymond Carver

The editors of the Newsletter were moved by Tess Gallagher's remarks made at St. Peter's Church in New York City, on September 22, on the occasion of a memorial service for Raymond Carver. The text below, which also apeared in **Granta** *(here reprinted with Tess Gallager's permission), is followed by an unpublished poem of Raymond Carver from his forthcoming book* **A New Path to the Waterfall** *(Atlantic Monthly Press). The poem is also printed courtesy of Tess Gallagher as representative for the Estate of Raymond Carver.*

Even though I don't choose to express the loss in this way, I understand Leonard Bernstein's having gone to bed and stayed there for six months after his wife died of cancer. But in my family no one would be so indulged. You have to get up, make an effort at normalcy, do your share, and how you feel doesn't come into it...part of the working-class ethic, I suppose. But that's where both Ray and I come from. Ray once said to me, speaking about the days before we met, 'I never had *time* to have a nervous breakdown,' The 'iron will' which he says in one of his poems is necessary for making art must, I think, have been forged during just such times when there was 'no-choice-but-to-go-ahead'.

But Ray and I learned somehow to do more than just go ahead: we learned how to go ahead with hope. When we joined lives nearly eleven years ago in El Paso, Texas, we were both recovering from an erosion of trust and hope. Between us I think we'd left behind something like thirty years of failed marriage. We more than rebuilt trust. We got to a place where trust was second nature. But along the way, we had a saying that helped us. We used to say: 'Don't get weird on me, Babe. Don't get weird.' And believe me, by then we'd both lived enough to know what weird was.

You probably know the story. Ray's capacity for joy, which extended even to the ability to take immense pleasure in someone else's pleasure, and this capacity continued into his last days. But it hadn't always been this way. Since his death I've become the repository for many people's memories and stories about Ray. I've read in letters from friends he knew during what he called his 'Bad Raymond' days that he was, according to one writer, 'the most unhappy man I'd ever met,' Twenty years later the two met again and the friend was astonished at the transformation.

Theodore Roethke said, 'The right thing happens to the happy man,' and I was privileged to witness as Ray became that happy man. I'm often remembering how glad he was to be alive, and because he was happy to be alive Ray grieved to be leaving his life so early. I won't hide that from you. If will alone could have prevailed, he'd be alive today and with us.

Still, at each turn during his illness he asked: What can I do with the life that's left? He chose to work, to write his poems, in spite of the terror of a brain tumor and later, in June, of the recurrence of cancer in the lungs. His response to that blow was to think of something important to celebrate, and on 17 June we were married in Reno, Nevada. It was a very Carveresque affair, held in the little Heart of Reno Chapel across from the court-house. Afterwards we went gambling at Harrah's Club and with every turn of the wheel I won. I couldn't stop winning.

Near the end Ray knew, he was sure, that his stories were going to last: 'We're out there in history now, Babe' he said, and he felt lucky to know it. He had a period of clear celebration when his book of stories, *Where I'm Calling From,* came out last spring. There was a brief interlude when we were free from the mental suffering that accompanied his disease and during which he accepted joyously and gratefully the wonderful reviews, induction into the American Academy of Arts & Letters, a Doctorate of Letters from the University of Hartford and the Brandeis Medal of Excellence.

I'm in mourning and celebration for the artist and the man, and also for that special entity which was our particular relationship which allowed such a beautiful alchemy in our lives, a kind of luminous reciprocity. We helped, nurtured and pretected each other, and what's more, in the Rilkian sense, we guarded and respected each other's solitude. In our days we were always asking: *What really matters?*

Ray gave me encouragement to write stories and I gave him encouragement to write his stories and his poems,

poems through which he worked out his own spiritual equanimity, for he was, I think, at his death, one of those rare, purified beings for whom, as Tolstoy says, the only response is love. He lived every day with the assurance and comfort that I cherished him. As Simone de Beauvoir said, when challenged by feminists for her devotion to Sartre and his work: 'But I *like* to work in the garden next to mine.' I'll miss working in that strange, real garden—Ray's garden. Everything I ever gave there I got back in his gifts of attention to my own work. It has sustained me since his death to be putting his last book in order. I'll miss his delight and laughter in the house and his unfailing kindness, for he was, before anything, my great friend.

All those qualities you sensed about Raymond Carver, that he was a man who would do the decent, the right and generous thing—that was how he was. I can tell you from inside the story. He was like that. And he managed this in a rather complicated life. For his hardships didn't all end back there in the bad old days, and the nature of those hardships is recorded in his stories and poems.

In the last book he completed, one of the epigraphs is a quote from Robert Lowell which reads: 'Yet why not tell it like it happened? I see this as central to Ray's attitude towards his art and its relation to his life. He carried some burdens of guilt about 'what had happened', and worked out his redemption and consequently some of ours in his art.

A few days after Ray's death I went into his study in Port Angeles. The study he'd always dreamed of, with a fireplace and a view of valley and mountain, then water beyond. I sat at the desk awhile. Just sat. Then I reached down and pulled open a drawer. Inside I found a dozen folders full of ideas for stories that would have carried him well into the year 2015. I'm sad we won't be reading those stories. But I can't stay in that sadness long. I keep feeling how much, in such a short time, how incredibly much he gave! We have to accept the blessing of that, and Ray believed that he had been graced and blessed and that he had done his utmost to return that blessing to the world. As he has.

I was standing with a friend at Ray's graveside overlooking the Strait of Juan de Fuca a week after his death, and the friend remembered a line from Rilke and said it aloud. It seemed to express the transformation Ray has come to now. 'And he was everywhere, like the evening hour.' To conclude I'd like to present the last poem in his new manuscript.

Late Fragment

And did you get what
you wanted from this life, even so?
I did.
And what did you want?
To call myself beloved, to feel myself
beloved on the earth.

•

The Painter & the Fish

All day he'd been working like a locomotive
I mean he was *painting,* the brush strokes
coming like clockwork. Then he called
home. And that was that. That was all she
wrote. He shook like a leaf. He started
smoking again. He lay down and got back
up. Who could sleep if your woman sneered
and said time was running out? He drove
into town. But he didn't go drinking.
No, he went walking. He walked past a mill
called "the mill." Smell of fresh-cut
lumber, lights everywhere, men driving
jitneys and fork-lifts, driving themselves.
Lumber piled to the top of the warehouse,
the whine and groan of machinery. Easy
enough to recollect, he thought. He went
on, rain falling now, a soft rain that wants
to do its level best not to interfere
with anything and in return asks only
that it not be forgotten. The painter
turned up his collar and said to himself
he wouldn't forget, He came to a lighted
building where, inside a room, men played
cards at a big table. A man wearing
a cap stood at the window and looked
out through the rain as he smoked
a pipe. That was an image he didn't
want to forget either, but then
with his next thought he
shrugged. What was the point?

He walked on until he reached the jetty
with its rotten pilings. Rain fell
harder now. It hissed as it struck
the water. Lightning came and went.
Lightning broke across the sky
like memory, like revelation. Just
when he was at the point of despair,
a fish came up out of the dark
water under the jetty and then fell back
and then rose again in a flash
to stand on its tail and shake itself!
The painter could hardly credit
his eyes, or his ears! He'd just
had a sign--faith didn't enter
into it. The painter's mouth flew
open. By the time he'd reached home
he'd quit smoking and vowed never
to talk on the telephone again.
He put on his smock and picked up
his brush. He was ready to begin
again, but he didn't know if one
canvas could hold it all. Never
mind. He'd carry it over
onto another canvas if he had to.
It was all or nothing. Lightning, water,
fish, cigarettes, cards, machinery,
the human heart, that old port.
Even the woman's lips against
the receiver, even that.
The curl of her lip.

Raymond Carver

Letters to the Editor

The recent events concerning Salman Rushdie, The Satanic Verses, *and Ayatollah Khomeini's death threat provoked responses throughout PEN's membership as well as the international literary community. Public statements made by PEN members on behalf of Rushdie, and other information, were deemed too timely to wait for publication in the Newsletter, and appeared in a special expanded edition of the Freedom-to-Write Bulletin mailed last month to all PEN members and Friends of PEN.*

However, before this issue of the Newsletter went to press, three short pieces by members of PEN were directed to us. They are published below as letters. The Newsletter invites all members to voice their opinions about the controversy over Rushdie and his novel. Space permitting, further letters will be published in the summer issue.

To the PEN Newsletter:

Draw an X on the map through the state of Pennsylvania, and where the two lines meet is State College. The town exists primarily to service Penn State University, where I've been teaching this spring. Here, as elsewhere, an independent bookstore owner proved his independence. While the university bookstore announced it would not carry *The Satanic Verses* (a decision reversed after six hours of phone calls and letter-writing), Mike Svoboda, owner of Svoboda's bookstore in town, hosted a twenty-four cover-to-cover reading of the book at his store. Muslim students protested and demonstrated. The upshot was his agreement to participate in a panel organized by the Muslim Students' Association at the university. He asked me to join him and another writer on the freedom-of-expression side of the panel, set for March 15.

The Islamic side of the panel was finalized only that morning after what had apparently been intense infighting among the Muslim students (there are thirteen separate Islamic student groups in this one university, most of them apparently with very few members). The Iranian faction had walked out. The panelists would be Dr. Dilnawaz Siddique, a professor of communications at Clarion University, and Mohammed Zakiuddeen Sharfi, owner of an Islamic bookstore in New Jersey. The panel would be moderated by a member of the Muslim Students' Association. Nobody seemed to know, or nobody was saying, why the Iranian students had withdrawn.

But they were there, handing out leaflets to every one of the three hundred people who came. The leaflets were, among other things, virulently anti-Semitic. The Jews, and Israel, were behind the whole thing. Rushdie was an irrelevance, literally a dead issue. The "Israeli Zionists" were "the true and legitimate object of liquidation." The leaflet was put out by the "Muslim Students' Association (PSG)," located in Albany, California.

I asked the evening's organizer if this was his association. No, he said, there was no relation between his association and this one. Had he read the leaflet? Not all of it, he said. I told him what was in it. Since his organization bore the same name, did he want to disassociate himself from anything in the leaflet? He smiled in what seemed to be helpless embarrassment: "I can't," he said. What he didn't say, but what I was given to understand, was that to do so would be to invite the wrath of the Iranian faction on his own head.

The panel got under way. Mike Svoboda, calm and eloquent, presented the case for the First Amendment. That also included the right to blaspheme, he argued; any new religion starts out as blasphemy.

Mohammed Sharfi argued that freedom of expression was a flimsy excuse for support for Rushdie; the real reason was Western desire to dominate the Muslim world culturally. It should be against the law, he said, for anyone to criticize any religious leader. And he announced that he prayed day in and day out that this whole affair would not culminate in World War Three.

Siddique maintained that the Koran called for complete freedom of expression. With limitations. Like Sharfi, he referred to "so-called fiction" as a means of passing the buck, of shirking responsibility for what has been said. He thought it "amusing" that a writer would not be willing to take all the consequences for what he had to say, stated that Rushdie had received $800,000 to write the book "before he had written a word," and wondered where the money had come from. Clearly, Rushdie had been paid to say what he said.

I was the only member of the panel on either side to refer to the leaflet in everyone's lap. I introduced myself as a Jew who had received death threats from fundamentalist Jews ("You are a traitor to the Jewish people"), then raised the leaflet high, dropped it to the floor, and said what I thought of it. I argued against fundamentalists of all stripes, whether Christian, Moslem, or Jewish, and emphasized that the death threat against Rushdie was in contravention not only of American law, but also of international law. I called on Sharfi and Siddique to join the growing number of Islamic intellectuals who decried the death threat.

Sharfi made no comment. Siddique could barely contain his mirth at such a call. It had all been exaggerated, he said. There wasn't even a price on Rushdie's head—that was an invention of the Western media.

The panel was opened to questions from the floor, which became impassioned statements on both sides. The Iranian faction sat still. Nobody said another word about that leaflet. Until the panel was finished.

The moment the video cameras and the microphones were turned off, I was surrounded by six very irate Iranians. They argued the Middle Eastern way, pressing in close, talking two or three at a time, jabbing their fingers to within three inches of my eyes, spittle forming on their lips, their faces contorted with anger.

In the middle of this tight knot of hatred, I thought, I've been here before—only then it was Jewish fundamentalists.

They were all engineering and business students. None would tell me his name. They were much better dressed than most students, and older. Among the things they said:

"The Jews paid Rushdie to write that book."

"You don't support Rushdie because you believe in freedom of expression, but because you're a Jew, and he attacked Islam."

"This is not a death threat. This is a death *sentence.*"

"What do we care about international law? We're Muslims."

What did I object to in their leaflet? they asked. I showed them. How did I define anti-Semitism? they asked. "Hating Jews for being Jews," I said. "What's wrong with that?" said one.

I burst out laughing, which brought him to the threshold of physical violence. The others hustled him away.

And then, one by one, other Muslim students came up to me. And very quietly, very gently, almost as though confiding a secret, they let me know, in indirect statements,

how embarrassed they were at the behavior of the Iranians, how they did not support anti-Semitism, how they did not support the death sentence against Rushdie, and how they appreciated my argument that not all Muslims were fundamentalist (I had, at one stage, talked of the Golden Age of Islam, before the Inquisition). But still, each asked, could I possibly appreciate their hurt and their insult?

I did appreciate that most of the Muslims present were not fundamentalist. They were deeply hurt by Rushdie's book, but also deeply embarrassed by the Iranians—and deeply afraid to say anything against the death sentence in public, lest the wrath of the fundamentalists be turned on them too as apostates, and therefore under automatic sentence of death.

Which means that those scholars and intellectuals from the Islamic world who have come out against the death sentence are far braver than we have so far imagined.

Lesley Hazleton

Dear Editors:

Yesterday on National Public Radio I heard a report featuring a number of PEN members agonizing over the Rushdie affair and calling for action. I didn't hear anyone who disagreed with what was going on, but I hope some PEN members were there to look at the other side of the question.

Certainly, no one can condone a death threat on an author for what he writes in a free society. But readers have just as many rights as the author to speak out against writing that offends and to use any sort of boycott or economic pressure they can bring to bear in a free market. The world would have been a better place had more people protested against Ezra Pound's work a little more vehemently.

Some writers and critics have had the courage to point out that writers aren't working in a vacuum, that they must take responsibility for the influence they have in the culture. We deplore gratuitous violence and sex when its purpose is merely to sell books. Don't we have the right to object to gratuitous blasphemy as well?

When I was in the Peace Corps in Tunisia, I shared a courtyard with a family comprised of mother, father, two little boys, and a blind grandmother who sat in the sun all day crushing herbs. They were very decent people, and tried to live their lives according to the conservative principles of their faith just like any fundamentalist Christian in the Midwest or Amish farmer in Pennsylvania. As some Arab commentator said on television recently, it is nearly impossible for a Westerner to understand how deeply Rushdie's book offends such people. There is simply no parallel in the West for the importance a wife's reputation has as the pillar of family honor. To use the equivalent of four-letter words in Hindi and describe the Prophet's wives, the "holy mothers," as whores would be intolerable. And Rushdie, raised as a Muslim, should know that.

I remember a personnel director from Mississippi who was tearing his hair out over the problems he was having with redneck construction workers in Morocco: "What these boys don't realize," he told me, "is that they're living in a kingdom." In a democracy we are not free to advocate the overthrow of government by force; in a theocracy you aren't allowed to go around blaspheming God or his saints.

A critic from Columbia recently described Rushdie's style as the irreverence of the postmodern author. It strikes me simply as the supercilious and adolescent attitude of a certain kind of Oxford undergraduate. Smart-assed. Some thoughtful editor at Viking should have given him better advice. Every author has been indiscreet at some point in his career. But we disavow our juvenalia and move on.

As a member of PEN I feel we must help protect Rushdie's life and his rights vigorously, but we don't have to condone what he's done.

Richard Harteis

Dear Editors:

The "death to Rushdie" proclamation from the throne of the ultimate Muslim leader takes on a familiar ring, although originally made in a much broader context. Namely the "death to the infidel" edict from the same high place, all during the eight-year war with Iraq. A war of the mullahs locked in fratricidal battle over slightly different shades of the holy writ. And at a cost of hundreds of thousands of "believers" and "infidels" alike. And at a ruin of cities, towns, industries—but not the oil.

Irony: Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses,* which is a kind of private war of his own—five years in the writing—and which describes his fictional encounters with angels-turned-devils and vice versa, among other things, is seized upon by the Ayatollah to pump air into the receding flame of the hard-line, off-the-(mosque)-wall theocracy. A prime case of an author being perceived as maker, rather than as messenger, of "evil." And in the Rushdie case, being hunted down with blood in the eye as well—for his "crime." Put it that in the marketplace of ideas, those of a fixed mind always are at risk.

(Viking Penguin, publisher of *The Satanic Verses,* has just come out with a 50th Anniversary edition of *The Grapes of Wrath.* And who is to say but that fifty years from now, *Verses* will not be given the same honor. And be read, perhaps with a venturesome detachment, throughout the Moslem world, under newly won conditions of freedom.)

One can hardly attempt to drag the people of all the world—whether kicking, screaming, or both—into the new age of, say, the nuclear freeze for the whole planet Earth. Nor drag them into the loose-lipped, speaking-in-tongues freeze as well. But all that aside, one can indeed practice a healthy skepticism in our time of the fired-up, Bible-as-club fundamentalism. Practice it wherever the latter surfaces; and whatever its fervor or hallucination. That way does one affirm free thought, speech, writing—the First Amendment's heartbeat—in an otherwise shaky, violence-prone comity of nations. (Or should it be called, "comedy of nations.") Credo: Let the otherness shine through. Than which nothing is more urgent, as the digital clock blips away toward a new century, and a new millennium.

As between the writer and religious leader, the politician and person in the street: The touch of freedom is not a sometime thing, but descends from the godhead and touches us all (to paraphrase the Bard) like the gentle rain from the heaven. What one does with that freedom is finally, and for the better or worse, of one's own individual doing. A fool is none the wiser for invoking Scripture in whatever holy name. Irony: Only the ungodly on their thrones would attempt to interdict the heavenly gift with threat of extinction for the user.

Not the Appassionata of Death, but the Appassionata of the Beethoven kind—of Life.

Sidney Bernard

Branch Reports

PEN Southwest

Norman Rush and Dave Smith were the first readers to appear as part of the 1988-1989 Houston Reading Series, first held in September at the Museum of Fine Arts and cosponsored by the University of Houston's Program in Creative Writing. The October program featured Ann Beattie, and the November program Frank Bedart and Garrett Hongo. Readers in 1989 have included John Hawkes and Gail Mazur in January, and Roger Angell in February.

On February 24, a reading was held in sympathy with Salman Rushdie. Selections from *The Satanic Verses* were read by Robert Coover, Nancy Dahlberg, Cynthia Macdonald, James and Mary Robison, and Susan Wood, among others.

PEN/Southwest's annual pair of Discovery Prizes in poetry and fiction, of $1,000 each, will be judged by Ellen Voigt and Norman Rush. The winners will read from their work at the Museum of Fine Arts in April. The Discovery Prizes are supported in part by PEN American Center.

Nancy Dahlberg

PEN West

PEN West has finally reemerged as a fully active branch of PEN American Center. The Women's Committee, Freedom-to-Write Committee, and International Visitors Committee involve PEN members in the San Francisco Bay area.

The Women's Committee is working toward a healthy mix of aesthetic and social agendas, and it has sponsored readings by poets Judith Johnson and Carolyn Kizer as well as by recent winners of the PEN Syndication Project. An afternoon meeting on translation included Laura Schiff, Jane Hirshfield, and Kathleen Weaver. Most recently, in March, Shirley Kaufman spoke to members about the difficulties of women writers in Israel today. Eda Kriseova, a dissident writer from Prague, also spoke about her experiences after the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia.

This spring the Freedom-to-Write Committee has planned a speakout on behalf of banned and imprisoned writers, to take place in front of the national embassies of these writers.

PEN West's current Co-chairs are Mary Mackey and Valerie Miner. Laura Schiff heads the Freedom-to-Write Committee, Joanna Bankier the International Visitors Committee, and Brenda Webster the Women's Committee. Writers from other areas visiting the Bay area are welcome to contact the PEN West office at 415-566-6677, and women writers interested in readings or in developing symposia with the Women's Committee should call 415-548-2618.

Brenda Webster

PEN New England

"The Night of the Book," PEN New England's annual celebration in honor of New England authors of books published during the past year, was held in October at the Harvard Bookstore Café. The following authors and books were represented: Robert Belsky, *Living a Fat Cell;* Eric Kraft, *Herb 'n' Lorna;* John E. Mack, *The Alchemy of Survival: One Woman's Journey* (with Rita S. Rogers); Arthur Myers, *Ghosts of the Rich and Famous;* Daniel Asa Rose, *Flipping for It* and *Small Family with Rooster;* Debra Scott, *The Nouveaux Pauvres: A Guide to Downward Mobility,* John Sedgwick, *The Peacable Kingdom;* David A. Smith; *Rendezvous;* Ross Terrill, *The Australians;* Dan Wakefield, *Returning.*

This was, as always, a delightful event, thanks to the hospitality of Frank Kramer and the staff of the Harvard Bookstore Café, the delicious hors d'oeuvres from their fine kitchen, and the superb wines from their cellar.

For "A Conversation with Richard Rhodes," in November, the Forum Room at Harvard's Lamont Library was full long before the program began. A standing-room-only crowd heard an intriguing and enlightening exchange between Richard Rhodes and Justin Kaplan, ranging from an exploration of the development of the concept for Rhodes's *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* to anecdotes about the research behind it. The event was so well received that we are considering continuing the "Conversation with . . . " series next fall and have been soliciting suggestions from members for pairs of writers they would like to hear in conversation.

"The Great Boston Literary Trivia Quiz" in January made for a lighthearted evening, with a few straightforward questions and a lot of quirky ones. Audience participation was invited but not required. By the end of the evening, to judge from the uproar and hilarity, it seemed even the most reticent members were participating. Team captains were Heather Cole, William Pritchard, and Lloyd Schwartz. William Novak was quizmaster. Several of those who attended have suggested that we make this an annual event. (By the way, what fictional character said: "Do you know what it is I dislike about writing?—All the scratchings out and touchings up that are necessary. . . . That's what seems to me so fine about life. It's like fresco-painting—erasures aren't allowed.")

On Thursday, March 9, we held our "Discovery Evening." At this annual event, designed to recognize new talent, PEN members introduce "discoverees," who give fifteen-minute readings from their work. Previous PEN New England discoverees include Sue Miller and Sven Birkerts. This year, Alice Hoffman presented Paula Bonnell, Mark Kramer presented Bill Littlefield, and Dan Wakefield presented Marcie Hershman.

Eric Kraft

"Lost" Members

The following PEN members' mail has been returned to PEN as undeliverable. If you have a current address for any of the following, please get in touch with the membership coordinator at PEN American Center:

Lloyd Alexander
David Bottoms
Edward Bunker
Kenneth Burke
Margaret Cook
Lucinda Franks
Lois Gordon
Frances Minturn Howard
Garrison Keillor
Julia K. Kernan
Elizabeth Lowe
Barbara Shelby Merello
Kit Reed
Betty Rollin

Roger Rosenblatt

New Books by PEN Members

The Newsletter is pleased to report the following new books published by PEN members in 1988. Many of these titles were displayed at our New Books Reception, held at PEN Headquarters last December, and were donated to PEN's growing library of members' books.

Alexander, Meena, *House of a Thousand Doors* (Three Continents)
Appleman, Philip, *Apes and Angels* (Putnam)
Ashton, Dore, *Fragonard: In the Universe of Painting* (Smithsonian)
Axelrod, David B., *The End of the Universe* (CPI Productions); *White Lies* (La Jolla Poets)
Barolini, Helen, *Festa* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich)
Barrett, Marvin, *Spare Days* (Arbor House)
Bartlett, Elizabeth, editor, *Literary Olympians II* (Crosscurrents)
Bawer, Bruce, *Diminishing Fictions* (Graywolf)
Berkow, Ira, *Pitchers Do Get Lonely* (Atheneum)
Bernstein, Jane, *Loving Rachel: A Family's Journey from Grief* (Little, Brown)
Birnbaum, Norman, *The Radical Renewal* (Pantheon)
Birstein, Ann, *The Last of the True Believers* (Norton)
Blue, Rose, *The Secret Papers of Camp Getaround* (Signet)
Butscher, Edward, *Conrad Aiken: Poet of White Horse Vale* (University of Georgia Press)
Chase, Emily (Lucille Warner), *A Roommate Returns* (Scholastic)
Chin, Marilyn, *Dwarf Bamboo* (Greenfield Review)
Christopher, Nicholas, *Desperate Characters: A Novella in Verse and Other Poems* (Viking)
Clausen, Jan, *The Prosperine Papers* (The Crossing Press)
Davis, Christopher, *Valley of the Shadow* (St. Martin's)
De Lynn, Jane, *Real Estate* (Poseidon)
Der Hovanessian, Diana, *About Time* (Ashod)
Devaney, John, *Bo Jackson: A Star for All Seasons* (Walker)
Dowling, Colette, *Perfect Women* (Summit)
Dufault, Peter Kane, *Memorandum to the Age of Reason* (Lindisfarne)
Ehrlich, Amy, *Where It Stops, Nobody Knows* (Dial)
Einzig, Barbara, *Life Moves Outside* (Burning Deck)
Elman, Richard, *Disco Frito* (Gibbs-Smith)
Flanders, Jane, *Timepiece* (University of Pittsburgh Press)
French, Dolores, with Linda Lee, *Working: My Life as a Prostitute* (Dutton)
Friedman, Mickey, *Magic Mirror* (Viking)
Fussell, Betty, *Food in Good Season* (Knopf)
Gallagher, Dorothy, *All the Right Enemies* (Rutgers University Press)
Ginsburg, Mirra, *The Chinese Mirror* (Gulliver Books)
Gioseffi, Daniela, *Women on War* (Simon & Schuster)
Gorog, Judith, *Three Dreams and a Nightmare* (Philomel)
Green, Judith, *Sometimes Paradise* (Bantam)
Hammer, Richard, *Dance down the Mountain* (Franklin Watts)
Harris, Jean, *They Always Call Us Ladies* (Scribner's)
Hartwell, David G. *Masterpieces of Fantasy and Enchantment* (St. Martin's)
Hearon, Shelby, *Owning Jolene* (Knopf)
Henderson, Bill, editor, *The Pushcart Prize* (Pushcart)
Hershan, Stella, *Der Nackte Engel* (Universitas)
Hirshfield, Jane, *Of Gravity and Angels* (Wesleyan University Press); cotranslator with Mariko Aratani, *The Ink Dark Moon: Poems by Komachi and Shikibo, Women of the Ancient Court* (Scribner's)
Hodges, Hollis, *Norman Rockwell's Greatest Painting* (Paul S. Erickson)
Holmes, John Clellon, *Passionate Opinions* and *Representative Men* (University of Arkansas Press)
Hurwitz, Johanna, *Anne Frank: Life in Hiding* (Jewish Publication Society); *The Cold and Hot Winter* and *Teacher's Pet* (Morrow Junior Books)
Ignatow, David, *The One in the Many: A Poet's Memoirs* (Wesleyan University Press)
Inez, Colette, *Family Life* (Story Line)
Johnson, Nora, *Uncharted Places* (Simon & Schuster)
Kaplan, Fred, *Dickens: A Biography* (William Morrow)
Kaplan, Louise, *The Family Romance of the Impostor-Poet Thomas Chatterton* (Atheneum)
Karp, Walter, *Liberty Under Siege: American Politics 1976-1988* (Henry Holt)
Katz, Menke, and Harry Smith, *Two Friends II* (Birch Book)
Kenney, Maurice, *Humors and/or Not So Humorous New Poems* (Swift Kick)
Klein, Norma, *No More Saturday Nights* (Knopf); *Now That I Know* (Bantam); *That's My Baby* (Viking)
Konig, Hans, *Acts of Faith* (Henry Holt)
Kramer, Rita, *At a Tender Age: Violent Youth and Criminal Justice* (Henry Holt)
Leedom-Ackerman, Joanne, *The Dark Path to the River* (Saybrook)
Lefevere, Andre, and Peter Glassgold, translators, *The Flexfield* by Stijn Streuvels (Sun & Moon)
Lehman, David, series editor, *The Best American Poetry, 1988* (Scribner's); editor, *Ecstatic Occasions, Expedient Forms* (Macmillan)
Lewis, Richard, *In the Night, Still Dark* (Atheneum)
Lifson, David S., *Sholem Aleichem's Wandering Star and Other Plays of Jewish Life* (Cornwall)
Lifton, Betty Jean, *The King of Children* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
Lima, Robert, *Valle-Inclan; The Theatre of His Life* University of Missouri Press)
Listfield, Emily, *Slightly Like Strangers* (Bantam)
Little, Geraldine C., *Beyond the Boxwood Comb: Six Women's Voices from Japan* (Sparrow); *A Well-tuned Harp* (Saturday)
Littledase, Freya, *Peter and the North Wind and The Twelve Dancing Princesses* (Scholastic)
Machlis, Joseph, *The Enjoyment of Music,* Chinese edition (People's Republic of China)
Madden, Dave, *Revising Fiction* (Plume); coeditor with Peggy Bach, *Rediscoveries II* (Carroll & Graf)
Mallon, Thomas, *Arts and Sciences* (Ticknor & Fields)
Mandel, Charlotte, *The Life of Mary* (Saturday)
Markson, David, *Wittgenstein's Mistress* (Dalkey Archive)
McGuire, Michael, *The Scott Fitzgerald Play* (University of Missouri Press)
Mellen, Joan, *Bob Knight: His Own Man* (Donald I. Fine)
Moore, Honor, *Memoir* (Chicory Blue)
Moore, Lillian, *I'll Meet You at the Cucumbers* (Atheneum)
Moore, Lillian, and Leone Adelson, *The Terrible Twitmeyer* (Scholastic)
Mukherjee, Bharati, *The Middleman and Other Stories* (Grove Press)
Munro, Eleanor, *Memoir of a Modernist's Daughter* (Viking)
Mycue, Edward, *Took Volumes 1-17* (Norton Co. Press)
Nason, Richard, *Old Soldiers* (The Smith)

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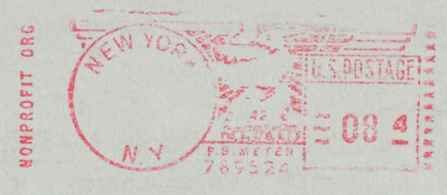

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Seattle, WA 98177

Orfalea, Gregory, *Before the Flames: A Quest for the History of Arab Americans* (University of Texas Press); *The Capital of Solitude* (Greenview Review); coeditor with Sharif Elmusa, *Grape Leaves: A Century of Arab American Poetry* (University of Utah Press)
Paolucci, Anne, *The Actor in Search of His Mask* and *Novelle Saracene, Giuseppe Bonarini* (Griffon House)
Patterson, Charles, *Marian Anderson* (Franklin Watts)
Ray, David, *Sam's Book* (Wesleyan University Press)
Replansky, Naomi, *21 Poems* (The Ginko Press)
Rorem, Ned, *Settling the Score: Essays on Music* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich)
Rosca, Ninotchka, *State of War* (Norton)
Rose, Barbara, *Autocritique* (Weidenfeld & Nicholson)
Rosenthal, Lucy, *Great American Love Stories* (Little, Brown)
San Juan, Jr., E., *Transcending the Hero: Reinventing the Heroic* (University Press of America)
Schulman, Sarah, *After Delores* (Dutton)
Sexton, Linda Gray, *Points of Light* (Little, Brown)
Shankman, Sarah, *Keeping Secrets* (Simon & Schuster)
Shapiro, Harvey, *National Cold Storage Company* (Wesleyan University Press)
Shubin, Seymour, *Never Quite Dead* (St. Martin's)
Smith, Susan, *Angela and the King-size Crusade; Dawn Selby, Super Sleuth; Sonya Begonia and the Eleventh Birthday Blues; The Terrors of Rock and Roll* (Minstrel, Pocket Books)
Snyder, Louis L., *The Third Reich, 1933-1945: A Bibliographical Guide to German National Socialism* (Garland)
Stepanchev, Stephen, *Descent* (Stone House)
Storey, Alice, *First Kill All the Lawyers* (Pocket Books)
Sulkin, Sidney, *The Secret Seed* (Dryad)
Tax, Meredith, *Union Square* (William Morrow)
Tucille, Jerome, *Trump* (Jovebooks); *Wall Street Blues* (Lyle Stuart)
Tucker, Martin, *Confrontation at 20* and *The World of Brooklyn* (Confrontation)
Tuten, Frederic, *Tallien* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)
Vachss, Andrew, *Blue Belle* (Knopf)
Valentine, Jean, *Home Deep Blue* (Alice James)
Vega, Janine, *Candles Burn in Memory Town* (Segue); *Drunk on a Glacier, Talking to Flies* (Tooth of Time)
Ward, Matthew, translator; Albert Camus, *The Stranger* (Knopf)
Weiss, Theodore, *Collected Poems* (Macmillan)
Weschler, Lawrence, *Shapinsky's Karma Boggs Bill, and Other True Life Tales* (North Point)
Weyr, Thomas, *Hispanic USA: Breaking the Melting Pot* (Harper & Row)
Wier, Dana, *The Book of Knowledge* (Carnegie Mellon)
Wilkin, Karen, *Stuart Davis* (Abbeville)
Williams, Joan, *Pay the Piper* (Dutton)
Winters, Nancy, *There's No Place to Cry at the Ritz* (Dutton)
Winthrop, Elizabeth, *In My Mother's House* (Doubleday)
Wolitzer, Meg, *This Is Your Life* (Crown)
Yoseloff, Martin, *The Wednesday Game* (Cornwall)
Ziner, Feenie, *Squanto* (Shoestring)
Zinnes, Harriet, *Blood and Feathers* (Schocken)
Zivancevic, Nina, *More or Less Urgent* (New Rivers)

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Loners and Losers in Exile

KILLING THE SECOND DOG
By Marek Hlasko
Translated from the Polish
By Tomasz Mirkowicz
Cane Hill Press
225 Varick St. New York, N.Y. 10014
117 pp. Paperback, $8.95

By Paul Preuss

MAREK HLASKO's story comes off the page at you like a pit bull. Before we're a couple of paragraphs in, a "stranger" dies. We're in a cab headed for Tel Aviv, we stop long enough to unload the body—and who are *we* and who's calling whom a stranger?—and then "some decent soul placed a photo magazine over his face. It had the picture of an actor on the cover; his blue eyes watched us with a piercing stare. Robert lifted the magazine and peered at the dead man's face. " 'I think he was Rumanian,' he said. 'Just arrived from Europe. He didn't speak a word of Hebrew.' "

By the time we've negotiated a room in the hotel across the street it's clear that we're all exiles here, members of no nation, no class, no system of belief. There's a hunchback guarding the door to the john, reading a life of St. Paul: "I converted to Catholicism because the priests promised to help me get a Canadian visa."

We're all actors, our identities as false, our psyches as fragile as a photo on a magazine cover. We live by our looks and our wits. Sacrificing what we must to survive. Love and trust are the first to go.

The worst of it is, to make our particular scam work these *dogs* have to die, which is tough once you've gotten attached to them. But that doesn't come until later—and this time maybe there's a way out.

One of us is named Robert, Bobby, Bob, a theatrical director who has firm theories of the drama:

"Shakespeare's plays shouldn't be performed . . . How can you perform a scene like the one where Hamlet and Ophelia's brother quarrel by the grave . . . ? Shakespeare is life, not theater."

The other of us, who narrates the story with self-conscious literary skill, doesn't like to say his own name (but lets it slip once; it's Jacob): "You really are a great director, Bob. It's too bad I happen to be your only actor. And I feel pretty worthless now. My face looks lousy. I don't think the girl is gonna fall for me. Sorry, but I really don't expect it to work this time."

Harry, the desk clerk who's always reading pulp crime novels, agrees:

" 'Are you going to try to marry him off again?' the desk clerk asked Robert.

" 'Sure. Hasn't it worked before?'

"The desk clerk looked at me closely. 'He's old. And he looks goddamn tired.' "

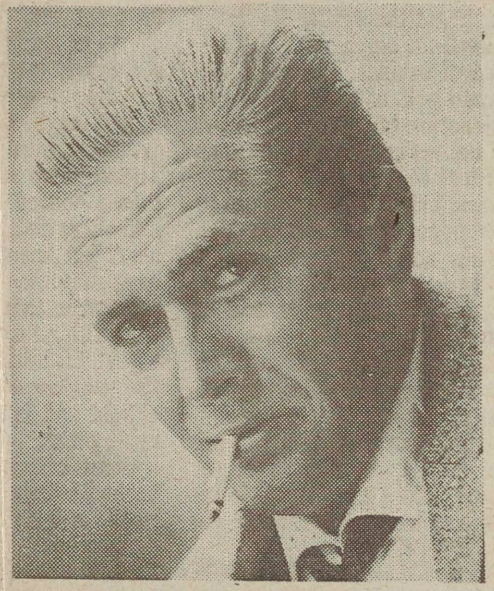
The truth is, Jacob isn't that old in years, and he isn't that bad looking. He's got what is takes, all right, to make a rich American tourist divorcee fall in love with him:

"I walked right up to her and set my deck chair next to hers. 'This spot vacant?' I asked . . .

" 'It's not vacant now,' she said. 'Unfortunately . . .'

"Women didn't trust men who sat down next to them and tried to charm them right off; all the sweet talk would come later, unexpectedly, at some point when Robert gave me the clue . . ."

Paul Preuss is the author of a novel, "Starfire."



BY RUDOLPH KLICKS

Marek Hlasko

Her name is just Her, She. The main path to her heart is through Jacob's dog—Spot, we call him—but the closer the time comes, the less Jacob wants to go through with it.

" 'Robert, let's get rid of the dog.'

" 'No, the dog's not a prop. It's an actor. You're playing together. And you need it to play out your anger.'

" 'I can break somebody's head,' I said. 'Even fight a guy twice my size. But let's forget about the dog.'

" 'No. You've got to do something really mean. Something you'll be ashamed of for the rest of your life . . .' "

The other route to her heart is through her kid, Johnny, an awesome little monster worthy of a W.C. Fields movie. No one but a mother could love this foul imp, who wreaks surrealistic violence wherever he goes. Yet Jacob's own heart, which he'd like us to believe has nothing left but scar tissue, begins to melt when Johnny tries to buy Spot from him, to take back to America.

What happens to Johnny and Spot and Her I won't tell you, partly because the novel is not about Spot, or about Her, or even about Johnny—although as a character Johnny does his best to derail the program. Fat chance. Marek Hlasko is no sentimentalist.

Hlasko's stylistic models are American B-movies and crime fiction; *Killing the Second Dog* is scattered with references to people like John Wayne and Gary Cooper and Mickey Spillane. His writing is extraordinarily compressed. In physics, compression is what happens when you squeeze a spring. In Hollywood, they call it "reading the middle of the page," meaning that the potential buyer of a movie script (assumed by generations of movie writers to be a virtual illiterate) skips all the scene descriptions and camera directions and reads only the dialogue, squeezed within narrower margins. Which is where your story has to be told. Which is where your message, if you're sending one, has to be slipped in.

"Why haven't I ever said or written that there is no greater misery than living without awareness of God, contrary to his commandments? I don't know. And why haven't I ever said that the worst sin is to betray the love of another human being? I don't know. Maybe it was too hot for such profound statements . . ."

Marek Hlasko is dead. Thompson Bradley's concise introduction to this novel—which I urge you to read only after you've read the novel itself—tells us that Hlasko was briefly Poland's most acclaimed author, following the death of Stalin in 1953; five years later he went into exile. He lived a vagabond's life in Western Europe, Israel and the United States until his death in 1969 at the age of 35. *Killing the Second Dog* is the first of his novels to be translated into English.

Hey, we're in luck; he left several more, yet to be translated. ■

ular powerlessness Le Guin naturally associates with the general condition of women. As a result, *Tehanu* enlarges its focus to take up again the story of Tenar, once priestess of the Tombs of Atuan, but now a middle-aged farmer's widow who has put all magery behind her and chosen the classic path to happiness: To live unknown.

An artist who has lost his power, a woman who has refused any: Together they shape *Tehanu* into a study of two people coming to terms with age, weakness, mortality. In the book's opening chapters Tenar's husband, the farmer Flint, and her substitute father, the mage Ogion, both die. Then Ged nearly dies. A little girl is discovered raped and half burnt to death, left with one eye blind, one hand a claw, one side of her face forever scarred. Tenar adopts the child Therru and nurses Ged back to health, but these little acts of kindness and of

ing, and finally her own narrow-minded son returns from the sea.

Throughout the earlier Earthsea books Le Guin emphasized the importance of balance, of integrating shadow and self, of trust; she examined the nature of power and how it shapes us, seducing us to its own ends. These same themes reappear in *Tehanu*, but with a darker, more realistic edge. We are done with journeying and boys' adventures. This is a woman's world, a realm of socially imposed weakness and of male stupidity, of child abuse and evil with a human face. It is also a tale, not of an individual hero, battling to save himself or his realm, but of a family in the making, trying to live quietly, coming to terms with what abides after much is taken. It is consequently meditative, somber, even talky.

As such, *Tehanu* may be a little too autumnal for many young people. It is in fact a kind of pastoral, almost a woman's novel like *Cran-*

ally actively malevolent. And for all its quietness, *Tehanu* builds to a climax of almost pornographic horror, nearly too shocking for its supposedly young adult pages.

Yet, maybe because it is a fantasy, all comes right in the end. Therru turns out to be much more than a burned little girl: As Ogion said on his deathbed, "They will fear her." But then sharp readers will have suspected as much, those who remember that Odin paid for wisdom with an eye, that dragons, the wisest of beasts, live in fire, and that wholeness embodies a balance of light and dark. The least shall be made great.

Some critics feel that in recent books Le Guin's writing has grown windy and soft, too feminist, too mythic, too preachy. Certainly this book is pointedly feminist and the motivation of its male villains a little fuzzy. But make no mistake. Le Guin can still stand your hair on end

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over the rest of the novel, first like a harsh bad dream, a great failure, then later as a kind of glowing affirmation and source of pride in what life and art are all about.

THROUGH all his troubles (raids by Spartans, the disastrous first years of his marriage to Phaedra, the various receptions of his comedies, a military tax-collecting expedition, the succession of Athenian leaders from Pericles to Alcibiades) Eupolis never, after his first play, loses sight of what his work means and is. He knows the role of the comic poet is to make people both laugh and think.

The Athenians of his time are presented as the people with the highest ideals, and the basest means of achieving them, who ever lived. Comedians have the politicians running on the slogan "Three Obols a Day for Life!" One night people at a dinner party argue for hours over the place of residence of the soul; the next morning they're punching each other out trying to get in line before the sun comes up so they can be picked for jury duty and get money and a free meal. The description of the Anti-Persian League (a sort of blackmail-by-Navy) sounds a lot like past dealings the United States has had in Central America (or closer to Holt's own case—he's British—England's dealings with the Irish). But that's what came to my mind as I read *Goatsong*; Holt never said it. He never brings his subtext—things are rotten all over and always have been; so do your best—out into the open. (That's why it's a subtext.)

My admiration for this book is pretty much complete. There is a richness and texture here that never leaves the down-to-earth (even when Dionysus shows up a few times). A writer is not supposed to be able to do all the things Holt has done in this one novel, and make everything both accessible and so seemingly dead right-on.

Ask anybody who knows me, they'll tell you I mean it: This is the first book of a series I've ever finished and really, actually couldn't wait to read the next one. ■



THE SOFT EDGE OF SPRING FASHION
Sunday, March 4, in The Magazine

An Uneasy Walker in the City

OUR NEW YORK
Text by Alfred Kazin.
Photographs by David Finn.
224 pages. New York:
Harper & Row. $35.

By Anatole Broyard

IN "Mr. Sammler's Planet," Saul Bellow's New York City novel, Sammler strolls the streets of the Upper West Side, practicing "aesthetic consumption of the environment," translating "heartache into delicate, even piercing observation." In "Our New York," Alfred Kazin, who like Sammler has reached his 70's, is another such walker, working a little harder to translate the heartache, reaching deeper and more desperately for the delicate or piercing observation.

Mr. Kazin is one of the last of that generation who searched the city streets for meaning, "looking for my future," as Bernard Malamud put it. Writing for them was partly a peripatetic art. They were *flâneurs*, window-shoppers of the *Zeitgeist*, and it is tempting to see this as one of the significant differences between them and the present generation of American writers, who no longer seem to walk their cities in this questing way, who tend to write inside stories.

The best thoughts, Nietzsche said, come while walking, and Mr. Kazin has produced many of American literature's best thoughts during almost 50 years of exploring New York. In the three volumes of his grand autobiography — "A Walker in the City," "Starting Out in the Thirties" and "New York Jew" — the city was still a source of lyric energy, and Mr. Kazin walked its streets with the dithyrambs of Whitman in his ears.

Now, in "Our New York," which blends autobiography, rumination, social history, celebration and lament, he seems uneasy about pronouncing on the city at this moment in its evolution. One can almost hear him asking, like the man in the Wallace Stevens poem, "Shall I uncrumple this much-crumpled thing?" Perhaps this is why Mr. Kazin has fortified himself with a collaborator, the photographer David Finn, who has published more than 30 books and who was also born in Brooklyn. Policemen too travel in pairs. Mr. Kazin may have hoped that Mr. Finn could persuade New York to smile for the camera. Perhaps he could capture the miscegenated beauty of its melded races and motley architecture. The camera might find a more benign way to look at a city that in its darker moments seems to have passed beyond literature to statistics, obituaries and letters to the editor.

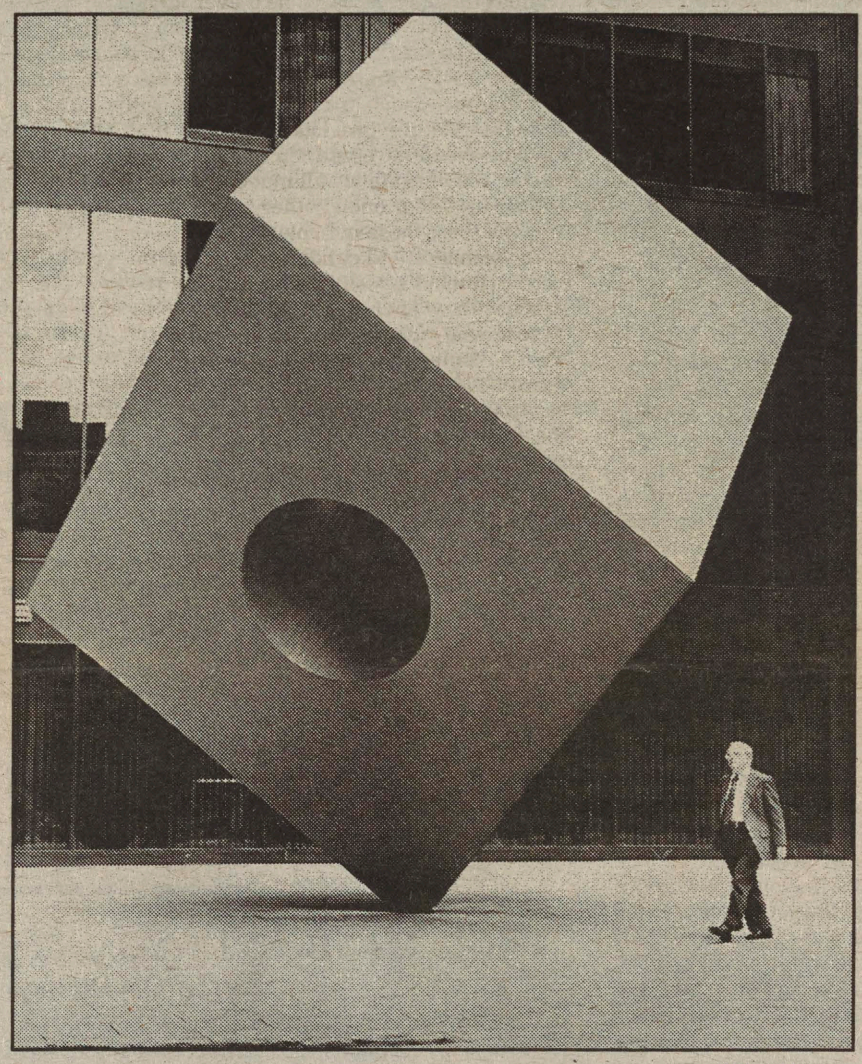
To a degree Mr. Finn succeeds. The inanimate parts of New York, the buildings that are not actively rotting or seething with restless humanity, the skyscrapers and modern museums, the bridges, grids and profiles against the sky, are soothingly abstract — at least to those who find solace in abstraction. His photographs of outdoor sculpture — the word "monument" could be applied only grudgingly — are not quite so innocuous. On the very first page of "Our New York," a huge cubical structure — pierced through the center like a nut from some cosmic hardware store — teeters ominously over a frowning passerby as if it might fall on him and lock or screw him into place to complete some obscure relation between art and life.

• • •

Except for the self-deprecating smiles of the habitually apprehensive, most of the faces photographed by Mr. Finn are carefully wiped clean of expression, for to show something is to invite anything. We are schooled to look inward, to keep our personalities buttoned in our pockets with our wallets. Sometimes, though, Mr. Finn's faces betray a kind of amnesiac grieving over their lost expressions; they look like memories, or prisons, of feelings.

Alfred Kazin, the man and his books, are unimaginable without New York City. As Henry James said, landscape is character. Mr. Kazin needs New York as Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin need it, or Philip Roth, Malamud, Cheever, Norman Mailer, Allen Ginsberg or Hart Crane need it — yet his relation to the city is entirely different from, say, Donald Barthelme's. While Barthelme drew on New York for its absurdity, Mr. Kazin's mission — we can safely call him a missionary or evangelist — is to make sense of the city. He is dependent on it as a horde or mine of meanings.

When something fails them, many writers fall back on irony, which can be failure's i.o.u. But Mr. Kazin is a moralist. He needs a city to believe in, to love, almost to worship. He feels excommunicated without it, and "Our New York" is a belated attempt to effect a reconciliation, a mutual forgiveness, to express what Walter Benjamin called "love at last sight." Kafka said of the cathedral in "The Trial" that its great size was almost beyond the limit of what human beings could bear, and something like this is true for Mr. Kazin's city. Yet it is not the enormousness of New York that he finds hard to bear — it is the enormity.



FROM "OUR NEW YORK"

"The Red Cube," a 1967 sculpture by Isamu Noguchi at 140 Broadway.

He regards the city with the ruefulness of someone who has no choice, no other infinity-framed place to go. An old revolutionary, he realizes that New York has undergone one revolution too many. What we see now in its streets is the revenge of democracy. As he says about our public parks, what awaits us there is not the pastoral, a place to picnic or meditate, but "the revolt of the masses." Through a peculiar political process, Mr. Kazin's old enthusiasms have turned into threats. Nothing is what it promised to be. Central Park is "a pacemaker for New York's straining heart," a place where "the pursuit of health has replaced the pursuit of happiness."

Cyril Connolly, the British writer, described New York as a city in which to get over romance, "to get over anything." But after the getting over, what then? Can we live on a boulevard of broken dreams? Like Spengler's "intellectual nomad," Mr. Kazin no longer has a city he can call his own. He quotes a Chicago witticism that "New York is a foreign city of no known country," which is another way of saying that, from a writer's point of view, it has become unpronounceable. The loss of the city as a companion or accomplice may explain why we find it evoked more often in memoirs than in current fiction.

When Mr. Finn takes to the air to show us panoramas, his pictures are very good — yet it is also true that they are like offering a rat a Corbusier maze. Mr. Kazin quotes a prophetic remark from "New York Panorama," published by the Federal Writers Project in 1938: "The ultimate modern artist might be defined as someone who likes living in New York City." The statement still holds after more than 50 years. New York is made to order for painters like Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol or Barnett Newman, who, as Harold Rosenberg said, tried to make nothingness exclaim itself, whose paintings are "a marathon of deletions."

Mr. Kazin tells us, on the basis of personal conversations and analysis of their work, what New York means to the writers and painters we most commonly associate with it. He shows the sense of betrayal of the 30's giving way to the hope of the late 40's, followed by the elation of the 50's, the pandemonium of the 60's, the morning after of the 70's, and the 80's still awaiting their epithet. The Brooklyn or Brownsville of Mr. Kazin's father seems as remote now as Kafka's Prague or Dostoyevsky's St. Petersburg.

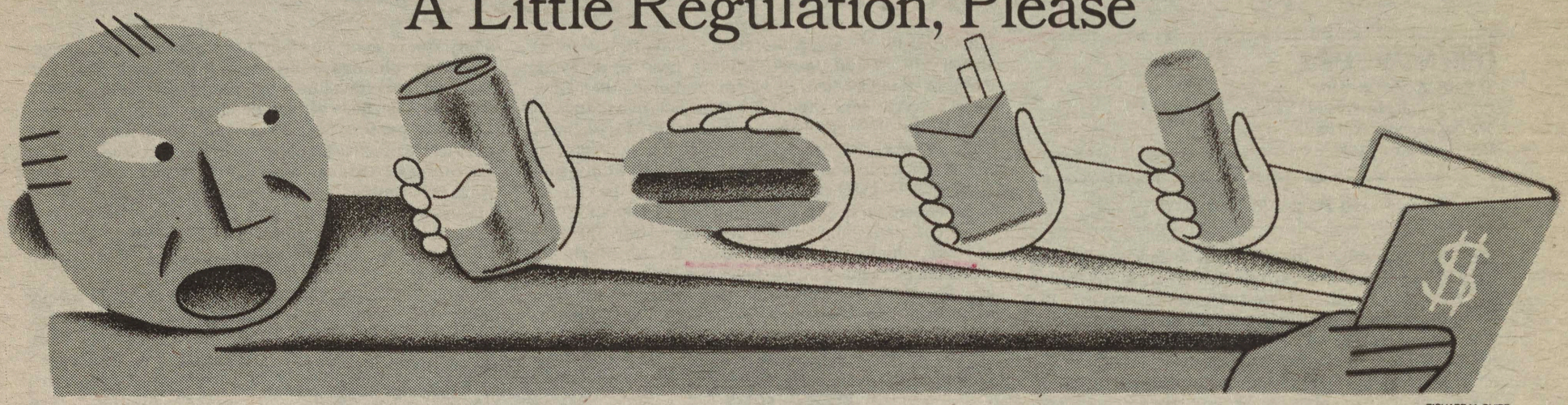
Irving Howe observed that life in a great city becomes a metaphysical question, and Mr. Kazin mourns the disappearance of metaphysics, which is like an old theater that has been razed. What, he asks, will we put in this gaping hole, this huge empty midtown lot? Metaphysics had nourished him like the double milkshakes of his boyhood. It was Hart Crane's "terrific threshold," Wallace Stevens's sublime, Delmore Schwartz's beautiful lunacy.

Reminiscing about his boyhood, Mr. Kazin remembers yelling in a tunnel in a park, enjoying the magnification of his voice, anticipating the acoustics of literature. That is what "Our New York" is like: a cry in a tunnel. This tunnel is dark, dangerous and urine-stained, but you can still yell in it. It still echoes and resounds. □

The Brooklyn or Brownsville of the past is as remote now as Kafka's Prague or Dostoyevsky's St. Petersburg.

Anatole Broyard, a former editor of The Book Review, teaches fiction writing in Cambridge, Mass.

A Little Regulation, Please



RICHARD McGUIRE

THE TROUBLE WITH MONEY

By William Greider.
Illustrated. 83 pp. Knoxville, Tenn: Whittle Direct Books. $11.95.

By John Taylor

THE mission that Christopher Whittle, the Knoxville, Tenn., media entrepreneur and chairman of Whittle Communications, has set for himself is to find increasingly ingenious — some say diabolical — ways to shove ads in your face. That may sound harsh, but Mr. Whittle, don't forget, is the man who plans to broadcast educational news programs that contain commercials to public secondary schools, the man who sends doctors posters for their office walls that contain advertising and who now wants to broadcast into their waiting rooms to barrage patients with yet more advertising.

Last spring, Mr. Whittle announced he would publish books by prominent authors, such as David Halberstam and John Kenneth Galbraith, that, like the posters and the television programs, would contain advertising. The writers would receive around $60,000 for manuscripts of about 20,000 words. Mr. Whittle said he would send these books out free to 150,000 rich and influential individuals in business, politics and academia.

The idea caused a stir in the publishing world. Some people complained about visual pollution, the encroachment of ad blather into yet another niche of contemporary life. Others worried about the editorial integrity of a book sponsored by advertising. But certain publishers thought the idea was brilliant, and the writers hired by Mr. Whittle enthused about the opportunity to explore a medium that was, as one agent put it, "somewhere between a magazine and a book."

The first in the Whittle Direct Books series, "The Trouble With Money" by William Greider, is now out, and it is just such a hybrid. From the outside it looks like a book, although, at 83 pages, a thin one. It has a hard cover, although a cheap one, and a dust jacket, although an unattractive one.

Inside, "The Trouble With Money" more resembles a magazine. On almost every page are enlarged blurbs pulled from the text, together with photographs of executives, four-color bar graphs and little concept illustrations depicting, among other things, executives on trapezes. The edition sent out free has another 18 pages of advertising by Federal Express scattered throughout the book. (There is also an advertising-free version available only through Waldenbooks.)

A number of the Whittle authors have said they intend to write on subjects similar to books or articles they have recently published. That has prompted cynics to suggest that the writers would simply recycle old material to make a quick $60,000 filling the pages between Mr. Whittle's ads. And Mr. Greider, the national affairs editor for Rolling Stone, does indeed build on the research in his massive tome, "Secrets of the Temple: How the Federal Reserve Runs the Country."

In six short chapters, "The Trouble With Money" briefly discusses the debacle in the savings and loan industry, the national housing shortage, the accumulation of corporate debt and the punishing effect of high interest rates on manufacturing companies.

Adopting the apocalyptic tone favored by critics of Reaganomics ever since the days of David Stockman, Mr. Greider urges the lowering of interest rates and the reregulation of the banking industry before "calamity" results from our "grave exposure." His analysis is thoughtful but hardly breathtaking. Much of the ground he covers will be familiar to regular readers of the financial pages. And to dramatize his charges of recent monetary mismanagement, he plays down the devastating consequences of high inflation in the late 1970's, which deregulation and the Federal Reserve's tight money policy were designed to combat.

Still, "The Trouble With Money" is an earnest, ponderous essay that might have appeared without causing much commotion in The New Yorker or The Atlantic. But as the deconstructionists like to say, you can't separate the work from its context. Because "The Trouble With Money" is a Whittle Direct Book, it carries some unfortunate baggage.

Mr. Whittle's model for his direct-mail books is the controlled-circulation magazine. Sent free to a specific audience — doctors, say, or residents of Beverly Hills — that certain advertisers want to reach, such magazines derive all their revenue from advertising. They therefore tend to be morbidly afraid of offending their advertisers. Most of them, in fact, avoid controversy of any sort.

However, that is not the real problem with controlled-circulation magazines. The real problem is that they are free. By giving away a book or magazine, the publisher expresses a lack of faith in its ability to make a market for itself, to generate attention and sales on its own merit.

When an author publishes a book, he sets out to create an audience for his words and thoughts. The size of that audience depends on the value — including the entertainment value — of what he has to say. The publication of any book ought to reaffirm the fundamentals of freedom of expression. They entail not only the freedom to climb on a soapbox and say what you want but the freedom of as many people as are interested to gather round and listen. Whittle Direct Books, in a sense, circumvent this marketplace of ideas.

It is fashionable these days to complain that too much is being published. People are swamped with subscriptions for magazines and newspapers; books compete for scarce shelf space in bookstores. In a saturated environment, anyone willing to give you a book or periodical on the off chance that you might glance at some of the advertising in it can't help but convey the impression that he doesn't think the editorial material is worth paying for. And you can't help but think that too. □

John Taylor is the author of "Circus of Ambition: The Culture of Wealth and Power in the Eighties."

L.L. Bean Presents 'The Shoes of the Fisherman'?

By Lawrence Hughes

When I first heard that Whittle Communications would publish books that carry advertising, I was aghast! We book publishers have always boasted that of all the media we alone have not been corrupted by the advertising dollar. We swim or sink on the quality of our editorial product, not on the trendy whims of Philip Morris or Procter & Gamble. But with many wise people now saying our book sales are in the doldrums, I'm not so sure we can afford to stay so snooty.

Indeed I can think back on many golden opportunities I missed by not tying my books to advertising. What a promotion I could have done with L. L. Bean and "The Shoes of the Fisherman," or with Rolex on Sidney Sheldon's "Sands of Time." ("Beautifully paired!" the reviewer would have blurbed.)

The possible matchups are endless: just look at the current best-seller list! Toys "R" Us would pay a premium for space in "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten." And if I were Nancy Reagan, I would be talking to my publisher right now about "My Turn to Fly the Friendly Skies," or "My Turn to Use Chanel's New Prevention Serum."

But why stop there? Book types should take a leaf from those magazines where you have to be as alert as a fox to know whether you are reading editorial content or advertising matter. We too could slide in an unnoticed product pitch. Jake Barnes might say, "Ahead was a civil guard in Banana Republic khaki, directing traffic. He raised his baton. The car, a Nissan Stanza GXE, slowed suddenly pressing Brett against me."

Everyone knows that nowadays those brand-name products we see in films are not there just to make things seem like real life. The manufacturers have actually *paid* to have them shown. Children's picture books would be a fertile field in this area. "The Little Engine That Could" might sport an Amtrak logo; Toad would drive Ratty and Mole in a brand-new Chrysler Imperial (bright red, of course) through "The Wind in the Willows," and there is certainly a visual tie-in someplace between Chicken Little and Frank Perdue.

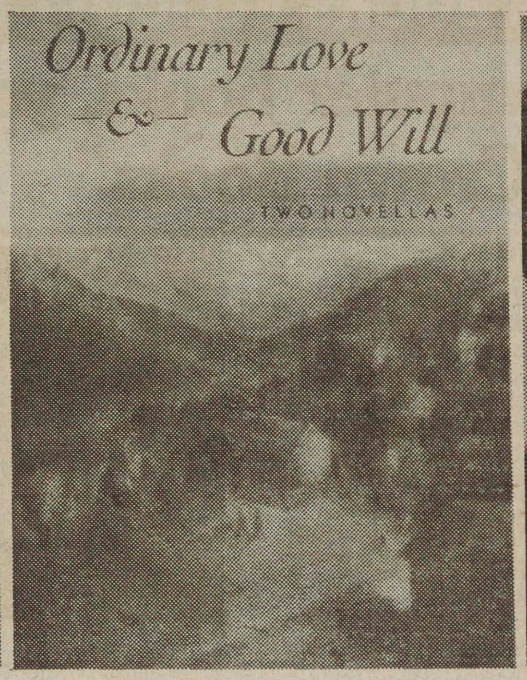
Fellow publishers, let's not let those little Whittle books get ahead of us. I have a copy of the very first Whittle book (reviewed above) and I see it has Federal Express as a corporate sponsor. So, now that the Whittle folks have softened up Frederick W. Smith, Federal's chairman and chief executive, I'm going to call on him next week. "Mr. Smith," I'm going to say, "I've got a fantastic idea. How about you joining us with an upcoming reprint of 'A Message to Garcia'? And if you don't bite, I bet I can sell it to the guys from Japan who make those fax machines." □

Lawrence Hughes is chairman of the Hearst Trade Book Group.



BY STEPHEN M. MORTENSEN

Jane Smiley



JACKET ILLUSTRATION BY LIZ PYLE



BY GERALD MARTINEAU—THE WASHINGTON POST

John Edgar Wideman

By David Streitfeld

Smiley's People

"I WONDER why I pay so much attention to my feelings, why Joe does, why Michael and Ellen do. We are like those scientists that Joe talks about, always stopping in the road to contemplate boulders, except that the boulders aren't anything interesting, like the speed of light or the nature of gravity, they are only the rubble of our own feelings."

So says Rachel in Jane Smiley's *Ordinary Love*—a novella that, with its companion story, *Good Will,* is up for the National Book Critics Circle fiction award, to be announced Feb. 12. Consequently, it's safe to assume that reviewers find Smiley's characters and their feelings more interesting than rocks. Readers do too. *Ordinary Love & Good Will: Two Novellas* was published in November, and has already gone through six modest printings.

Smiley, who has written four novels as well as another acclaimed story collection, *The Age of Grief,* is getting something of a reputation as a spokesman for her generation. "No writer of the generation now in its thirties," wrote critic James Atlas, "has written more movingly about what it feels like to become one's parents." But to hear the 40-year-old Smiley talk, it was largely an accident.

About a dozen years ago, she was heading off to Europe. "My plan," she says, "was to go to England and then sort of wander around the world, with my typewriter in one hand, my banjo in the other and my backpack on my back."

She got as far as New York, and had even bought her ticket for Europe. Then her boyfriend tracked her down. "I don't want you to go," he said. "Come back." Adding weight to his argument: Smiley's realization she was pregnant.

Back she went. "It meant," she says, "I was going to write about home rather than about being on the road." She still hasn't been to India, her ultimate destination in '78.

As for this spokesman notion, "I feel like every writer is in a solution, and that solution is their own generation or their own time. Was Mark Twain a racist? Yeah, he was a white man living in a racist time. Am I overheated in my interest in my children? Well, yeah, I can't help that. So I don't feel like I speak *for* my generation, I speak *from* it."

Men and women who are now around 40—the cutting edge of the baby boom—have always had, according to Smiley, two main areas of interest: sex and the apocalypse. "We were the generation that grew up with the pill and the atom bomb. I don't think our concerns have changed, although they may be dissipated by getting to work on time. But if there is a single person in my generation who doesn't deeply believe that they and their families could be blown to smithereens at any time . . . ." Her voice trails off.

"A person could say about me, has she earned this sense of fragility? Her life looks pretty normal—she went to Vassar College, she's been employed all these years. And I would say that on the surface, well, probably not."

Yet she argues that any educated, sensitive person has to have this sense of fragility, "because we're constantly barraged with the ends of things: planes blowing up, governments falling, famine overtaking Ethiopia."

Look at the matter on a more individual level. A staple in newspapers has been to offer up a family that looks normal: they're nicely dressed, drive a Volvo, have good jobs. But the father is arrested for murder, or the son pushes drugs. This, the story implies, could happen to anybody. Prominent variations on this theme range from the Preppie Murder in New York to the Stuart affair in Boston.

"If we actually studied this family we could see, yeah, there are problems in their lives that could account for this. But the image that's presented is, it was a perfectly normal family and then it fell apart. That goes along with this whole image of, it was a perfectly normal airplane and then it blew up. And it was a perfectly normal government and then it collapsed. So I go through life every day, thinking 'God, my perfectly normal family, they could [she makes a noise like a rocket] vanish at any minute.' "

Just think: Smiley lives with husband and two young daughters in relatively calm Ames, Iowa, where she teaches creative writing and world literature. Imagine how much sharper this sense would be if she lived in, say, New York, where disaster is nearly always in view.

Isn't this all rather morbid? Think glasnost, the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe, an American economy still afloat . . . The world is no longer supposed to end any time soon.

"Well, it isn't," Smiley agrees. "But every time you let your guard down, that makes it more likely to happen."

A Historian's Conclusion

ANOTHER NBCC nominee is John Clive's *Not By Fact Alone,* one of the choices in the criticism category. Unfortunately, Clive never knew of the honor. He died on Jan. 7 of a heart attack, the day before the nominees were announced.

Not By Fact Alone is subtitled *Essays on the Writing and Reading of History;* when it appeared last spring, John Kenyon noted in Book World that "unfortunately we still await the second volume" of Clive's masterwork, his 17-year-old *Macaulay: The Shaping of the Historian.* That National Book Award-winning biography ends with the great Victorian historian returning to London from India at age 38, with the idea of his *History of England* firmly in mind.

Actually, Clive never intended to write a second volume. "People made assumptions, and I think he left open the possibility," says his editor, Jane Garrett. "But very rapidly after publication he decided he wasn't interested. The central thing about the second volume would have been the historiography, and John had already said what he had to say in essays about Macaulay as an historian." *Not By Fact Alone* will be his final work.

A Blot on His Escutcheon

IMAGINE it suddenly being alleged that J.D. Salinger once sold drugs to schoolchildren and you'll have some idea of the reaction in France to the news that Alain-Fournier might have died in less than heroic circumstances.

Alain-Fournier, author of *Le Grand Meaulnes,* a bittersweet novel of lost love that holds somewhat the same position in French culture that *The Catcher in the Rye* does in American, was an infantry lieutenant who disappeared on the front-lines during the first days of World War I. The circumstances of his death have always been mysterious, but recently scholar Michel Algrain said he had found out the truth: Alain-Fournier was executed by the Germans in retaliation for shooting at a field hospital.

It's a subtle point, but in the early days of the war notions of chivalry still held, and one of them was that you didn't shoot at ambulances. Consequently, some French are upset by the notion that one of their heroes—or any Frenchman, for that matter—would have deliberately attacked a field hospital. Algrain's research has been criticized. Words like "scandalized" and "slander" have been used. The truth, it seems, will never be known, but one more hero has been tainted.

Reaching for an Audience

SAUL BELLOW was recently quoted in Book Report as deeming his experiment with paperback publishing a success. Indeed, there's much to recommend the form. It's cheaper, faster, more immediate—as if literature were once again news. It's also an attempt to breach that enormous, crucial gap between the small actual audience for books and the huge potential audience.

But before getting too carried away, talk to John Edgar Wideman. He begs to differ.

Avon issued three original Wideman works of fiction, his Homewood trilogy, in paperback in the early '80s. The books were well reviewed, and *Sent for You Yesterday* even won the PEN/Faulkner award—still the only time a paperback original has done that. But on the occasion of the publication of *Fever,* his new volume of stories, Wideman was a bit disgruntled about the experience.

"My idea was simply that if the books were cheaper, in theory a larger audience could buy them. But it's not only the price of the books that's problematic—six or seven bucks for a paperback is still not an easy purchase for many people. The other thing is the distribution. How many bookstores are in black communities in this country? And when you get right down to it in a cynical, hardnosed way, how many middle-class or lower-middle-class people in this country actually buy books?"

In his own case, Wideman blames the publisher. About that time, Avon was losing interest in its well-regarded Discus and Bard lines. A highly touted Southern writers series was gutted almost before it began. While Wideman did get some recognition, he says sales were minimal and the books themselves hard to read, crammed with too much type per page.

It's difficult to write good fiction; do the authors have to sell it, too? "It's hard enough to keep stuff in print because of the blockbuster syndrome," comments Wideman. "You're either going to get $500,000 for your next book or nobody wants it. It's really difficult now for anybody, black or white, to have an honorable career—to publish what you really want to publish, sell up to 10,000 hardbacks, and then continue book after book. But if you don't hit it somewhere after book two or three, people in the business aren't interested."

Wideman isn't personally complaining here. His next novel, *Philadelphia Fire,* is due out this fall. It was the subject of at least a small-scale bidding war. Holt is doing it as a hardback.

Would he do a paperback original again? Possibly, he says, but with less naivete. "I would like to have a sense that the network of minority bookstores growing up around the country might be somehow incorporated into the distribution.

"Somebody might sit down and think from a business point of view about how you reach this kind of black, lower-middle-class, potentially bookbuying public. Maybe we're talking about itinerant peddlers—guys with a sack of books on their back. Or the mom-and-pop groceries where magazines like Jet and Ebony are sold. I'd like to see some innovative thinking. Because there is a market out there." ■

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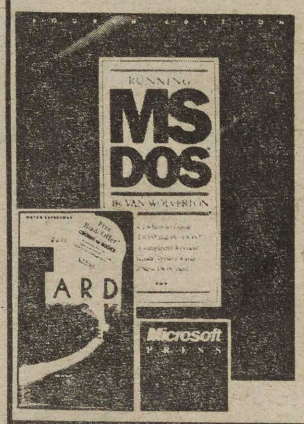

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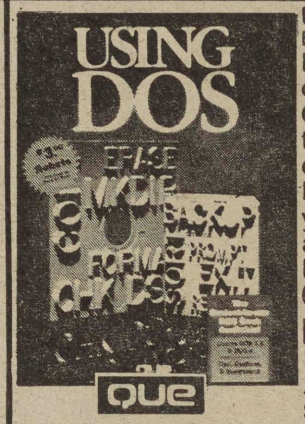

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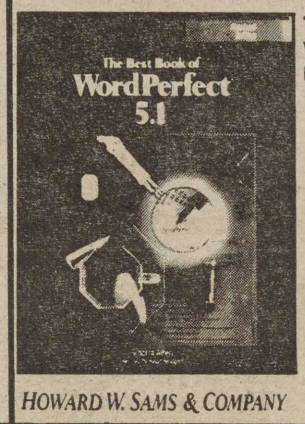

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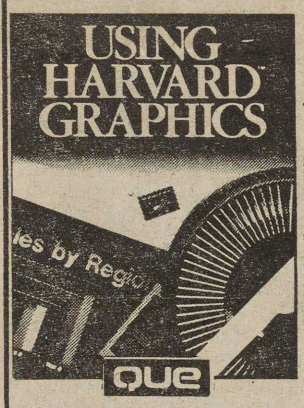

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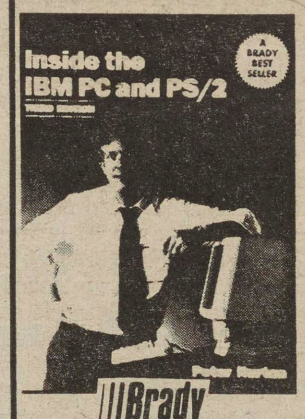

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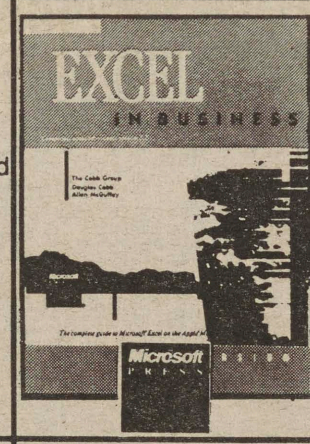

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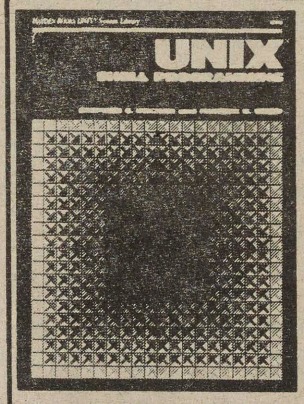

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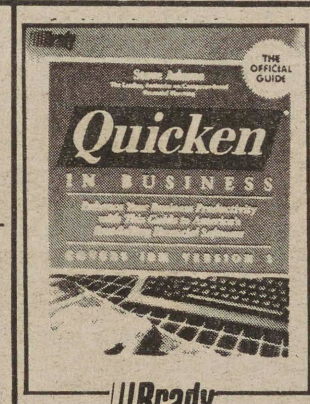

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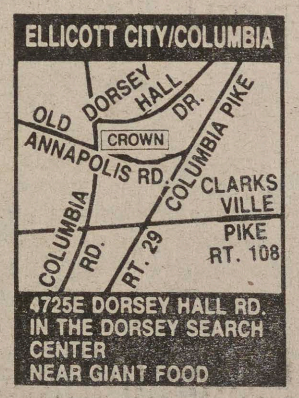

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NEAR GIANT FOOD

Fuentes

(Continued from page 5)

common." But nothing is black and white: opposing one "only truth" with another is not an answer to the difficult and urgent query Fuentes finds in Kundera:

> *We cannot evade the burning question in the novels of Milan Kundera. It is a question of our times and it possesses a tragic resonance because it is a fight within ourselves and affects our possible freedom. The question is simply this: How to fight injustice without creating injustice? It is the question of any man who acts in our time.*

In his Harvard Commencement speech, the style is direct and energetic, the matter bluntly political, as commencement speeches by public figures are by definition. Fuentes speaks here first as a Mexican, only secondarily as a writer, and eloquently outlines the causes of the failure of U.S. policies in Latin America. In large part, this failure is due to "the mistaken identification of change in Latin America as somehow manipulated by a Soviet conspiracy." Fuentes argues, in this speech given in 1983, for the same thing he asked for in Prague in 1968—a solution for non-intervention:

> *The United States can no longer go it alone in Central America and the Caribbean. It cannot, in today's world, practice the anachronistic policies of the "big stick." It will only achieve, if it does so, what it cannot truly want. Many of our countries are struggling to cease being banana republics. They do not want to become balalaika republics. Do not force them to choose between appealing to the Soviet Union or capitulating to the United States.*

Fuentes is a Mexican spokesman with an American childhood, an international aristocrat with decidedly leftist politics, a writer who undoubtedly *has* seen all the paintings and all the films in all the capitals of the world. He can outdo De Tocqueville; he is a man whose views of the U.S. benefit from an otherness fraught with intimacy. These essays have no translator. This is a writer as good in English as he is in Spanish. And in the end, this is a writer who believes—

> *language is a shared and sharing part of culture that cares little about formal classifications and much about vitality and connection, for culture itself perishes in purity or isolation—*

a writer who transcends the Rio Grande or any other arbitrary boundaries drawn in the dust by isolationist tendencies of man:

> *Neruda, Reyes, Paz; Washington, Santiago de Chile, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Paris, Geneva; Cervantes, Balzac, Rimbaud, Thomas Mann; only with all the shared languages, those of my places and friends and masters, was I able to approach the fire of literature and ask it for a few sparks.*

These essays, like the novels of Carlos Fuentes, contain more than a few sparks. □

Wright

(Continued from page 9)

of any irony and are ostensibly unaware of the reader. *This Journey* is filled with such poems, nearing acts of private communication to loved ones. "A Winter Daybreak Above Vence" is a reminiscence of his meditating and working on a poem one morning in France:

> *I turn, and somehow*
> *Impossibly hovering in the air over everything*
> *The Mediterranean, nearer to the moon*
> *Than this mountain is,*
> *Shines. A voice clearly*
> *Tells me to snap out of it. Galway*
> *Mutters out of the house and up the stone stairs*
> *To start the motor.*

The mature Wright voice is here unadorned, unmindful of moralizing or rendering literary allusions, and as such it becomes increasingly difficult for one to maintain the critical dictum of separating poet from speaker.

One of the elegies to Wright, Galway Kinnell's "Last Holy Fragrance," is a direct response to "A Winter Daybreak Above Vence." The Kinnell "I" makes his tribute, in which the speaker's reading of Wright's poem—handed to him by Wright in the hospital, apparently the final meeting of the two men—evokes the memory of watching Wright compose that poem one morning in Vence, France:

> *When by first light I went out*
> *from the last house on the chemin de Riou*
> *to start up the cistern pump, there he sat,*
> *mumbling into his notebook at an upstairs window*

Wright consciously worked on creating an individual and distinctive voice. He explains:

> *Sometimes people have called me a confessional poet. I don't see that. I feel perfectly free to make up something that never happened to me. There is not a point to point reference between the events of my books and the events of my life. Not at all.*

It is clear that Wright mastered in his verse the confessional use of voice/speaker, which is actually "another self" (to borrow a line from Richard Hugo). *James Wright: A Profile* presents this self to us and appropriately highlights the late poems which best reflect Wright's powerful personality. □

I MET THE MEXICAN

I met the Mexican Tihuatin
a few centuries ago, in Jalapa,
and later after each time I found him
in Colombia, in Iquique, in Arequipa,
I began to wonder if he really existed.
His hat had seemed
strange to me when
that man, a potter by trade,
lived by Mexican clay,
later he was an architect, a foreman
in a foundry in Venezuela,
a miner and a governor in Guatemala.
I wondered how, being the same age,
only three hundred years old,
I, of the same trade, daydreaming
in my foundry of bells,
always striking stone or metal
so that someone will hear the sound
and know my voice, my singular voice,
this man, from wasted years
sailing rivers that do not exist,
how was he changed by those changes?

Then I understood that I was he,
that we were one more survivor
among others from here and there,
and those of the same lineage, equal, buried,
their hands crusted with sand,
always being born and everywhere
seized by an endless task.

Pablo Neruda
CHILE
Translated by William O'Daly

Merwin

(Continued from page 9)

reassignment to poetry of prophetic properties assumed by the ancients. Language was recreated as incantation and magic, as something that does not simply reflect but reenters, changes, and *affects* the world—poetry as action. It seems to me, upon reading and rereading the poems of these two books, that Merwin has done something similar for our own era.

Merwin translated extensively. Working in another language, he returns one to the mysteries and to the very roots of language—the dark well where words swim up out of our terror at darkness, at the presence of others in our lives, out of our grapplings towards that world forever outside us, forever going its own impenetrable, immensely powerful way. In this sense, the best poetry itself constitutes another language. That recognition, as much as any other, is Merwin's legacy.

The extreme individuality and starkness of Merwin's work, especially its rigorous delimiting of image and vocabulary (with the heavier semantic load taken on by those images and words which *are* used), often reminds me of contemporary French poets, such as Dupin, du Bouchet, and Giroux, elemental poets, poets of wind and lights, poets of silence.

> *When you look back there is always the past*
> *Even when it has vanished*
> *But when you look forward*
> *With your dirty knuckles and the wingless*
> *Bird on your shoulder*
> *What can you write*

Yet narrative is the center of Merwin's poetry. He is a storyteller, and if this hasn't been often enough remarked, it's most likely because the narrative instinct *is* so prevailing. Nowhere is this more evident than in "The Last One," in many ways the keynote poem of *The Lice*, still chilling after countless readings:

> *Well they'd made up their minds to be everywhere because why not.*
> *Everywhere was theirs because they thought so.*
> *They with two leaves they whom the birds despise.*
> *In the middle of stones they made up their minds.*
> *They started to cut.*
>
> *Well they cut everything because why not.*
> *Everything was theirs because they thought so.*
> *It fell into its shadows and they took both away.*
> *Some to have some for burning.*
>
> *Well cutting everything they came to the water.*
> *They came to the end of the day there was one left standing.*
> *They would cut it tomorrow they went away.*
> *The night gathered in the last branches.*
> *The shadow of the night gathered in the shadow on the water.*
> *The night and the shadow put on the same head.*
> *And it said Now. . . .*

We turn to literature and the arts to recover our wonder at the world around us and to ransom our humanity. Just so, one of the reasons we return to poetry like Merwin's is to remind ourselves why *that* poetry, why language and literary pursuit, are so important. Within the work itself, then, is an answer unsought: the reason I am sitting here in this circle of light at two in the morning with poems I have read a hundred times and with new ones, caught up in the struggle of my own words.

For Merwin, dwelling at once in the diurnal and sempiternal in a world simultaneously bone-white and penumbral, is the poet of alternative things, a voice for all that precedes and will succeed us.

Real or imagined, our journeys into the world, Merwin reminds us again and again, are forever the same:

> *Naturally it is night.*
> *Under the overturned lute with its*
> *One string I am going my own way*
> *Which has a strange sound . . .*
>
> *I forget tomorrow, the blind man.*
> *I forget the life among the buried windows.*
> *The eyes in the curtains.*
> *The wall*
> *Growing through the immortelles.*
> *I forget silence*
> *The owner of the smile.*
>
> *This must be what I wanted to be doing,*
> *Walking at night between the two deserts,*
> *singing.* □

A HARVEST OF RICHES

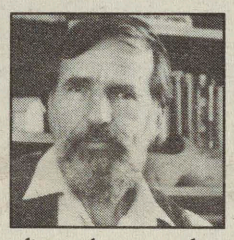
Writers Select Their Favorite Books of 1988

Edited by Gregory McNamee

The year 1988 was a good one for readers, bringing them many pleasures. For one, the English publication of Eduardo Galeano's masterful trilogy *Memory of Fire* (Pantheon) was finally completed, a first step toward a popular (and harrowing) history of the European conquest of the Americas. For another, we were graced with any number of good novels and books of stories, among them Louise Erdrich's *Tracks* (Holt), David Quammen's *Bloodline* (Graywolf), Edward Abbey's *The Fool's Progress* (Holt), and Gabriel García Marquez' long-awaited *Love in the Time of Cholera* (Knopf), and with such events as the Library of America's publishing the collected works of Flannery O'Connor and the resurrection of Northwestern University's collected works of Herman Melville. And we saw splendid editions of modern foreign novels and memoirs from the Eridanos Press, and the widening circulation of several useful journals, among them the English quarterly *Granta*.

It was a good year indeed, and not only for its being Ronald Reagan's last in office. In celebration of the bountiful harvest, *The Bloomsbury Review* asked a number of American writers to name their favorite books of the year—whether books newly published or books of earlier vintage that they happened upon in 1988.

EDWARD ABBEY



Here are some of the things I've been reading during the past year:

Tom Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities* (Farrar Straus & Giroux), a satire both hilarious and savage on the corruption, hypocrisy, and accelerating degradation of big-city life in America.

Gabriel García Marquez' *Love in the Time of Cholera* (Knopf). I was one of many (I suspect) who never got more than fifty years through *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; that kind of soft, relaxed, whimsical fantasizing, whether called surrealism or magic realism or whatever, does not appeal to me. However, in this new book, our Colombian-Mexican author takes on a complex and difficult subject, namely the industrial destruction of the natural world, giving his novel an essential importance that transcends the whimsy and fantasy of his style.

In the general field of science, the best books I've come across lately are ***The Flight of the Iguana*** by **David Quammen** (Delacorte) and ***Filters Against Folly*** by **Garrett Hardin** (Viking Penguin). Rather than focus on specialized esoterica, these writers take the whole field of animal life (which includes, of course, human life) as their object of attention. For me, this makes them far more interesting than such as S.J. Gould, America's Lysenko, whose science is determined by his politics, or the almost weekly books in some allegedly new sub-sub- sub-branchlet of mathemetaphysics, e.g., a book called . . . was it *Chaos*?

Trying hard to keep up, I skimmed through a series of harmless trifles and charming truffles, including **S.** by **John Updike** (Random House), ***The Accidental Tourist*** by **Anne Tyler** (Simon & Schuster), ***An American Childhood*** by **Annie Dillard** (Random House), ***The Bean Trees*** by **Barbara Kingsolver** (Harper & Row), and ***Something to Be Desired*** by **Thomas McGuane** (Simon & Schuster). Speed reading does have its points.

Merely for pleasure, I read some old good books: ***The Way Things Are*** by **Titus Lucretius** (Indiana University); ***Persons and Places***, an autobiography, and ***The Last Puritan***, a wise and witty fiction, both by **George Santayana**, and both published by Scribners; **Schopenhauer's *Essays and Aphorisms*** (Viking Penguin); and a new biography of Thomas Wolfe, ***Look Homeward*** by **D.H. Donald** (Random House), which should gain that great American novelist the respect he deserves.

Finally, special praise for a writer named **Cormac McCarthy**, four of whose novels I've read in the past six months: ***Blood Meridian***, ***Child of God***, ***The Orchard Keeper***, and ***Outer Dark***, all from Ecco. McCarthy writes in a style that combines the best of Melville and the Elizabethan Bible with something entirely his own that defies a label; its only flaw is an occasional vague echo from that octopus of obscurity, William Faulkner. McCarthy deserves at once what he will enjoy eventually, a much bigger audience.

SVEN BIRKERTS



Here are my recommended books for 1988:

Heimito von Doderer, *The Waterfalls of Slunj* (Eridanos). The forgotten moods of the nineteenth century; the sly, subtle telling style of one of the master narrators.

Georges Perec, *Life: A User's Manual* (Godine). Novelty verging on profundity. Perec takes us into the lives of the tenants of a large Parisian apartment building by tracing the shadow lives of their objects and furnishings. Playful and breathtakingly precise in its descriptions and evocations.

Larry Woiwode, *Beyond the Bedroom Wall* (Farrar Straus & Giroux). In time this will become an American classic. The Midwest has never been captured so fully. Alas, Woiwode's successor volume, *Born Brothers*, gets lost in fragmentation.

Seamus Heaney, *The Government of the Tongue* (Farrar Straus & Giroux). No one writes better about the alchemical process whereby simple words combine to make unforgettable kinds of music.

Paul Muldoon, *Selected Poems, 1968-1986* (Ecco). Vivid, sportive poetry—cleanses the ear and refreshes the heart and the living reflexes.

GUEST EDITOR: **Gregory McNamee** is a contributing editor to *The Bloomsbury Review*, the editor of *Living in Words: Interviews from* The Bloomsbury Review *1981-1988* (Breitenbush Books, 1988).

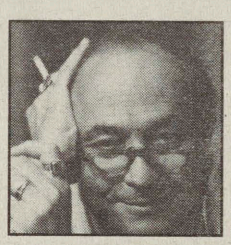
Harold Brodkey, *Stories in an Almost Classical Mode* (Knopf). Difficult, slow going, but here and there these stories give flashes of something altogether new. Childhood becomes a realm of pure duration. The dream-life gets affected by the battles with this prose.

GRETEL EHRLICH



Here's my list: ***Love in the Time of Cholera*** by **Gabriel García Marquez** (Knopf), ***Rock Springs*** by **Richard Ford** (Vintage), ***Gathering the Desert*** (University of Arizona) and ***The Desert Smells Like Rain*** (North Point) by **Gary Paul Nabhan**, **Albert Camus' *American Journals*** (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), ***A Sport of Nature*** by **Nadine Gordimer** (Random House), **Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*** (Doubleday), **Anita Brookner's *Hotel du Lac*** (Dutton), ***The Art of the Novel*** by **Milan Kundera** (Grove), **Garrett Hongo's *The River of Heaven*** (Grove), **Yasunai Kawabata's *Palm of the Hand Stories*** and ***The Old Capital*** (North Point), **Carlos Fuentes' *The Old Gringo*** and ***The Death of Artemio Cruz*** (Farrar Straus & Giroux), **Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*** and ***Stephen Hawking's Universe*** (Bantam), **Paul Davies' *The Cosmic Blueprint*** (Simon & Schuster), **Alfred Kazin's *The American Procession*** (Knopf), **Burton Watson's *From the Country of Eight Islands*** (Columbia University), and **Donald Keene's *Dawn to the West*** (Holt). Among my favorite re-reads this year were **Albert Camus' *The Plague*** (Vintage), ***The Collected Stories of Ernest Hemingway*** (Scribners), **Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*** (various editions), and **Lady Murasaki's *The Tale of Genji*** (Doubleday).

RICHARD ELMAN



I read ***My Father in Dreams*** by **C.E. Poverman** (Scribners) in manuscript and think it's one of the finest and most accomplished novels about growing into manhood by an American writer I have read in quite some time. Really moving stuff.

Carole Glickfeld's *Useful Gifts* (University of Georgia) contains wonderful sad funny stories about New York street life and growing up in a handicapped family in which the most moving things were often said by signing. A winner of the Flannery O'Connor Prize.

Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past* (Random House). Boxed in three volumes. Pick this up in the beginning, in the middle, and even toward the end, and read backwards and forwards and get lost in a world of rich complication and entire frankness. I go in and out of this every couple of years and am always afterwards enlightened, moved, refreshed by the wonder of Proust's insights and reflections. It sure as hell beats E. White and so on.

Denis Johnson, *Angels* (Ballantine). I've taught this a couple of times and am still amazed at Johnson's dramatic and cinematic gifts. They are rarely equalled by cinema, never by most of his contemporaries, who deliver sermons while he writes novels. This surpasses all his later efforts, including *The Stars at Noon* (Knopf).

The Lives of John Lennon by **Albert Goldman** (Morrow). A brave and terrible biography in the demythologizing mode, one that takes nothing away from the Beatles as musicians, but makes one wonder, as with politics in this culture, why we are apt to

fall for so much self-serving and destructive horseshit as that dealt out by Yoko Ono and her gang.

Mary Gaitskill's ***Bad Behavior*** (Poseidon) is a book of ferocious wit and humor about the downwardly mobile world of sleaze which bears too many resemblances to that of the upwardly mobile middle classes, not to mention that of literary ladies and gents.

LOUISE ERDRICH & MICHAEL DORRIS



Of the books we've most enjoyed this year, there are several we'd especially like to mention.

Borrowed Time: An AIDS Memoir by **Paul Monette** (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich) is a beautifully expressed, terribly sad, and, most of all, brave chronicle of the illness of Roger Horwitz, as recalled by his friend, the poet and novelist Paul Monette. It stands as an enduring testament to the survival of love and courage in the face of tragedy.

Gathering Home by **Vicki Covington** (Simon & Schuster) is a first novel of insight and quiet good humor about a group of exceptionally kind characters in modern Birmingham, Alabama. It is a story of family bonds that overturn stereotype to reveal a startling range of emotions. Written in understated prose, this is a book to enjoy and to give to good friends.

Dancing at the Rascal Fair by **Ivan Doig** (Perennial) continues the author's chronicle of nineteenth-century Scottish immigration to Montana. It is a lyrical, meticulously researched novel—romantic in the best sense of the word and filled with a language that sings.

Savings by **Linda Hogan** (Coffee House) is a new collection of marvelous poems. Ms. Hogan continues her exploration of themes that touch on the Native American experience as well as on her reactions to nature and contemporary life. Hers is the work of a fine writer with a vision of strength and beauty.

Iroquois Land Claims, edited by **Christopher Vecsey** and **William Starna** (Syracuse University) is an excellent set of essays dealing with the historical, legal, and social implications of Indian land issues. Though its setting is the Northeast, the issues raised by such contributors as William Hagan, Laurence Hauptman, Arlinda Locklear, and others—including the knowledgeable editors—are instructive for understanding the ethics and practical concerns for similar cases around the country.

And finally, especially, ***Windbreak*** by **Linda Hasselstrom** (Barn Owl Books), a rancher who lives in western South Dakota and writes of everyday experience on the land in a way that is fresh and lively and moving. Hers is a true and powerful voice from the heartland.

RAY GONZALEZ



Here are my favorites of 1988:

Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung by **Lester Bangs**, edited by **Greil Marcus** (Knopf). Anyone who claims to know anything about rock & roll needs to read this book. The late Lester Bangs wrote for *Rolling Stone* and *Creem* in the early seventies. The best collection of rock writing since Marcus' own *Mystery Train*.

Where I'm Calling From: New and Selected Stories by **Raymond Carver** (Atlantic Monthly). The late Raymond Carver's final collection is haunting because it seems to have been written by someone who knew there wasn't much time left. The classic stories "Neighbors" and "Gazebo" are included, along with seven new ones. Someday this book will stand alongside Hemingway's *Collected Stories* as fictions that most effectively captured the twentieth-century American character.

Libra by **Don DeLillo** (Viking). No one comes close to Don DeLillo on America in its darkest moods. In his ninth novel, he retells the story of John Kennedy's assassination through the eyes and minds of Lee Harvey Oswald and the CIA renegades who planned it. A timely book for the end of the Reagan era.

Last Waltz in Santiago by **Ariel Dorfman** (Penguin). The most important collection of Chilean poetry since Neruda's *Residency on Earth*. Dorfman captures the environment of torture and repression at the hands of the Pinochet dictatorship, a state of reality the world needs to understand as it understood Neruda's earlier Chile.

The Book of Seeing With One's Own Eyes by **Sharon Doubiago** (Graywolf). At last we have a true legacy of fiction about the sixties. Doubiago's stories about coming of age will upset the memory and heart of anyone who lived through those turbulent years. A book of this magnitude makes you realize that it is time to confront the hidden consciousness of that decade.

Vertical Poetry by **Roberto Juarroz**, translated by **W.S. Merwin** (North Point). This unusual collection of the Argentine poet's "vertical" poems presents a style and voice very different from other Latin American poets. The master translator of our time, Merwin presents Juarroz' cycle in a wild, spiritual tone.

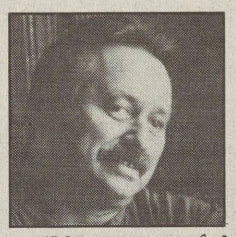
Poet in New York by **Federico García Lorca**, translated by **Greg Simon** and **Steven White** (Farrar Straus & Giroux). Simon and White have achieved a rare feat in translation—the reawakening of the literary world to an overlooked classic. The single most valuable book of poetry to appear in 1988.

Selected Poems by **Thomas McGrath** (Copper Canyon). In many ways McGrath has been our Cervantes, a man in quest of a moral, responsible national character. His fifty years of writing have resulted in some of our most biting political work, enduring poems about modern history and passionate love. Blacklisted for his political convictions during the McCarthy era, McGrath survives and speaks out with the same force found in Whitman.

River River by **Arthur Sze** (Lost Roads). These poems won't go away. Their innovative, leaping imagination demands a constant relationship with the reader.

Unwinding the Vietnam War, edited by **Reese Williams** (Real Comet). More than thirty writers deal with the aftermath of the war. The most disturbing pieces include the data on veteran deaths since 1975—more than 110,000 have died, the majority by suicide.

JIM HARRISON



Here are some of my recent favorites:

Gerald Vizenor's ***Griever: An American Monkey King in China*** (Fiction Collective/Northern Illinois University) and ***The Trickster of Liberty*** (University of Minnesota). Vizenor is a novelist of awesome talent, if not genius.

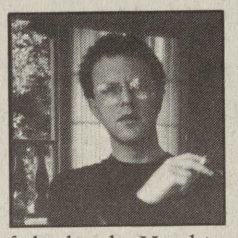
The Watch by **Rick Bass** (Norton). Bass is my favorite of the new American writers.

Mississippi Solo by **Eddy L. Davis** (Nick Lyons). Powerful record of a young black writer's voyage down the whole of the Mississippi in a canoe.

A Yellow Raft in Blue Water by **Michael Dorris** (Holt). A gorgeous novel. Period.

A Good Journey by **Simon Ortiz** (Sun Tracks/University of Arizona). With the passing of **Robert Duncan, Ortiz, Allen Ginsberg,** and **Gary Snyder** are the contemporary American poets with the most to offer us.

SCOTT MAHLER



These are the most memorable, if not the best, books I read during the last year:

A Brief History of Time by **Stephen Hawking** (Bantam). The title alone is almost worth the price of the book. Hawking holds Sir Isaac Newton's old chair at Trinity College, Cambridge. Recommended for the general reader, required for poets.

The Collected Poems of Octavio Paz, 1957-1987, edited by **Eliot Weinberger** (New Directions). It's almost all here, from *Sunstone* to *A Tree Within*. The jury is still deliberating over the evidence, which is impressive.

The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams, Volume One (New Directions), edited by **A. Walton Litz** and **Christopher MacGowan**. Williams wrote a ruck of bad poetry, but at least it's all in one place now.

The Columbia Literary History of the United States (Columbia University). Simply and appreciably necessary.

Cy Twombly by **Harald Szeemann** (Prestel Verlag/TeNeues). The text is practically inconsequential, but readers will find a comprehensive visual survey of the works of this neglected American abstract expressionist, who lives in Rome.

Dubious Honors by **M.F.K. Fisher** (North Point). Another attractive book of essays by a real stylist, the author of *How to Cook a Wolf, A Cordiall Water, Two Towns in Provence*, etc., and translator of Brillat-Savarin.

The Haw Lantern by **Seamus Heaney** (Farrar Straus & Giroux). Heaney remains one of the very finest poets of our time, even when he's not at his best.

The Jules Verne Steam Balloon by **Guy Davenport** (North Point). A collection of "stories" by perhaps the most educated and imaginative writer in the United States.

Love in the Time of Cholera by **Gabriel García Marquez**. A masterly work.

Posthumous Papers of a Living Author by **Robert Musil** (Eridanos). The first English translation of these incisive, brilliant, and mostly satirical essays (originally published in 1939) by the author of *The Man Without Qualities*.

N. SCOTT MOMADAY



I'm afraid my reading has taken a back seat to my writing in the last few months, but:

Reina, my wife, and I both enjoyed **Tony Hillerman's** ***A Thief of Time*** (Harper & Row). For me there is nostalgia in Tony's references to the landscape of the Navajo country, which I have known all my life. Reina has a special interest in Kokopelli, who figures importantly in the novel.

I read **Elie Wiesel's** ***Twilight*** (Summit). It made no deep impression on me, but I thought it a good, quick read. It is well written, but I suspect it has lost an edge in translation from the French.

Carl Rollyson's ***Hellman*** (St. Martin's). Big and gossipy. It told me more than I wanted to know about Lillian Hellman. Fun to read randomly.

Nora by **Brenda Maddox** (Houghton Mifflin) is a wonderfully done biography of a fascinating woman.

(Continued on page 17)

VIEW FINDERS



Marking the Passage, Three Rivers, New Mexico, 1983–86. By Rick Dingus

Photo from MARKS IN PLACE

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MARKS IN PLACE
CONTEMPORARY RESPONSES TO ROCK ART
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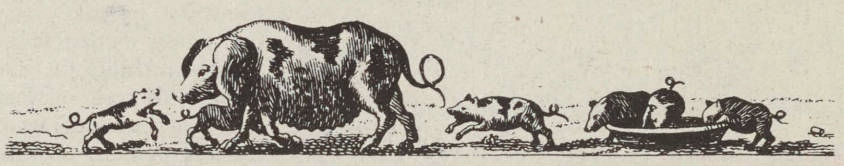

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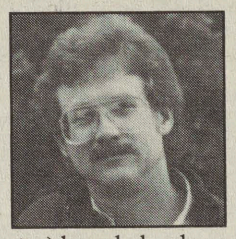
(Continued from page 15)

Let me mention also ***We Need to Dream This All Again*** by **Bernard Pomerance** (Viking). A first-rate, poetic evocation of the fight for the Black Hills, insightful, provocative, lyrical.

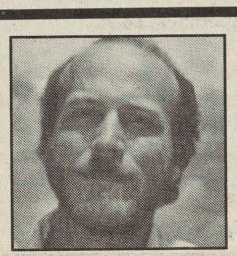
Finally, I've just finished ***Dylan Thomas*** by **Paul Ferris** (Dial), a book I found on a dusty shelf in my mother's library this June. It is very well written, but how depressing a story!

DAVID QUAMMEN



Oscar Wilde by **Richard Ellmann** (Knopf), ***Libra*** by **Don DeLillo** (Viking), ***Dalva*** by **Jim Harrison** (Dutton), and ***The Growth of Biological Thought*** by **Ernst Mayr** (Harvard University) have helped me stay sane in recent months. All four of them are wonderful books in very different ways. I badly want time enough to dip back into recent collections by friends: **Barry Lopez' *Crossing Open Ground*** (Scribners), **Richard Ford's *Rock Springs*** (Vintage), and **Ed Abbey's *One Life at a Time, Please (Holt).***

R.H. RING



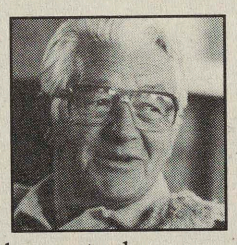
The list I've come up with might seem a little dated, but more and more I'm finding that authors from previous generations suit my taste. This older fiction in fact seems younger to me, compared to what's being done today, and it has a sharper edge. In no special order, then: ***The Thin Red Line*** by **James Jones** (Dell); ***Find a Victim*** by **Ross MacDonald** (OP); ***Serenade*** by **James M. Cain** (Vintage); ***Winterkill*** by **Craig Lesley** (Dell); ***The Blind Corral*** by **Ralph Beer** (Penguin); ***Fast One*** by **Paul Cain** (Black Lizard); ***Shane*** by **Jack Schaefer** (Bantam); ***Presumed Innocent*** by **Scott Turow** (Warner); ***The Man Who Owned Vermont*** by **Bret Lott** (Viking); and ***The Mocassin Telegraph*** by **W.P. Kinsella** (Penguin).

GARY SNYDER



Among the good recent books I've been reading are: **Robert D. Richardson, *Thoreau: A Life of the Mind*** (University of California); **Daniel Halpern**, ed., ***On Nature*** (North Point); **Wallace Stegner, *The American West as Living Space*** (University of Michigan): and **Gretel Ehrlich, *The Solace of Open Spaces*** (Penguin).

WALLACE STEGNER

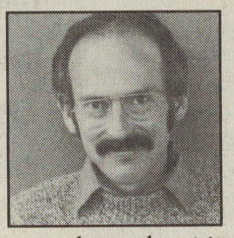


I wish I had a long list of wonderful books to cite. Actually, I haven't read a novel this whole year that thoroughly satisfied me—and I read most of the highly touted ones as well as a lot of books less noticed.

I got a good deal out of **Stephen Trimble's *The Sagebrush Ocean*** (University of Nevada), on the natural history of the Great Basin—but *The Sagebrush Ocean* isn't published yet; I read it in galleys.

So the only new title that I found instructive and solid and intelligent and informed is **Patricia Limerick's *The Legacy of Conquest*** (Norton), on the historical continuities of the American West. That's a good one.

STEPHEN TRIMBLE



I tend to read older rather than freshly published books; time seems to become ever more precious, and if a title stays with me for several years—resurfacing every time that wonderful moment comes along when it's time to pick the next book to read—sooner or later I'll give it a try.

Dusk by **James Salter** (North Point). One doesn't participate in these people's lives; one watches them. But the language in Salter's stories is extraordinarily elegant and the structure so perfect it makes me gleeful to read them.

Bless Me, Ultima by **Rudolfo Anaya** (Tonatiuh-Quinto Sol). A quieter village than Milagro, but still full of magic, and seen from the inside instead of the outside.

The American West as Living Space by **Wallace Stegner** (University of Michigan). Stegner knows more about the essence of the West than anyone, and this is the pithiest, strongest statement yet of his understanding.

The Year of Decision: 1846 by **Bernard DeVoto** (Bison Books). DeVoto is one of my heroes and this history is so boldly written, so sweeping in its scope—and so much fun to read—that it always makes me exhilarated even to browse in it.

Fools Crow by **James Welch** (Viking). A fine, fine evocation of what it felt like to live the life of a nineteenth-century Blackfoot Indian. Made even more approachable by Welch's setting the story at the time when wilderness life began to disappear in the Indian/non-Indian conflict.

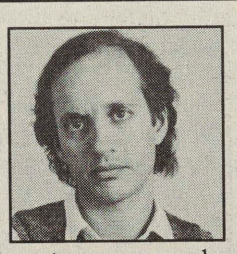
Mountain Light by **Galen Rowell** (Sierra Club Books). Rowell demonstrates that it doesn't much matter what kind of camera a photographer uses; it matters far more how much attention you pay to light and to landscape. I learned a lot from this book.

This House of Sky by **Ivan Doig** (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). I love books that move me to weep at the end of them (e.g., *The Once and Future King*, *Lonesome Dove*). To create characters that much alive is the highest form of writing, and Doig does it—along with lovely landscape imagery.

The Primal Place by **Robert Finch** (Norton). I recently edited a book of natural history writing, and of the writers in that anthology, Finch, I think, is the least appreciated. This is fine writing, circling about Cape Cod in subject matter but with universal appeal.

Mary Poppins by **P.L. Travers** (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich). Don't laugh! My wife and I have a brand-new daughter, and we keep wondering what she's thinking about. Mary Poppins told us the answer (see chapter nine).

ELIOT WEINBERGER



I look forward to discovering the good-better-best books of 1988 over the next forty years; in the meantime I can only report on a few I happened to read in the year of their publication.

In American poetry, above all, the stellar ***Groundwork II: In the Dark*** by **Robert Duncan** (New Directions), who died this year. Two magnificent editions: ***The Collected Poems of Charles Olson*** (University of California), edited by **George Butterick**—who also died, too young, this year—consisting largely of previously unpublished work; and ***The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams*** (New Directions), volume one edited by **A. Walton Litz** and **Christopher MacGowan**, volume two by MacGowan alone, a model scholarly edition that demonstrates that WCW was, most of the time, far more radical than the Dr. Wheelbarrow of current affection. And three new books by three of the most interesting poets to emerge since 1970: ***Sun*** by **Michael Palmer** (North Point), his finest to date; ***Tabula Rosa*** by **Rachel Blau du Plessis** (Sun & Moon); and ***Voyaging Portraits*** by **Gustaf Sobin** (New Directions).

Two imprints are offering books of remarkably uniform excellence. **Eridanos Press** of Hygiene, Colorado (where else?) is publishing beautiful editions of foreign literature in translation, among them **Michel Leiris'** dreambook ***Nights as Days, Days as Night***, translated by **Richard Sieburth**, with a wonderful introduction by **Maurice Blanchot**; **Robert Musil's *Posthumous Papers of a Living Author***, translated by **Peter Wortsman**; and **Ryunosuke Akutagawa's** last works before his suicide, ***Hell Screen/Cogwheels/A Fool's Life***, put into English by various translators. **Zone Books** is bringing into print a number of classics of (mainly French) philosophy and social science, including **Georges Bataille's *The Accursed Share***, on excess as the determining factor in economy; **Pierre Clastre's *Society Against the State***, on the moment when society becomes based on power; **Gilles Deleuze's *Bergsonism***; and, after decades, a reprint of **Henri Bergson's *Matter and Memory***. Could William and Henry James have imagined a world in which Bergson was out of print?

James Clifford's *The Predicament of Culture* (Harvard University) is a brilliant examination of cultural intersections: "Primitivism" at the Museum of Modern Art, Segalen in China, Cesaire in Paris, and the era when ethnographers and surrealists were interchangeable—an era further presented in ***The College of Sociology 1937-39***, short pieces by Georges Bataille, Michel Leiris, Roger Caillois, et al., edited by **Denis Hollier** (University of Minnesota). And the most important new book on the Aztecs is now available in English: **Alfredo Lopez Austin's *The Human Body and Ideology***, translated by **Thelma** and **Bernard Ortiz de Montellano** (University of Utah), an extraordinary cosmological map of the Nahua anatomy.

Finally, my best novel of 1988 was first published in 1617: the anonymous **Chin P'ing Mei**, surely among the least read of the greatest novels. A relentless saga of political, financial, sexual, and gastronomic corruption, it is perfect for the end of the Age of Reagan. The translation to read is by **Clement Egerton**, under the title ***The Golden Lotus***. In the original 1939 edition, the countless erotic passages were in Latin (Latinists being above prurient interest). The current four-volume Routledge & Kegan Paul (now Viking Penguin) set has it all in English.

IN CLOSING,

In closing, let me name a few of my favorite books for the year:

Children of the Arbat by **Anatoli Rybakov** (Little Brown). One of the first literary manifestations of glasnost, this magnificent, sweeping novel unflichingly portrays Soviet life during Josef Stalin's reign of terror.

Rock and Hawk: Selected Shorter Poems of Robinson Jeffers, edited by **Robert Hass** (Random House). The famed "inhumanist" of the California coast is finally being recognized as one of our major poets, and this well-edited collection helps.

Freud: A Life for Our Time by **Peter Gay** (Norton). Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar, and sometimes a book is more than a book. A fine if somewhat orthodox biography.

Crossing Open Ground by **Barry Lopez** (Scribners). Writing about nature—call it natural philo-

(Continued on page 31)

Gretel Ehrlich in Deeper Spaces

An Essay/Interview by Christine Ford



When Viking published Gretel Ehrlich's *The Solace of Open Spaces* in 1985, critics applauded, and it changed the way many people thought about Wyoming. Her sensual and cerebral essays on the power of landscape have appeared in *Time, Harper's, The Atlantic, The New York Times, New Age Journal* and on National Public Radio, and are upcoming in *Sports Illustrated* and *National Geographic*. Her first novel, *Heart Mountain*, was released in October by Viking Penguin. Four chapters of the novel originally appeared in *City Tales, Wyoming Stories*, a back-to-back book by Edward Hoagland and Ehrlich published by Capra Press in 1986. She is now working on a new book of essays, *Islands, the Universe and Home*.

Ehrlich lives with her husband on their ranch at the foot of Wyoming's Big Horn Mountains. They are using a type of range conservation new to the overgrazed West, and building a cattle herd to produce organic beef.

In August of 1988, she flew to Colorado to read at the Aspen Writers' Conference. Christine Ford met her at the Denver airport, and they spent a few days talking in the Colorado Rockies.

Gretel Ehrlich and I were driving down the canyon road above Redstone, Colorado, when we came upon a woman in full march, arms flailing in an orgy of aerobics. "Power walking," I said, as we passed. Ehrlich howled. She lives in nineteenth-century Wyoming and had never heard of the fad, much less seen it pumping in the flesh. "Can you imagine Indians watching that woman?" she said. "Can you imagine the guffaws? And if they heard what it was called? Native American humor is the ultimate."

"'People on whom nothing is lost,'" I replied—a Henry James quote Ehrlich once used in an essay.

You'd think she'd just walk where it's harder if she wants more exercise. But people are greedy, grabbing for things. They don't think they're 'people on whom nothing is lost' because they're out there reaching for it—doing these things, going to workshops. They think they're really opening themselves up. But what they're opening themselves up to is secondary experience, not to—whatever—a fucking ant walking across the road. They don't see. They run over the ant trying to get to the workshop. They miss the whole show.

The whole show is fueling Gretel Ehrlich. Her life and her work seem to be spiraling in a solid groove. Natural. Unpredictable. None of it forced. *The Solace of Open Spaces* is a poetic blend of personal chronicle and an anthem to the scapes of Wyoming land and sky and the weathered beings who ride with its winds. Annie Dillard called her Wyoming's Whitman. In squint-eyed tribute to the state's impassive weather and landscape, Ehrlich said, "It's absolute indifference steadied me."

I don't know Walt Whitman's personal reasons for celebrating America, but in 1976 Ehrlich needed to love Wyoming. *The Solaces of Open Spaces* was a book born from her journal, begun as part of a healing process. Shortly after coming to Wyoming to make a film on a sheepherder, her lover and filmmaker partner died suddenly of cancer. Numb, she rattled around the West for a few years, then returned to Wyoming and became her former subject.

With the recklessness that death leaves on the left, she traded in the scripts for a sheepherder's horse, dog, and wagon. She cut her hair and cut out her migrations to bear down on this hard life. Simply to live year-round in remote northern Wyoming can be reckless. To work out of doors there, with animals, is recklessness to another power. The California native had grown up around horses, but the stock and terrain of Wyoming were severly different breeds.

She survived. A sheepman she called "pre-literate but brilliant" gave her shelter and put her to work trailing 1500 sheep to summer range. Off the range, there was no one in the little ranching community she could talk to.

"But they were great providers," she said. "I was just quiet for the first few years." She wintered alone in a log cabin, stared deep into her new world, and began to write about it. As she thawed, she started hitting the summers hard, helping ranch friends and hanging out with the raucous young guys she cowboyed with, doing 10- to-15-hour days for $30.

It was wild. We'd drive and drive, park a 10-horse trailer outside the nearest bar, party all night, fix our own breakfast, and hit the road. This would go on for days. Sometimes I felt like their mother. I drove.

After five years, she was still stuck on the place, the life, and the ranchers, but the intellectual drought was getting to her. Wyoming might have lost Ehrlich if she hadn't attended the social event of the season—a John Wayne film festival in Cody, where she met her husband. Another educated transplant, Press Stevens had also adopted Wyoming from horseback, as a wilderness outfitter and guide. It's been eight years since they got married in the mountains and put a downpayment on a rundown ranch with a 100-mile view down the Big Horn Basin. Her steadiness now is delicate and sturdy.

She still ranches hard, still likes to rope, but lately some bad jolts with horses and hooves have put a caution in it for her. After one incident, she didn't walk for six months. Then a recent bout with pneumonia taught her about winter in an uninsulated old house in the northern Rockies. And lately it has been difficult for her to read part of a new essay called "Spring." The passage concerns a young rancher friend lost a few years back in an accident endemic to Wyoming—the roll of a pickup.

"Spring" will appear in her upcoming book and is out now in a taped edition of her work issued by The Audio Press. It's a riveting, circular essay of renewal whose metaphors point toward a new direction for many of the pieces in the next book—Ehrlich's deepening journey into a range of scientific disciplines, the new physics in particular.

Spring. The general law of increasing disorder is on the take. I try to think of what it is to be a cause without an effect, an effect without a cause; to abandon time-bound thinking, the use of tenses, the temporarily related emotions of impatience, expectation, hope and fear, but I can't . . . Spring teaches me what space and time teach me. That I am a random multiple, that the many fit together like waves, that my swell is a collision of particles.

Her voyage into science started with her curiosity about the 600-million-year-old rock formations around her ranch. That led to geophysics, where she learned that deep inside the earth there is another kind of landscape with a rain made of iron splinters. When she and her husband decided to reverse the march of the desert on their range, she studied botany and wrote a piece for *Time*'s "American Scene" on her mentor, Allan Savory, and his progressive techniques for bringing back abused farm- and ranchlands.

"The more you see, the more you see," said Ehrlich, explaining how she went on to study and visit with scientists in the fields of astronomy, astral and quantum physics, and neurobiology. The new essays are set in Wyoming, California, Japan, and Hawaii, where she spent several weeks with astronomers at the observatories on Mona Kea. The symmetries of personal and natural chaos leap out at Ehrlich from every discipline: "It's now known that the workings of consciousness are the same as those of the cosmos,"

WRITER: **Christine Ford** is a Denver freelance writer and editor of *The Urban Design Forum* and *Historic Denver News*.

PHOTOGRAPHER: **Jack Swenson**. Used with permission.

The Ecstasy of Gerard Manley Hopkins

By Anthony Burgess

IT is just 100 years since the death of Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J., and about 60 years since I first read him. Those were the days when to read "Ulysses" was to break the law. Modernism was dangerous, and one of the marks of modernism was strangeness of language. Hopkins, like James Joyce, had bizarre compound words like "beadbonny" and "fallowboot-fellow"; he seemed to be dragging the Germanic roots of English out of freshly dug earth. Yet how could a Jesuit priest, who died in the same year as Robert Browning, be a modernist? By an accident, the fact of his not being published until 1918, he was forced into joining that tide of literary innovation on which T. S. Eliot rode, also Ezra Pound, above all James Joyce. The poet Robert Bridges, the closest friend of Hopkins, had done wrong, I still think, in delaying the publication of Hopkins's small poetic *oeuvre* until the end of World War I. Young poets died in that war, and they would have been glad to take that thin volume of Hopkins into the trenches. But the world, according to the highly conservative, not to say timid, Bridges, was not ready for the Hopkinsian hand grenade, and it is true that the 1918 edition of his work was slow to sell out.

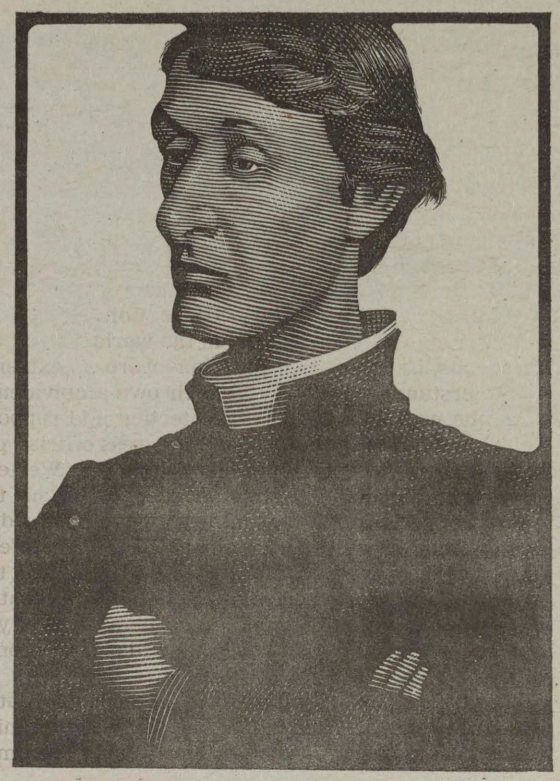
I read the second impression of 1930. I read it on the Channel packet coming back from France, a schoolboy tremulous at having stuffed the Odyssey Press edition of "Ulysses" (two paperback volumes) into his waistband. I still cannot read Hopkins without the sensation of daring proper, at that time, to reading "Ulysses."

Joyce had formed his own style by the time Hopkins was first published. There was no possibility of the great Jesuit's influencing the great former student of Jesuits. Joyce was 7 years old when Hopkins died. Asked in late life what he thought of Hopkins, Joyce said he was a kind of English Mallarmé — sure proof that he hadn't read him. The two writers were on the same sort of track in total independence of each other. Joyce sought those flashes of revelation that he called "epiphanies." Hopkins spoke of "inscapes" and "instresses." Both meant that ordinary experience had the capacity to startle, in sudden unsought explosions, with a vision of truth. The expression of truth couldn't be entrusted to the weary clichés of conventional verse or prose; language itself had to startle.

One way to startle was to exaggerate the Teutonic element in English, complete with the elimination of those timid hyphens that make some English compound words look like items in a child's primer. Bridges, when he had the poems printed, introduced hyphens that are not in Hopkins's manuscript. In the manuscript Hopkins's windhover, or kestrel, is "dappledawndrawn"; Oxford is, or was, "lark-charmèd" and "cuckooechoing." John Milton's method of making new in "Paradise Lost" was to exaggerate the Latin heritage of English. His elephants are "endorsed" with towers; spring is "vernal." The Hopkinsian way looked more eccentric than the Miltonic, chiefly because speakers of English don't like to be reminded of the brutal Anglo-Saxon base on which the Latinized Normans built.

• • •

And yet the Anglo-Saxon element is native, radical. William Barnes, the Dorset clergyman who was a contemporary of Hopkins, was not wrong in wishing to call an omnibus a folkwain. A telephone works no better than a farspeaker. Anglo-Saxon went in for heavy head rhyme (or alliteration). This was one of the items in the Hopkinsian battery: "Treads through, prickproof, thick / Thousands of thorns, thoughts." The thorns and thoughts are the same. Not until Joyce's "Finnegans Wake," published in 1939, would it be possible to say "thornts." But Hopkins was on the way to this kind of counterpoint — one word doing the work of two, even more. And he was always ready, in the interests of verbal freshness, to expand usage. Self, selves — why not "selve" as a verb? If a thing "selves" it speaks itself, says what it is. A bell selves, so does a snowstorm. When a thing selves it shows its "sakes," its individual marks: a bird's plumage, a bell's harmonics.



MARK D. SUMMERS

Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89).

To Hopkins, who was almost blindingly devout, God's glory showed itself in the intense variety of the physical world, especially when such variety was present in a single member of it. Hence his laudation of "pied beauty" — "Glory be to God for dappled things." Dapple was a kind of tension of opposites: nothing flaccid, everything dynamic — "fickle, freckled." His poetic practice broke away from the flaccidity of the regular Tennysonian or Emersonian line — "Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height." The English language had allowed itself to be shackled into a verse system borrowed from the Latin languages, which don't go in for the hammerblows of the native Saxon. Hopkins seems to have invented a new kind of prosody he called "sprung rhythm." What he was really doing was restoring a native practice that the Normans drove out — the counting of stresses, not syllables.

The line "Morning, evening, noontime, night" is regular and traditional. Not too many syllables, nor too few. Four stresses — the down, left, right, up of the conductor's baton. But why shouldn't we have "Morn, eve, noon, night"? Why not "In the morning, during the evening, sometimes at noontime, always at night"? Always four beats and as many, or as few, syllables as you wish. The rhythm springs out of the beat, not the syllable counting. Hence the name "sprung rhythm." And so Hopkins wrote sonnets — his tribute to traditional regularity — that are perfect examples of the form except for the number of syllables:

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
Dom of daylight's dauphin, dappledawndrawn
falcon, in his riding. . . .

No trouble with the first line, as regular as anything in Wordsworth. But for the second line we have to dig out the stresses, finding them on "daylight's," on "dauphin," on "dappledawndrawn," on "falcon," on "riding." There's a lot of hurry there, as in ordinary speech. Hopkins knew that it was all too easy to let such verse sink into prose, but the charged language, the heavy head rhyme, the ecstasy of expression keep the vehicle airborne.

Reading Hopkins and getting the sprung rhythm right (as I have illustrated in the box below) has always troubled poetry lovers who have no musical ear. Ideally his verse should be set out in musical notation with crotchets, quavers, bar lines. Hopkins, like Joyce, was a musician (he wrote a song in the 1860's that employs quarter tones). He saw where poetry and music came together; he tried notating his poem "Harry Ploughman" in a quasi-musical form; he recognized, with a sigh, that readers of books are not necessarily readers of scores. The difficulty of reading him correctly remains. He was a poet who could not compromise. There was no compromise in his religion either. His family was heartbroken when he left Anglicanism and turned Roman Catholic. His fellow Jesuits didn't understand him. He knew the dark night of the soul. He died young of typhus. He knew no fame in his lifetime.

His fame, in this centennial year, remains limited. The difficulty of understanding his language and his technique confines him to university departments. "The Wreck of the Deutschland," his masterpiece, is not likely to be filmed. His Jesuit theology puts unbelievers off. Many of the English object to his apostasy from Anglicanism; the Irish are unhappy about the fear he expressed of the consequences of home rule. Even his co-religionists are dubious about his ecstatic excesses. But, whether we like it or not, his influence subtly pervades the practice of all who are forced to take language seriously. He should be on the shelves of Madison Avenue copywriters. Phrases like "gash gold vermilion" must tempt advertisers in Vogue. He was ready to teach the world the idiom of ecstasy, but we reserve ecstasy for the latest state-of-the-art acquisition. We live in an age of dilution. Hopkins brews the powerful liquor of faith — in God, also in language. □

Scanning iambic pentameter lines in a sonnet of Milton.

When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark
world and wide.

An example of the sprung rhythm of Hopkins.

Towery city and branchy between
towers;
Cuckoo-echoing, bell-swarmèd, lark-
charmèd, rook-racked, river-rounded;
The dapple-eared lily below thee;
that country and town did
Once encounter in, here coped and
poised powers ...

SOURCE: ANTHONY BURGESS

A basic iambic pentameter line has 10 syllables with five stresses. The Hopkins lines also have five principal stresses, but derived from the natural beat of the language, with any number of syllables.

Anthony Burgess has completed Gerard Manley Hopkins's unfinished drama, "St. Winefred's Well," which will be produced for BBC television this year.

In Short

FICTION

HOME FOR THE SUMMER. By Georgina Kleege. (Post-Apollo Press, 35 Marie St., Sausalito, Calif. 94965; Paper, $9.95.) Few novels are more disappointing than those that promise much and deliver little. Georgina Kleege's first work of fiction has almost the opposite problem; the novella begins in melodrama, slowly redeems itself with intriguing portrayals and dialogue, and ends just when Ms. Kleege's characters have developed real fictional presence. The premise of "Home for the Summer" is arresting: what happens when an intelligent but violence-prone teen-age girl comes home from a mental institution to discover that her family's old equilibrium has changed? Alice has been "put away" since the age of 14 for stabbing a teacher almost to death; Lucy, a young English professor, has just married Alice's father. Lucy is wary, knowing all the gossip and some of the truth about Alice, but she isn't prepared to discover that her new stepdaughter is funny, sharp-witted, intensely curious and in some ways deeply moral. Alice and Lucy develop a peculiar relationship, challenging and reproachful at the same time, that gradually illuminates the cause of their individual troubles — Alice's acting out, Lucy's passivity — but with bloody results. The basic trouble with "Home for the Summer" is that the violence framing it is overly theatrical, even unnecessary. Having drawn complex and interesting characters, Ms. Kleege shouldn't finally abandon them to operatics. She can capture a person in a single sentence — we know immediately what Alice's father is about when he jokingly suggests that Lucy and Alice achieve "that instant intimacy only shopping can provide" — but she uses her talent too sparingly.

CHRIS GOODRICH

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TROPHY FOR EAGLES. By Walter J. Boyne. (Crown, $19.95.) Walter J. Boyne, the author of 10 books on aviation, has written an 11th book on aviation, thickly disguised as a novel. It concerns airplanes and people, real and imaginary, of the period 1927-37, a glorious era for aviation but for Western humanity a slog through the sloughs of depression and totalitarianism, emerging in war. Mr. Boyne's hero pilot, an American engineer named Frank Bandfield, is not immune to history; his fortunes rise and fall, as do those of Mr. Boyne's villain pilot, the German plane maker Bruno Hafner. Like all pilots, Frank gets gobs of sex, some of it pretty technical. ("Their first kisses had . . . a sort of rasping, sucking urgency that shot Bandfield's testosterone gauge past the red line.") Odious Bruno gets even more, though as a German and a rotter he is less potent and more kinky. In a scene I certainly hope to see in the movie — I will pay plenty — Frank and his sweetheart, Patty ("when she unbuttoned her blouse the moon caught her breasts tumbling out in an avalanche of beauty"), go the distance in the front seat of a hurtling Beechcraft biplane over Arizona. I will not fully reveal the whole astonishing conclusion of the climactic Spanish Civil War dogfight between Frank and the Nazi opportunist Bruno because Mr. Boyne, who intends a sequel, doesn't reveal it himself. But I will say that Mr. Boyne's planes are livelier than his people and I miss them more when they crash. Not every plane is perfectly characterized — there was no such thing as *a* Messerschmitt Bf 109 V5, only *the* one and unique Bf 109 V5, and the real Howard Pete racer had a Wright Gypsy engine, not a Menasco — but they fly. Everything else in this book sinks.

TOM FERRELL

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MURDER KEEPS A SECRET. By Haughton Murphy. (Simon & Schuster, $16.95.) The skyscraper offices, art-stuffed homes, privileged campuses and, last but not least, exclusive restaurants that form the meeting ground for the East Coast Establishment provide the scenes of the crimes — and the tables for the tête-à-têtes that solve them — in Haughton Murphy's detective novels. In "Murder Keeps a Secret" the pseudonymous author again utilizes his 20-year experience as a Wall Street lawyer and his inside knowledge of the social life and pressures among the rich and ambitious to introduce readers to a varied cast of characters whose lives are all entangled in quite different ways with the victim of a defenestration — a fancy term for being thrown from a window. Attempting to solve the crime is the retired Wall Street lawyer Reuben Frost, an urbane and energetic septuagenarian who is making his fourth appearance in a Murphy novel. Able to mingle with powerful WASP's and working cops, Frost is perfectly suited to examine the motives of a group that includes a body builder turned trashy novelist, a senator on his way to the Presidency, an icy anchorwoman and a retired Supreme Court Justice. Murphy's strengths lie in his knack for making the reader feel personally acquainted with the rich and powerful and in his lawyerly ability to spell out the essentials of a complicated case. Blended in are delectable descriptions of meals in New York's best restaurants, proving that good food and a pinch of inside knowledge about social high life remain excellent ingredients in the mystery recipe.

ROSEMARY HERBERT



DRAWINGS BY ROB SHEPPERSON

DORUNTINE. By Ismail Kadare. Translated by Jon Rothschild. (New Amsterdam, $15.95.) It's safe to say that Albania is Europe's most reclusive society. This alone would make the publication of a contemporary Albanian novel an event in the West. But "Doruntine," a magical parable of love, death and the power of familial bonds by Albania's leading literary figure, Ismail Kadare, is more than a curiosity. This brief tale, set in the distant past when Albania belonged to the Byzantine Empire, manages to be at once a meditation on the isolation and tenacity of Albanian culture and on the birth of legend. Mr. Kadare's simple, evocative prose even survives the pressures of double translation — from Albanian to French to English. The Doruntine of the book's title is a beautiful aristocratic woman who has married a nobleman from distant Bohemia. Almost immediately after she has arrived at her new husband's estate, a terrible war breaks out in her homeland, leaving her nine brothers dead and her aged mother in lonely isolation. When the novel opens, Doruntine has returned to Albania under strange and terrifying circumstances. She says she was brought back by an oath sworn by her brother Constantine. But Constantine is dead, and shortly after her return both Doruntine and her mother also die. The story of the resurrection of a dead brother, brought to life by the power of his oath, spreads throughout the land and soon reaches the authorities of the church, who compel a member of the local constabulary to investigate and dispel this threatening and heretical tale. In so doing, he uncovers some blood truths at the core of an Albanian soul gripped by passionate belief in God, mystery, clan and honor.

STEPHAN SALISBURY

QUITE THE OTHER WAY. By Kaylie Jones. (Doubleday, $18.95.) Although we've got used to second-generation actors equaling or surpassing the accomplishments of their parents, the same hasn't happened with second-generation novelists. Nonetheless there are a few, like Martin Amis and Susan Cheever, who are making names for themselves — and added to their small number ought to be Kaylie Jones, the daughter of James Jones, whose second novel, "Quite the Other Way," is a look at the particulars and peculiarities of glasnost. Clinton Gray, the daughter of the famous American correspondent Alexander Clinton Gray, spends a college semester in Moscow — with side trips to Tbilisi and Leningrad — formally studying the culture and informally but compulsively searching for information about her now-deceased father's sojourns, when he was about Clinton's age, in Russia during World War II. She begins an affair with a fellow student, the opaque Phil Chase, gets chummy with two other students, Isabel and Ceppie, and is befriended by a line of Muscovites as long as any outside a Soviet grocery store. Although every single day of Clinton's stay is not described, "Quite the Other Way" includes coverage of the quotidian that sometimes seems to have been included simply because it happened and not necessarily because it is dramatically cogent. Nonetheless this account of Clinton's quest for fragments of her father's past and her coming to terms with life and love in today's Soviet Union is touching, disturbing, funny, frustrating and as charming, in its way, as that of the more innocent earlier adventures of Americans-abroad Emily Kimbrough and Cornelia Otis Skinner in "Our Hearts Were Young and Gay."



DAVID FINKLE

HANNAH. By Paul-Loup Sulitzer. Translated by Christine Donougher. (Poseidon, $18.95.) Since Paul-Loup Sulitzer has already published novels entitled "Cash," "Money," "Fortune" and "The Green King," it seems safe to say that he's not uncomfortable airing his personal preoccupation with wealth. His latest effort, "Hannah," is a rags-to-riches tale chronicling the adventures of a peripatetic Polish girl who rises from her humble origins to become an international cosmetics queen. Having dutifully announced that his book is based on the life of Helena Rubinstein, Mr. Sulitzer then offers the reader an outrageous, wildly imagined yarn that corresponds in only a cursory fashion to any of the details of Mme. Rubinstein's own story. Mr. Sulitzer's Hannah is a headstrong, manipulative creature who will stop at nothing in her globe-trotting pursuit of tycoondom. In a flat-footed prose style translated from the French with occasionally awkward results, the plot doggedly traces Hannah's exploits as she manages to gratify her every desire, from business deals to sexual conquests. What she cannot acquire with finesse, she buys outright. The book is liberally sprinkled with the names of her many illustrious friends, the celebrated writers, artists and musicians of her day. But these figures always remain just outside the narrative. With cold-blooded, calculating business acumen, Hannah succeeds in parlaying her mother's homemade beauty remedies into a worldwide empire. When asked if they really work, she replies, "I haven't a clue." Like Hannah's overhyped cold cream, Mr. Sulitzer's novel panders to an audience more awed by celebrity than quality.

SARAH FERGUSON

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OPHELIA AND THE GREAT IDEA. By Deborah Levy. (Viking, $16.95.) In the title story of this collection by the young British playwright Deborah Levy, one character glosses the eponymous "great idea": "To invent a time and place of your own." To this end, Ms. Levy has discarded the traditional props of plot and unified setting. Instead, she has produced a series of dreamlike miniatures in which ideas, images and characters endlessly collide, pick themselves up and head off in their own directions. That's the good news. The bad news is that Ms. Levy's imagination, and often her prose, trail far behind her formal inventiveness. In story after story, she submerges the reader in a porridge of staleness and cliché: "Preparing for Life" is an inept rehash of Gabriel García Márquez, "Heresies" trots out all the old inverted sentimentalities about art and madness and in "The Sinful Twins" a randy painter takes up with a Spanish girl "famous for her lustrous coil of black hair, whom he devoured and deflowered with all the passion of his vermilion tube of paint." In a few cases, Ms. Levy experiments with more success. "Flush" is a well-turned surrealistic cartoon about capitalists and

The Short Stories Keep Coming To a Late-Blooming Irish Writer

By D. J. R. BRUCKNER

William Trevor, who began to write fiction only in his 30's and who has become one of the most productive and honored short-story writers in the English language, will make a rare public appearance tomorrow night, reading from his newest collection, "Family Sins and Other Stories," at the 92d Street Y, at Lexington Avenue, in New York.

The 61-year-old author of 10 novels and dozens of plays for stage, radio and television, in addition to the scores of short stories that have won some of Britain's top literary prizes through the years, will share the stage with Edna O'Brien, who will read from her new story collection, "Lantern Slides," in the closing session of the Y's Irish Literature Festival.

Mr. Trevor, who was born in Ireland, has had a home in England through most of his adult life and is often described as an Anglo-Irish writer. But he says he finds the English "rather strange people" and thinks an advantage of living in England is that "it is sometimes easier to write about your own people from a foreign country." In fact, he is breaking his usual rule against giving public readings because "this is an Irish festival, and I thought I would like to do this one."

The Writer as Wanderer

His home in rural Devonshire, he said in a telephone interview from there, is an old mill surrounded by 40 acres of land that creates an island of solitude. "It looks a bit like Ireland, and that is pleasant."

Not that he is there all that much. When he began to write, he said, he became a "wanderer," and he regularly spends half the year traveling in Italy or in Ticino, the nub of Switzerland that juts down into Italy. And he visits Ireland quite often during the other half of the year. But his house is in Devon. "I don't have other homes." he said. "I hate owning things. It's easy to rent a place or stay in a hotel. A hotel is a good place for a writer. You can eavesdrop a lot."

Wandering is his habit in writing as well. "I am always working on a number of different things at once," he said. "The change is important; you're just a man alone in a room writing." He writes "very rapidly" and puts things away for a year or two before he returns to them "to see if they worked."

"Often I have forgotten a lot about them," he said. "I forget characters' names, things that happen to them."

When it comes to rewriting stories, he does them over completely, from beginning to end — "you can't tinker with sentences or paragraphs in a story" — typing them on colored paper before he sends them to a typist who produces a copy in black and white. "They look different that way," he said. "You get a different view of them."

A Cinematic Novelist

On novels he works "like a movie maker, cutting and splicing and pasting things in." But novels seem to annoy him. "I think of myself as a story writer who also writes novels," he said. "My novels just won't be maneuvered into short stories. I start writing away, and sometimes I find myself, to my considerable horror, in the midst of a novel."

In part, he resents the time a novel takes when stories keep bubbling up.

> But where the ideas originate William Trevor does not know.

For, even though he insists he is "a very lazy person," the stories are compulsive. "If one wants to be written, it must be done. They're insistent. I can't make them go away." Nor can he stop to think about the course they may take. "To me, being a writer is like being an athlete. You can't pause to analyze the game while you're in it."

Where the stories come from he generally does not know, and he is reluctant to tamper with the springs of his imagination to find out. By now he has created many hundreds of vividly realized characters in stories notable for an almost Elizabethan richness of detail. Often it is something he observes or a remark he overhears that will start him off.

But that is only a nudge, "that first little wrench out of reality that's needed," he said. "That's where observation is useful." He has even been wrenched out of reality and into a story by a few of his own dreams. "It doesn't really matter how a story starts; it's how you cultivate it that counts, like gardening."

In praising "Family Sins & Other Stories" in her review in The New York Times, Michiko Kakutani wrote that "decisive moments define the lives of almost all of Mr. Trevor's characters, dividing their lives into an after and a before, a now and a then." She noted that "the line of demarcation in a character's life has less to do with the loss of love than with the loss of innocence — something happens to fundamentally change how an individual sees himself or his family or a friend; and in the wake of that revelation, his entire relationship to the world is altered."

One of the things Mr. Trevor is working on now is a television script of one story in the new collection, a tale of unusual violence called "Events at Drimaghleen," about the deaths of two young people in love who are kept apart. Mr. Trevor's television versions of his stories have become enormously popular in Britain, and he is asked to dramatize many more than he is willing to do.

"But I do like the variety of the techniques," he said. "The big job is to create images; those just suggested in stories are not usually right for television. What you trust your reader to imagine just doesn't work. Sometimes for television I have given the story a twist it doesn't have in the original. As long as the producers are willing to let me deliver when I am ready to, I enjoy this kind of writing. By now they know they'll have to wait a long time."

He has never turned the process around and made a play or script into a story. But when he writes scripts for radio, he may also write the same story for publication because the script and the story "can contribute a good deal to one another." He explains: "The listener has to imagine in the same way a reader has to, and I find often that one version will tell me something about the other."

'Still Bewildered'

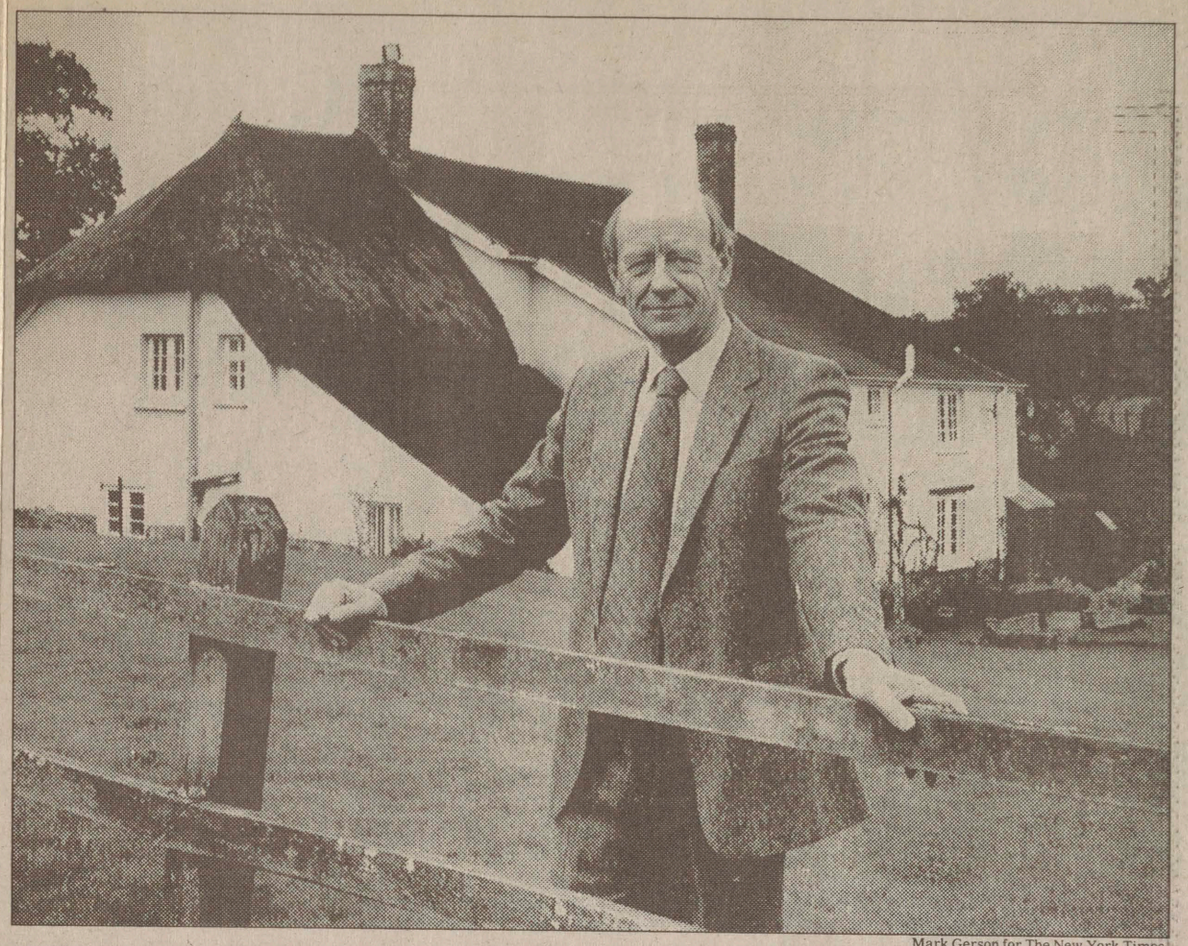
The force that drives him in all this work is bewilderment. "I believe in not quite knowing," he said. "A writer needs to be doubtful, questioning. I write out of curiosity and bewilderment." After almost 30 years of writing, he adds, "I am still bewildered about the world."

Although critics often point out that his narrative technique is the traditional storyteller's, with few of the self-imposed limitations adopted by his contemporaries, he also insists: "All writing for me is experimental. I never know when I start out whether a story will work. I am entirely an instinctive writer."

Whether he is at home or traveling, Mr. Trevor writes from "about 7:20 in the morning until 9, then drink a lot of coffee and gossip with my wife or whoever else is about, and then do another hour and stop altogether for the day."

"If I don't write, I get melancholy," he said, "and if for some reason I can't do it for a week, I can get very low. It's a kind of tonic." He does not mean merely a therapeutic one. "Writing becomes a fix," he said, "an obsession."

That is only the manual part of it. "All the rest of the day, you know, you are imagining people and wondering about them and working on things like disbelief. Your characters have to be believable. I have found it is very difficult for people to lie to me now because I am always dealing with the problem of deception."



Mark Gerson for The New York Times

William Trevor, who is to give a reading tomorrow night in New York, at his home in Devonshire, England.

Artistic and Moral Vision

Not that readers of his stories would believe he had ever been unskeptical. Some of his stories have sharp humor, but the vision of life they present is often dark, and in them innocent people may be set upon, as one reviewer put it, by remarkably inventive and tenacious moral monsters.

Writing, Mr. Trevor said, has changed his view of the world — "I've learned a lot I could not have learned if I were not a writer" — but it has not made him a harsher judge of people. "Personally I am pessimistic, but there is a kind of optimism in writing itself and it balances the pessimism" he said. Presumably it is that tension that leads many critics to talk about his moral vision.

He does not talk about that. His original vision was artistic, strictly. As a boy he read thrillers, "any crime story I could get my hands on, and I thought I would like to write those, too," he said. "But in school I found everyone wanted to write, and why would I do what everyone else wanted to?"

So he became a sculptor and for about 15 years made his living with a chisel. "But a terrible thing happened. My sculpture became more and more abstract, and finally I did not like it at all. There is hardly a worse thing could happen to an artist."

Seeking a way out, he found a job writing advertising copy in the early 1960's. "This was absurd," he said. "They would give me four lines or so to write and four or five days to write it in. It was so boring. But they had given me this typewriter to work on, so I just started writing stories. I sometimes think all the people who were missing in my sculpture gushed out into the stories."

So, does the uncanny accidental quality of many of his characters' lives belong to his own? If he had been able to determine his own life, he would still be living in County Cork where he was born, he guesses. Economic conditions there were terrible in the early 50's, when he left college. First he went to Northern Ireland to teach art, but his school went bankrupt and he went to England to find work. Once he became a writer, he said, he could have returned to Ireland. "But by then I had become a wanderer, and one way and another, I just stayed in England," he said. "I hated leaving Ireland. I was very bitter at the time. But, had it not happened, I think I might never have written at all."

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Review/**Ballet**

'The Sleeping Beauty' Amid Embellishments

By JACK ANDERSON

With its majestic choreography by Marius Petipa and ravishing music by Tchaikovsky, "The Sleeping Beauty" remains one of the most sumptuous spectacles in the balletic repertory. Much of its splendor was evident on Friday night at the Metropolitan Opera House when American Ballet Theater gave this season's first performance of the beloved classic.

Sir Kenneth MacMillan's staging follows traditional lines and is blessedly free of newfangled interpolations. "The Sleeping Beauty," which received its premiere in 1890, may be an old ballet that retells a still older fairy tale, but its beauty and fantasy keep it from being merely old-fashioned.

More than a vehicle for stars, it offers rewarding roles for many dancers. Ballet Theater has been in fine shape this spring. Therefore it was not surprising that its ensemble proved convincing as courtiers, villagers, hunters and enchanted spirits.

Susan Jaffe portrayed Aurora, the princess who sleeps for a hundred years until she is awakened by a prince's kiss. Although Ms. Jaffe is an admirable classicist, she has been theatrically bland at times in the past. Her Aurora, however, was radiant.

There was a new eagerness and vitality in her dancing. In the demanding Rose Adagio, her balances were secure, yet she always looked like an innocent girl rather than a ballerina doing tricks. She was lyrical in the vision scene and confident in the final pas de deux. Like the Rose Adagio, that duet became something more than a virtuosic display. When she slowly raised her arms in her solo variation, she appeared to be telling the audience that each lifting of the arms indicated that Princess Aurora was growing up from a child into a woman.

Kevin McKenzie was a handsome prince. But in the hunting scene, he was sulky one moment, melancholy the next. It was as if he realized that something was missing from his life. When he beheld the vision of Aurora, he knew what it was: love. Then his manners became as noble as his appearance.

Other roles were interpreted with varying degrees of effectiveness. Carabosse, the evil fairy, can be portrayed by either a man or a woman. Victor Barbee made her a remarkably spiteful, venomous personification of hatred. In contrast, Christine Dunham was gentle as the Lilac Fairy, Aurora's fairy godmother.

Lucette Katerndahl, Deirdre Carberry, Julie Kent, Amy Rose and Christina Fagundes gave neat, but tepid, accounts of the solos for the attendant fairies. Each variation has its own distinct choreographic personality. These dancers made them too much alike.

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The spectacular Bluebird pas de deux was also troublesome, even though Alessandra Ferri was delicate and Julio Bocca leaped with enormous energy. Yet one was more conscious of Mr. Bocca's effort than of his ease. This was a Bluebird that jumped high without ever really soaring.

The strength of the company as a whole prevented any of these problems from diminishing the total effect of the ballet. Unfortunately, the production is seriously hampered by its fussy scenery by Nicholas Georgiadis. There are so many hanging bits of colored drapery, especially in the prologue and last act, that the stage seems filled with whipped cream and chocolate frosting.

Jack Everly conducted a dull account of the score that conveyed little sense of either its charm or its grandeur. Petipa's choreography triumphed nonetheless.



Jack Manning/The New York Times

Kevin McKenzie and Susan Jaffe of American Ballet Theater in "Sleeping Beauty."

Of Male Desires And Lives Of Women

Continued From Page B1

did not appear in The Post: "I am proud to be an American and I have dedicated my entire being into creating work that will move people's souls with my art."

Ms. Finley received money from the National Endowment in 1984, 1987 and 1989. This year's exhibition program at Franklin Furnace received a $37,500 endowment grant; next year's program is to receive $20,000 from the endowment. Franklin Furnace, at 112 Franklin Street, describes itself as a "museum for temporal art" focusing on "multiple art published after 1960 — artists' books and magazines, audio art, mail art, Fluxus works, posters, videotapes and films." (Fluxus was an international art movement in the 1960's that was inspired by the iconoclasm and ephemeral art forms of Dada.)

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By far the most successful parts of Ms. Finley's installation are two poems scrawled in three columns across two walls, one of them painted azalea pink, the other what the artist calls "Lake Placid blue." "Why Can't the Veal Calf Walk?" is a poem about rape and incest, about women being valued solely in terms of their desirability to men, and about women as private property. The poem makes an analogy between the treatment of women and the cruel treatment of calves to produce tasty veal. Two lines from this bleak poem are inscribed on a stone marker near the entrance to the show.

The other poem, "Aunt Mandy," is also written in small and large letters, moving back and forth between expressions of personal hurt and impersonal accusation. It is a plea for a woman's right to control her fate. It includes the lines:

It's my body
It's not Pepsi's body
It's not Nancy Reagan's body
It's not Congress's body
It's not the Supreme Court's body
. . .
It's not your body.

The installation also includes a wall of cartoonlike images accompanied by words declaring what men do not like in women (sagging breasts, hairy legs and pregnant bellies) and what they do like (firm breasts, smooth skins and youthful, fat-free bodies). It includes drawings on the themes of faith, hope and charity; wall paintings on secrets many violated women bear silently within them and on the lack of value society places on "tradi-

3 French Cinema Idols and an American Maverick at Cannes

Continued From Page B1

The film is loaded with vibrant, scary style, but a number of its effects seem either detached from the main narrative or else oddly familiar. Echoes of "Blue Velvet" are all over the place (Willem Dafoe, made up with rotten teeth and a pencil-thin mustache, is ssentially playing that film's Dennis r character), but they don't ame shock value the second Still, Mr. Lynch creates y grotesque images No one else could haracter who of sexual ke this

instead there is speculation about the various tiny irregularities that, for Cannes, are apparently par for the course. Anjelica Huston will be one of those judging Clint Eastwood's portrayal of her father, John Huston, but she has said that won't bother her. Her fellow jurors Bernardo Bertolucci (who is president of the jury) and especially Bertrand Blier have worked closely with Mr. Depardieu, but it would be hard to find major European directors who have not. A French journalist on the jury is the mother-in-law of a distributor who has a film, "Taxi Blues," in competition, but she is said to be scrupulous in the extreme.

Spike Lee was asked to participate, which would have made the jury even harder to second-guess, but he was busy. Possibly he will be here next year, when Jane Fonda is scheduled to be president of the jury. As for the sorts of curve balls that can be thrown among jurors, it is widely acknowledged here that the chief reason Mr. Lee's "Do the Right Thing" missed out last year on the festival's highest award, the Palme d'Or, was

Advertising

Randall Rothenberg

Is It a Film? Is It an Ad? Harder to Tell

WHEN Pauline Kael, the film critic for The New Yorker, entitled the first collection of her criticism "I Lost It at the Movies," the "it" presumably was a whimsical reference to her innocence and insularity.

Another film critic, Mark Crispin Miller, worries now that the movies themselves are losing it. In an essay that will be included in the forthcoming book "Seeing Through Movies," Mr. Miller argues forcefully that American cinema has been corrupted by the goals and methods of advertising.

Mr. Miller, known for his explorations of American television for The New Republic and other publications, looks at contemporary films and everywhere sees product placements, happy endings and anti-realism that are drawn from and promote the same disposable culture extolled by advertising.

"Conceived and sold as 'product,' just like the many products that it sells, the movie passes right through you, leaving nothing in you but a vague, angry craving for another one," writes Mr. Miller, a 40-year-old associate professor at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.

A shorter version of the essay, entitled "Hollywood: The Ad," will be published as the cover article in the April issue of The Atlantic magazine. The book, which was edited by Mr. Miller, is scheduled to be published in June by Pantheon.

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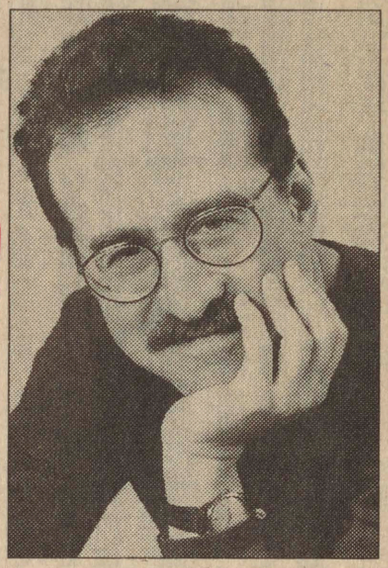
Using as a reference point the idiosyncratic visions of the films of the 1970's, Mr. Miller attempts to show that the change in Hollywood has been dramatic and recent. Older films like "The Godfather II" or "Chinatown" had themes that however dark were informed by realistic relationships between people and their society. But today's films, typified by "Top Gun" and "Ferris Bueller's Day Off," are uplifting versions of an impossible America where opposites always attract, good guys always win, and the environment is filled with fantastic action, cathartic violence, brilliant colors and a limited handful of brand names.

To a large extent, Mr. Miller contends, the sole purpose of this "deliberately anti-realistic" cinematic construction is to market products whose manufacturers pay to feature them in films. As such, new movies are little different from commercials, for their purpose "is to enhance the product by meticulously placing it within the sort of idealized display that occurs nowhere in real life."

In an interview, Mr. Miller affirmed his belief that the change in American cinema dates to the acquisition of the big studios by global marketing conglomerates. "Cinema," he said, "is no longer supervised by businessmen who have a powerful affection for and knowledge of the craft of making movies. The crisis relates to excessive control by forces that are anti-esthetic and are interested only in an immediate hit."

Evidence certainly exists to indicate that a blatant marketing imperative is driving much current American movie-making. Advertising Age recently reported, for example, that the Walt Disney Company's Buena Vista Pictures unit sent large consumer-products companies letters soliciting product placements for a new movie entitled "Mr. Destiny." For $20,000, the companies could have a product seen in the film; for $40,000 an actor would mention the product, and for $60,000 an actor would actually use it.



The film critic Mark Crispin Miller, who says the American cinema has been corrupted by the goals and methods of advertising.

Worse than product placements, Mr. Miller said, was the twisting and turning of all current movies to conclude on happy notes. He pointed out that at least three of the five nominees for best picture this year — "Glory," "Born on the Fourth of July" and "Field of Dreams" — include climactic moments of what he called "gratuitous applause," aimed at dissipating any lingering bittersweetness.

"I worry about a country whose citizens can't tolerate the slightest bit of darkness," Mr. Miller said.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1990
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The New York Times

Soviet Theater Company's Gamble: Chekhov's Play, Gorbachev's Way

By FRANCIS X. CLINES

Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, Feb. 21 — Given the new freedom of Soviet artists to indulge the soul's delight, the latest theater company here has decided to risk all by combining the separate agonies of Chekhov and Soviet free enterprise.

In a gamble unusual in the Soviet theater, a collection of popular, well-known stars is taking a flier and departing from the traditional theater-company base that nurtured them. They have joined as a kind of venture troupe, an all-star cast in search of a new audience, banking on their art and on Chekhov to keep them afloat.

On stage, it is strictly Chekhov: pre-Revolutionary Chekhov with his seemingly woolly, roundabout way of getting at the heart of things, freshened as something of an allegory of the current hard and jaded times. It is pre-Stalin, pre-stagnation, pre-perestroika Chekhov with his assembled figments and their legacy: "Let everything on stage be just as complicated, and at the same time just as simple as it is in life."

In the box office life is mostly complicated, for the new Anton Chekhov Theater is trying to produce the master with all the financial risks and unknowns attendant on the confusing quasi-private enterprise way of doing things in the Sovet Union — the business cooperative.

An Orphan Aborning

The co-op is a child of President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's economic restructuring and is already something of an orphan as an uninitiated public and a jealous state bureaucracy look on the oddity of a Soviet entrepreneur as if he were Chekhov's Lopakhin himself come to cut down the nation's own cherry orchard of egalitarian fantasizing.

"It's a new mentality for our actors," said the co-op's producer, Marat Akchurian, a poet and co-op publisher who is putting his own money into the venture. "Most have basic connections with one of the state theaters. But now they will share the risk with us, because we are paying them more than the state theaters pay."

'Cherry Orchard,' with some of the financial risks of free enterprise.

Their first production is a heightened version of "The Cherry Orchard" done as a tragi-farce to parallel modern Soviet life with its long, soul-deadening lines, more Beckett than Chekhov, with people waiting for something better, contemplating dashed idealism, yearning for some sort of redeeming strength.

The Heroism of the Ordinary

The director, Leonid Trushkin, has set his entrepreneurial cast in motion on a set never imagined by Chekhov, a multi-doored, Chippendale-like giant cupboard, the very one saluted in Gayev's first-act soliloquy as a repository of a century's secrets and hopes, "and the highest ideals of goodness and justice." Through its doors Chekhov's characters come and go for three hours, tinged with the Gorbachevian cynicism that comes of too many promises and too much truth.

"In this country you have to work so hard against circumstances that every ordinary thing we accomplish here is an act of heroism," Mr. Trushkin insisted in the darkness of the rehearsal theater, happy with his cast.

A bearded and dark-eyed actor and troubadour, Mr. Trushkin the director was a disciple of Anatoly V. Efros, the late master director of the Taganka Theater. "Efros taught us to study the entire artistic history of a play, every bit, and then find something new," he said.

Mr. Akchurian chose Mr. Trushkin because he sensed in him a fresh generation's need for theater classicism, for an avant-garde way of treating the quiet depths of Chekhov with new respect.

An Honor With a Profit

"In the Soviet education system, the teachers do their best to make us hate Chekhov, to make him very boring, very uninteresting," said Mr. Akchurian, explaining why he wants to focus solely on Chekhov. "But here is the real Chekhov, very up to date in speaking of our eternal problems."

After opening here, the company will go on the road to Leningrad, Riga and Kiev with the dual mission of revealing Chekhov to his homeland and trying to turn a profit. Eventually the company hopes to take its repertory to the West.

In effect, the new group is using the domestic audience mainly to test-market its departure from traditional theater while hoping for real profits abroad. By law, Soviet ticket prices cannot float with demand, so they are

Continued on Page B4



Reuters for The New York Times

"The Cherry Orchard" at the Anton Chekhov Theater in Moscow.

Books of The Times

An Outsider's Vision of America

By CHRISTOPHER LEHMANN-HAUPT

Never mind that Wilfrid Sheed calls this third collection of his nonfiction pieces "Essays in Disguise." (The previous two were "The Morning After" and "The Good Word.") He means only that few books "actually have the nerve to call themselves collections of essays" because, he says, "the form has been in virtual eclipse for most of my writing life, squeezed to a shadow by the adjoining landmasses of the Article and the Review, not to mention its own dwarf love child, the Column."

"Thus a form which has traditionally brought out the best in English prose (the novel has too many other fish to fry) has been forced to live underground — there's no question of killing it — and operate in disguise."

What lends these pieces their particular vitality is that Mr. Sheed writes as a kind of American in disguise. Actually, he's been around these parts long enough to consider himself as American as the next person. But he began life as an Englishman, and though he took refuge here during World War II, he did not move permanently to the United States until 1947, when he was 17 years old. He later went back to be educated at Oxford.

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And he writes things about this country that only a shrewd outsider would see, probably because he has the leverage of a clearer perspective. For instance, when he was "press-ganged home from America" as "a surly 15-year-old British war refugee" in 1946, it was James Thurber who served as an antidote "to the sound of England."

"His voice was flat, after the English bird song, but not *too* flat. Where the English carried modulation to the brink of hysteria, his ups and downs were measured, and a delicate low music came of them." Only an American in disguise would notice subtleties like that.

And only an American in disguise would notice the diversity of native things that Mr. Sheed sees so sharply: the out-of-sync gestures of Marlon Brando in "The Godfather"; the face of Jack Nicklaus winning the Masters Tournament at the age of 46; the voice of Frank Sinatra when he broke out of the pack of crooners, or the prose of John Updike, which "can get on your nerves at times, because" it's "like live electrical wiring carelessly left around the house, and so, I sometimes think, is his soul."

As a footnote to how much easier it is to talk about satire than humor, he writes: "This is why movie critics stress the satirical content in Marx Brothers films, which is surely the feeblest thing about them." How many native Americans brought up on the Marx Brothers have noticed that?

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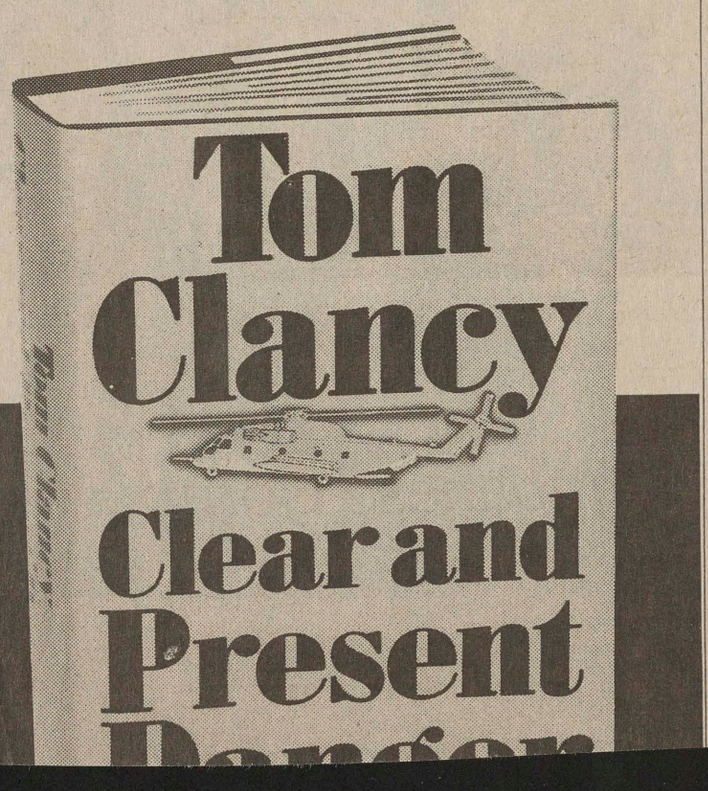
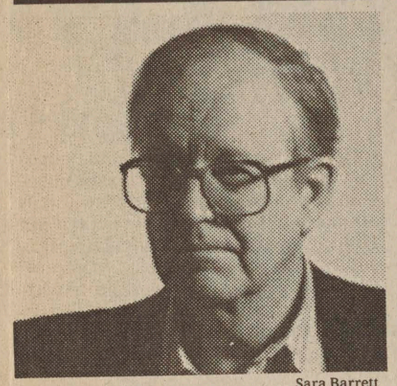
But it's old news that Mr. Sheed writes about a wondrous diversity of subjects, just as it's old news, I'm afraid, that he's better as an essayist than he is writing novels. There is about his graceful prose a quality that suggests he could pronounce your death sentence and at the same time convey great sympathy for you. In his fiction, this quality kills his characters. In his nonfiction, it cuts people down to the right size.

In the best pieces in this collection, he puts in perspective such subjects as the Roman Catholic Church, the mob, S. J. Perelman, the vanity of certain poets in their youth, and American popular music before rock.

About Richard Nixon during Watergate, he observes: "It was only





Sara Barrett

Essays in Disguise

By Wilfrid Sheed

264 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. $19.95.

"Whether it speaks to you or not," he writes in "A Farewell to Hemingstein," "Hemingway's recurrent theme of communion under pressure between bully and victim, hunter and hunted, man and woman, so that each becomes the other, deserves better than being labeled the theme of a 'closet queen.' " I wish he had made these points a little clearer.

Commenting on the flaws of Mario Puzo's prose in "The Godfather," Mr. Sheed "wonders if book people haven't surrendered too much to film in drumming melodrama out of literature." He concludes all too elliptically: "In its very artificiality, melodrama offers specific literary possibilities lacking in naturalism. And our Puzos might be tempted to write those in-between bits better if such efforts were not foredoomed to be called commercial." This observation would bear the weight of an essay.

And I wish that in writing about Frank Sinatra's voice, he had explored a comment the singer once made in Life magazine that as a young man he learned to take a small breath while simultaneously sustaining a note. How is that possible?

Still, the two dozen or so pieces in this collection are almost unfailingly stimulating. In two of them, he writes of Sloth, one of his favorite sins ("Rest in peace, but not yet."), and writers' burnout. ("Twenty years is a mighty long time to stay deeply inter-

Review/**Comedy**

Vulgar and Vicious Humor Right From a Locker Room

By JON PARELES

When Andrew Dice Clay called himself "the most vulgar, vicious comic ever to walk the face of the earth," as he did on stage Thursday evening at Madison Square Garden, he left out two other adjectives: juvenile and calculating. Mr. Clay has devised a public persona — call it Everylout — that carries male high-school humor, bawdy and bullying, to the world outside the locker room. In the process, and probably not inadvertently, it exploits the tensions that are arising as white heterosexual males find that the days of unquestioned dominance are over.

Mr. Clay may well be the most popular standup comic of the moment. His two Madison Square Garden shows were sold out, and were being filmed for a documentary; as at stadium rock shows, the stage action was projected on video screens. His performance was introduced by a coming-attractions trailer for a detective comedy starring Mr. Clay, to be released in June.

He presents himself as a swaggering tough guy, wearing a rhinestoned leather jacket that says "Dice Rules" and ceremoniously smoking cigarette after cigarette. In his routine, delivered in a Brooklyn accent and punctuated by grunts, Mr. Clay is the ultimate male-chauvinist pig — boasting about every sexual exploit, hostile to any needs but his own. And while he tolerates women as providers of sex, cooking and cleaning, his hostility extends to just about any other group he can identify. "I pick on everything," he boasts.

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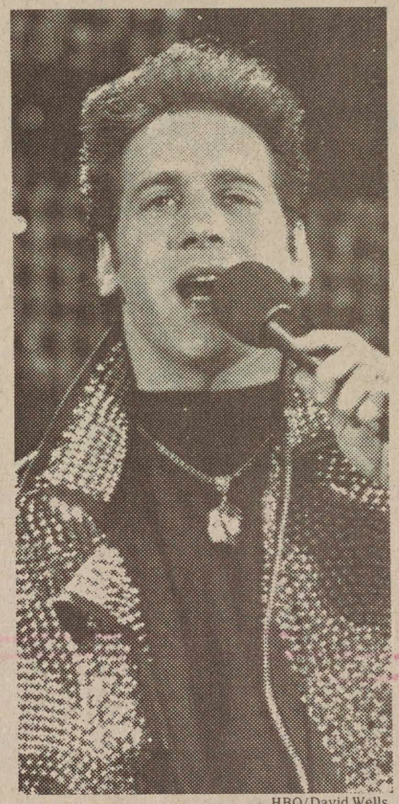
He's a caricature of macho insensitivity; when his bedmate gets upset that he doesn't care about her, he groans and says: "Honey, stop crying. What's your name?" Like a stereotypical 1950's biker adrift in the present, he's got no use for sexual equality: "Until about six years ago,



HBO/David Wells

Andrew Dice Clay

genitalia. His crowd-pleasing specialty is to give Mother Goose rhymes scatological endings, and the audience shouts along with ones that are familiar from his album and his Home Box Office programs.

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Mr. Clay's persona, a kind of X-rated Archie Bunker, could be amusing in small doses. And he may intend a deep irony with it — who would want this angry, megalomaniacal moron to run the world? But as he

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Western Historical Quarterly
July '73 #3, V.4

Research Opportunities in Western Literary History

RICHARD W. ETULAIN

A major dilemma for the contemporary literary historian is that many students contend that his approach to literature is hopelessly outdated. Literary historians, they argue, too often discuss the biographical and historical backgrounds of the work of art without scrutinizing the work itself. It is this point of view that leads one recent reviewer to dismiss Jay Martin's *Harvests of Change*, a literary history of American literature from 1865 to 1915, as old-fashioned, superficial, and, on the whole, not very useful.[1]

My purpose here is not to argue that literary history is a better approach to literature than the varied forms of literary criticism. Instead, I wish to suggest that some topics of western American literature, like much of colonial American literature, lend themselves more to the techniques of the literary historian than to the methods of the literary critic.[2]

Nor do I have in mind a narrow definition of literary history. As Robert Spiller has pointed out, the historical development of literature cannot be fully understood unless its relations with other disciplines have been examined. The findings of the literary critic, the cultural anthropologist, the historian of ideas, and the cultural sociologist must be used to produce the best kind of literary history.[3] Or, to follow Howard Mum-

Richard W. Etulain is chairman of the department of history at Idaho State University, Pocatello. Versions of this paper were read at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association meeting, Colorado Springs, October 1968, and at the conference of the Western History Association, Santa Fe, October 1971.

[1] Jay Martin, *Harvests of Change: American Literature, 1865–1914* (Englewood Cliffs, 1967). See the review in *Western Humanities Review*, XXII (Winter 1968), 69–70.

[2] On this subject see Howard Mumford Jones, "Desiderata in Colonial Literary History," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, XXXII (1938), 423–39.

[3] Some of Spiller's essays on literary history have been collected in *The Third Dimension: Studies in Literary History* (New York, 1965). Howard Mumford Jones, "The Nature of Literary History," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXVIII (April-June 1967), 147–60.

ford Jones, the writing of literary history is the product of studying the total culture of a civilization. In recent years, the products of departments of American Studies have led the way in this fruitful, multidisciplinary approach.[4]

Despite the increased interest in western American literature in the past two decades (since the publication of Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land*), few results of this enlarged activity have been in the field of literary history. Instead, the pages of *Western American Literature*, *South Dakota Review*, and other journals interested in western literature are filled primarily with articles of literary criticism. Further, journals of western history have published little research in literary history. The student or scholar interested in western literary history has a fertile field before him, but thus far the workers have been too few. As a result, the needs and opportunities outnumber the literary historians.[5]

In the first place, western literary history lacks a satisfactory set of definitions. Can Zane Grey and Walter Van Tilburg Clark, for example, be compared as writers of westerns? In his otherwise useful study of the western novel, James K. Folsom makes few distinctions of merit between various writers, and in his larger interest in the similarity of theme and form he overlooks the imprecision of his definitions.[6] Grey

[4] The methodology of this approach is explained in Henry Nash Smith, "Can 'American Studies' Develop a Method?" *American Quarterly*, IX (Summer 1957), 197–208.

[5] For the remarks that follow I have learned much from John T. Flanagan, "Middlewestern Regional Literature" in *Research Opportunities in American Cultural History* (Lexington, 1961), 124–39; and Warren French, "West as Myth: Status Report and Call for Action," *Western American Literature*, I (Spring 1966), 55–58. In a narrower perspective, I have dealt with the same subject in "Novelists of the Northwest: Needs and Opportunities for Research," forthcoming in *Idaho Yesterdays*.

In spite of the paucity of recent works of western literary history, several earlier publications must not be overlooked. Besides the books and articles mentioned in subsequent footnotes, one should examine Edward Douglas Branch, *The Cowboy and His Interpreters* (New York, 1926); Dorothy Dondore, *The Prairie and the Making of Middle America: Four Centuries of Description* (Cedar Rapids, 1926); Lucy Lockwood Hazard, *The Frontier in American Literature* (New York, 1927); Ralph Leslie Rusk, *The Literature of the Middle Western Frontier*, 2 vols. (New York, 1925). Also very useful are the chapters on the West in Robert E. Spiller et al., *Literary History of the United States*, 3 vols. (New York, 1946). These items and more than 2,200 others are listed in Richard W. Etulain, *Western American Literature: A Bibliography of Interpretive Books and Articles* (Vermillion, 1972). The most recent scholarship on the subject is *Interpretive Approaches to Western American Literature* (Pocatello, 1972).

[6] *The American Western Novel* (New Haven, 1966).

and Clark represent two different trends in western fiction, although both have used similar settings and some of the same character types. But to lump them together in the same category is like suggesting that Frank Yerby and William Faulkner are both writers of "southerns." Someone needs to demonstrate the differences between western novelists (John Steinbeck, Ken Kesey, Vardis Fisher, and Clark, for example) and writers of westerns (Grey, Max Brand, and Luke Short), who most often chose to follow a familiar pattern of action, romance, and stock characters.[7]

Also, such terms as *regionalism* and *local color* need more attention. Western local color writing made a promising beginning in the late nineteenth century, but why is it that much of it quickly hardened into stereotypes and formulas? The South, with its distinctive literary qualities, has aroused the notice of scholars, but the topic of western regionalism has been largely neglected. The prospective literary historian of western writing must ascertain whether western regional writing differs from that found in other regions or whether there are marked similarities. And, is the literature of the Great Plains, the Rocky Mountains, and the Pacific Coast similar enough to be treated as one region? One historian of the West suggests that the areas are separate regions and cannot be treated as a unified section with a single culture.[8]

Smith's *Virgin Land* is an instructive example for some types of definition-making. This brilliant study is, most of all, an analysis of what people thought the West to be in the nineteenth century; it is a study of the conglomerate myths and symbols they conjured up in attempting to understand a mysterious West. Cannot this approach be applied to the present century? Thus far we lack much-needed studies of the images of the West as portrayed in fiction and poetry since 1900. Ambitious Ph.D. candidates need to scrutinize the pages of western regional magazines like *Overland Monthly*, *Frontier*, and *Midland* to see what these periodicals did with the literary West.[9]

[7] The comments on this subject by Wallace Stegner in *The Sound of Mountain Water* (Garden City, 1969) are stimulating. Less helpful are the ideas of Leslie Fiedler in *The Return of the Vanishing American* (New York, 1968). I have dealt with some aspects of the western in "Literary Historians and the Western," *Journal of Popular Culture*, IV (Fall 1970), 518–26.

[8] Earl Pomeroy, *The Pacific Slope: A History of California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada* (New York, 1965).

[9] *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, 1950). For a study of Charles Lummis and his magazines, see Edwin R. Bingham, *Charles F. Lummis, Editor of the Southwest* (San Marino, 1955).

Literary biography is another form of western literary history that needs additional attention. Even though, as Robert Spiller has contended, biography adds more to literary history than any of its other components, there have been few published literary biographies of leading western writers.

Nearly two decades ago W. H. Hutchinson wrote a sprightly biography of Eugene Manlove Rhodes, and since then he has continued to be the leading interpreter of this southwestern novelist. It is obvious that Hutchinson's book, *A Bar Cross Man*, will be *the* study of Rhodes for some time.[10] He has succeeded in capturing much of the liveliness of Rhodes's humor, lingo, and masculinity. This accomplishment has been achieved largely through the use of numerous quoted excerpts from the novelist's letters.

Yet without demeaning the worth of Hutchinson's scholarship, one must point out that his biography is not an adequate guide to the writings of Rhodes. One looks in vain for extensive analyses of the literary ideas and forms that Rhodes utilized. Rhodes's writing does not lend itself to all the formalistic methods of the New Criticism, but illuminating parallels could have been drawn between Rhodes's fiction and that of his contemporaries who wrote about the West: Owen Wister, Zane Grey, Emerson Hough, and Andy Adams. A writer is more than his life and his personal letters; he must also be evaluated as a literary artist. Because Hutchinson chose to omit comments on the literary craftsmanship of Rhodes, his book is not the best model for the prospective literary biographer.

The same problem weakens Anthony Amaral's recent study of Will James.[11] Because Amaral is primarily interested in pointing out the distortions in James's autobiography, he leaves out valuable comments that could have been made about the cowboy novelist's writings. Amaral and Hutchinson have failed to use the techniques of literary critics that would have allowed them to add evaluations of the writings of these two novelists to the details of their lives and thus produced full literary biographies.

[10] *A Bar Cross Man: The Life and Personal Writings of Eugene Manlove Rhodes* (Norman, 1956). Hutchinson has also compiled a bibliography of Rhodesean materials, edited a collection of his shorter pieces, and is writing introductions for reprints of Rhodes's novels. For helpful literary criticism of Rhodes's writings see Edwin W. Gaston, Jr., *Eugene Manlove Rhodes: Cowboy Chronicler* (Austin, 1967), and James K. Folsom, "A Dedication to . . . Eugene Manlove Rhodes: 1869–1934," *Arizona and the West*, XI (Winter 1969), 310–14.

[11] *Will James: The Gilt Edged Cowboy* (Los Angeles, 1967).

Another recent study, however, can serve as a paradigm for future literary biographies of western writers. This is Wilson Hudson's admirable book, *Andy Adams: His Life and Writings*.[12] Hudson has achieved what literary biography calls for: a synthesizing of the life of his subject (external biography) with the inner life, the mind, and the art of his subject as they appear in his writings. Hudson points out this dual objective in his foreword: "Andy Adams is interesting and important primarily because of what he wrote, but this book is not confined to literary matters. It is a biographical as well as a literary study." Then he adds: "The question of the relationship between the realities that Andy remembered and the fiction that he created will be touched on in this book, but emphasis will fall on his novels and stories as literary productions and their relationship to other western fiction" (p. ix).

More studies of this sort are needed, studies that are more complete than those found in the Minnesota and Steck-Vaughn series on American writers and ones that are less restricted to a prescribed format, such as those in the Twayne United States Author series.[13]

At the top of the list is the need for a wide-ranging literary biography of Owen Wister, who did so much to popularize western literature in the early part of the twentieth century. Wister has had no more than article treatment but deserves a first-rate, well-researched biography that illustrates how much he reflected the intellectual milieu of his times. A student interested in the task must not overlook the helpful manuscript collections of Wister material at the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, the University of Wyoming, and the Pennsylvania Historical Society.[14] The same need applies for extended studies of Zane Grey and Max Brand. Biographies limited to the external facts, such as those by Jean Karr and Frank Gruber on Grey, add little to our under-

[12] *Andy Adams: His Life and Writings* (Dallas, 1964).

[13] A fine recent biography (but containing only brief sections of literary criticism) is Calder M. Pickett's *Ed Howe: Country Town Philosopher* (Lawrence, 1968).

[14] A student interested in Wister should not overlook two dissertations: George T. Watkins, "Owen Wister and the American West: A Biographical and Critical Study" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1959), and Neal Lambert, "The Western Writings of Owen Wister: The Conflict of East and West" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1966). The best published materials on Wister are a series of articles by Lambert; G. Edward White's *The Eastern Establishment and the Western Experience: The West of Frederic Remington, Theodore Roosevelt, and Owen Wister* (New Haven, 1968); and Ben Vorpahl, "Henry James and Owen Wister," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, XCV (July 1971), 291–338. Watkins is doing the Wister volume for the Twayne series, Lambert is finishing a critical study of Wister, and Vorpahl plans a full-scale biography.

standing of the men and their literary products.[15] Instead, what is needed are treatments that combine these facts with careful examinations of these writers' roles in popular western literature. Henry Nash Smith's chapters on the dime novel hero and heroine in *Virgin Land* are an excellent paradigm for future studies of the western, for these chapters demonstrate what can be done with popular literature.[16]

No one has yet written a literary biography of Hamlin Garland. Bret Harte still lacks a satisfactory volume of bio-critical nature, although the recent study of Richard O'Connor is helpful.[17] In fact, a series of volumes dealing with the major western writers that combines the best biographical and critical methods is needed. One hopes that an ambitious western publisher may soon undertake such a series.

Some of the most perceptive comments about western literature have been made in regional literary histories. The best of these is Franklin Walker's *San Francisco's Literary Frontier*.[18] His study may serve as a model for future studies of a similar nature. Walker has included the necessary ingredients of the most penetrating literary history. As he says in the introduction: "My purpose in this volume is to trace in detail the experiences of these writers while they remained on the west coast, to analyze and evaluate their early writings, and to reconstruct the background of their work. A logical concomitant of these objectives has been the construction of a literary history of San Francisco from 1848 to 1875 . . . ." He then adds: "In my critical approach I have concerned myself with showing how the personality and interests of each subject was reflected in his journalism and how the time and place influenced each writer during the years of discussion" (p. v).

Walker fulfills his broad goals. He has carefully constructed biographical accounts of such writers as Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Ambrose Bierce, Joaquin Miller, and several others. To these vignettes he has added objective analyses of their writings. And, finally, the focus of the study is

[15] Jean Karr, *Zane Grey: Man of the West* (New York, 1948), and Gruber, *Zane Grey: A Biography* (New York, 1970). Robert Easton's study of his father-in-law, Max Brand, is a penetrating biography, but the author fails to analyze Brand's writings: *Max Brand: The Big 'Westerner'* (Norman, 1970).

[16] James K. Folsom follows the methods of Smith, and so does Kent Steckmesser, *The Western Hero in History and Legend* (Norman, 1965).

[17] O'Connor, *Bret Harte: A Biography* (Boston, 1966).

[18] Walker, *San Francisco's Literary Frontier* (New York, 1939). The University of Washington Press has issued a reprint of Walker's book with a new introduction by the author (1969).

not limited to the contents of the region alone, but includes discussions of the ties of the region with the literary events and ideas of the nation. Walker has based his book on a wide variety of sources: contemporary periodicals and newspapers, collections of rare books and letters, and manuscript letters and diaries. These sources have been woven into the narrative to add helpful background for the author's analyses and evaluations.

Walker's literary history of southern California, while less successful than his earlier volume on San Francisco, contains the proper balance of the matters of literary history. More restricted in its subject matter because it limits itself to a regional genre is Edwin W. Gaston's *The Early Novel of the Southwest*. The main purpose of this study is to scrutinize the historical development of the southwestern novel, but the author does not leave out judgments on the literary merits of the fiction produced. Nor has Gaston failed to cast light on how productions of his region compare with those of eastern contemporaries. Again the approach is not one of narrow literary antiquarianism.[19]

On the other hand, the type of regional literary history that should be avoided is found in *History of Oregon Literature* by Alfred Powers.[20] The weakness of the volume is not that it is limited to the literature of one state, for Oregon does merit a literary history; but Powers's book is a chronicle of Oregon writing and not a literary history. He records the development of literature in his state but gives little evaluation of the writings he is putting in chronological order. His definition of literature is too broad, almost inclusive enough to include the indecipherable scratchings on the rocks along the Columbia River, and he does not demonstrate sufficiently the differing merits between the journalistic and filiopietistic histories and novels of Oregon and the fine literary efforts of such writers as Pulitzer Prize-winner H. L. Davis. There is, in short, no literary criticism in Powers's volume. And, as is so often the case with narrowly centered local studies, his volume is crudely wrought, with more than its share of blatant regional promotionalism. To Powers, the literary efforts of most Oregon writers are first-rate, and other Americans ought to be cognizant of that fact. Regional literary histories similar to that by Powers are inadequate guides to the literature of a region because they lack both balance and perspective.

[19] Walker, *A Literary History of Southern California* (Berkeley, 1950); Gaston, *The Early Novel of the Southwest* (Albuquerque, 1961).

[20] Powers, *History of Oregon Literature* (Portland, 1935).

These unsatisfactory efforts, however, do not diminish the abundant opportunities for regional literary histories. Using Walker as a model, one could compose a literary history of the Rocky Mountain area, the Pacific Coast, the Northwest, or any other region of the West. Such states as Texas and California, for example, have had sufficient literary activity to merit state literary histories. And one can think of several cities besides frontier San Francisco — Taos and Portland being two — that could be the subjects of even more narrowly focused literary history.

But if the type of western literary history that is being called for is to be of high caliber, two problems must be avoided. In the first place, too many interpretations of western American literature, like the land we westerners deal with, are too broad and frequently without adequate depth. This tendency toward generalizing is exhibited in Folsom's study of the western novel. Repeatedly he says that a theme or form is typical of the western novel, and he cites several examples to illustrate his generalizations. But often the serious student can find exceptions to most of his broader contentions.[21]

We need to utilize smaller subjects, to analyze them in depth, and to suggest the implications that are true for the self-contained subject. Roy Meyer's study of the midwestern farm novel is an instructive example. He is not guilty of making vague inferences about all western novels from his findings; he has limited his conclusions to the scope of his subject, and his volume is all the stronger for avoiding this tendency. In his book on the image of the pioneer, Nickolas Karolides is more discursive than Meyer, but this weakness is not because of the format of the study so much as the author's inability to convey his conclusions in a concise and penetrating manner.[22] Before there are any more large generalizations made about the western novel, it would be helpful to have studies of the development of western literary types: the cowboy, the mountain man, the miner, and the overlander.[23]

Aficionados of western literature have heard much recently about the eastern Establishment — from novelists, critics, and historians. From the

[21] This problem of generalizing too much is also evident in Robert E. Lee, *From West to East: Studies in the Literature of the American West* (Urbana, 1966). These problems are discussed at greater length in Richard W. Etulain, "Recent Views of the American Literary West," *Journal of Popular Culture*, III (Summer 1969), 144–53.

[22] Meyer, *The Middle Western Farm Novel in the Twentieth Century* (Lincoln, 1965); Karolides, *The Pioneer in the American Novel, 1900–1950* (Norman, 1967).

[23] Don Walker, University of Utah, has finished a monograph on the mountain man in American literature, and he is working on a companion volume for the cowboy.

evidence cited there seems to be *some* basis for this view.[24] Another view is appearing, however, and it is one infinitely more dangerous to the future of western American literature. It can be termed *western boosterism*, but it also smacks of argumentum ad regionem. Westerners are becoming too interested in championing their cause, and in turn, in getting revenge for the wrong treatment they think the region and its literature have received from the East.[25]

In doing so, we have become defensive and are guilty, in part, of blaming others for some of our own faults.[26] The West has produced a severely limited group of top-rate writers, and we must be more willing to accept this fact. Nor must the mistake be made of maligning an eastern critic for writing an eastern book about western literature. This logic, if turned upon the West, would mean that several of us should never undertake books about our eastern interests. Certainly Folsom did not make use of all the latest views of western critics, but he did make several points (especially in his chapters on Cooper and on the Indian in western fiction) that westerners had not yet made. The East *is* willing to pay more attention to western literature if better books are written about the West. Notice the attention paid to *Little Big Man*, the simultaneous appearance of *True Grit* and *Red Sky at Morning* on recent best seller lists, and the increasingly favorable reviews of the novels of Benjamin Capps. Finally, the selection of N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* and Wallace Stegner's *Angle of Repose* as winners of the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1969 and 1972 adds to this contention.

Before western historians join their literary brethren in criticizing easterners for not paying more attention to the best western writing, they should make more use of regional writing to broaden the perspective of

[24] Vardis Fisher, "The Western Writer and the Eastern Establishment," *Western American Literature*, I (Winter 1967), 244–59; Lee, *From East to West;* and White, *The Eastern Establishment and Western Experience.*

[25] This tendency has broader and longer dimensions than I have indicated here. Part of the mythos of the western has been based upon the conviction that the West is morally superior to the decadent East. Also, Pomeroy demonstrates that western defensiveness has led to a stultifying parochialism in many areas of western history. Pomeroy, "Toward a Reorientation of Western History: Continuity and Environment," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLI (March 1955), 579–600. One of Pomeroy's students adds another slant to western feelings about the East in Gene Gressley, "Colonialism: A Western Complaint," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, LIV (January 1963), 1–8.

[26] Instructive on this point is Wilson O. Clough, *The Necessary Earth: Nature and Solitude in American Literature* (Austin, 1964), especially pages 153–68.

their courses in western history. For example, the journals of Lewis and Clark and Jedediah Smith and the early accounts of Washington Irving, Lewis H. Garrard, and George F. Ruxton provide important insights into life on the western frontier in the early years of its development. Later in the nineteenth century, the local color writings of Bret Harte, Joaquin Miller, and Mary Hallock Foote, although romantic, supply revealing descriptions of life in several regions of the West. Hamlin Garland's *Main-Travelled Roads* (1891) epitomizes much of the discontent that boiled up in the Populist movement, and Owen Wister's *The Virginian* (1902) illustrates what many Americans thought about the West during the Progressive era.

Between the two world wars, western regional writing came of age, and such prize-winning novelists as Vardis Fisher, John Steinbeck, and H. L. Davis published important fiction about the West that built upon the superior western writings of Mary Austin, Frank Norris, and Willa Cather which appeared earlier in the twentieth century. More recently, the work of the Beats and their descendents — Jack Kerouac, Greg Corso, and Gary Snyder — capture the discontent of many Americans during the 1950s and 1960s. At the same time, these writers demonstrate the lessening differences between western literature and that of the remainder of the nation.

Finally, if the western historian selects only one novel for his course, Stegner's *Angle of Repose* ought to be that book. In this important work Stegner asks two important questions about the history of the American West: (1) What is the region's relationship with the East? (2) What continuities and/or differences are there between the frontier and the twentieth-century West? Stegner's novel is a brilliant example of what can be accomplished when a penetrating mind invokes the muses of both western history and literature.

Western literary history, then, is a research field rich with possibilities. One hopes, however, that when some of these much-needed projects are undertaken, scholars will (1) avoid the pitfalls of provinciality and regional defensiveness and (2) devote additional attention to the style and structure of their studies. If prospective literary historians of western literature exhibit the breadth of perspective and the precise syntax and polished form of such volumes as *Virgin Land* and, to cite an example for another region, Jay B. Hubbell's *The South in American Literature, 1607–1900,* they will have filled some of the large gaps now apparent in the subject.

The Writings of Brigham Young

Dean C. Jessee

In an 1873 letter summarizing his life for the editor of the New York *Herald,* Brigham Young expressed disappointment that his mission was not "better understood by the world." But he assured his correspondent that "the time will come when I will be understood and I leave to futurity the judgment of my labors and their results as they shall become manifest." [1] That the predicted age of "understanding" has not fully dawned is evident from the distorted image of Brigham Young that has been perpetuated in the years since these lines were written. The failure of writers to accurately portray Brigham Young is due, at least in part, to the herculean task of assimilating the massive amount of primary source material pertaining to him.

The most significant source of information on the life of Brigham Young is the collection of his papers filed in the archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah. This collection, comprising more than a hundred boxes of records, contains the 47,735-page manuscript history of Brigham Young, twenty-one volumes of letter books totaling 15,000 pages, four personal diaries, nine office journals, seventeen boxes of loose papers (rough-draft letters, addresses, certificates, and other documents), several thousand items of incoming correspondence, four volumes of telegram books, and numerous records pertaining to Brigham Young's business holdings — not to mention the voluminous printed works and manuscript collections related to him.

Nearly all of the writings that appear over Brigham Young's signature are in the handwriting of twenty-four men who assisted him in a secretarial capacity at one time or another during the last thirty years of

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[1] Young to James G. Bennett, 10 April 1873, Letter Book 15: 319–23, Brigham Young Collection, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. All Young papers cited are in this collection.

Home Truth Recycled: Burnt Once, Twice Shy

By Andrew Ferguson

Robert Fulghum became an enormous BLIP on the radar screen of American pop culture a couple of years ago, with the publication of "All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten," his collection of essayish ruminations notable for their brevity and relentlessly uplifting tone.

The heart of that book's title essay—which has by now been reprinted throughout the free world—or at least wherever puppy dogs lap the apple cheeks of beribboned little girls, unicorns canter 'neath



Bookshelf

"It Was On Fire When I Lay Down On It"

By Robert Fulghum

rainbows, waterfalls spill golden honey and wishes really do come true—is a series of admonitions that Mr. Fulghum insists every healthy being learned in kindergarten: "Share everything." "Warm milk and cookies are good for you." "Take a nap every day." There were several more.

Some of us objected that Mr. Fulghum's list excluded the truly enduring and commonsensical aphorisms of youth—"Don't get mad, get even," for example, but hundreds of thousands of Americans, maybe millions, have clutched Mr. Fulghum and his book to their bosom. "Kindergarten" has been on the best-seller lists for what seems like centuries.

Mr. Fulghum now has issued a followup to "Kindergarten": "It Was On Fire When I Lay Down On It" (Villard, 218 pages, $17.95). It too is a best seller, although in every particular indistinguishable from its predecessor. And for the curious, the dust-jacket bio tells us all we really need to know about Robert Fulghum. He has been a cowboy and a folk singer and Unitarian minister. His business card reads, simply, "Fulghum." He lives on a houseboat. "He is," we learn, "still working on what he wants to be when he grows up."

If this isn't enough to make your flesh leave your bones, there is the book itself, with its warmhearted pitch. Upon examination, Mr. Fulghum's prose style appears to owe much to the late A.A. Milne, particularly Milne's mature "Pooh Corner" period. Like Milne, he is a master of the sentence fragment and the single-sentence paragraph. And as with Milne, these truncated stylistic forms are perfectly suited to what he has to say, which is an agglutination of Lao-tse, Whitman, Harry Emerson Fosdick, Thoreau, Friedrich Schleiermacher and Abigail Van Buren.

"I am in tune with the universe," he writes. "It feels like home." And: "I would live in a treehouse if I could. And: "The purpose of hugging has changed . . . a shift from Look At Me to I Am Seeing You." And (no surprise here): "My son is a mother." And: "What I do is to be the most Fulghum I can be. . . . poet, counselor, neighbor, dreamer, wisher, laugher, traveler, pilgrim, and on and on and on."

And on and on and on is right. What Mr. Fulghum's stream of consciousness lacks in depth it makes up in width and length; there seems to be no end to his gift for rumination. This means that he will continue to scribble, and to publish, and to sell, unless something is done. It is, therefore, more profitable (although not in the sense that Mr. Fulghum's philosophizing will continue to be) to resist the ostensibly timeless questions that Mr. Fulghum pretends to contemplate and to consider instead why his bogus gravitas should resonate—as he might put it—so mightily with the nation at large.

I would guess that at the center of Mr. Fulghum's appeal is an exercise in self-congratulation—and a massive one at that, on the order of, say, the construction of Versailles. But there's a twist: The self-congratulation is catching. In his little essays Mr. Fulghum signals not only his own singularity but his reader's as well. "Yes," he seems to say, "I really am a quite remarkable man; but what does that say about you, who had the taste and sensibility to buy my book and write 'How True!' in the margins?"

Mass, indiscriminate flattery always has been a means of acquiring certain kinds of popularity. Mr. Fulghum milks the technique until the udders are chafed and aching. One of his central, and more familiar, tenets is that children, despite their terrible hygiene and inability to spell, are somehow superior in wisdom and spirituality to those of us who can drive, open bank accounts, and procreate. And since we all were children once, wisdom is equally accessible to all, by a simple process of regression—by developing, for example, a chin-wagging fondness for Mr. Fulghum's Pooh-like prose.

Now, if there is anything to learn from America's "education crisis," it is that there is no more deleterious notion than that children possess a special wisdom: It's deleterious for teachers, for adults, and for those of us who are forced to ride public transportation with their children. Obviously Mr. Fulghum must be stopped. But how? The First Amendment does constrain us, alas. But not all concerted action is therefore ineffectual. Nothing will so discourage gurus of Mr. Fulghum's ilk as simply to ignore them. For the sake of our children, then, for the sake, indeed, of our country: Give Mr. Fulghum an early retirement. He already has a houseboat, after all, and doesn't need your money. Don't buy this book.

Mr. Ferguson is an editorial writer for Scripps Howard News Service in Washington, D.C.

11-3-89
Hi Kids.
Thought you might like to read this —
Wow.
J+L —

Gale Research Inc.

Penobscot Bldg. • Detroit, Michigan 48226 • (313) 961-2242

February 15, 1990

Mr. Ivan Doig
17021 10th Ave. N.W.
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Mr. Doig:

This brief note is to tell you that I will be leaving the Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series and Gale on February 16. My friend and colleague Joyce Nakamura, who presently edits the Something about the Author Autobiography Series, which publishes comparable autobiographical essays by authors and illustrators of young adult and children's books, will become the editor of this series as well. Future letters should be directed to her. I am grateful, though, for the opportunity to begin this correspondence.

With all best wishes,

Mark Zadrozny

Contemporary Authors

Autobiography Series

October 13, 1989

Mr. Ivan Doig
17021 10th Ave. N.W.
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Mr. Doig:

Thank you very much for your card of October 5. I am happy to hear that you are considering writing an essay for our project, even if it will be some time before that is possible. I appreciate you taking time out from a novel to give us the news.

Good luck as you complete its writing. I'll be sure to write again come spring to find out if the time might then be right.

With all best wishes,

Mark Zadrozny

Mark Zadrozny

Gale Research Inc.
Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series
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June 29, 1989

Mr. Ivan Doig
17021 Tenth Avenue N.W.
Seattle, WA 98177

Dear Mr. Doig:

I am writing to you in the hope that I may interest you in participating in the Contemporary Authors Autobiography Series, a reference project that publishes autobiographical essays of writers from throughout the world.

Each volume in the series contains approximately twenty "miniautobiographies" of prominent writers. We are asking for essays of about 10,000 words, but we are prepared to be flexible about length. Authors are supplying personal photographs to accompany their autobiographies, which adds considerably to the interest of the series.

This series is being published by Gale Research Inc., a major reference publisher whose titles include Contemporary Authors, Contemporary Literary Criticism, and the Dictionary of Literary Biography. We are marketing this series to libraries and are asking for nonexclusive rights to each autobiography, under which arrangement the author retains the right to use the essay at any time and in any form. We will be paying $1000 for each autobiography. In addition, we furnish each author with five complimentary copies of the volume in which his or her essay appears and 25 offprints of the essay.

To give you an idea of the flavor of the series, I am enclosing, with his permission, Vance Bourjaily's autobiographical essay. I think it is a splendid essay, blending personal reminiscence with reflections on his individual works in a way that provides both new insights for the researcher or student and lively reading for those simply interested in learning more about a favorite author. However, other writers have taken an entirely different approach. If you would like to review the wide variety of essays in a complete volume, I will be happy to send you a complimentary copy of the book.

We think this is an exciting series and we hope that you will participate in it. Launched in 1984, the Autobiography Series is now flourishing, with over 200 writers already taking part. I will be happy to supply you with further details about this project and to answer any questions you may have. I look forward to hearing from you.

With best regards,

Mark Zadrozny

Mark Zadrozny
Editor

5 Oct. '89

Dear Mr. Zadrozny--

The inordinate length of time it's taken me to respond to your letter about your autobiographical series is a kind of answer in itself, I'm afraid. This final stretch of work on my next novel simply hasn't left me any time for other projects. If you'd like to nudge me again, say, next spring, I could take a look at the possibility then.

regards,

Vance Bourjaily

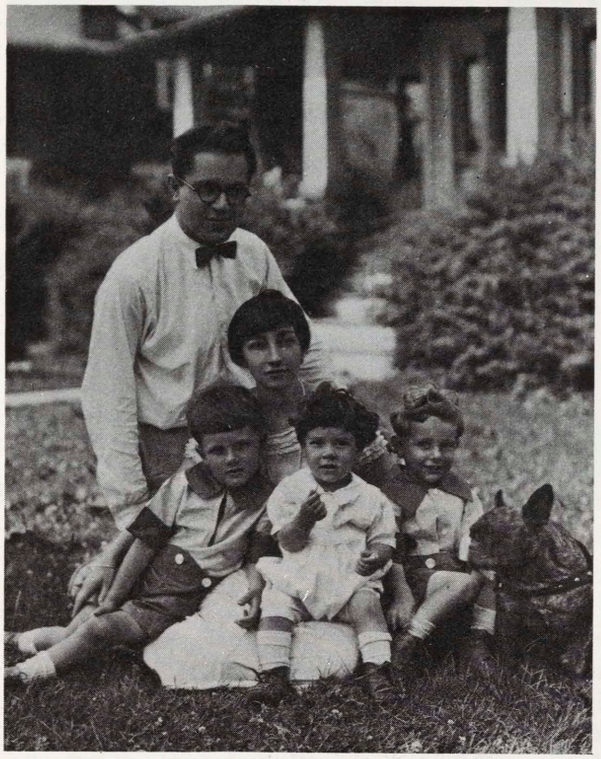
1922–

There was a girl called Betty. My two brothers and I knew her for a week or so, I'd guess, when we were four, five, and six. That would have been the summer of 1927, in England, and I was the five year old. Betty's family kept a bed-and-breakfast place for tourists.

Under her bathing suit, Betty had something she wanted to show us, one afternoon as we played in the shed in her backyard. It looked to me like the absence of something, but was obscurely exciting anyway, and I have been convinced of the breathtaking raciness of British women ever since.

My image is of a slightly grubby right hand, tugging upwards at the inner leg of a red-knit bathing suit to reveal the unexpected tuck in the flesh, and that this released a surge of yelling, small-boy energy. We went tearing around Betty's backyard, leaping the posts and wickets of a croquet set as if it were a giant obstacle course. My older brother flipped over a wicket, landed hard and cut his knee very deeply on a sharp stone. There was plenty of blood. He was taken to a doctor, who stitched up the cut and gave him a word to bring back to us: "I cut my knee so deep it bruised the cartilage."

Sex and violence and a new word.



Monte and Barbara Bourjaily with their three sons, Monte, Jr., Paul, and Vance, circa 1925, probably in West Haven, Connecticut.

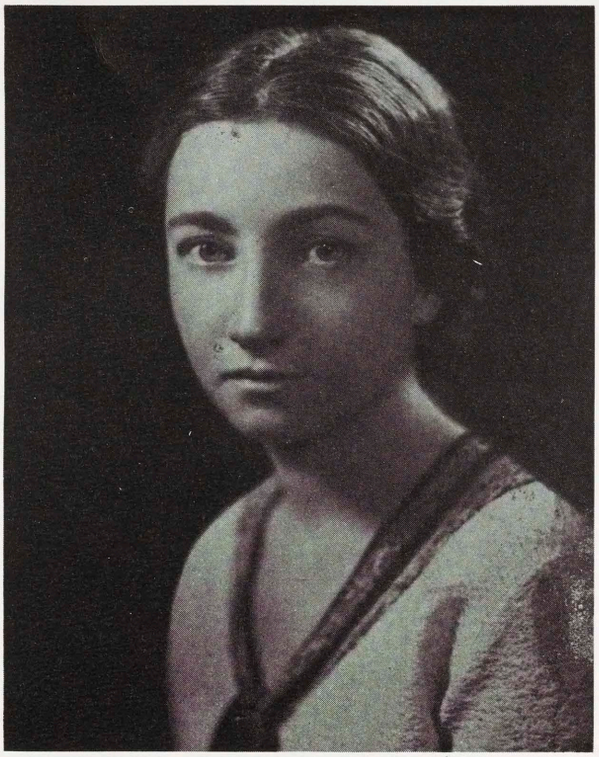
We were in Europe because our mother was leaving our father for the first of several times. They had both been reporters on the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* when they married, and we were all three born in Cleveland. Our father was on the City Hall beat, and our mother was the sob sister. Her job was to write human interest stories, which were what your daily newspaper brought you in the days before soap opera.

When three boy babies arrived, in consecutive years, our mother quit the paper and pushed her talent harder. She wrote newspaper serials. She wrote a cookbook, for mothers of very young children, and a book of fairy tales, all before the summer when she left our father and took us, on a Spanish freighter, to live abroad. Her name was Barbara Webb.

She meant to stay indefinitely in France. She had started from an Ohio farm, where her mother had some claim of descent from American gentry and read a book a day; there were two bright brothers and a disappearing, nongentry scallywag of a father. During the First World War, young Miss Webb had finished enough high school to get a teaching certificate, and taught grade school in Florida, but that was marking time, as women do in days of war. Came Armistice, the newspaper job, and the men home from France—Prohibition, the flu epidemic—I cannot read Katherine Anne Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* without hearing Miranda's lines as my mother's. Mother, too, loved horses and knew loss.

Our father had been in the Air Force, in France, but I don't think he ever flew in combat. He'd got himself on General Pershing's staff as a second lieutenant, *aide-de-camp*. A photograph in uniform shows him dark and handsome, if not especially tall.

In her photographs from the 1920s, when she was in her twenties, Mother looks like a soft-eyed flapper. She knew about the literary life, wanted it for her-



Price Studios

Barbara Webb Bourjaily, mid-1920s



Monte Ferris Bourjaily, Sr.

self, had heard about the expatriate writers and decided to become one. She'd have made it, I feel sure, if it hadn't been for three little kids and not having enough money to hire help. I may have been told—I'm not sure of this—that our father, wanting his family back, or perhaps encountering reverses, stopped sending a small, promised remittance.

From the Spanish freighter, I have two recollections and a strange blank. When Mother filled in the blank, years later, it was hard to believe that I couldn't recall something so weird. Traveling with us was a mad young thing—call her Ruth—another flapper, a friend of Mother's, and much madder than anyone supposed. One day apparently Ruth took to fondling me in the stateroom, grew hysterically guilty when she got done, and commenced to bundle me out the porthole. Mother interrupted this attempt to silence the witness before Ruth could quite figure out how to manage the shoulders.

Halfway across the Atlantic the crew slaughtered a steer, using the loading boom to hang and draw it, so that there'd be fresh meat for the rest of the voyage. I remember them hosing the blood off the deck. Monte, Jr., Paul, and I were fascinated. My final memory is that Mother, who had strong opinions about nutrition, believed that Spanish bottled water might be impure; she also believed that she must keep our liquids up. Consequently, she kept a small store of hard candy, and used it to bribe us to finish our wine at lunch and supper. I never let on that I liked the wine better than the candy. Sex and violence and a taste for booze.

Once I got a letter from a man who'd known my father in high school. He referred to Dad as "Mansur," the Lebanese first name which was later changed to Monte. Having got back this far, I'd like to go back farther and write about my Lebanese grandmother, but I've already done it, in a story called "The Fractional Man." It was published once in *The New Yorker,* if anyone should care to look it up, and published again as a chapter in an autobiographical novel, called *Confessions of a Spent Youth.* Like my mother, in spite of her origins in an Arabic-speaking country, my grandmother was an American go-getter, a self-starter, a doer, a scrapper. Both were women who made things happen in the lives of their sons.

The letter from Dad's high school friend said that "Mansur had an infectious laugh," which is, when you stop to think about it, a couple of degrees better than a winning smile. He had a nice enough tenor voice to have sung light opera professionally (if locally, in Syracuse, New York), before going off to France with the



Terkman Bourjaily

A.E.F. His powers of persuasion were formidable. This made him an excellent reporter and editor, and later maybe the best salesman of newspaper features there ever was. He was to become, in consequence and quite briefly, from his immigrant childhood, an American rich man.

He did not wander. He followed his star, which took him East. It took him, of course, to New York. In 1930 he commuted from Douglaston, Long Island, quite close to where Fitzgerald placed Nick and Gatsby. There was a lot of Gatsby in Dad.

Across the street from us in Douglaston lived a bootlegger, whose redheaded son was a loud kid named Buster. People were standoffish towards Buster's family, a little scared of them, I suppose, but I knew they were sound people even if I wasn't supposed to play with Buster: on the Fourth of July his folks shot off more fireworks in their yard than all the other families on the block put together—skyrockets, salutes, roman candles, fountains, and pinwheels—going on and on gloriously into the night, past the window of the bedroom in which I was supposed to be asleep; but I was wide-awake, and thrilled that we were all Americans.

I'm sorry, Buster, that we couldn't play. I believe you were a couple of years older than we, in any case—and brothers as close in age as we three were don't need a lot of other kids to play with. Or fight with. That's not a joke; we all three have scars from sibling injuries, deep enough to bruise the cartilage.

The summer I was six, almost seven, Hoover was running against Al Smith for president. I heard a good deal of talk about this on a Virginia estate, where we were paying guests. There was horseback riding. I was thrown by a horse called Traveller, whose sire was sired by Robert E. Lee's horse, Traveller. I thinned sweet corn in the vegetable garden and was paid ten cents an hour, my first earnings. Grateful for the employment, I agreed with our hosts that Al Smith should not be allowed to pamper the poor or put the Pope in the White House. This Pope seemed to be the leader of the Irish and the Italians in the same scary business as Buster's father. Never mind the fireworks. The country was in danger.

But the real reason for mentioning that summer in this soliloquy is that I wrote a poem. It was, I imagine, the first thing I ever wrote, and undertaken because Mother had started reading aloud to us from an anthology for children called *This Singing World,* by Louis and Jean Starr Untermeyer. I'm afraid I remember my poem perfectly:

The Dance of the Fireflies

The fireflies one autumn night
Went dancing with their little lights,
Under the stars they danced all night
Till they and the beetles began to fight.
They fought from twelve to half-past-one
And the result was that the fireflies won.

Twelve to half-past-one. Not much sex there, but a good hour-and-a-half of violence, and the birth of an author's vanity.

Roosevelt became president when I was ten. He was still president when I turned twenty-three. His first election has much to do with why my father's young family became an affluent one.

Depression years are good for the newspaper business—a lot of desperation advertising, desperation job-hunting, and political talk as a serious national pastime. The papers wanted what Dad had to sell. He took over United Features Syndicate, and signed on four European big shots as rotating columnists (Mussolini was one of them). As people came and went in the New Deal they too, along with Heywood Broun, Westbrook Pegler, and others, became my father's columnists: there were General Hugh Johnson, Mr. Harold

Ickes, and finally Mrs. Roosevelt herself, with whom Dad developed her column, "My Day." Probably even more satisfying for my brothers and me were the comic strips he edited and sold—*L'il Abner, Tarzan, Fritzi Ritz,* and many others.

We no longer lived across the street from a bootlegger, but in quite a classy neighborhood in Greenwich, Connecticut, went to a classy progressive day school, and spent summers in the mountains of Virginia which wasn't classy at all. It was L'il Abner country, but we had our own horses.

In my fourth and fifth grade years, rather than trying to consolidate my position as the fireflies' laureate, I studied with my Uncle Bob, an admirer of Ty Cobb's, to hit for placement, not for power. I was small (and still am—five-foot-seven, 150 pounds); I played shortstop for the fourth grade team, hit singles, stole bases, and hollered a lot. I had a big voice, was extroverted and mischievous. Miss Finch, who coached acting and directed plays at school, decided I was a natural for Puck, in an outdoor production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* That Christmas I asked for and got a make-up kit—if you happen to remember a swarthy man with a black mustache, in an oversized hat, four feet tall, with unusually heavy eyebrows and blue circles under his eyes, stalking the streets of Greenwich, Connecticut, on Christmas Day, 1933, that was me.

I took acting lessons from Miss Finch, and in the spring she rewarded me by choosing Maeterlink's *The Blue Bird* as the school play, casting me as Tyltyl and a fifth grade enchantress whose name I wish I could remember as Mytyl. A day or two before we were to open, Mytyl got the mumps. Play cancelled, acting career ended; I decided to become a playwright. I stuck with that intention for as long as Roosevelt continued president, though the end of his era has only a coincidental relationship with my tawdry reason for switching from play to novel-writing. See below for this, rather soon.

I read plays a lot, when I was eleven and twelve, but I think I liked novels better. I liked *Penrod, Skippy, Tom Sawyer, Tom Brown's School Days,* the Lawrenceville stories of Owen Johnson, and his *Stover at Yale,* and the adventures of a group of schoolboys created by a writer named Ralph Henry Barbour, which I followed in bound copies of *St. Nicholas Magazine,* already fifty years old. I also liked Sherlock Holmes, Jeeves, *Arrowsmith* by Sinclair Lewis, and *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck. Mother still read aloud to us; she read Dickens and Conrad. She read awfully well, and through the next decade established a solid, minor reputation as a contributor of light novels to women's magazines, and a lecturer on Emily Dickinson.

Mother left Dad for the final time in 1934, and each remarried in the next year or so. My stepparents, Elizabeth Young and Schuyler Larkin, were both vivid, even glamorous, people, but I'd better not take space now to write of how they affected me, except to say that it was all quite positive.

In the fall of 1934, my brothers and I were put into a boarding school, run along military lines by an ex-West Pointer; I loathed it, and have so recorded in *Confessions.* After it came a public school in Virginia, a day school in New Jersey, and then Solebury, an excellent small prep school in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, at which I lasted three years before getting expelled. It was at that time that my father was losing his small fortune, but again I shan't try to detail it here.

Fortunately, the masters at Solebury put some work into my case before I forced them to give up on me. I was, along with being a breaker of rules against smoking, reader after lights out, sneaker off-bounds and defiant graffiti-writer, a natural-born intellectual sloth. Remarkably enough, the good masters got some Latin and French into me, a little history and less math, before I went on my way to a public high school for inadvertent intellectual sloths (the teachers at the school were pretty good, but what could they do?). This was Handley High, in Winchester, Virginia, near which my mother and stepfather had a farm with a few riding horses and a lot of dairy cattle. I delivered milk to forty or fifty homes on the way to school, washed and sterilized the empty bottles I'd collected when I got back in the afternoon, picked apples with the migrant laborers in local commercial orchards for cash, and nevertheless put on airs. I was from New York, and prep school, and had read Fitzgerald.

For much of what was emotionally important during the next few years, I want again to refer you to *Confessions of a Spent Youth,* if you're at all curious. I must say I would be, in your place. It is only the confessional-emotional element in autobiography which makes it any fun to read. But from here on, increasingly, fun or not, I've charged myself with trying to write an account of how I grew up as a writer, of the trials and errors of the profession as I've followed it or, houndlike, it has followed me—no, this is false deprecation. I love writing, and it is to me a high art, not a mere profession. Why am I embarrassed to say so? Perhaps because back then in high school, I thought it neither art nor profession, but only compensation and inadequate. No winner of debates, public speaking, and state short story contests could bring that glow to the voice or gleam to the eye of a girl which greeted young males who scored on end runs against Martinsburg, or broke eleven seconds in the 100-yard dash—

nor did I think, nor do I think, the girls mistaken.

Say this for me: I tried for a romantic, sexually-appealing presence. In addition to calling myself writer, even poet with its suggestion of a wastrel life and youthful death, I said that I was a union guy, an anti-Fascist, and meant, after graduation, to lie about my age so as to be able to enlist in the International Brigade and fight in Spain. Different airs. I was from New York, and a hitchhiker, and had read Steinbeck.

The Spanish war didn't wait for me to join up, and I don't mean seriously to suggest that I might have. I did, though, hitchhike north again, late in the fall of 1940, and went to work for Erwin, Wasey, an advertising agency. It was a job which Dad, out of work, out of money, and out of his second marriage, had applied for. When they laughed with him, infectiously, I hope, at how overqualified he was to become a copywriting trainee, he suggested me. I was just seventeen, and perhaps there is some doggerel precocity to boast of here. I would rather have my contributions to the Kreml Hair-tonic and Barbasol Shaving Cream campaigns inspected than I would the book I wrote on graduation from high school. It was a teenage analysis of life and of the way I meant to live it, called *Not to Confound My Elders;* if you don't care for the title you ought to see the rest of it. And if I've put it in the Bowdoin Library, along with my other documents, it's for clinical use only; anyway, I forgot to save the tear sheets from the agency.

Meanwhile, I was spotted for an intellectual sloth by the scholarship people at Harvard. I don't know how the admissions office had failed to recognise me. Dad had a decent job again, as editor of the Bangor, Maine, *Daily News,* and reminded me that there was a pretty good college up in Maine called Bowdoin.

I never told Dad, but I'd had a camp counselor, years before, named Larry, who went to Bowdoin, and Larry'd been just the kind of guy who could have scored that touchdown against Martinsburg, before going on to room with Dink Stover at Yale. My precocious ad-man veneer was thin as copypaper, after all. I became a freshman at Bowdoin, and a pledge of Delta Kappa Epsilon, in the fall of 1940.

At college, I resumed trying to write plays with all the desperation of one who needs a good excuse for flunking German. There was little during my freshman and sophomore years in which I can take pride—see again, if you like degradation, *Confessions of a Spent Youth.* Dean Nixon, at Bowdoin, didn't care at all for degradation, but he didn't think I should drop out of college at nineteen to join the American Field Service, either. I treated the dean's advice in my usual way, and hence celebrated my twenty-first birthday, not quite two years later, encamped in Tripoli, in my second year as a volunteer ambulance driver attached to the British Eighth Army. We were waiting for a boat ride to the beach at Salerno, where the swimming was still quite noisy.

A month or two later, as seasoned veterans of the Italian campaign (oregano, garlic, olive oil, and raw, red wine) we were bivouacked in an apple orchard in Capua, trying to figure out whose raw, red twenty-first birthday to celebrate this time. You are about to see the acorn drop from which, after the cows of war have mouthed it and the squirrels of peace unearthed it, a novel will sprout.

We'd met some nurses in Naples, actual young American females. Hadn't seen any for about two years, in Lebanon, Egypt, or the Western Desert. They were officers and gentlewomen, new to the environment of a theater of war and excited to be there. The one who fit best by my side was short, blonde, and cute about wanting to see the front. She imagined it as being like the trenches of World War I, about which her Dad sometimes cussed when he was drunk enough to sing "That's the wrong way / To tickle Mary." My stepfather knew that one; something in common.

It was no problem for me to take this tourist riding up along the car track north, between the mine tapes, in my off-duty ambulance.

"But we won't see trenches," I told her. "Strong points. Bunkers. Mustering places for river crossings. Skirmishes. Patrols. It's a seesaw." We were passing an artillery position. Some British guys were shooting 25-pounders in a desultory way, over to the right. I stopped. I think they were firing what was called counter-battery. It was hot, and the men, sixty yards away, looked relaxed. An incoming round went off somewhere, and I asked: "Close enough?"

My blonde friend gasped and squealed and mouéd and nodded and squeezed my arm. She had something to tell her Dad now.

I said: "Want to go talk to the gunners?"

"Okay."

I got out, opened the door for her, and we strolled over. The gun crew was delighted to see her. They gave us hot tea out of a thermos, with lots of sugar and condensed milk in it. They let her pull the lanyard on the gun that shot back a round at the people who'd just fired one in our direction. Then she and I ran laughing back to the ambulance, drove laughing back to Capua where the party was starting. I laughed some more and drank too much. So did the others, except for one sober friend who was on call, and who eventually drove the young lieutenant ladies back to their field hospital in Naples.

Next morning I woke up in my slit trench, sweaty, stiff, sun glaring at me, the greatest and most vicious sinner in history, though I was far too miserable to be able to remember why. Then I remembered. Then I was appalled. Across the cavern walls of my skull, bitter images flickered of my blonde friend, dead: shell-fire, strafing, a deadly box mine. I may even have seen her impaled on a German bayonet. In each scene I was myself woefully unharmed and totally responsible. The resonance of this was migrainous. It got me out of the slit trench and over to the portable typewriter that had stayed unused, under the seat of the ambulance, ever since Salerno. Fiction, I was about to learn, may be the art of telling what never happened, or of telling what damn-well-did, but very often it comes out of the masochistic mysteries of might-have-been.

In the short story I wrote that morning, the self-indulgent, criminally irresponsible young heel was called Skinner, the nurse's name was Johnny, and I chose for her the least frightful of the deaths I'd been fantasizing. I made her the victim of a random strafing, and a single slug in the middle of the forehead; eight pages of this ghastly stuff, and I was ready for breakfast, guilt all gone, pretty good appetite—morning, Andy, how hangs your curly head? Try writing a story: beats hell out of aspirin.

I went back to the States from Italy in 1944, got drafted, took infantry training, and was sent to the Pacific. In basic training I'd written a book of poems, imitated from Housman and Eliot; in the Pacific, where the assignment of my bumbling infantry division was defense of the Hawaiian Islands, thousands of miles away from action, I wrote yet another play. The sources for the imitation here were a little more diffuse: Auden and Isherwood, some Maxwell Anderson (as rendered by Burgess Meredith in *High Tor*), Fitzgerald, Hemingway, Molnar's *Lilliom,* and, I guess I'll claim, myself (as rendered, without his knowledge, by John Garfield, in any number of movies).

Like so many senators and representatives, servicemen were allowed to frank their mail. I had my poetry-drama, one-two punch delivered postage-free to my mother, who socked her agent with it while I was on a troopship, moving towards Japan. Because of the atomic bomb, we were on our way to occupy what we'd been training to invade.

And now: a moment of silence in memory of the Wartime Excess Profits Tax. This beautiful tax was 90 percent on all profits, during the war years, in excess of a firm's average earnings during the Depression. The war years had been a time of inflation, shortages of most consumer goods, no new cars, and little gasoline. Book publishing boomed along with the cannons. So: there were all these excess profits, and a hard dollar-choice to make—either let the government take ninety cents and keep a dime, or, distasteful as the publishers found it, give the ten-cent dollar to some stupid new writer. The stupid new writers had not, you see, been coming along in their regular, doltish way for the past four or five years—too busy getting seasoned (sake, sea-weed, soy sauce, and Sapporo were my marinade, while the Great Tax heated up the wok).

Meanwhile, on publisher's row, as the gentlemen panicked and started competing for the dolts (could they all have been careless enough to get themselves killed?), the wisdom went: "If he can spell his name the same way twice, give him an advance. Waiter, I said no olive, please. Just a twist."

I guess they'd forgotten that Shakespeare seldom spelled his name the same way twice.

Diarmuid Russell, the agent, put my play and poems into the hands of Maxwell Perkins, at Scribner's. Perkins, the celebrated editor of Hemingway, Fitzgerald, and Wolfe, was an agreeable man. He told the waiter it was all right about the olive. Then he told Diarmuid to send off a cable, if he liked, offering me an advance of $750 if I'd agree to cut out the poetry-and-drama nonsense and try to write a novel. I don't know if Mr. Perkins had to ask Charles Scribner to okay this $75 (ten cents to the dollar as noted) venture or not. I do know that when the cable arrived, Poet and Playwright were sent off hand-in-hand into the sunset and there was one, lean, tough, smallish, blue-eyed, thin-haired, grinning Pfc. of a novelist, waving them goodbye.

That was in the city of Osaka, in Japan, a few days before Christmas, 1945, where the dead men in the streets were beggars, and not soldiers, after all.

I rummaged my duffel and found, for a wonder, that I still had the story of Johnny the Nurse and Skinner the Heel.

Within the next twenty months I was discharged, bought a weekly newspaper, drafted the novel, was engaged, revised the novel, got married, was published, graduated, and bankrupt. The paper was for my mother who loved the western Virginia mountains in which it circulated. The novel-drafting went on in those same hills, in an isolated cabin.

I wrote fluently, thoughtlessly, starting at a fraternity party as the war began, trying to learn by writing about him what made my Skinner into a romantic nihilist, accountable for destroying love, friendships, and finally, carelessly, another person's life.

I had models, of course, but not very consciously. I worked out of the tonalities, the sense of form, of how

to move a narrative and write a scene, which were in the postwar air, though I couldn't have used those analytic terms. Dolt and sloth I might be, but intuition and a decent ear saw me through, and, ah, to be such a fluent dolt and sloth again. If my models were chiefly Hemingway and Fitzgerald, as they were, there was also a kind of wisecracking dialogue and radical vision that carried over from the theatre of the thirties, and the novels of Nathaniel West. Might have been a little *Stover at Yale* in there, too, if you can imagine Dink getting into anything premarital, partying hard, trying hashish, feeling disaffected, and shrugging off any impulse to resist the way history was beating up on youth.

"Listen," Skinner said. "We were war-born."

Turned in that draft and met, in Washington, where my father now had a house, a beautiful young horsewoman named Tina Yensen. She was working for the State Department, next assignment Moscow, for she'd studied Russian. She came from a family dispossessed by the Depression, had put herself partway through college by working for the *San Francisco News,* and was now a woman of wealth since she earned $45 a week, to my GI-Bill-self-employment $100 a month. I intend no irony when I say she gave up things when she agreed to marry me.

About the revision of my book, let me credit Mr. Perkins. I was pretty pleased with my draft. Especially, I liked the artistic way things were left unresolved. What Mr. Perkins liked, he said, was the idea of publishing the novel if I wouldn't mind finishing it up, and all-of-a-sudden I didn't mind at all. If you happen to have read that book, *The End of My Life,* try thinking of how you'd like it if the last chapter were omitted. The first chapter is there at Maxwell Perkins's suggestion, too. I have been willing to concede since that thick or thin, a slice of life is still baloney if there's no end and no beginning.

Tina and I were married the day after Christmas, 1946, and still are. In January 1947 I took her back to Bowdoin, a men's college then, where she got a job in the Art Department. There were other couples, each consisting of a seasoned veteran and his pretty new bride (gin, hamburger, quahogs, and the Sunday *New York Times,* when we could get to the end of the week and still have a quarter left). We were poor as orphans, hopeful as young royalty. We made friends, love, and—by my avoiding difficult studies—straight A's.

All my life I had subscribed to the following proposition, of which I now persuaded my wife: when my book is published, the world will be ours. Publication day was a few weeks before August graduation, but I couldn't tell you the date. Maybe I could if the



Harry Shulman

Bourjaily and Bettina Yensen on their wedding day, December 26, 1946, in Brunswick, Maine.

expected telegram or call had come from Scribner's. It didn't. We did have quite a fine lobster party in our cottage on the New Meadows River. Bill Weaver, who is now the vastly honored translator from Italian, was there, and so was Hilda Osterhout, who had just won the Dodd-Mead college novel contest. There was a nice brief review of my book in *The New Yorker.* There was none at all in *The New York Times,* in spite of all the quarters we'd spent Sunday mornings to keep it in business. *Time* magazine phoned a young lady in the Scribner's publicity department to ask for a photograph of me, and was told, "Oh, that's not the book we're pushing this week."

In Virginia, mother was a superb weekly newspaper editor. Her political editorials drove the rascals out. Unfortunately, the rascals included the Ford dealer and other merchants, who stopped advertising. She sold the linotype one week to meet her payroll, and called for help.

Tina and I went down after graduation to try to salvage things. We had to have the newspaper's body-type set by a free-lancer, and teach ourselves to hand-

set ads and headlines, do makeready, and operate the old, flatbed press. Fridays we spent trying to scrub ink off one another. Other days, we phoned around trying to sell the paper. The buyer who turned up, just before the sheriff, had no distaste for rascals.

Tina's parents, who hadn't yet met me, lived in California. We got a ride out there to visit them, sharing gas and driving with a schoolteacher named Margaret who said that prosperity was just across the Rockies. We went on to a rooming house and occasional temporary jobs in San Francisco. We ate a good deal of something called Multi-Purpose Food which we bought at an army surplus store. It had been developed for air-dropping into starvation regions of conquered countries. It was fraud on our part. We were far from conquered. And Harry Truman beat Tom Dewey for the presidency.

After a time I got back into the family business. Dad was editing a paper again, Mother wrote press releases for the Democrats, my older brother became a reporter for the *Army Times,* and my younger one, who was an MD and a physiologist, was publishing research papers in the medical journals. I went to work for the *San Francisco Chronicle.* Evenings and weekends, when parties and travel assignments didn't interfere, I finished a second novel, the title of which was either *The Sun Follower* or *The Hero of Friday Afternoon.* I honestly can't recall which I settled on. It doesn't matter. I'd had a good enough first draft, and dissipated the damn thing, pressing too hard, unable to keep up with the changes in attitude and understanding that were going on in myself. When you're in your twenties, you'd better write fast.

Max Perkins had died. My new editor, Burroughs Mitchell, a nice man, couldn't seem to help me. Scribner's rejected the book, and rightly so. The only consoling thing that happened while we lived in California was that my army-written play, *Time Is a Dancer,* was produced at the Pasadena Playhouse. The remains of both novel and play rest peacefully at Bowdoin.

After a year I quit the *Chronicle.* Tina and I agreed that, if the world was to be ours, I'd better write another book. Now. Seeking isolation, I took my portable off to a Mexican village called Ajijic. Tina went to New York—and back into the family business herself, as a staff writer for *Woman's Day.*

In Mexico, instead of behaving myself, I wrote another play, and caught a fine case of infectious hepatitis. I took a long, delirious train ride to New York, where Tina put me straight into St. Luke's Hospital. I was pretty sick. Tina and Tolstoy pulled me through. Reading *War and Peace,* during the weeks of bedrest and light diet, restored my faith in the novel; not long afterwards, a piece of wonderful luck restored my faith in myself.

My luck was the arrival of John W. Aldridge, as the first serious critic to deal with the young, postwar writers—Mailer, Bellow, Capote, Burns, Shaw, Miller. And, of all people, Bourjaily. *The End of My Life* was out of print already; Tina had bought up the remainders from Scribner's, and we used them, in their two packing cases, as a coffee table in our Greenwich Village apartment. When Jack Aldridge's *After the Lost Generation* came out, in 1951, we had to buy a real coffee table. Here is what Jack said about my novel: "No book since *This Side of Paradise* has caught so well the flavor of youth in wartime, and no book since *A Farewell to Arms* has contained so complete a record of the loss of that youth in war."

In consequence, we began to meet most of the other writers with whom Jack had dealt, as well as others, already arrived, and newer ones arriving—Styron, Jones, Calisher, McCullers, Auchincloss, Plimpton, Wouk, Hersey, Ellison, and John W. Aldridge himself. He and I became friends, and talked, as young men do, of magazines. I went to Pocket Books with a proposal for one he and I would coedit, to be called *discovery.*

It would appear in Pocket Books format, twice a year, be sold on newstands, and present, without worrying about taboo words and subject matter, or consulting audience taste, the best short fiction, poetry, and essays we could find. Doc Lewis and Herb Alexander at Pocket Books listened with surprising interest and, even more surprisingly, agreed to let us try. We wanted to find, and did find, unpublished people, but we relied on writers like those I've mentioned in the last couple of paragraphs, whose names we needed for attention, and whose work for substance. Their response was generous. In the first issue we had, among other things, Mailer's "The Dead Gook" and Styron's "Long March"; after that Jack stepped aside and I was sole editor for the next five *discoveries.*

It had some impact. People of a certain age, on meeting me, still reminisce about having been our readers, and I'm proud.

Of the other writers we were coming to know in New York, Tina and I were closest to Norman Mailer, with whom we had in common, among other things, a belief in the transcendental necessity of parties. He gave them; so did we. I used to say, and now I shudder at the recollection, that "the proof of a great party is that you wake up the next morning wanting to change your name and start life over again in a new place." Some of the Mailer parties, and some of ours

(but there were other such hosts and hostesses, of course) figure in the literary memoirs of the fifties. The one we gave most often mentioned was at 49 Grove Street, where James Jones met Montgomery Clift and decided he had found the actor to play Prewitt in *From Here to Eternity,* in the movies. We were all in our late twenties then, and damned if some of us didn't carelessly turn thirty.

Now I am sixty. There are nine more books to write about. I'm inclined to skip a lot of personal detail, but here: our daughter Anna was born. We moved to Mexico City. Partly because of that, *discovery* was to be terminated, which saddened me, but I was a novelist, not an editor. *Sauve qui peut.* Now I mean to get technical, because, after the innocence in which my first book was written and the despair which followed the second try, I think I did begin to learn technique.

My second published novel is called *The Hound of Earth.* It is set in San Francisco, was written while we lived in Mexico, but I think of it as my New York book.

New York was our cultural capital and I'd been there three years, and read several thousand manuscripts with enough care to choose a hundred or so for publication. So my taste in new work developed in the city. The friends I talked with lived there. At the same time, and though I was then inclined to scoff at the idea that criticism can affect the writers with whom it deals, I'll admit now that the close attention Jack Aldridge had paid to text made me aware of it. It is the text of *The Hound of Earth,* to which I gave close attention, that seems to me to have New York in its rhythms.

The prose has more drive and more economy than does the language of the first book, I think. The pacing is faster, the shifts more abrupt. I shed some gentility in the tone and gained some urgency. I was trying to develop, whether I knew it or not, a postwar voice; maybe everybody was. Bop was replacing jazz, beat was replacing lost, and if I didn't identify much with either movement outside my field, in writing I wanted to produce a feeling of now, of prose-present rather than prose-past.

If the prose was tighter, I looked to balance that with freer invention; to use both to protest the new smugness of the Eisenhower era; and I needed to teach myself new ways to handle time. The book begins by



Norman and Adele Mailer, during a visit to the Bourjailys' in 1956 in Essex, Connecticut. The picture was taken by Bourjaily at a beach club near Old Lyme, Connecticut.

reporting the arrest of a young physicist who had deserted his assignment to the wartime Manhattan Project when he learned of its result in Hiroshima. Next we pick him up a few weeks before the arrest, two years after the desertion, working in the stockroom of a San Francisco department store during the Christmas season. He's shortened his name from Allerd to Al, and become a migrant. His co-workers find him appealing, but mysteriously educated and thoughtful. Time then switches back and forth, between the toy department and its personalities and flashbacks to Al's adventures on the road. But the toy department is his last stop. He can't stay uninvolved and, at the end of the book, allows himself to become the scapegoat for the sins of others.

Summing up that way, I can see a little creeping existentialism, though it wasn't a word I used at the time. Mailer, who was by then living nearby in Mexico City with his second wife, used the word sometimes, but I don't think he was applying it to me. I do recall exchanging manuscripts with him to read—*The Hound of Earth* for *Barbary Shore*—and that each of us could see what the other ought to do in the way of revision. And that each of us resisted, not without gratitude, and it did nothing to stop the flow of parties and of going to bullfights together. Hank Lopez used to go, too, and Willard Marsh and George Mandel, once or twice.

I shall take pleasure now in omitting the melancholy publication history of *The Hound of Earth,* except to say that in the fading away of Scribner's as a great publishing house are many histories like it. The book was published, printed anyway, in 1955. Some of the reviews were pretty nice.

My next novel, *The Violated,* and the one I think of as having established me, was done by The Dial Press in 1958. We were then living in Essex, Connecticut, a summer town, a sailing town, two hours from New York, where I went to earn support for Anna, Tina, and me by writing television shows. It was the time of live production, sometimes called television's golden age, and often interesting and sometimes exciting. I was also a theater critic for *The Village Voice* just then, and had a second play, *The Quick Years,* performed off-Broadway. More external excitement.

But novelists are withdrawing wretches, emotional hermits who have come to feel that true excitement is internal, and, in that dimension, I was a real novelist by now. The true excitement for me was what was happening in a small, upstairs office, over the Essex movie theater, where I'd begun to write a long, American family novel. At the center of it was a children's secretly-rehearsed production of *Hamlet,* with a fourteen-year-old girl named Sheila as producer, director, and leading player I was writing about her grandparents and the way they raised Sheila's lovely, alcoholic mother and brilliant disoriented uncle; about two others in that middle generation, growing up; about the war again, and how it changed things; and about the strange performance of the play itself, and the consequences it had.

The story was suggested by a real-life kid's *Hamlet,* which I'd heard about but hadn't seen, asked about and not been answered, and had finally now to create in order to experience what such a thing could possibly be like.

In organizing the book, I was finally using the chief lesson, for me, of *War and Peace,* seven years after reading it. One of the many things I didn't know, because I hadn't yet read Henry James, let alone his critics or his prefaces, was that I'd grown up confined by James's single-point-of-view rule, derived by me at secondhand from the great Hemingway-Fitzgerald examples. *War and Peace,* James said, was "a loose, baggy monster"; not to me. To me it was the mountainside from which freedom rang. My book romped, dashed, and scuttled back and forth in points of view from omniscient author's to those of each of five main characters. It covered sixty years and scores of people. It was big, it was ambitious, and lord, it felt good to stretch out and work with all my muscles.

There was a new goal for prose in this one. I wanted to produce, I said, prose like perfect glass, windowpane prose, which would never call attention to itself, or distort the view a reader had of people and action. On a normal day, I work three or four hours; on *The Violated* I worked, joyfully, twelve or fourteen hours sometimes, on into the night when the movie soundtrack would fill the theater building with vibrations.

At The Dial Press, my new publisher, George Joel, and new editor, Jim Silberman, were delighted with my monster. It was a book for which they'd put up a nice advance, on no other understanding or information than that it would be *your next book, whatever it is, whenever it's ready.* And from the odd, outlandish, probably comical state called Iowa, a poet of whom I'd heard, Paul Engle, phoned to ask if I'd be interested in coming out there to teach for a year, in something he directed called The Writers Workshop. Herb Gold, Harvey Swados, and Marguerite Young had been visiting lecturers out there before me. In various issues of *discovery,* I had published all three. Bread on the waters. Mr. Engle needed two people. I recommended Hortense Calisher. I'd published Hortense, too.

Tina and I bought a beautiful Jaguar XK 140, British racing green, put Anna who was five and our Wiemaraner, Moondog, in the back seat, and headed

midwest, with the manuscript ready for revision.

Iowa might be corn and pig country to the rest of the nation but to Moondog it was pheasant and duck country, for Tina and Anna it was starting school, another child on the way, and for me, sincere thanks to the University of Iowa, time without pressure in which to work.

The Violated was published in the summer of 1958, and the reviews were pretty fine. I cherish in particular one by Charles Poore, my first daily notice in *The New York Times,* in which he called me the Dostoevski of the generation that came of age in World War II, and even better, said that I could write funny.

It might have been a good time for the Dostoevski family, with their year-old boy, Philip, making them four now, to stick around New York. But I'd been asked back to Iowa, Anna had started school, and back we went. While my students were teaching me the next lessons, *The Violated* had a modest success in the trade edition, and eventually sold a million copies in a Bantam reprint. Many books, of course, do that well in paper.

Those next lessons were duck-calling, squash, short-story-writing, and poker. I got pretty good at bringing in the ducks, and learned to stay with a deuce and trey in the hole at seven card high-low. Tom Williams was a better shot and could usually beat me at squash; I might hold my own against him Friday nights at the poker table (neither of us was a match for Don Justice, the staff poet), but Tom, who'd already published a novel before coming in as a student, was a clear winner at short fiction. So was Jim Buechler; Jim wrote lovely stories.

Years before, for the first issue of *discovery,* when we lacked nonfiction, I'd written a pseudonymous mock-essay called "Confessions of an American Marijuana Smoker," and signed it U.S.D. Quincy. The author and antihero was called "Quince" in the piece, by his friends—a half-rhyme for Vance. Now I wrote another about the same feckless young man as a college drunk, titled it "Quincy at Yale," and sent it to Diarmuid Russell who sold it to *The New Yorker.* And next I learned that one reason I wasn't a storywriter was because my stories were magnets; they attracted other material, which accumulated into books. The Hamlet performance in *The Violated* started out to be a novella; a story about a crazy, young Indian oil millionaire's plans for the reconquest of America became one of Al's adventures in *The Hound of Earth.* Now I wrote my third Quincy piece, about sexual initiation, called "The Poozle Dreamers," and my fourth novel, *Confessions of a Spent Youth,* was three chapters underway.

In the organization of *Confessions* I was consciously



John Ferrell

Anna Bourjaily, age 11, leading Philip, age about 4, on her pony, Carry Me, circa 1962.

experimental for the first time. I decided to put the book together topically, rather than chronologically. Each chapter, like the first I wrote, is a kind of mock essay. In "The American Marijuana Smoker," the topic was drugs; in the next I now began, "The New England Whore and Other Sporting Reminiscences," there is all the information and example Quincy can offer on the subject of himself as a customer of prostitutes during the war—thirteen whores, he ruminates, in seven countries, on four continents, and each a particular woman. This has something to do with one of the major conclusions in the book, which is that there is an equivalent, for men, to women being forced unwillingly to sell their womanhood—the unwilling soldier has been forced to sell his manhood, hasn't he?

The book, to continue about its form, is governed by a secret rule: each purported essay, at whatever point in Quincy's life the kind of experience it deals with may begin, must continue to a time past the one at which the preceding mock-essay ended.

About the material of *Confessions,* I had written a couple of never-happened books, and a might-have-been book. I wanted to learn to write a damn-well-did book, to use experience directly and without major alteration. This meant that I was quite consciously writing through some of the same stuff I'd used in *The End of My Life,* a dozen years before. Then I had seen the characters and events romantically; now I wanted to take a steadier and less enchanted look at the young men we were and the war we had. To avoid the plainness of realistic prose, since the book was to be realistic, and to give it some texture, I set aside my windowpane

theory and was working at the new pieces, and reworking the older ones, in an idiosyncratic, first-person voice. It was, I think, my own, quite personal voice, or at least as close to it as Quince is to Vance.

The next thing we did was pretty dumb. Tina loaded herself, Anna, Philip, Moondog, the Jaguar XK 140, and a couple of shotguns onto a boat for South America. I flew off ahead of them to do some lecturing down there for the State Department. We joined up in Montevideo. By the time Moondog had learned to point tinamou, and Tina and I to hit them now and then, we began to realize that our savings wouldn't last much longer, and that the demand in South America for foreign free-lance journalists, teachers of writing, drama critics, TV scripters, and migrant stockroom boys was low all over.

In Chile, in a slum apartment on Avenida Brasil, I sat in the cold front room, watching for a chance to pick off a scrawny street pigeon for supper with Anna's beebee gun. There were old ladies around who liked to feed the pigeons, and I never had a bird in range without one of its friends being nearby. Since that was the case, I had to write something. What came out was a long piece for the center of *Confessions,* the one called "The Fractional Man" with Grandmother Bourjaily in its opening. I sent it off to Diarmuid Russell who wrote back scolding me for having underpaid the international airmail postage, and adding that he thought the novella the best thing I'd ever written. He sold it almost immediately to *The New Yorker,* and we had enough money now for Tina to fly away, with the children, to where her parents lived in Lakeport, California. I stayed on with the car and the dog and my new, young friend from Texas, John Pearson, to try to write something which would get me, Moon, and the Jag home. It was, I think, the Quincy piece called "Varieties of Irreligious Experience," which Rust Hills bought for *Esquire.*

Before I left Santiago, John Pearson made a theatrical evening out of *The Violated,* cast with Chileans who were pupils in his English classes. It was hilarious. John is dead now, and I miss him.

Diarmuid Russell is dead, too, and I miss him as well.

There was news in Lakeport. When I rejoined the family, Tina had heard from Paul Engle that he wanted me back at the Workshop. We'd expected to return east to some unimaginable renewal of the free-lance life, unimaginable because television production had moved to Hollywood, and the scriptwriters weren't part-timers any longer. We bought sleeping bags and a tent, and drove into the Northwest, turned east through Idaho and Montana, south through the Dakotas and Nebraska, back to Iowa City. Financially, I guess I have never been a novelist for more than a few giddy weeks at a time; financially, I'm some kind of editor or journalist or scriptwriter or teacher or migrant, and it's teaching which has had the best hours-per-pound ratio to bacon on the table.

Iowa wasn't a way station any longer. It was home.

Confessions of a Spent Youth was published in 1960, and published very well. Richard Baron had arrived at The Dial Press, bringing in fresh money and energy. Richard loved parties as well as anyone, and he and Jim Silberman gave a dandy on publication day, taking over the Village Vanguard for it. I have two pieces of advice for young novelists:

When your publisher says, "Which do you want, a publication party or the cost of one applied to additional advertising?", take the party. It makes everyone feel better.

The other is, never let him change your title, but I was still ten years away from having to learn that one.

The reviews of *Confessions* were mixed. It's a challenging book, I suppose, and some found it abrasive. It did pretty well in the trade edition, and had enough sensational stuff in it to fetch a nice price for reprint, though I can't say that I'd yet had a real commercial success.

By now I was comfortable with the first-person voice I'd worked out for myself, and was using it to write about my continuing passion for hunting. Tom Williams had gone along to teach and to write stories and novels (he won a National Book Award for one, not long ago) in New Hampshire. I had a new, occasional hunting companion now, in Jerry Bumpus, who has since gone along to teach and to write stories and novels in San Diego (and there should be a prize in it for Jerry too, one of these days).

It was he who took me down into southern Illinois, to the goose-hunting grounds at Cairo. It was there that my hunting passion got complicated by an impulse towards self-criticism for the way I was participating in the methods and manners of Americans in the field. At Cairo, where the government feeds and winters much of the continental flock of Canada geese, there are many pit blinds, in which midwestern businessmen, many of them half-drunk, squawk on calls and shoot magnum loads at geese too high to kill but not too high to cripple, all day long. I wrote about this, in a piece called "The Goose Pits," which *The New Yorker* bought. I continued to write exploratory pieces about the field sports, pleasant things as well as unpleasant, placing one in *Esquire,* another in *The New*

Yorker, others in magazines new to me like *True* and *Sports Afield.* I reworked the pieces into a short book, a thoughtful one I hope. Nature is full of natural enmities, crows for owls, cats for mice, bears for salmon. I called my book about men hunting *The Unnatural Enemy.*

It got thoughtful reviews. It went nowhere commercially, though Richard, Jim, and I had had high hopes for it. It gave me some standing among conservationists and has become a rare item. I was forty-one, it was 1963, and this time Richard's party was a dinner with buffalo steaks at the Players Club.

John Kennedy was killed later that fall.

I had an old contract with Dial for a novel about Mexican archaeology, in which I'd been an enthusiastic amateur when we lived down there. In January 1964, we bought a four-wheel-drive station wagon, I put up a little money to finance a new dig, and drove down to join my former teacher, John Paddock, in Oaxaca, where we excavated at a site called Caballito Blanco. And I drove back.

We lost our daughter Anna in an automobile accident, late that spring. I shall not write further about it, except to quote what Diarmuid Russell said when he wrote to us: "All I know is, life is still dangerous."

Redbird Farm, to which we moved, and on which we live, and for which we are still paying off the mortgage, is 500 acres, largely timberland and pastured hills. The big white oak trees and the ponds we built, the trefoil pasture Tina had seeded, and the wild flowers and the wild mushrooms, the game birds and the songbirds, the rabbits and the deer, even the foxes and coyotes, though they sometimes kill our sheep, have healed us insofar anything has—those, and the birth of our daughter Robin in 1965.

The only things I remember writing that year were outdoor columns for *Esquire,* and a proposal to the *Saturday Evening Post* for a feature they ran called "Speaking Out." In it, writers were supposed to take controversial positions. I offered to write a piece called "Don't Look Now, But We Just Lost World War III." They declined. I was disturbed about Vietnam. I was a little early for that, but there were many others, especially among the poets, who took the position long before I did.

Some time in 1966, Richard Baron had an idea for a book. Jim Silberman had left Dial for Random House, and Ed Doctorow was now Richard's chief editor. They proposed that each of several writers (Ed was to be among them, I think, and James Baldwin) contribute a piece of fiction dealing with the Kennedy assassination. The idea got me back to my typewriter. I drafted a story called "The Man Who Knew Kennedy." Richard's anthology never got completed, but my story, once again, grew into a novel. It tries to deal with what happened to the country when Kennedy was killed. I wrote it in the first person, not in the Quince-Vance voice but in that of a narrator called Barney James, whose friend Dave had known John Kennedy slightly. It is an emotional, perhaps even a sentimental book, in what I hope is an acceptable way. It became, on publication, my first commercial success, a Literary Guild selection, and made some best-seller lists. My late friend Yogi Swain, whom I'll quote in preference to reviews (though there was a beautiful one in *Time*) said: "I like this better than your other books. Your *Confessions* was our generation at its worst. Now you've written about us at our best."



Robin Bourjaily, age about 18 months. The book is The Adventures of Augie March, *by Saul Bellow. The year may be 1967.*

We were in politics a lot in those days. When Harold Hughes, whom I knew as governor of Iowa, ran for the Senate, I joined his campaign staff. It was a dark time in America. Bobby Kennedy was killed. Martin Luther King, Jr., was killed. Governor Hughes agreed to nominate Eugene McCarthy for the presidency, at

the riot-torn Democrat convention in Chicago, and I did one of the drafts of the nominating speech. McCarthy failed, of course. In the fall Humphrey failed; Nixon won. And Agnew. Hughes made it to the Senate. I went back to my Workshop job.

There were extraordinarily good student writers in that decade: John Yount, Bill Harrison, Jim Whitehead, Tom McHale, John Irving, Gail Godwin, John Casey, Mark Dintenfass, Jane Barnes, Phil O'Connor, Mark Costello, Ted Weisner, and Andre Dubus were much remember. There've been so many world tragedies since.

I had finished writing my Mexican archaeology novel, but Richard Baron was gone from Dial. So was Ed Doctorow. Henry Robbins had been there and gone. The new publisher and editor were Al Hart and Don Hutter. They seemed professional, and nice enough, but I'd barely got to know them before they moved on too. They did stay long enough to talk me



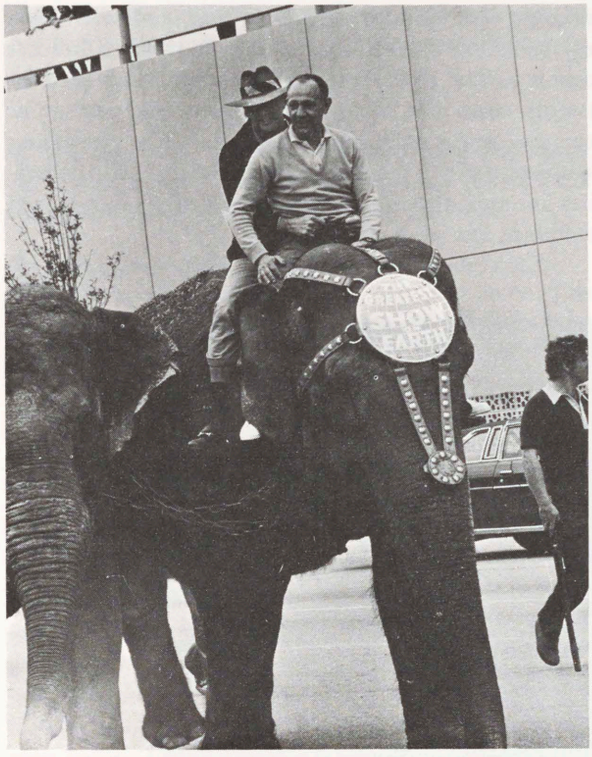
Late 1960s. A snapshot by Paul Engle, probably. The foreground figure is Fanny Ellison. Behind her, from left, her husband, Ralph Ellison, Betty Algren, Nelson Algren, Tina Bourjaily, Huah Ling Engle, and Bourjaily.

some. Let me also list who some of my teaching colleagues were: Philip Roth, Verlin Cassill, Nelson Algren, Kurt Vonnegut, Jose Donoso, Bob Coover, George Starbuck, Mark Strand, and others I've already mentioned. Mostly we were friends.

Kurt and I became especially close. In the first week of 1970 we went to Africa, with a young woman named Miriam Reik. We picked up a relief plane in Gabon, and were flown by an Irish mercenary over the Russian tracking trawlers and Nigerian anti-aircraft into Biafra, where the Ibo nation was fighting for its life. There were hostile, Egyptian-registered MIGs in the air, piloted by East Germans. We three were the entire American presence there when Biafra fell. It was a world tragedy, but I don't suppose people

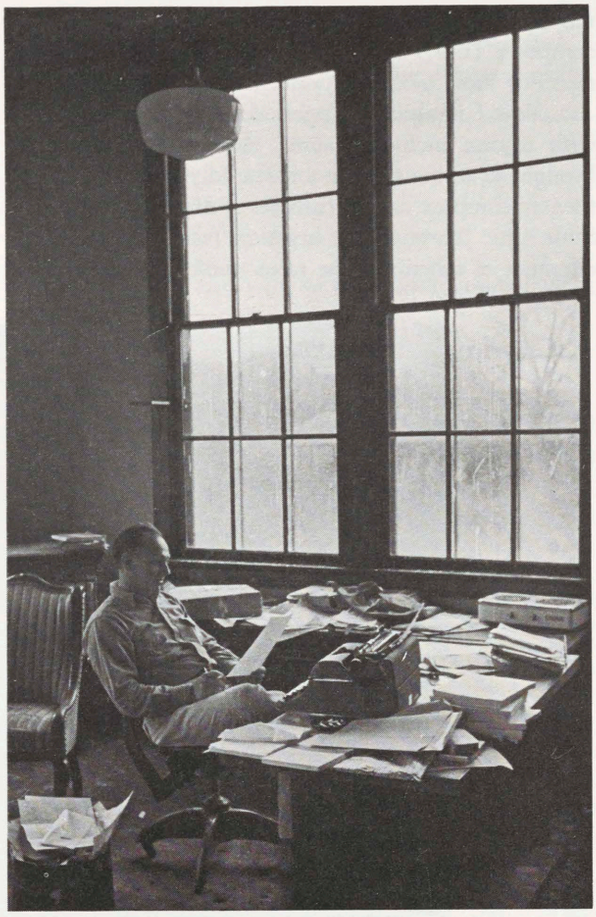
out of my title, which was *Tell Rain Goodbye.* They preferred *Brill among the Ruins.* Whether they were right or not, I was wrong to give in. It's like letting a stranger call up on the telephone and name your kid.

There are critics who like *Brill* best among my novels. Though it did only moderately well (the publishing job was professional, and nice enough), it was nominated for a National Book Award. Archaeology concerns half of it. The rest takes place in a small, midwest city where the hero is a lawyer, sometimes disenchanted, sometimes visionary, always a man to contend with. I like him a lot, and may have borrowed some traits from another midwesterner I like a lot, Senator Hughes. I invented a new kind of prose, for me, a first-person plural, for the voice of the town, here and there. And I continue to be incorrigably tickled



Barbara Curry

Bourjaily riding an elephant in a circus parade in Columbus, South Carolina, mid-1970s. Behind him is James Dickey.



Harry Boll

Bourjaily in his studio, a remodeled country schoolhouse on Redbird Farm, during the writing of Now Playing at Canterbury *in the mid-1970s.*

with myself for the device I used to do the necessary exposition of Mexican prehistory. I let Bob Brill go back in his imagination, generally in the shower after a day's dig, and live through a series of practically comic-strip adventures as Zap, a half-Mixtec, moving through Zapotec territory with a party of treacherous Aztecs. He almost gets skinned.

In the early seventies, I had a play off-Broadway based on *Confessions.* It was the last thing John Pearson and I did together. It had a fine cast, with one damaging exception. I was the exception. I appeared in the piece myself, I sure did, which may be why, although we had some magic going in rehearsals, the project started coming apart a week before we opened.

In 1973, Bill Decker was my editor at Dial when I turned in *Country Matters,* a collection of nonfiction of which I'm quite proud. And I'm fond of Bill. If he hadn't been undergoing serious surgery at publication time, he'd have tried to get some attention for the book. No one else seemed to know it existed. Dial was coming apart, too. Pieces from *Country Matters* get anthologized, but the book is long, long out of print.

By now I was seven years, off and on, into the writing of a very long, intricate novel, and three more years away from having it done. I was working from the model that starts with the Sanskrit story cycles, goes west through the *Arabian Nights* and Boccaccio, and reaches English with Chaucer—a collection of tales, held together by a dominant frame story. Many writers and critics feel that language is the heart of the novel. I disagree. Language is only skin, to me, and the heart is story.

I believe narrative can do wonderful things, characterize for one. Each storyteller in my book was to be characterized by the story told, and the voice and manner of the telling. The stories would advance the book, if they were set in order properly, would comment on each other and on the frame as well, narratives begetting narrative—"It's your answer to Joyce," Ed Doctorow had said when I'd first talked about the idea, years before.

For a frame story strong enough to recapture attention each time a tale was told, I was drawing on a fascinating part of my university experience. I'd writ-

ten an opera libretto called *$4000* for my friend, the composer Tom Turner, on the music faculty, and we'd seen our show modestly performed.

Now I imagined it being done quite immodestly, with a cast including some glittering professionals, brought in to inaugurate a splendidly pretentious new theater complex on the campus of State University in State City. Through the urgency, frustration, and excitement of rehearsal, the tales would be interspersed



Harry Boll

Bourjaily, a "less than mediocre but fairly devoted amateur jazz trumpeter," mid-1970s.

almost naturally. When a group of high-strung strangers is collected together to work intensely in a common enterprise, what do they do (someone asks) if there isn't time to get properly acquainted?

"They tell lies," says Snazzer Short, the librettist in the novel, and I half-agree with him, but only half because the lies are fiction, and there is truth in the fiction people invent about themselves, if you know how to read it.

So I had my pilgrims—singers, director, conductor, composer, designer, seventeen in all—moving together towards the ecstasy of first performance, and I felt (and feel) that universities are what we have in America instead of cathedrals. I had a subtext as well. I tried to display in the stories all the different modes of narrative I knew about—epic, Gothic, farce, fantasy, and the rest. Chaucer had done that, and so I called my book *Now Playing at Canterbury,* and wished I didn't owe it to The Dial Press, whose author I had been for twenty years now. What sort of idiot would turn up as the new editor or publisher this time? The publishing business was a dying dog, it seemed to me, with careerists jumping about from spot to spot on its thin-haired stomach, like so many fleas.

Dick Marek, the new guy at Dial, was no flea. He was a publisher of absolute brilliance, and he loved *Now Playing at Canterbury.* His work on it was dazzling. He guided it to major critical success, good enough sales in the trade, and an excellent paperback deal, with a mixture of skill and enthusiasm that still makes me grin. I couldn't even feel displeased with him when Dick told me, a year or so later, that he was moving on to start his own imprint.

Now Playing at Canterbury, I want to add, is dedicated to Diarmuid Russell. I don't know how many writers there are who would admit to having been influenced by their agents, but I certainly was by Diarmuid, not so much by his literary judgments, though he loved good books, as by his character and integrity. He was a model for me. When I wanted to create, in my fiction, a person of moral strength, I thought about

Diarmuid. He had presence, charm, and a somewhat mordant turn of wit, but above all, he was a righteous man.

I left the Iowa Workshop in 1979, and now work winters at the University of Arizona. I play a lot of tennis in Tucson. I don't hunt much anymore.

There is one more Dial Press editor to name, Juri Jurevitch, and one more novel I still owed the firm, which he persuaded me to call *A Game Men Play.* The title of the book, should there ever be a new edition, is *The More Fool.* It came out in 1980, and was neither a commercial nor a critical success. I like it. So did Kurt Vonnegut, a friend, and Joyce Carol Oates, whom I've never met, but it's a failure, nonetheless, so it seems.

I like the prose of *The More Fool.* It is careful, simple prose; after all the fancy varieties I'd needed to use for the different voices in *Canterbury,* I went back to the windowpane theory. There are no metaphors in *The More Fool,* no literary devices, no images. This seemed to me to suit the main character, a tough, damaged man named Chink Peters, about whom I wrote in the third person with love and admiration for his kind.

If the book does fail, the failure is mine, of course, and how odd not to have lived and written without error. The firefly poet never supposed that could happen, any more than Puck did. I can only hope that I have not so dissipated the spirit of that cheerful, industrious pair that I can't yet show you a couple more books worth looking at.

There's one on the way as a matter of fact. It's going to be terrific. It's called *The Great Fake Book.* I shall not change the title. I hope there'll be a party.

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The Living Arts

The New York Times

First Sign of Spring: Soft, Romantic Styles

By BERNADINE MORRIS

The first spring styles emerging from Seventh Avenue design rooms have a soft, gentle air with a new fit that makes them kinder to the body. "Romantic" is the umbrella word that designers use when explaining their approach to the new season.

They express this romantic flavor in pale, misty colors with an occasional strong accent, and in fabrics that drape and flow as well as in shapes that skim but do not clutch the body. Linen, for example, is combined with silk or rayon to get around its traditional stiff look.

These clothes will appear in the nation's stores soon after the new year begins and will not be shown to retailers until the end of this month, after the new collections in Milan, London and Paris make their debuts. There is plenty of time for pinning and sewing and adjusting; there is even time for total revision. Still, designers are confident that they have found the right key.

The demise of the exaggerated shoulder pad in the last few seasons is one element that has caused them to rethink the shape of clothes. Calvin Klein, who builds his collection around jackets, has worked hard to eliminate the inner construction that is part of stiff tailoring.

"I still believe a jacket needs a pad to hang properly," Mr. Klein said. "But the new pad is soft and the edges are rounded, not squared, so that you are not aware of it."

Ralph Lauren has aimed for a "more delicate, more elegant, more romantic" spirit in his suits, he said. He is also aware of a need for flexibility. The best jacket to come out of his design room so far is a white silk style with three vertical tucks at each side of the waistline. With pants and a tank top, it looks young and swinging. With a pleated-front shirt and a long skirt, it is sophisticated and appropri-

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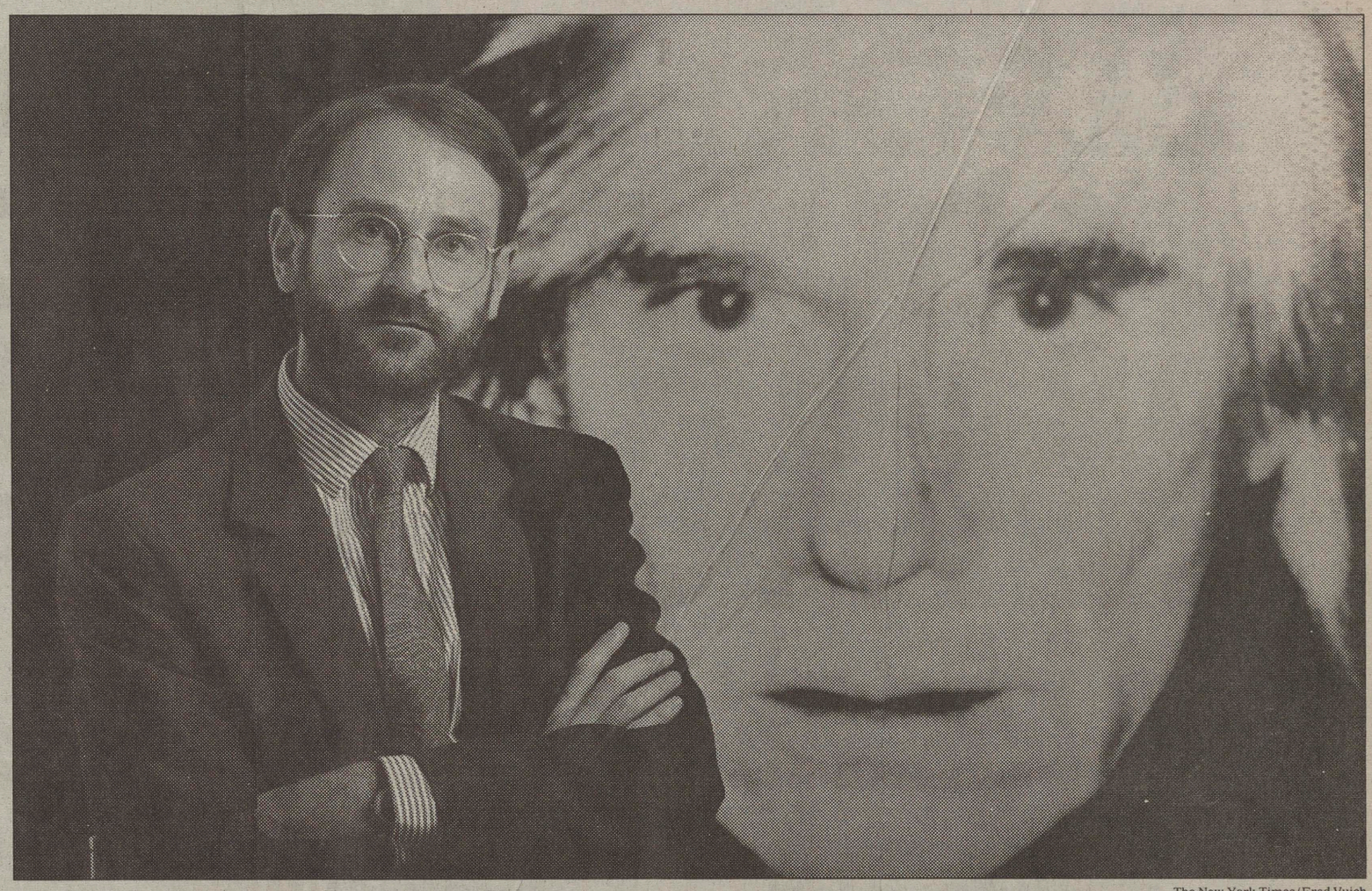

The New York Times/Fred Vuich

Mark Francis before an Andy Warhol self-portrait that will be in a Pittsburgh museum devoted entirely to the artist's work.

A Museum for Warhol in His Hometown

By GRACE GLUECK

More than 700 paintings by Andy Warhol, as well as drawings, prints, photographs, sculptures, films and videotapes, will form the core collection of a museum devoted entirely to the artist's work, to open in 1992 in his hometown, Pittsburgh.

Details of the Andy Warhol Museum emerged yesterday. It will occupy a renovated industrial building on Pittsburgh's culturally blossoming North Side and will be operated by the Carnegie Museum of Art. The works — said by officials of the venture to be worth more than $80 million — have been donated by the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts and the Dia Foundation, an organization that supports innovative projects by contemporary artists.

As director of the Warhol Museum, the Carnegie has chosen Mark Francis, a 37-year-old Englishman with an extensive background in contemporary art. Mr. Francis will also serve as curator of contemporary art at the Carnegie.

'An Exemplary Achievement'

"It was one of those wonderful, terribly exciting ideas that nobody ever expected," Philip M. Johnston, director of the Carnegie said in an interview yesterday. "Since we are a museum committed to the 20th century in a major way, and Andy attended art classes at this museum and graduated from our neighboring institution, Carnegie-Mellon University, the whole thing has a ring of rightness."

The collaborative project was hailed yesterday by Ashton Hawkins, executive vice president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, who is also chairman of Dia's board, as "an exemplary achievement for the arts." He added, "Dia, the Warhol Foundation and the Carnegie together will create a great public institution that no one of us could have managed alone."

The Warhol Museum got its start

In Pittsburgh, plans for an $80 million collection.

after the artist's death in 1987, said Charles Wright, president of the Dia Foundation. Dia had been presenting a series of long-term shows devoted to Warhol's work, primarily from its own holdings.

"Andy died right in the middle of it," said Mr. Wright, "and shortly after that we began to scheme. We wanted to further Dia's program of siting artists in longer-term, single-artist environments. Because of the nature of Andy's work, which emphasized the mechanical nature of modern life, and which is, in part, serial, you can't really represent it by putting it next to that of another artist. He'd take a single image and work it and rework it. So we thought we'd look for a building."

Mr. Wright gives credit to Fred Hughes, president of the Warhol Foundation, for his "vision and generosity" in collaborating with Dia on the idea. "The foundation could have taken all of the paintings they own and sold them to enhance their financial power," Mr. Wright said. "But Fred said, 'We're not going to loan, we're going to make gifts.' "

New York Costs Cited

Because of high real estate costs in New York, and his inability to find an institution here willing to help with the project, Mr. Wright thought of going to Pittsburgh, and then to the Carnegie Museum.

"They really embraced the idea," he said of the Carnegie. "They made an incredible effort; we must have looked at more than 100 buildings."

The seven-story, 70,000 square-foot industrial building eventually selected will be renovated and maintained by the Carnegie Museum. It will be redesigned by the architect Richard Gluckman, who also renovated Dia's New York headquarters at 548 West 22d Street.

The building, which Mr. Wright says will be "the definitive repository" of Warhol's work, will also house the artist's archives, compiled over a period of 30 years. They comprise some 1,200 boxes filled with items from his daily life, such as the Polaroid photographs and newspaper clippings that served as source materials for him; a full run of Interview magazine, which he founded; scripts; audiotapes; correspondence, and other papers.

Foundation to Donate Works

"This archive-library will be akin to a fully excavated and catalogued archeological dig of U.S. history from around 1950 to 1987," said Vincent Fremont, secretary and treasurer of the Andy Warhol Foundation. The foundation, the beneficiary of the Warhol estate, preserves the artist's work, makes grants to visual arts organizations here and abroad and supports the preservation of historic parks. Its present worth is put at $25 million.

The foundation will give the new museum more than 650 paintings and numerous works in other media. Dia — established in 1974 by Philippa de Menil, an heiress to the Schlumberger oil exploration fortune, and her husband, Heiner Friedrich, to give support to artists' projects whose nature or scale would preclude other funding sources — will transfer 60 paintings and 80 works in other media. That is virtually its entire Warhol collection except for "Shadows," a rare abstract painting from 1979 whose 102 panels form one of the few Warhol environments not broken up into individual parts. "Shadows" will be placed on long-term loan.

The donated works represent all phases of Warhol's career. They include early drawings and paintings

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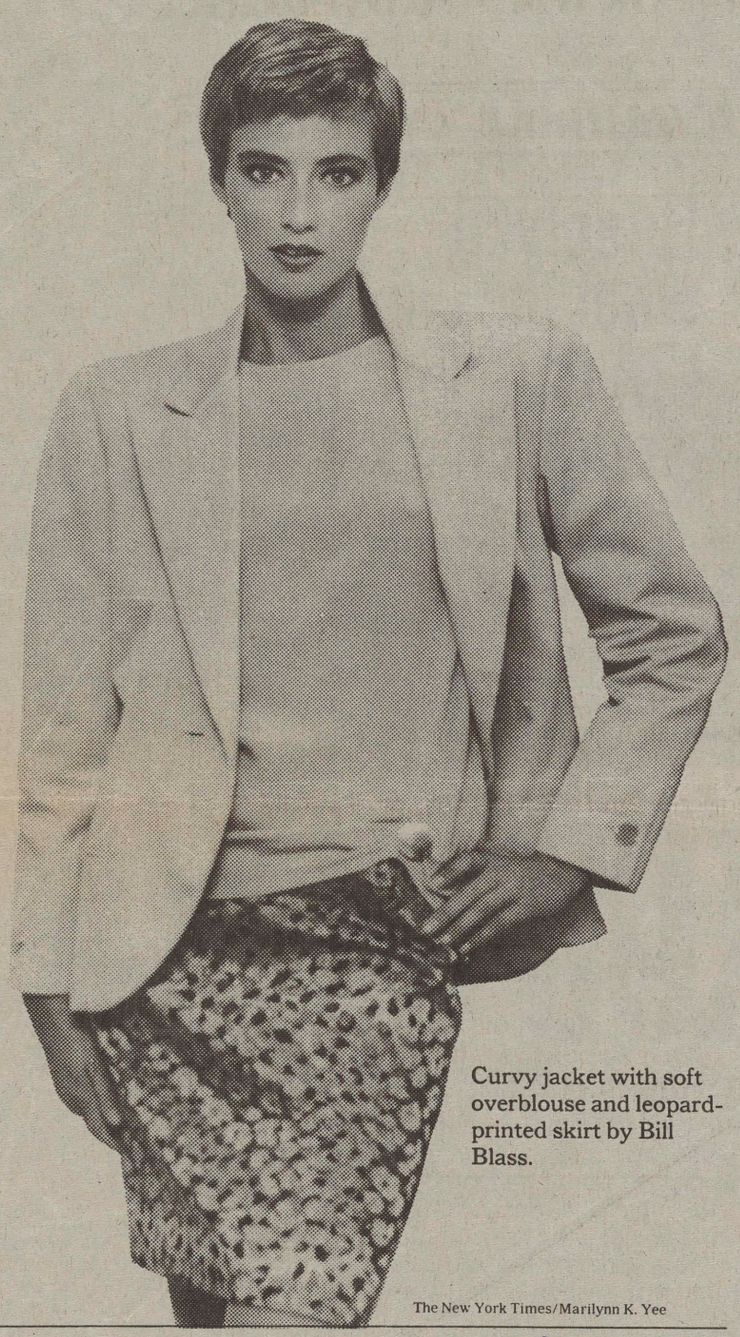


Curvy jacket with soft overblouse and leopard-printed skirt by Bill Blass.

The New York Times/Marilynn K. Yee

On Being Nice or Rotten in Writing

By RICHARD BERNSTEIN

You might not think in first meeting Cynthia Ozick that savage literary thrusts and volcanic flows of shrewd observation could emerge from the pen — or, as she has put it, from "the wet substance, ink or blood" — of this gentle figure of a Jewish mother.

Ms. Ozick, whose latest book, "The Shawl," is being treated by many critics as her most powerful and tragic work, says she is "unbearably shy." She lives, she says, an unadventurous life in the suburbs of New York City, a life like "a movie inside my mind," that she only half seriously calls a cop-out, where "you don't have to do anything real with real people."

But Ms. Ozick is also the kind of person who compensates for her shyness with intellectual boldness. Ever since she started receiving notice about two decades ago — after laboring unrewarded and unpublished for about as long — her characters have appeared to be opposites of herself. They are crabby, bitter, uneasy, spiteful, full of acid observations about a discomfiting world — although, because they live in the shadow of the Holocaust, they are also understandable and sympathetic.

Cynthia Ozick says she's nicer in real life.

"I have a writer friend and we talk about this," Ms. Ozick said the other day over tea in a Manhattan hotel. "And the question we put to each other is: Is it better to be nice in life and rotten in writing or rotten in life and nice in writing?"

Then, laughing the almost girlish laugh that does not seem to come from the same person who fashions her pitiless stories, she said: "I am nicer in life than I am in my writing."

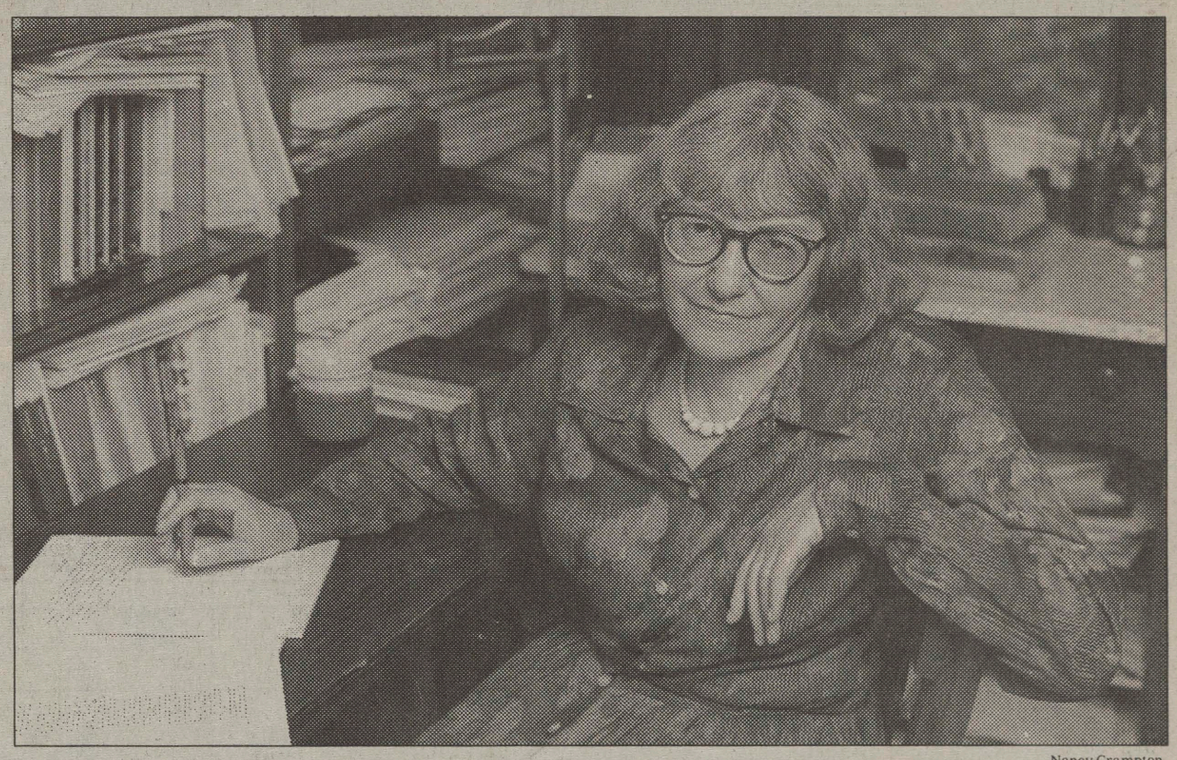
Ms. Ozick, who is 60 years old, is not easy on herself. She said she is always surprised when one of her stories, like the pungent, satirical "Envy, or Yiddish in America," is treated as comical. At the time she is writing, she said, she does not realize she is being funny.

"It's a confession of obtuseness, of a lack of a sense of humor," she said. "All these things I know are true of me."

But because her newly published volume is perhaps her most tragic to date, it is the question of not being nice in writing that leads to Ms. Ozick's lifelong concerns as a writer and a thinker on the moral meaning of life. Ms. Ozick deals with the bitter residue of the Holocaust, the residue that clogs the spirit of the survivors and disrupts their passage through the alien landscape of the United States. Her characters struggle with the vexations of memory, with one another's infuriating foibles and with the ahistorical fuzzy-mindedness of American life, its sybaritic blandness, its ignorance of evil.

"I'm always accused of not having characters that people would like to identify with, or that the narrative

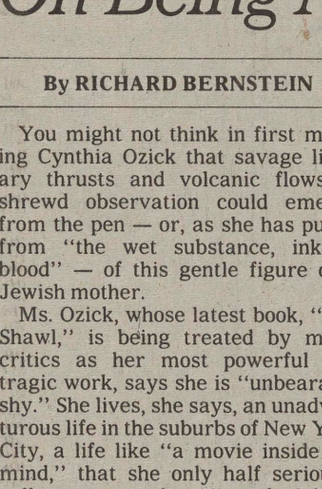
Continued on Page B2



Nancy Crampton

The author Cynthia Ozick, who, she says, lives a life like "a movie inside my mind."

BOOKS

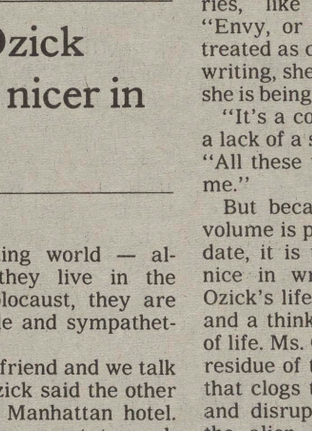


A Boy's View Of Adults And 1943

Rick DeMarinis portrays coming of age in a vanished era.

2

COMEDY



Together at Last: Burns And Hope

Two masters join forces at Madison Square Garden.

3

SCIENCE

Gambling: Biology May Hold the Key

Extreme addiction may stem from a chemical need for risk.

5

SPORTS

Air Force Conquers the Wishbone

At 5 feet 10 inches, Dowis emerges as a Heisman threat.

13

Books of The Times

World War II Los Angeles as an Odd Boy Sees It

By MICHIKO KAKUTANI

The year is 1943, when the war effort required that pennies be manufactured of zinc instead of precious copper; and Trygve Napoli, the narrator of Rick DeMarinis's new novel, is 10 years old. His story of that year is, at once, a portrait of a vanished era, and an old-fashioned coming-of-age tale, showing one boy's initiation into the solemnities of the adult world. If the novel's material sometimes feels derivative — there are echoes throughout the narrative of the movies "Radio Days," "Hope and Glory" and "Empire of the Sun" — Mr. DeMarinis's voice remains distinctively his own, by turns comic and melancholy, lyrical and street smart.

Writing in brisk, observant prose, Mr. DeMarinis quickly immerses us in the staccato rhythms of life in wartime Los Angeles: rowdy sailors on leave, showing off their war wounds and tattoos; war widows working in aircraft factories, riveting wings and tails; children searching the skies above the city with their tin binoculars, on the lookout for enemy planes. A huge camouflage net spans one boulevard, covering the Douglas aircraft plant, and Tryg and his friends notice that it has been painted — surreally — to look like an ordinary farmland scene with houses, barns, and herds of dairy cows. The Japanese will never fall for it, says his friend William, noting that a Midwestern farm scene looks incongruously out of place in downtown Los Angeles. "The nut who designed it must have been from Iowa."

•

When Tryg isn't at the movies watching Ronald Colman, Claudette Colbert and Franchot Tone, he's home listening to the radio, tuning in the Lone Ranger or whatever foreign station he can locate on his shortwave machine. With the help of his uncle, he builds a huge antenna on the top of his parents' apartment building — an antenna that enables him to listen to the likes of Tokyo Rose, as he sits in the living room playing Parcheesi or concocting secret codes.

Tryg's favorite pastime, however, is fantasizing about the war. Sometimes, he is an anonymous figure like Kilroy — someone who is everywhere and nowhere, partly hidden, in disguise. Other times, he is a brave fighter pilot named Charlie Jones or Bill Tucker, Jerry Granger or Buddy Thompson — someone without an awkward foreign name. He shoots down enemy pilots, divebombs strategic targets, and after his plane crashes, dies a heroic death in the arms of a beautiful girl.

"I loved the pose," Tryg recalls. "I loved being someone everyone could like. To encourage this view of myself, I had to make it real. To make it real required a strong and unwavering imaginative act. I had to elaborate the details of my coming death in combat. This was important. I had to work at it. I couldn't afford to be slack on the details."

•

Though these fantasies earn Tryg a reputation as an oddball — "Monk, the Nut," who's constantly spacing out and mumbling to himself — they also provide a necessary respite from the boring rigors of school and the tensions of his squabbling family.

Tryg's mother, who left his father for a smirking would-be actor named Mitchell, is a disturbingly cold woman, possessed of "a Norwegian fatalism." When he was an infant, she abandoned him for four years, leaving him with her autocratic father; and now that she has retrieved him, she seems quite indifferent to his happiness or welfare.

Filling out the Napoli household are Ginger, Tryg's neurotic aunt, who acts like a California version of Blanche DuBois, and her violent husband, Gerald, who's constantly getting into drunken brawls. Their son, William, a sullen, chain-smoking teen-ager, becomes Tryg's mentor and surrogate brother. And William's girlfriend, Betty, becomes a symbol to Tryg of the mysteries of sex that await him in adolescence.

Although these characters are all drawn in broad, colorful strokes, they never become generic cartoons, so deft is Mr. DeMarinis in portraying Tryg's mixed feelings toward them of love and resentment, sympathy and irritation. In the course of the year, we watch him exchange needy loneliness for a more melancholy detachment, and we see him attempt to use the clear-sighted logic of childhood to solve the mysteries of love and death. By the end of the book, he is old beyond his years.

"I had discovered something about myself," Tryg says, recalling an exchange with his stepfather, who has just been drafted. "I knew that I was now capable of mustering any necessary lie at will. I could say 'Dad' and not mean it and I could accept being called 'son' by someone who did not mean it. It was like discovering an unsuspected talent."

Without ever resorting to easy nostalgia or cheap sentimentality, Mr. DeMarinis gives us both a picture of the eternal realities of childhood — the humiliations of playground gamesmanship, the cruelties of puppy love — and a tactile portrait of life in the wartime 40's. In that sense, "The Year of the Zinc Penny" is like one of Proust's madeleines: for those old enough to remember, it captures a receding past; for those too young to recall, it conjures up a vanished era.

The Year of the Zinc Penny

By Rick DeMarinis

174 pages. W. W. Norton & Company. $17.95.



Cynthia Farah

Being Nice Or Rotten In Writing

Continued From Page B1

voice is critical of or sardonic about," she said.

In fact, the heroine of "The Shawl," a short story and novella published in a very thin volume by Alfred A. Knopf after appearances more than a decade ago in The New Yorker, can hardly be called unsympathetic. "The Shawl" centers on Rosa Lublin, born in Poland of assimilated, wealthy, highly cultivated Jewish parents, whose baby daughter is thrown by a Nazi guard against the electrified fence of a death camp. Rosa, at that instant, becomes a witness to horror, even if to save herself from a similar fate she has to choke down her shriek of pain, what Ms. Ozick describes as "the wolf's screech ascending now through the ladder of her skeleton."

Rosa many years later is drawn as a bitter, truculent, ill-tempered survivor living a life of near squalid seclusion amid the old people of Florida — a "whole peninsula" that is "weighed down with regret." There, she hates everything in her life — from her niece in New York, whom she calls the Angel of Death, to the merciless sun, an "executioner" — except the illusory thoughts that she cultivates about her dead daughter.

The conjunction of the fictional Rosa Lublin and the real Cynthia Ozick is not difficult to find. The one had her life stolen from her by evil men; the other seeks to redeem that awful experience by making it a part of the human conscience, the preoccupation with which, she said, is the "Hebrew contribution to human civilization." And yet the question remains: Why did she, with no history of personal suffering in the Holocaust, decide to write about such things? Where in her imagination did a character like Rosa come from?

'Everybody Is a Witness'

"If you're talking about why do I write about people affected by the Holocaust, it's because I believe that after the Holocaust, and through knowledge of it, everybody is a witness, not just those who went through it and came out alive," she said.

"For the Jews of Poland before the Holocaust, the Spanish Inquisition was a full presence in their lives," she said.

The inspiration for Rosa, Ms. Ozick said, came from two sources. One was a passage in William L. Shirer's "Rise and Fall of the Third Reich," in which the Nazi practice of killing Jewish infants by hurling them against the electrified fences of the camps is mentioned.

A second inspiration came in a long evening spent with the novelist Jerzy Kozinski, who, Mz. Ozick said, spoke of the richness of the Polish language. She realized in listening to Mr. Kozinski that there was something amiss in the typical image of the Eastern European Jews as "shtetl Jews," people who were strangers in their own country. There were some prewar Jews who were highly assimilated and extremely cultivated not in Yiddish but in other languages and cultures, like Polish. It is a condition that, in Rosa for example, provides for Ms. Ozick a special irony.

"Rosa stands for the wholly acculturated Jew who belongs to the civilization into which she was born," she said. "Then the cataclysm comes and deprives her of this patrimony, which does not seem acquired."

"I once wrote metaphorically about people thrust into the ovens," Ms. Ozick continued. "They were saying: 'You don't mean me. You can't mean me. I'm not a Jew.' " That, she said, is Rosa's case; "She is a woman who cries out: 'I'm not like those other Jews.' She thinks it's a case of mistaken identity."

But in the eyes of those who created the Nuremberg laws, Rosa is a Jew, just as she was to the Nazi guard who killed her baby.

"All the Jews that died rend our hearts, our sense of mercy and of justice," Ms. Ozick said. "But I think the Jews who went to their deaths not knowing why, but knowing the meaning of their lives as Jews, were in some sense more redeemed in the eyes of history than those who went with a sense of mistaken identity.

"Because those who went as universalists have not really understood that the moral life has 'a habitation and a name,' " she said, quoting Shakespeare. "It's what Isaac Bashevis Singer means when he says every writer has an address. Everybody is born into a civilization, and if you want to live the life that can best bring you into a sense of being a civilized person, then you have to seize it through your own culture."

City Opera Proposes Contract Arbitration

Negotiations in the strike by the New York City Opera's musicians remained at a standstill yesterday, despite a proposal by the company's chief negotiator that the dispute be submitted to binding arbitration.

The proposal, made on Friday by Martin J. Oppenheimer, the vice chairman of the New York City Opera, was rejected over the weekend by the striking union, Local 802 of the American Federation of Musicians, which represents the orchestra.

The musicians have been on strike since Sept. 13. The City Opera has threatened to cancel the rest of the season if the dispute is not settled by Sunday, and it has already canceled its planned "Live From Lincoln Center" telecast of Mozart's "Don Giovanni," scheduled for Oct. 25.

Neither Mr. Oppenheimer nor John Palanchian, the vice president of Local 802, would discuss the terms of the orchestra's latest offer.

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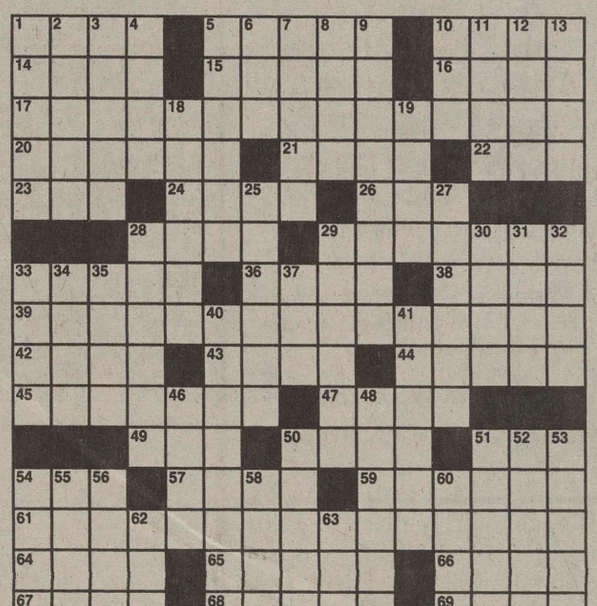
Edited by Eugene T. Maleska



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ACROSS

1 Layer of felt
5 Small stream
10 New York street
14 Brainstorm, in Brest
15 Person born on Oct. 3, e.g.
16 Hodgepodge
17 Comics
20 More wrathful
21 Spirit of Saint Louis
22 Type of shirt
23 With 59 Across, Iowa city
24 Jacob's first wife
26 Entirely
28 A defendant, in law: Abbr.
29 Encircle, as with a lei
33 Exert influence over
36 Humorous suffix with switch
38 Sesame
39 Comics
42 Sandwich filler
43 Eye, to Pierre
44 W. German state
45 Programs for committees
47 Cupid
49 Comic Caesar
50 Stainer
51 "—— Got a Secret"
54 Refuge
57 Being, to Brutus
59 See 23 Across
61 Comic from Dayton
64 Mimicked
65 Sahara filling station
66 —— dixit
67 Comic-singer Jerry
68 Songbirds
69 British gun

DOWN

1 Forked
2 Love very much
3 Where Rangers range
4 Subject for a sermon
5 Family of a memorable British comic
6 Tear
7 Witchcraft in the West Indies
8 Algerian city
9 Kind of court
10 Chinese skillet
11 Came down
12 "I Walk the ——," Cash hit
13 Theater section
18 Mont.'s capital
19 Printer's word
25 Summits
27 Shaping tools
28 St. Paul's book
29 Comedienne Jo Anne
30 English river
31 Towel word
32 Otherwise
33 "—— boy!"
34 Iron horse's snort
35 Shoe size
37 Stat for Strawberry
40 Performance on a troupe's tour
41 Radioactive isotope
46 Lose weight, hopefully
48 Lax in duty
50 Stupid
51 Awkward
52 Poetry
53 W. German city
54 Slightly open
55 Lasso
56 Leg joint
58 European coal basin
60 Gleason's "How sweet ——!"
62 Find the sum
63 Conquer

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

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THE MEANING OF CELEBRITY

No longer are there immutable standards by which to judge ourselves. Image has overtaken reality.

By Barbara Goldsmith

AT A RECENT MANHATTAN DINNER party, the celebrity guests included a United States Senator, an embezzler, a woman rumored to spend $60,000 a year on flowers, a talk-show host, the chief executive officer of one of America's largest corporations, a writer who had settled a plagiarism suit and a Nobel laureate.

The line between fame and notoriety has been erased. Today we are faced with a vast confusing jumble of celebrities: the talented and untalented, heroes and villains, people of accomplishment and those who have accomplished nothing at all, the criteria for their celebrity being that their images encapsulate some form of the American Dream, that they give enough of an appearance of leadership, heroism, wealth, success, danger, glamour and excitement to feed our fantasies. We no longer demand reality, only that which is real seeming.

Our age is not one in which the emperor's golden nightingale is exposed as valueless when the true pure voice of the real bird pours forth, but one in which the synthetic product has become so seductive and malleable that we no longer care to distinguish one from the other.

Synthetic celebrities are our own creation, the modern equivalent of biblical graven images. In bowing down to them, we absent ourselves from the everyday ethical and moral judgments that insure the health of a society.

We cling to outmoded standards in according these fabricated celebrities all the substantial rewards we once reserved for those who deserved our adulation: social acceptance, head-of-the-line access, public acclaim, monetary gains and the ability to influence the power structures and institutions of our nation.

In rewarding these individuals, our society often exempts them from hard moral rules and equal justice.

When the film executive Robert Evans was convicted of cocaine use, his sentence was to create a program to deter young people from using drugs. When the Hollywood studio head David Begelman pleaded no contest to the charges of embezzling funds from Columbia Pictures, he was ordered to continue his psychiatric care. When the international celebrity art dealer Frank Lloyd was convicted of falsifying his books on the purchase and sale prices of the late Mark Rothko's paintings, thereby defrauding Rothko's two children of millions of dollars, his sentence was to donate $100,000 to the Fund for Public Schools to be used in educating children in art.

Contrast these sentences to the one given William James Rummel for three nonviolent crimes that netted him a total of $230.11 — life imprisonment (a judgment upheld by the Supreme Court). Or that of Jerry Helm, also sentenced to life imprisonment (a sentence recently overturned by the Supreme Court) for writing a check for $100 on a nonexistent account.

The rewards of villainy and heroism often prove equal. A decade down the road from Watergate, there have been 169 books written about this affair; they have generated an estimated total of $100 million in profits, much of the money garnered by President Nixon and his men, several of whom were imprisoned for their deeds.

Our inability or lack of concern in questioning the qualifications of people to be celebrated represents an increasingly pernicious phenomenon, for it is axiomatic of a society that we are who we celebrate.

The evolution from reality to image has been relatively rapid. In 1962, the social historian Daniel J. Boorstin alerted Americans to what then seemed a distant threat: "We risk being the first people in history to have been able to make their illusions so vivid, so persuasive, so realistic, that they can live in them." What Boorstin could not have predicted was how the swiftness of our technological achievements, combined with the personal disillusionments of the

Barbara Goldsmith is an author and social historian. Her most recent book is "Little Gloria . . . Happy At Last."

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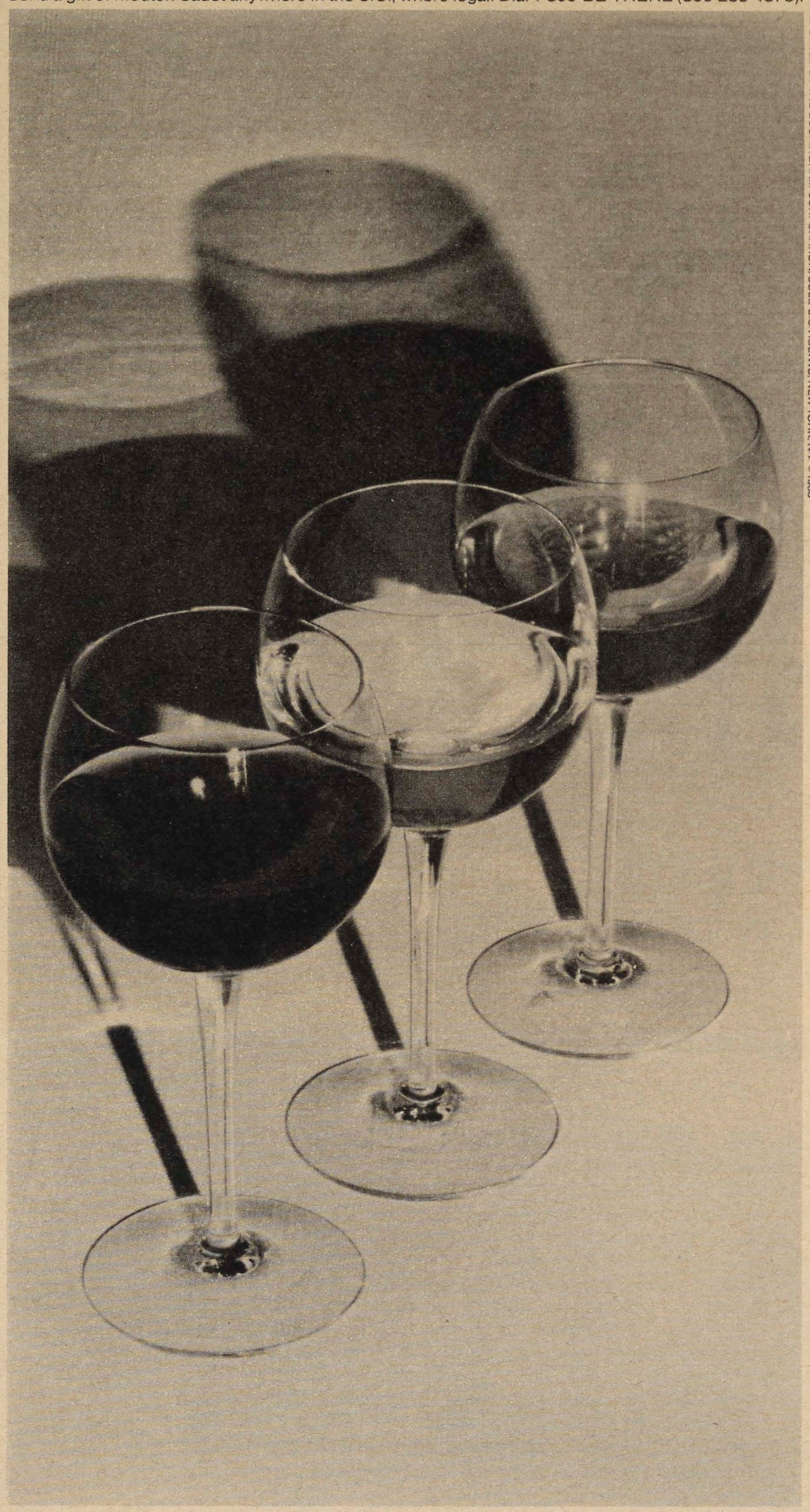

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last two decades, would encourage us to manufacture our fantasies while simultaneously destroying our former role models and ripping away the guideposts of the past. The result is that we have created synthetic celebrities whom we worship, however briefly, because they vicariously act out our noblest or basest desires.

Earlier this century, the proliferation of magazines, newspapers, network radio and Hollywood movies propelled celebrities into prominent positions in the national psyche. Now images can be instantly transmitted across the nation, indeed, the world, sometimes with disastrous results. Marshall McLuhan, the late mass-communications expert, credited television with turning terrorism from an isolated phenomenon into an international spectacle by allowing its practitioners to make free use of electronic facilities to publicize their causes. Political protesters inform the news media of their intentions, then stage demonstrations in front of the cameras. Even intimate tragedies become public events, turning those involved into momentary celebrity performers.

In today's highly technological world, reality has become a pallid substitute for the image reality we fabricate for ourselves, which in turn intensifies our addiction to the artificial. Anyone who has attended a political convention or a major sporting event knows that watching the proceedings on television, where cameras highlight the most riveting moments, then replay and relate them to similar situations, provides us with more stimulating and complex perceptions than being there does.

Next year's visitors to the Grand Canyon need not see it. One mile from the boundary will be a $5 million complex where they will be able to view a film of the way the canyon looks during all four seasons and take a simulated raft ride through artificial rapids.

Thomas Hoving, former director of New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, predicts that within the next decade there will be a "quantum leap in the appreciation of art." By pushing a button in our living room, we will be able to exactly replicate any work of art in any museum in the world.

"Andy Warhol's Overexposed: A No-Man Show," will star a $400,000 computerized robot of the artist that has such sophisticated pre-programmed speech that it can hold press conferences and answer questions. In creating his robot, Warhol, who frequently serves as a bellwether of our celebrity society, has simply severed his image from himself, thus defining the ultimate in synthetic celebrity.

"Technology," wrote the author Max Frisch, "is the knack of so arranging the world that we don't have to experience it."

□

Paralleling the technological advances of the last two decades have been a series of moral and ethical blows to the American psyche that have produced a crisis in confidence in the validity of our perceptions. No longer are there immutable standards by which to judge ourselves, or positive role models to provide a pattern for conduct. These have all but vanished in the wake of the assassinations of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, in the moral ambiguity of Vietnam, in the senseless violence of Kent State and in the traumatic aftermath of the "third-rate burglary" of Watergate.

But the need to celebrate other human beings — some symbolic, some real — is a continuing psychic and societal fact. Throughout history, the accomplishments of these individuals have provided a pattern for our aspirations, their frailties have bolstered our self-images. Celebrity worship, the psychoanalyst Ernest van den Haag says, is directly traceable to the basic and continuing need for authority figures, the first of whom are our parents.

In the past, Americans celebrated such positive examples as Johnny Appleseed, Horatio Alger and a father who "Knows Best." As societal needs changed, so did the nature of celebrity. In the second half of the 19th century, those who in the words of social scientist Thorstein Veblen received "the deference of the common people" were men who epitomized the Industrial Revolution — Carnegie, Morgan, Rockefeller, Vanderbilt. These captains of industry, crude and rapacious though they were, felt a sense of moral obligation rooted in the puritan ethic. They endowed hospitals, museums, churches, universities; contributed to the poor, and, observed Veblen, served as a "guide to literature and art, church and state, science and education, law and morals — the standard container of civic virtue." The trade-off seemed an equable one: preferential treatment in exchange for providing role models and economic support.

Though our deep-seated need to have individuals to celebrate has remained stable, our society has not. Many people wish to be admired, not respected, to be perceived as successful and glamorous, not as hard working and righteous. Among the worthy now are synthetic celebrities, famed for their images not their deeds. They need not have a sense of moral or ethical obligation, and often use our approbation for their own cynical purposes. The trade-off is no longer fair.

In a society where the details of private lives are subjected to public scrutiny, role models have all but vanished. In the past, we often provided those we celebrated with a protective cloak to cover their fallibilities and frailties. It was an unwritten law, for example, that the press never photographed President Franklin Delano Roosevelt except from the waist up, so that the dispirited society of the 1930's would not be reminded its leader was physically crippled. Today such amenities are not practiced, nor are figures from the past spared. Long after their deaths, we are informed that Presidents Frank-

Daily, the concept of the melding of heroes and villains plays itself out on prime-time television where notorious, immoral, self-centered individuals, often the perpetrators of heinous crimes, are pseudoheroes.

lin D. Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson all were unfaithful to their wives.

□

The public appetite for celebrity and pseudo-event has grown to Pantagruelian proportions, and for the first time in history, the machinery of communications is able to keep up with these demands, even to outrun them, creating new needs we never knew existed.

To one extent or another, all the branches of the media have become complicitous to this pursuit. People magazine is prototypical. In one issue, novelist E. L. Doctorow is mentioned, but so are Joanie and Gary McGuffin, an Ontario couple on a 6,200-mile canoeing honeymoon across Canada. Elizabeth Taylor appears, but so does Frank Spisak, a neo-Nazi murderer. The ersatz and the real appear side by side, and the willingness to distinguish between them has been abdicated.

Charlotte Curtis of The New York Times was one of hundreds of members of the news media who interviewed a current celebrity, and wrote: "While she was here, she said, she put the couple's spacious Fifth Avenue duplex on the market. . . . the asking price is expected to exceed $6 million. . . . 'We'll move to the New Jersey place.' . . . a $3.5 million, 430-acre estate in Bedminster. Besides the 25-room Georgian mansion . . . there are guest cottages, a cattle barn and stables."

In the not-so-distant past, this description could only have been of a member of high society. It was written, however, about Cristina DeLorean. When her auto-executive husband was arrested on charges of cocaine dealing, both DeLoreans became instant synthetic celebrities. John Z. DeLorean achieved what he admitted was one of his goals in life, though presumably not in the manner he expected: to appear on the cover of Time magazine. (He also appeared on the covers of New York and People magazines.) The couple also announced that they had been offered millions for their story.

The image of a titan standing at the pinnacle of society was maintained in the coverage of the trial and the subsequent appeals of the guilty verdict handed down to Claus von Bülow, accused of injecting his heiress wife with insulin in an attempt to murder her.

At the latest Whitney Museum of American Art Biennial Exhibition, the painter Eric Fischl depicts a couple in the act of sexual intercourse. A video camera records their actions and projects them on a television screen in front of the couple. The man's eyes are riveted to his own image on the television set, which is clearly more exciting than the act itself. The most primal and basic of human acts has become secondary to its own image.

□

The rise of synthetic celebrity coincides with what the writer Jules Henry calls "the erosion of the capacity for emulation, the loss of the ability to model oneself consciously after another person." When Lisa Birnbach, a young writer who is currently preparing a comprehensive guide to American universities, asks students to name their heroes, many say they have none. A typical explanation is that they are no longer willing to admire any person. (Indeed, Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, Elvis Presley, Humphrey Bogart and the like may have become enduring deities precisely because they are dead and can no longer manipulate or disappoint us.) Those students who do name their heroes often include the name of Blake Carrington, the unprincipled tycoon character in the television series "Dynasty."

Daily, the concept of the melding of heroes and villains plays itself out on prime-time television where notorious, immoral, self-centered individuals, often the perpetrators of heinous crimes, are pseudoheroes. J. R. Ewing of "Dallas" is a scoundrel, but he is vigorous, rich, powerful and successful.

George Gerbner, dean of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications, estimates that by the time a typical American child reaches adulthood, he or she will have absorbed more than 30,000 electronic "stories." These have, he suggests, replaced the socializing role of the preindustrial church in creating "a cultural mythology" that establishes the norm of approved behavior and belief. Gerbner concludes that watchers of prime-time television are receiving a highly synthetic picture of the real world, but that they accept it *more readily* than reality itself.

Credibility and plausibility have replaced truth. During the Watergate investigation, the American public was given explanations that seemed believable. As facts were discovered that rendered them implausible, President Nixon's press secretary, Ron Ziegler, admitted that his previous statements had become "inoperative." Writer Christopher Lasch noted in "The Culture of Narcissism" that "many commentators assumed Ziegler was groping for a euphemistic way of saying that he had lied. What he meant, however, was that his earlier statements were no longer believable. Not their falsity but their inability to command assent rendered them 'inoperative.' The question of whether they were true or not was beside the point."

A university student recently ventured the opinion that if the present Republican Administration wished to remain in power it must give the appearance of helping the poor. When the student was asked should they not simply help the poor, the reply was that, of course, that would be preferable, but if it were done invisibly it would not accomplish the desired end. The subject was, after all, remaining in power and only the visible appearance of helping would win the neces-



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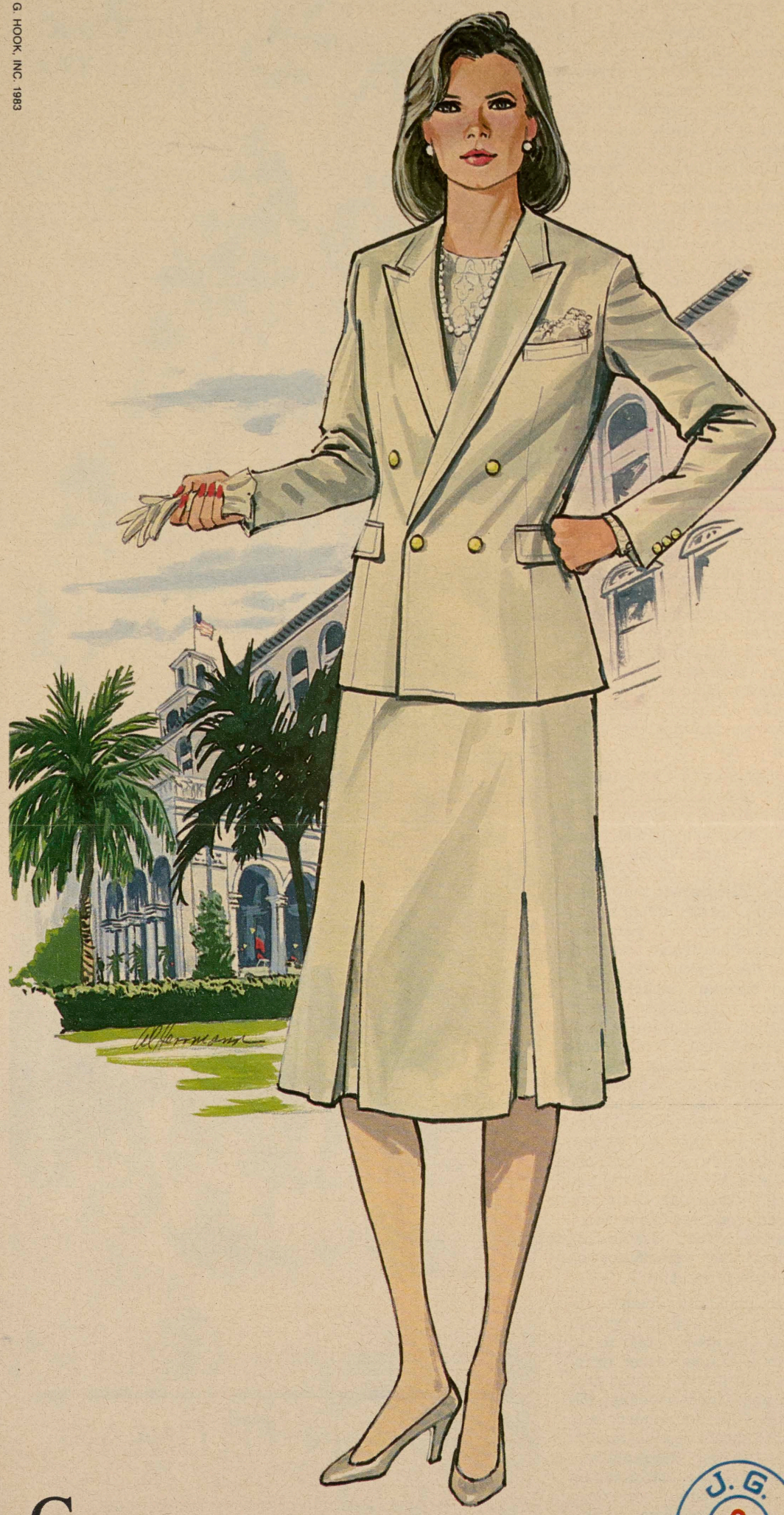

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Because it is fabricated, image can be altered at will. Andy Warhol's 1960's go-go image of black-leather motorcycle jacket, patched dungarees and drugged companions has given way to the conservative tailored suits and socialite parties of the 1980's.

sary sympathy and dissipate potential anger. This cynical understanding of the importance of image reality is formidable, and frightening. What counts is that our President project an image of decisiveness and self-confidence, not that he actually be able to solve the country's problems.

□

We deal openly in terms of image. Universities, religious groups, business organizations, charities, law firms, all speak of their desire to create a favorable image. The woman in a Pine Power television commercial laments, "This mop will ruin my image." Designer Bill Blass says that while he will license such products as chocolate and perfume, he will never lend his name to tires, which would damage his image.

With success as the primary goal, the temptation to take shortcuts is pervasive. The present art market is glutted with Jungian nightmares, full of energy but devoid of intellect. In recent years, there has been a rash of plagiarism suits against prominent writers. Businessman-author Michael Thomas says that today much of business is about "accounting not accountability."

Narcissists, Lasch believes, have the best chance of becoming celebrities because they present pseudoheroic images, are often possessed of magnetic personalities and have "no compunctions about manipulating people or their environment, and no feelings of obligation toward truth." Sociopaths, too, by virtue of the fact that they are totally amoral, incapable of guilt or shame, qualify as excellent material.

The rewards of celebrity are so substantial and seductive that genuinely talented and otherwise level-headed individuals in the arts, business and the humanities are willing to sacrifice their privacy and sense of self to commingle with the synthetic members of this privileged group.

The longer one remains a celebrity, the longer one continues to be rewarded. In explaining why he had signed up yet another book on Henry Kissinger, Summit Books' president James H. Silberman said that he had great confidence in Kissinger's "ability to keep himself in the public eye." Norman Mailer, who recently signed a deal with Random House to write four books over a nine-year period for $4 million, has written of himself, "of necessity, part of Mailer's remaining funds of sensitivity went right into the war of supporting his image and working for it." Early on, Mailer created a renegade literary image for himself, tied to drinking and violence. Now he strenuously objects when the news media clings to his old image and does not print more about his refurbished one as a paterfamilias and partygoer.

Because it is fabricated, image can be altered at will. Andy Warhol owes the longevity of his celebrity to the fact that his image keeps changing to suit the temper of the times. His 1960's go-go image of black-leather motorcycle jacket, patched dungarees and drugged companions has given way to the conservative tailored suits and socialite parties of the 1980's.

Image is essential to the celebrity because the public judges him by what it sees — his public posture as distinguished from his private person. Entertainers are particularly adept at perfecting their images, learning to refine the nuances of personality. Indeed, the words "celebrity" and "personality" have become interchangeable in our language. Public-relations people, who are paid to manufacture celebrities for


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A society that exalts flights from reality, that acknowledges power without moral obligation, sets a dangerous course. John Lennon's assassin, Mark David Chapman, wanted nothing more than forever to be identified with the singer he idolized. Now he is.

public consumption, are often referred to as image makers.

□

Celebrities are invariably accepted as instant authorities. Advertising takes advantage of this, fusing the celebrity with the product to be sold. Robert Young's long association with a physician role on television helped solidify his image as a medical authority, adding credence to his endorsement of Sanka. A similar case is the endorsement of Scoundrel perfume by the actress Joan Collins, the bad girl of television's "Dynasty" series.

Former Senator Sam Ervin, who came close to genuine heroism in the Watergate affair, reduced his stature to synthetic celebrity by using his familiar country-boy locutions in television commercials while never leaving home without his American Express card.

So accustomed are we to seeing celebrities identified with products that those who are not initially celebrities become them as a result of their appearances in advertisements. Leona Helmsley, president of Helmsley Hotels, utilizes the image of a queen, bountifully dispensing her largess to potentional guests in advertisements that rely heavily on the public's identification with her life style, which includes a phone in the bath, magnifying mirror, king-size bed, etc.

It has become common practice to use charity to bolster one's celebrity. Benefits proliferate, often with no more involvement on the part of celebrities than a lending of their names. Television talk-show host Phil Donahue, who on many occasions has served as host at fund-raisers, said in an article he wrote for Television Quarterly that Americans have been lulled into thinking that "celebrity appearances can solve the problems of human misery. As long as we continue to congratulate ourselves for working on the 'gala' charity dinner, or the telethon, or the celebrity auction . . . we delay the time when we finally face up to the painful fact that this country's priorities are wrong. . . . Sick children ought to receive . . . a piece of our public money pie . . . Show business should be out of *this* business."

The combination of crime and the minutiae of private lives is also a sure-fire guarantee of celebrity. Truman Capote established the pattern in modern times when he reached into the criminal element to write "In Cold Blood" and escalated two men who had wiped out an entire family to celebrity. Recently, there have been two books on Jean Harris, who became an instant celebrity when she killed the Scarsdale Diet doctor, Herman Tarnower. Even in prison, she is a media draw. She was recently interviewed at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for radio and television news programs.

The brigand, the flamboyant person who "beats the system," has always been an appealing figure in our culture. Those who operate outside the system gain particular popularity in times of economic stress, when people feel they have little control over their own destinies. Today's social climate has much in common with that of the early 1930's. Then, too, the notorious were invited to dine at the finest tables. Fanny Brice and mobster Nicky Arnstein became media idols. Bank robber Willie Sutton gave speeches at Rotary Club meetings across the nation. But then our admiration for the outlaw was tempered by moral and ethical strictures. Crimes of true villainy or violence were never condoned. As our sense of reality was undermined, so were our standards. In the 1930's, kidnapping was considered one of the most hei-

(Continued on Page 120)

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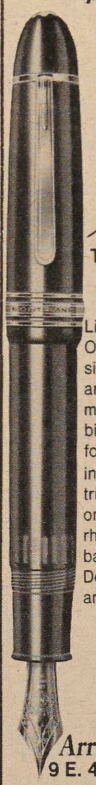

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CELEBRITY

Continued from Page 82

nous crimes. In the recent film, "King of Comedy," it is through kidnapping that the protaganist achieves his dream of becoming a celebrity.

Because our diets are so glutted with reprocessed images and events, any vestige of spontaneous reality can create a sensation. In 1970, the writer Tom Wolfe noted the phenomenon of "radical chic," whereby members of celebrity society associated with renegades in order to feel the shock of adrenalin that comes from experiencing the sensation of danger without any real threat. Wolfe equated this with the 19th-century French phenomenon of *nostalgie de la boue*, in which the aristocracy could be revitalized by taking on certain styles of the lower orders. But there has always been a clear understanding of who was the patron and who the patronized, and a certain moral code applied.

A recent poll conducted by Yankelovich, Skelly and White Inc. revealed that 63 percent of the American public is ambivalent about embracing a totally self-centered, self-fulfilled style of life, asserting that the old standards are still important. However, 80 percent admitted that they have been deeply affected by the new mentality and feel that their own need for sensation, novelty and ego fulfillment takes precedence over the needs of *all* other people.

□

Synthetic celebrities are, after all, but reflections of ourselves and in deifying them we are holding a mirror to our own foibles. This reflected image cannot illuminate, it can only destroy our capacity to take an interest in anything outside of ourselves. A society that exalts flights from reality sets a dangerous course. Only a culture that acknowledges power without moral obligation could spawn such celebrity monsters as Charles Manson and the Rev. Jim Jones. John Lennon's assassin, Mark David Chapman, wanted nothing more than forever to be identified with the singer he idolized. Now he is.

The meretricious aspects of synthetic celebrity have been consistently explored by the film director Martin Scorsese. The plot of his "Taxi Driver" revolves around Travis Bickle, a psychotic loser who sets out to assassinate a Presidential candidate but fails. He succeeds, however, in murdering three men. The movie's penultimate scene shows Bickle's bedroom wall covered with numerous newspaper articles about his heroism, as well as a fulsome note of gratitude from the parents of the young prostitute, played by Jodie Foster, whose pimp was one of those he murdered. In the closing frames of the film, a young woman who has been the object of Bickle's sexual desires, a woman who has previously ignored him, now notices him. As a celebrity, he has become worthy of her attention.

When asked why he attempted to assassinate President Reagan, John W. Hinckley Jr., a young drifter, said he did it "to impress Jodie Foster." Hinckley says he saw "Taxi Driver" 15 times and had absorbed its implicit message with stunning acuity: It isn't what you do, it's doing something that will impress enough to project you into the realm of celebrity.

Hinckley was judged not guilty by reason of insanity.

As our lives become more and more difficult to comprehend, we become so accustomed to retreating into our illusions that we forget we have created them ourselves. We treat them as if they were real and in so doing we make them real. Image supersedes reality. Synthetic celebrities become the personification of our hollow dreams. ■



Water 'needs a national authority'

Financial Times Reporter

NEED FOR a national water authority with wide-ranging powers is stressed in the ninth annual report of the Water Resources Board, published yesterday.

Referring to a previous similar recommendation, the Board, which lists the powers it thinks are required, says that nothing has happened since 1970 to modify its view.

"The National Water Council as now proposed will not in our view be equipped to do what needs to be done at the centre in the coming years."

But the Board says that its reservations about the proposed organisation at the centre do not detract from its firm support for the Government's proposals for reorganisation of the water services as a whole.

It also says the growing need to move water from one river basin to another over the whole of England and Wales will create operational problems between regional water authorities.

These problems will need an element of central co-ordination and decision. No provision had been made for the council to have an "adequate expert staff."

Keep business confidence in Ulster —Howell

BY DAVID WALKER

A RENEWED APPEAL for British businessmen to maintain confidence in the ability of Northern Ireland companies to meet contracts was issued yesterday by Mr. David Howell, Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office.

Commenting in London on the current campaign on behalf of Ulster being mounted throughout Britain, he claimed that business life was continuing to "go on at a great pace," in the six counties.

Only 12 companies had been permanently put out of business as a result of the present crisis and, in the main, productivity was continuing to rise and industrial relations were remaining good.

"The effects of terrorism have been amazingly small and the ability of companies to stay in business had been amazingly great," he declared.

Nonetheless, it was understandable that a lot of businessmen who might have otherwise invested in Northern Ireland needed stronger re-assurances about the situation there.

There were problems, particularly as far as establishing night shifts was concerned because of the justified fear that people had of being in the streets at night.

Alleged discrimination in jobs, "both imaginary and real," also created difficulties, as did the "shadow" of the Loyalist Association of Workers which threatened the structure of the official trade union movement.

The official unions themselves had proved "an amazing source of stability and strength" in Northern Ireland, he said.

High prices for clarets

BY EDMUND PENNING-ROWSELL

YESTERDAY'S WINE sale at Christies was the first of an unusually large number which it and Sothebys are packing into the next two pre-VAT months. In the knowledge that after April 1 vendors will pay higher auctioneer's commissions, and buyers—at least of trade-sold items—will pay VAT, an appreciable factor on wines selling at £200 a case or more.

The chief interest in Wednesday's auction of Bordeux wines was whether last autumn's high prices would be maintained and even increased.

For the general run of classed-growth clarets of the '59, '61, '62 and '64 vintages there was a considerable number of record prices, which might not look very high in relation to the extraordinary records of the first growths but appear to indicate another step towards closing the excessive gap between these two groups.

For example, magnums of Palmer '61 fetched a clear record of £190 per case of six, and Domaine de Chevalier '61 reached £105 per dozen bottles. Many other records were achieved for '61 classed-growths whose prices now range from at least £65 a case up to £80. Even so large a parcel as 47 dozen of Calon Segur '61 averaged between £68 and £70 per dozen.

Although no fresh records were made for the top-growth estates of this vintage, Mouton Rothschild (£310) and Margaux (£250) maintained their previous record prices. Otherwise it appeared that the first growths of al vintages were marking time after their big prices rises last year—a not unwelcome pause.

Tories put off school seminars

By Michael Dixon

TWO CONSERVATIVE conferences in Pembrokeshire schools have been postponed—apparently on the advice of the local education authority's director of education.

The news follows Mrs. Margaret Thatcher's rejection of Labour MPs' dmeands for an inquiry into the running of alleged politically-biased conferences in school time.

Mrs. Thatcher said that as Secretary for Education and Science she had no powers of direction over secular instruction in State schools. By custom, the decision as to whether a programme was biased and therefore unsuitable, was entrusted to the schoolteachers.

According to Mr. Vaughan Weale, Pembrokeshire Conservative agent, the initial approach to the schools in the county was

Shortages worry drop forgers

BY PETER CARTWRIGHT, MIDLANDS CORRESPONDENT

GROWING CONCERN about their ability to meet sharply increased demands from their chief customers in the vehicle industries because of steel shortages has led drop forgers to seek an urgent meeting with the special steels division of British Steel Corporation in Sheffield. This will probably be held next week.

The demand/supply position has changed dramatically in the past three months and both big and smaller drop forging plants are falling seriously behind component schedules being placed with them.

About 75 per cent. of the overall output of forged components goes into cars, trucks, tractors, off-road and other vehicles. Car makers have increased requirements for 1973, the tractor industry is running at about 35 per cent. higher volume than in the autumn and more recently truck producers have been began to rise sharply," a spokesman said.

In the past two years the division has been spending about £5m. on modernisation, particularly in improving the quality of carbon steel billets to meet criticism from drop forgers who were being pressed by customers to meet increasingly stringent specifications, particularly for export markets.

The modernisation has not included any increase in furnace capacity. In fact, the programme, not yet completed, and the extra emphasis on quality has resulted in some diminution of capacity.

SNOW REPORTS

	Depth (cms.) L	U	State of Piste	Weather	°F
Andermatt	8	110	Good	Fine	30
Excellent skiing above 2,000 m.					
Engleberg	30	120	Good	Fair	32
Skiing conditions excellent.					
Flaine	40	130	Good	Snow	34
Good skiing conditions.					
Iglis	10	25	Good	Fair	34
Fairly good conditions.					
Klosters	18	52	Good	Fine	32
Ideal skiing conditions.					
Lech	35	109	Good	Fine	23
Pistes much improved.					
Lenzerheide	20	45	Fair	Fine	32
Many pistes in excellent order.					
Mittenwald	30	110	Good	—	32
Oberammergau	13	28	Good	—	28
Oberstaufen	22	60	Good	—	19
SWITZERLAND					
Braunwald	15	60	Good	Sunny	28
Chateau d'Oex	15	40	Good	Sunny	28
Crans	5	90	Fair	Sunny	27
Grindelwald	20	40	Good	Sunny	27
Gstaad	20	50	Good	Sunny	23
Kandersteg	25	30	Good	Sunny	27
SCOTLAND					
Cairngorms: Some main runs complete, others broken. New snow on firm base. Lower slopes snow cover patchy.					

1-19-73

BOOKS

Sicilian splendours

BY C. P. SNOW

Princes Under the Volcano by Raleigh Trevelyan. Macmillan, £6.00. 531 pages

Small tight groups, closed societies, are a gift to a good writer. It takes a certain amount of judgment, and perhaps even more, luck, to find one which will work in literary terms. Proust had both judgment and luck with the Guermantes. So did Trollope with the Barsetshire clergy and also with the Whig grandees. On the other hand, quite a lot of talent has been wasted in attempts to extract interest from segments of the entertainment industry, though they are closed enough in all conscience. By and large, though, it is difficult to go wrong with a self-sufficient group.

Raleigh Trevelyan has discovered, or had the luck to stumble across, one entirely novel to most of us, and made very effective use of it. At times he has been overwhelmed by his material, which is not only strange but abnormally rich. Probably the second book which he promises, on a most restricted part of his archive, will be neater and in some ways more satisfying. Still, this one is good fun to be going on with, and has not had anything like adequate attention.

His subject is, believe it or not, English merchants in Sicily, who were beginning to make money in the early years of the last century. The English made money in improbable places in the 19th century, but this seems as improbable as most. Yet the Inghams, the Whitakers, to a lesser extent the Woodhouses, made a lot. They started with the sale of Marsala, at a time when there was enthusiasm, since damped down, for fortified wines. That was a stroke of good fortune.

A much greater stroke was that their chief pioneer, the grand old man of Anglo-Palermican trade, Benjamin Ingham, was a man with a streak of something like commercial genius. He would have made money anywhere at any time. As it was, he made millions of pounds (it isn't yet clear how many millions, and one is left waiting for the details of his operations, which are to be analysed in Mr. Trevelyan's next book), partly out of the wine business, partly out of entrepreneurial schemes in Sicily, where he owned the largest bank, but mainly—so it appears—from investments in the U.S. He visited America only once, but that didn't prevent him being the main stockholder in a couple of railroad companies.

He is by far the most impressive figure in the book, hard, competent, imaginative, not well educated, but much more reflective than inept 19th-century businessmen. His letters are clear and well-written. Incidentally, he merged into Sicilian society more sympathetically than any of the other merchants, learned the dialect, which is almost as much a separate language as Catalan, lived with a local duchess, and went through some sort of marriage form with her.

He had one really able adjutant, his second-in-command and nephew, Joseph Whitaker—not, on the evidence, so original a force, but ruthlessly competent. Between them, in the period 1806-61, when Ingham died, they made the first millions. Rather curiously, there doesn't appear to have been any further business acumen, or certainly application, in the families (Joseph had a dozen children) or their connections; but those two managed to accumulate capital substantial enough, and concerns which had enough momentum, to keep numbers of their successors living as very rich people for a hundred years.



Benjamin Ingham, aged eighteen in Paris, 1802

They deserved all the money they made. Sicily in their time (and later) was a dreadful place, like an Ireland administered by Kafka and decorated by Hieronymus Bosch. Visually it was beautiful. The family houses were sumptuous (though no one liked the emporium at Marsala itself). That was all there was on the credit side. On the other, irregular and ferocious lawlessness, later succeeded by the Mafia, which was organised lawlessness and a slight improvement: squalor and helpless poverty, which made Ireland of the same period look hopeful and opulent: miscellaneous insurrections against the Kingdom of Naples, miserably performed—the Sicilians didn't even fight for Garibaldi—but enough to mean that the English merchants got accustomed to being bombarded by the Neapolitans and to the routine of taking refuge in the English ships in the bay: much worse than all the rest, epidemic of cholera after epidemic, as frequent as influenza in England. The Protestant graveyard became full. In one hideous year, 15 per cent. of the Palermo inhabitants died.

Altogether, the setting of Lampedusa's novel, which is a great deal romanticised, wasn't a place to live in, except for the money rolling in. After Benjamin Ingham's death, his nephews and their wives became a singular enclave of Anglo-Italian plutocracy. Their stories form the second part of Mr. Trevelyan's book. Ingham was a capricious man, and his main estate, which must have been enormous, was left to Joseph Whitaker's second son, who promptly set up, like others in the family, as an English country gentleman. But more fully documented is the life of the third son, Pip, along with his wife and two daughters. The last three, all living to great ages, after histories of wretched ill-health, happened to be Mr. Trevelyan's introduction to the whole Whitaker society.

Pip married a girl who was half-Italian, half-Sicilian, and who strangely managed to seem more English than he was, six feet high, intensely snobbish, inhibted, vaguely aesthetic. In due course she wrote books, not good ones. Pip produced scholarly works on birds and archaeology, much better. Their marriage was probably not happy, though it endured for 50 years. Something went wrong with most of the Whitaker marriages: there were some unhealthy genes somewhere. This particular marriage wasn't helped by Tina's (Tina was Mrs. P) obsessive passion for her mother, which reads remarkably like Proust's for his, quite as sickly and disoriented. It was succeeded, odder still, by her elder daughter's having an exactly similar, though even more obsessive, passion for Tina herself.

Here we need much more in the way of medical and psychological information. Norina had neurotic asthma, as severe as Proust's, whenever she parted from her mother. Though both daughters were great heiresses, and were pursued with Italian realism by a good many fortune-hunters, only the elder married, and that not until she was 37; to a cocksparrow of a Sicilian adventurer who later became for a short time Mussolini's Minister of War.

For many years, Pip, Tina and the daughters lived sad, peripatetic lives of the very rich, Claridge's in the London season, Switzerland in the winter, their houses in Sicily for a month or two a year, where they entertained Edward VII, the Kaiser, the smartest of European society, what we should now call the Jet-set. None of this Whitaker family had the temperament to get whatever pleasures they might from great wealth. Poor Pip would slip in very late, to his wife's grandiloquent dinners, somewhere between the pudding and the savoury. Benjamin Ingham would have given a grim smile if he had known what money bought.

There was one peculiar feature. The Whitakers, not Pip so much as the women, seemed to have a bizarre fascination, which was reciprocal, for any international homosexual coterie. Lord Ronald Gower and his young men were always likely to be around, or Alix Yorke, or the Anglo-Venetians, Horatio Brown and his incumbent gondolier, or John Addington Symonds similarly accompanied, or miscellaneous Anglo-Florentines.

As the book proceeds, and the story of wealthy invalidism makes one more depressed (Tina, after major operations in middle-life, and, earlier than that, the certainty that she was fated to die early, survived till 98) one can't help feeling how triumphant the Baron de Charlus would feel, as he studied the Whitakers' guest list. "Trente pour cent! Trente pour cent!" That used to be his happy shout, estimating the number of heterosexuals in the male population. Chez Whitaker, he would have felt more than ever justified.

RICHARD M. DORSON P-1 Feb. 20, '75

The Professor of Dirty Jokes

NY Times

There is a sad misunderstanding in American higher education about the teaching and study of folklore. Were folklore called by a highfalutin name — or even by folkloristics, a term now making headway — it would encounter less suspicion and derision from university administrators and faculties.

"Are you a professor of dirty jokes?" colleagues sometimes ask. And indeed dirty jokes do provide the student of American folklore with some basic data, since they are a major folktale form, and should be collected and scrutinized with the same attention the Grimm Brothers gave to German peasant fairy tales.

The folklorist is interested in all forms of what might be called the underculture, in contrast with the elite, the uppercrust, the official, the formal culture. He studies folk literature as compared with art literature, folk history as against documentary history, folk arts and not the fine arts, folk religion rather than theologies, folk medicine and belief as against medical science — the list can be extended to all spheres of human activities.

This is not to say that the visible figures in history or the power elite are separated from folklore. Lincoln used folk anecdotes adroitly to make a political point.

Unlike the established subjects of history, English, anthropology, sociology and so on, folklore conjures up nonacademic images. The word suggests granny women, singing old-time "ballads" in the holler, grizzled mountaineers carving straight-backed chairs, peasants in gay costumes dancing in the village plaza.

For the commercialization of traditions I have coined the term "fakelore." Contrary to the general notion that the folklorist deals with the long ago and the far away, and the United States is preoccupied with Appalachia or the Mississippi Delta, today he is moving into the city and the contemporary scene.

Folklore mirrors the world of its own day, not that of a time long gone, and it throws a broad shaft of light on the preoccupations and fears, the dreams and desires of the people — the folk — whom the social scientists quantify and computerize.

Yet if folklore deals with humanity it can produce hard data, in the form of recorded texts and documented artifacts, which inform us about other peoples, our countrymen, our neighbors, ourselves.

Each historical era generates its own body of reflecting its own outlook. In the colonial period in American history, the witch and the devil harassed settlers concerned with the salvation of their souls and fearful of succumbing to evil.

In the later decades of the Twentieth Century our most pervasive legends fasten on the automobile, chief symbol of American affluence and mobility. "The evil genius of our time is the car," Studs Terkel was told in an interview by someone who was later killed by an auto.

Believed as true happenings, just as the presence of the devil and the magic of the witch were once believed, are the legends of the Death Car, the Killer in the Back Seat, the Vanishing Hitchhiker, and the Stolen Grandmother (whose corpse was strapped to the luggage rack of the honeymooning couple's car).



Richard M. Dorson, director of the Indiana University Folklore Institute, is author of "America in Legend: Folklore From the Colonial Period to the Present."

Historians heavily emphasize political elections in their analyses of the American mind, but the average person spends little time thinking about politics. What they are thinking about finds expression in sayings, superstitions, anecdotes, jokes, graffiti, jingles, epithets, whoppers, charms, practices — the materials of folklore.

Where folklore courses are offered, they have proved highly attractive to students. At Indiana University, the first United States university to offer a Ph.D. in folklore — there are only two others, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Texas — over 150 students seek higher degrees in folklore, the annual enrollment in all courses exceeds 2,000, and the ratio of students per faculty member is the highest of any department in the college of arts and sciences.

In today's climate of opinion, with the intense interest in ethnics, blacks, Chicanos, native Americans and other left-out groups of American history, the role of the folklorist in recording information about these cultures is crucial.

Slowly the word is getting around. The other day a professor of English at a remote university called me long-distance with some urgency. He was going into a department meeting to sell the hiring of a folklorist, as a means of strengthening the shrinking enrollment, and he wanted to know in a hurry what a folklorist did. Could he teach a course on ballads? "Yes." How about science fiction? "No."

Actually my caller knew enough to ask reasonable questions and pick up brains selectively. The briefing must have succeeded, for within a fortnight the university was advertising for a folklorist.

Thursday Highlights

Jerry Van Dyke and Dr. Charles Kelman. (90 minutes)

THRUSDAY MOVIES

★★**Incredible Mr. Limpet,"** 1 p.m., Channel 11. Don Knotts.

"City Beneath the Sea," 3:30 p.m., Channel 5. Robert Ryan, Anthony Quinn, Mala Powers.

insert paid ad

◆ **(7) ATTACK ON TERROR!! FBI vs KLAN PART 1**

"Attack on Terror: The FBI vs. the Ku Llux Klan," 9 p.m., Channel 7. Part One with Part Two at this time Friday. Wayne Rogers, Dabney Coleman, Ed Flanders, Andrew Duggan.

"Winchester for Hire," 11:45 p.m., Channel 7. Guy Madison, Edd Byrnes.

"Waikiki Wedding," 2:30 a.m., Channel 7. Bing Crosby, Shirley Ross.

◆ **Indicates paid adv.**

Late Thursday TV Changes

See Sunday TV Prevue

7 A.M.

(5) TODAY Panel on world trade and politics with Roger Hilsman, Richard J. Barnet and Zygmunt Nagorski Jr.; Percy Knauth, author of "A Season in Hell." Report on Little John, the water saver. (2 hours)

9 A.M.

(4) MORNING NEWS Guest: Dr. Bob Knopp of the Northwest Lipid Research Clinic discusses the problems the clinic is having getting research patients.

(5) SEATTLE TODAY Guest. Robert Rosefsky, author of "The Money Book." (60 minutes)

6:30 P.M.

(7) MIKE DOUGLAS Guests: Rip Taylor, John Amos, Dick Heatherton and Stan Kann. (60 minutes)

8 P.M.

(4) BARNEY MILLER Barney is worried about Wojehowicz's new romantic interest — a girl he arrested at "Village-A-Go-Go.

1 A.M.

(5) TOMORROW Discusses big city prostitution as big business with guests, the head of a call girl service, two call girls and an investigative reporter. (60 minutes)

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Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined

Three Policemen Are Honored For Capturing Rapis

Three Seattle police officers who last year captured a young man later convicted of raping three Madrona district women and assaulting two others were honored yesterday by the Seattle Exchange Club.

Accepting awards for heroism beyond the call of duty were Officers Roger Lutz and Manny Porto and Sgt. Larry Farrar — the trio which had patrolled the Madrona area on bicycles and finally on April 29 cornered their man, Larry Rogers Jones, 22, near the Madrona bathing beach.

Jones' capture had marked an end to a series of reported crimes which had haunted the Madrona area since December of 1973.

After presentation of plaques to the officers, Sgt. Farrar told Exchange Club members of the department's earlier unsuccessful attempts to get th man who had terrorize Madrona women fo months.

There were weeks of u ing seven to eight polic patrol cars in the area then several weeks mor of using unmarked cars.

On April 9, despite th motor surveillance, th rapist struck again.

This time, Farrar an Company decided on a di ferent tactic.

"We moved in on bicy cles wearing grubby clothes, blue jeans an tennis shoes," Farra said. "We peddled aroun between 4:30 and 9 a.m each morning."

The Exchange Club als voted to award its month ly restitution - to - victim fund to the Heidi Peterso Memorial Fund in memo ry of the 5-year-old Seattl child who was kidnappe from her home and mur dered.

Women Plead Guilty In Kidnap, Death

Two Seattle women accused in connection with the kidnap and death of a Sumner man pleaded guilty yesterday before Federal Judge Walter T. McGovern.

The women, Heidi Renea Buce, 20, and Frances Patricia Mace, 25, were named in an indictment charging conspiracy to kidnap.

Louis D. Thiederman, 43, of Federal Way, faces a charge of abducting Clarence E. Legitt, 34, who died of a heart ailment Feb. 1 after being drugged, beaten, bound and transported to Oregon.

Thiederman, charged in the same case but in a separate indictment, pre-

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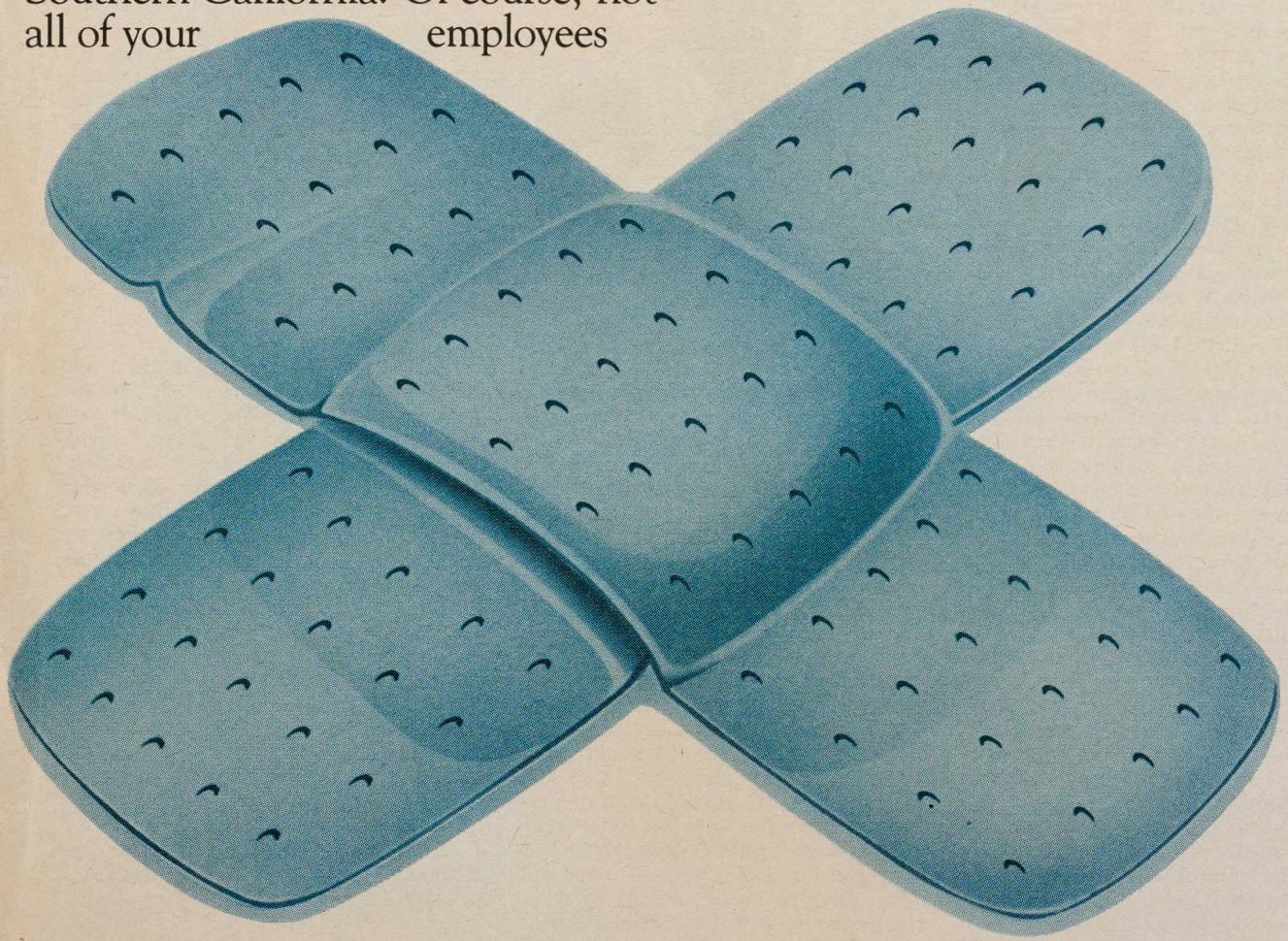
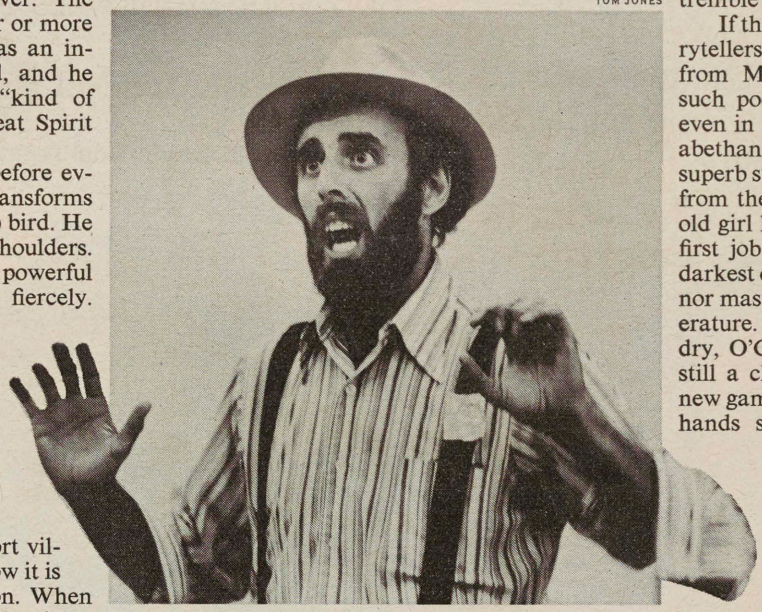


In Maine: Storytellers Cast Their Ancient Spell

Once upon a summer's morning, on the stage of the Opera House at Rockport, Me., a lanky bearded man in striped shirt and suspenders, looking as if he were off a potato farm, sits on a piano bench beneath an 1890s-style white-and-gilt proscenium arch. At the First Annual North Atlantic Festival of Storytelling, Michael Parents is speaking of creation.

The story Parents tells is from an Iroquois legend, explaining how birds got their song. God, it seems, decided on a fair and just competition. Each bird would fly upward as far as it could, and at that level where its lungs burst and it could fly no higher, it would hear the song it was destined to sing forever. The higher the level, the sweeter or more powerful the song. This was an ingenious idea, even for God, and he was, Parents points out, "kind of proud of himself, in a Great Spirit sort of way."

Then, suddenly, right before everybody's eyes, Parents transforms himself from storyteller into bird. He sinks his neck into his shoulders. He flaps invisible but powerful wings. He crosses his eyes fiercely. His hooked nose curves even more sharply above his downturned mouth. With pride, with paranoia, he twitches his head from side to side. He becomes an eagle, the odds-on favorite to win God's most majestic sound. It may be Sunday morning in Rockport village in the year 1981, but now it is also the first day of creation. When Parents' unsuspecting eagle—with a thrush stowed away on its back—lifts off majestically at the upward wave of the storyteller's hand, the audience lifts off too, out the window of the Opera House, above the sun-dappled boats lying at anchor in Rockport harbor, beyond time, beyond space. Somewhere off in a primeval woods everybody's inner ear hears a sneaky, undeserving little hitchhiker of a thrush trill the loveliest of songs.



TOM JONES

Parents soaring like an eagle beyond time, beyond space

The exposition, quiet as a Sunday-school teacher's lesson, is over. The storyteller, in the fullness of his craft, has struck, and the spell is on, as surely as it was when Homer conjured up a fleet of ships on a wine-dark sea bound for the walls of Troy.

Again and again, during the two days and two nights of storytelling, the small miracle happens. There is a perfect gesture, an eloquent word, a scrap of song or dance, and the imagination soars. "Storytellers," said that old Celtic taleteller William Butler Yeats, "make us remember what mankind would have been like, had not fear, and the failing will and the laws of nature tripped up its heels."

It would be too much of a storyteller's exaggeration to suggest that in the middle of an electronic giant's blink—presto! —the art of the storyteller is about to recapture the castle. But certainly more things are happening on the stage of the Rockport Opera House, and elsewhere, than the programmers of the age of television ever dreamed of. This year of the First Annual North Atlantic Festival is also the year of the First Storytelling Festival in New York City, the Second Annual Storytelling Festival in St. Louis and the Third Annual New Mexico Storytelling Festival in Albuquerque. Something called the National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling in Jonesboro, Tenn., numbers over 800 members. Storytelling has become a respectable course in the college curriculum, without its old academic euphemism, the "Oral Literary Tradition."

Ten years ago, a storyteller was somebody who sat cross-legged on a classroom floor with a copy of *The Brothers Grimm,* locked in a losing battle with the attention span of first-graders. Under the ceiling fans in Rockport, 404 adults perch on folding wooden chairs for 12½ hours, charmed by every possible kind of story from every possible kind of storyteller.

Bob Barton, from Toronto, favors contemporary fantasies, steeped in rue and irony, like *The Porcelain Man* by Richard Kennedy. With his bemused schoolboy's face, Barton roams the stage, bending at the waist to beseech from his listeners the sympathy due this magically animated figure of China who—would you believe it?—falls in love but, alas, keeps smashing himself into pieces and being reassembled as a porcelain horse or, worse, a dinner set just before he can properly go awooing.

Jackie Torrence, originally out of Granite Quarry, N.C., gives Appalachian Mountain tales her own Earth Mother Afro twist. Eyes rolling, hands fluttering, laughter spilling up and over, she can jolly an audience as nobody else. But watch out for the little sting afterward! Uncle Remus is not safe in her company. When she turns into a frog, warning of the approach of Br'er Rabbit, lily pads a mile away tremble at Torrence's harrumph.

If there is a genius among the storytellers of 1981, it is J. O'Callahan, from Marshfield, Mass., a man of such poetry, wit and elegance that, even in a rugby shirt, he seems Elizabethan. O'Callahan writes his own superb stories. *The Herring Shed,* told from the point of view of a 14-year-old girl learning the mysteries of her first job in Nova Scotia during the darkest days of World War II, is a minor masterpiece of coming-of-age literature. As she strings up her fish to dry, O'Callahan's young narrator is still a charming child, playing at a new game. When she learns, with her hands smelling of herring, of the death of her brother on a European battlefield, O'Callahan in one exquisitely touching moment transforms the girl into a woman.

At intermission the audience streams out of the Opera House into afternoon sunlight. If you stroll through the center of the village, past the New Leaf Bookshop, over the bridge above Goose River, you come to a gray colonial across the street from Enos Ingraham's general store. This is the home of David Outerbridge, an independent publisher and organizer of the festival. In the Outerbridge living room, half a dozen off-duty storytellers talk about their calling with nearly the same pleasure that they tell stories.

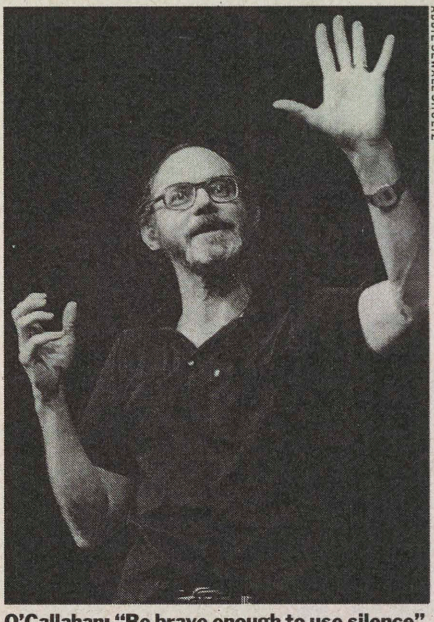
Barton has a confession to make: "Sometimes I control a story too tightly. I sit on it. I'm holding it back. Then the moment comes when it flies—when it pulls you along behind it. That's a wonderful feeling. The story tells you."

There are polite disagreements about technique. Some encourage improvisation. Some stick strictly to their text. Some argue that the first law of storytelling is to keep up a flow of words. O'Callahan, who believes that storytelling is a kind of music, with the storyteller as the instru-

ment, has advised in print: "Be brave enough to use silence."

But the one thing they all agree on is that storyteller and audience somehow constitute a single being, as inseparable as two lovers. One goes nowhere without the other. Either storyteller and audience are borne up together, like Parents' eagle and thrush, or else they are left earthbound together, stranded, waiting for the small miracle to happen.

It is in the tradition of storytellers to be paid by food and lodging. The storyteller of the 1980s does better, though as yet baseball players need not worry. Torrence, with a repertoire of some 450 stories, makes a living by giving as many as 600 performances a year. (Storytellers get paid anywhere from $100 to $750 a day.) Most of the storytellers have to hold down a job. Barton works for the Ontario Ministry of Education. Even O'Callahan

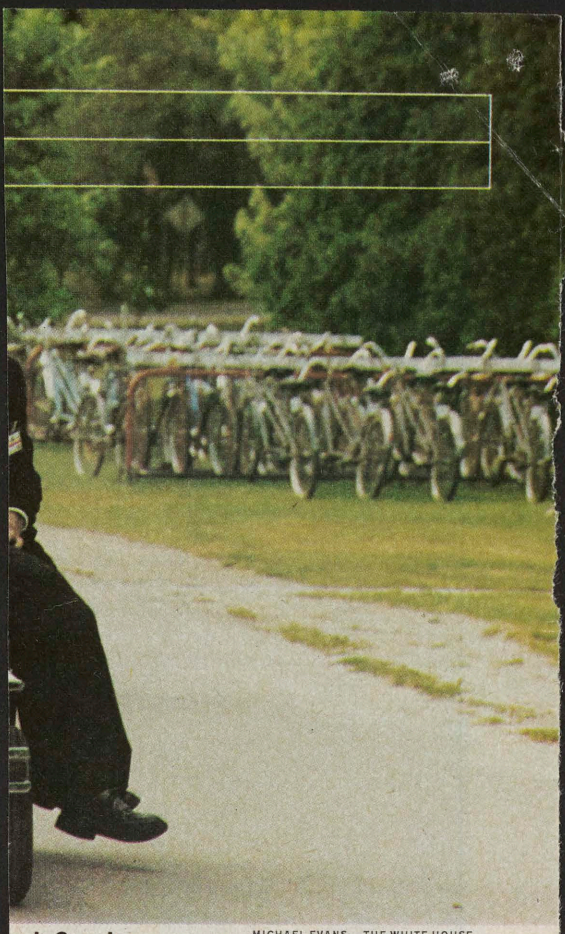


ABBIE SEWALL SHULTZ

O'Callahan: "Be brave enough to use silence"

keeps a base on the faculty of the Lesley Graduate School of Cambridge, Mass. But the shoptalk is less about any collective or individual success of the storyteller in the near future than it is about the price of such success. "I remember what happened to folk music in the 1950s," Barton reminds everybody soberly.

Pure is a word used with some regularity. Outerbridge plans to produce a pilot series for television, but he is wary of gimmicks. "We won't have an enactment," he promises. The rules of the game are clearly understood. No antic chorus, no laugh track—not even an introduction by Alistair Cooke—can really make Parents' eagle soar. Parents sums up the ancient contract: "A live person is looking at you and telling a story. That's a pretty arresting thing." Outside, the late afternoon shadows are beginning to lengthen. Somewhere an eagle flies. Somewhere a thrush sings. It is time to get back to the stories. *—By Melvin Maddocks*



on in Canada

MICHAEL EVANS—THE WHITE HOUSE

ng Seven

a dialogue of promise

Somewhat more credibly, European participants credited Reagan's low-key and amiable personality with easing tensions. Many of them had openly wondered beforehand whether the President knew enough about global affairs to represent a superpower in such select company. His steady, unabrasive performance erased many of their doubts.

"Reagan turned out to be a very good communicator, even with some elements of a statesman," said one senior European official. Shrugged an Italian participant: "He's such an attractive leader —what can you do?" Added Allan MacEachen, Canada's Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister: "We were genuinely impressed with his obvious conviction about what he is doing. There is no vacillation in his approach, no self-doubting. Through his friendliness, a lot of heat was removed from the summit." Reagan, said Italian Premier Giovanni Spadolini, "speaks in anecdotes and proverbs, and in this he reminds one a bit of Khrushchev." Reagan might not have relished the comparison.

Reagan was well briefed for the summit; he forcefully advocated his Administration's positions in the conference's

Guardian 1-18-73

BOOKS OF THE DAY

Wilson's Russia

by JOHN BAYLEY

A WINDOW ON RUSSIA, by Edmund Wilson (Macmillan, £3.50).

IN "The Bronze Horseman," Pushkin imagines Peter the Great announcing that the foundation of his city would open a window for Russia on to Europe. With a scarcely less imperial flourish Edmund Wilson offers us here the fruits of his experience of Russian masterpieces, from Pushkin to Solzhenitsyn. Most of the pieces, including the notorious chiding of Nabokov for his "Eugene Onegen" translation, have appeared in periodicals over the last twenty-five years, and were assembled for publication by Wilson just before his death.

The result is a book worthy of succession to "Axel's Castle" and "The Triple Thinkers." Wilson turned criticism into an essentially narrative art; his flow carries us irresistibly along and his immense knowledgeability is aggressive but never self-justifying. The longest and most interesting essay is on Turgenev, the tale of whose disablingly harrowing childhood is recounted in masterly fashion.

"Tolstoy had been an orphan, exhilaratingly self-dependent; he had inherited his estate at nineteen, with no hateful memories, and during the years of his rather wild freedom and his service in the Crimean war it had been kept for him as a home by an affectionate aunt whom he loved. When he married, he founded a family that was something completely his own. His property of Yasnaya Polyana was a romance he was always inventing, as he had invented—out of old family papers and legends—the idyll of "War and Peace." Even in his later phase of pretending to abdicate his status of landowner, nobleman and popular writer, he was reserving for himself *le beau rôle* Put Spasskoye for Turgenev was a block of his past; he had grown up in it, been maimed in it, escaped from it. . . . As he had never been at home at Spasskoye, so he was never really to feel at home anywhere, and even in the freedom of Europe he re-established his mother in the person of Pauline Viardot, a formidable Spanish gipsy, who carried her household with a very high hand and cost Turgenev a good deal of suffering."



Edmund Wilson: "... turned criticism into a narrative art."

That is a just and important contrast, and Wilson does not spoil it by insisting too much—as he once did in the case of Dickens and Kipling—that he only can draw the bow who exhibits the incurable wound. He is surprisingly reverent about Turgenev, chiefly because his study of Russian has shown him the inward texture of the famous style. I feel myself that no really great Russian writer cultivates style in the Western and Flaubertian way that Turgenev did: and though, up to a point, he "succeeded," is he not a case of something that must happen far more often—only we don't hear of it—than the triumph of a writer over childhood troubles, and that is his defeat and permanent diminishment by them?

But the west took Turgenev to its heart: Carlyle wept over the heart rending "Mumu," in which Turgenev's mother significantly appears as the cruel landowner; and we hear too that Turgenev, a fascinating conversationalist, managed to reduce Carlyle to helpless laughter by relating how his prowess as a sportsman was impeded by the fact that he often saw spots before his eyes, one of which he had once fired at in mistake for a hare. It is impossible to imagine Tolstoy telling that story, or Dostoevsky for that matter; but Turgenev was genuinely emancipated from their particular kinds of Russian touchiness and pride. Moreover, in the age of Dickens and Thackeray he could retell a heart-rending tale quite simply and factually and without any recourse to sentiment, and yet he does not—unlike Flaubert and Merimée—ever strike one as deliberately deadpan or cold.

Wilson's essay on Gogol's points out that his style—the notorious equivocation and evasiveness—is really an inspired variety of that "viscous prose which, for reasons difficult to understand, was so popular in the nineteenth century." Its affiliations are with Lamb as well as with Hawthorne and Melville (Wilson thinks the most personal nightmare of Gogol his account of a voice calling him on a completely calm and sunny day, but I would hazard a guess that Gogol had heard of De Quincey's essay on the knocking in "Macbeth" and the terror inherent in all natural contrast). Wilson's conclusion is typically pithy and true: the "point" of Gogol is "the sudden falling-out of the bottom of some impressive construction that we have seen being elaborately built."

Equally incisive is his comment that Chekhov's most common and most odious characters, whom the Soviet calls typical products of the old regime, in fact uncannily anticipate "in their grovelling before authority, their half-baked education and their vulgar ambitions" the people who run Russia today.

If Wilson had a fault it was being a bit too brisk and no-nonsense with his authors, a commandant who barks out the instruction that Tyutchev's poetry is "a little too weepy for our taste," and that the explorer of Russian literature often "comes across something clammy that makes him instinctively withdraw his hand." His other fault—where foreign literatures were concerned—was an undue pugnacity and self-assertiveness. Formidable as was his reading and linguistic knowledge he did not carry it exactly lightly: his attack on Nabokov's translation seems more like one armed knight challenging another—Tweedledum against Tweedledee—than a scholarly remonstrance.

Doughty blows were given on both sides, as readers of the **New York Review of Books** and **Encounter** will remember, but my own obstinate feeling, after rereading the tirade, is that Nabokov—in spite of his odd and flippant vocabulary—did none the less breathe more of the gaiety and sophistication of Pushkin into his immaculately literal translation than any other version has accomplished, and Wilson's own are somewhat heavy handed. Is not this:

Winter! The peasant celebrating
In a flat sledge inaugurates the track;
his naggy, having sensed the snow,
shambles at something like a trot

more agile and *alive*—supremest Pushkinian characteristics—than this:

Winter! The peasant, rejoicing,
Breaks a new track with his sledge;
His poor horse, sniffing the snow,
Attempting a trot, plods through it

—granted the accuracy of both?

EDMUND Wilson's **To the Finland Station**, the best popular history of the rise of socialism, has been reissued with a new preface in which the author a little qualifies his approval of Lenin and pooh-pooh's the claims which David McLellan and others have made for the "Grundrisse" of 1857-58. ("To trace Marx's intellectual development on the basis of earlier unpublished material seems rather futile, an exercise in academic one-upmanship.")—Macmillan are charging £5.95 for this new edition.

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BOOKS

The New Yorker
Feb. 8, '68

Thrown Voices

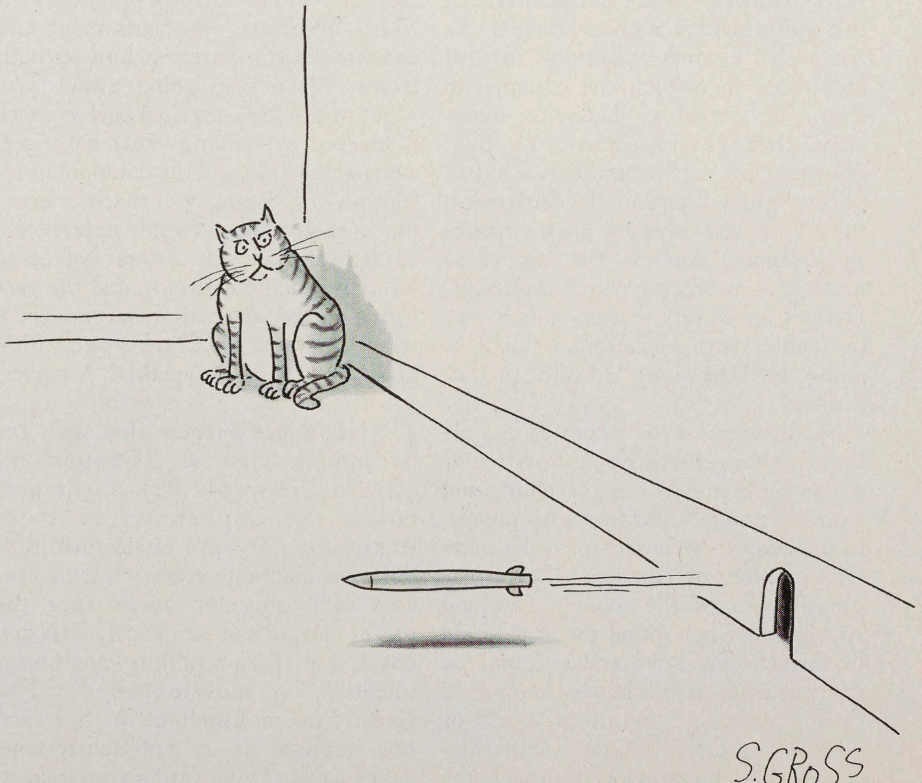
A VENTURESOME soul, the Australian writer Thomas Keneally has set novels in the Antarctic, in Nazi-occupied Poland, on the battlefields of the American Civil War, and in medieval France. With his new book, "The Playmaker" (Simon & Schuster; $18.95), he has gone himself one better by propelling his characters into outer space—or, anyway, to a world that seems utterly otherworldly. There, under a rearranged firmament, one encounters unclassifiable flora, including "a steely tree . . . which when struck with the axe either took a gap out of the blade or began to bleed a blood-red sap," and fauna whose unsettling, antic singularities "mocked the Ark." The place is Australia, in the year 1789. Keneally's cast of characters—plucked from surviving records of Australia's first penal colony, which was launched from England in a spirit of criminological experimentation in May, 1787—is in fact doubly a cast of characters, since the book details the first production of a scripted play on "this reverse side of the mirror of space."

So impossibly distant at that time was Australia from England that most of the transplanted convicts never expected to see their homeland again. To reach their new continent-sized prison (one in which walls were strangely and—given the rigors of the antipodean climate—sorely missing), they had to complete "eight moons of navigation . . . if you were lucky, a year or more if not." The reference to moons rather than months is one of the characteristically playful and uninsistent ways in which Keneally likens the eighteenth-century felon, hunkered in the hold of an English sailing ship, to the contemporary astronaut, fitted and strapped into the womb of a space capsule. Australia is variously a "new extreme of space," a "distant sidereal shore," a "convict moon," a "bibulous star," and a "penal planet." (Keneally, who likes wordplay, savors such near-anagrams; a key chapter is entitled "Curse or Cure.")

The play is "The Recruiting Officer," an English comedy that was "written some eighty years past by a sad young playwright called George Farquhar." Farquhar turns out to be an almost inevitable choice for a theatrical première, since at that time his was the one play in all of Australia of which two copies existed. Its casting and direction lie in the hands of Lieutenant Ralph Clark, a historical figure, whose journal and letters Keneally acknowledges in an Author's Note. But exactly where the naked facts of history slip into the clothed fictions of the imagination is, happily, impossible to discern; in "The Playmaker," research and invention are woven seamlessly.

As an officer of the force responsible for overseeing and, if necessary, disciplining the convict population, Clark feels at once unnerved by the new society's potential for mayhem and insurrection and thrilled by the heady possibility that communal life—even among those cast aside as reprobates—might be studied and shaped along rehabilitating lines. Clark proves a winsome hero—naïve, enterprising, timorous, and (increasingly, as rehearsals begin and the play coheres before his eyes) giddy with a sense of the redemptive powers of art. It seems that all the convicts yearn to be actors. In this harsh, open-ended new land, the comfortingly straitened borders of the stage offer a sort of magic box: within its confines, the settlement's young hangman, purified of dark associations, steps forth as a clean-gloved aging squire; and a Soho prostitute who began selling her body at the age of nine becomes what she has always pretended to be, a woman of secure social standing.

Keneally's subject matter is so colorful and so rich with suggestions that one marvels a little that his book turns out successfully; certainly temptations toward authorial overindulgence must have been strong. One can see how a primitive equation might have been born in the writer's creative unconscious (Sprawling New Continent = Sprawling New Novel) and the aesthetic sin of gigantism have resulted. Instead, Keneally offers a tale that is ample but ultimately delimited, and more implicative than exhaustive. Obviously, any novel that chronicles the founding of a society is apt to raise questions about humanity's essential nature and the psychological roots of law and ceremony—and will do so the more pointedly when the populace in question consists largely of felons, outcasts, and lunatics. But for the most part Keneally's philosophical queries and observations stick close to the turns of a neatly crafted plot. His touch is light. Sombre, profound questions about religion, for example, arise through the hapless figure of the Reverend Dick Johnson, who arms himself against the damned by means of



tracts with titles like "Advice Against Swearing."

Ralph Clark runs afoul of Reverend Johnson, initially because the Reverend deplores the mild bawdiness of "The Recruiting Officer" and later because Clark cohabits with a convict, Mary Brenham, who at the age of thirteen was sentenced to spend seven years in Australia for stealing thirty-nine shillings' worth of clothing. Clark is married. But just how bound he ought to consider himself while separated from an English wife who lives almost beyond the reach even of correspondence is one of the questions that he mulls over in his dogged, circumspect way. Is it not possible, he asks himself, that the sacrosanct ties of matrimony no longer obtain here on the "dark, unredeemed side of things"? And if the Reverend grandly banishes Clark to hell for his infidelities, most of Clark's fellow-officers are tolerant of such makeshift alliances. It is only a matter of time before, pair after pair, convict and keeper lie down together. From the loins of Lawbreaker and Lawmaker a vigorous nation will spring.



Yet England, notwithstanding its distance, has an uncanny way of reasserting its claims. Clark is afflicted by nightmares in which his wife wanders through a snowy field in her wedding dress. Clark's best friend, Harry Brewer, cannot put behind him the unpunished embezzlements he committed against a London firm of architects, for which, he explains to Clark, he remains "hangable material." Harry sees ghosts. In fact, ghosts of one sort or another, English or aboriginal, frequent the settlement; the empty new territory proves spookily populous. And, in the face of so much that is bizarre and inexplicable, Harry's amusingly matter-of-fact way of dealing with visitations ("He'll be along. He'll be along") begins to look rational.

Much of the book's comedy is gallows humor—literally. A "particular native fig tree between the men's and women's camp," outfitted with nooses, overshadows the landscape; poignantly, a number of convicts who miraculously escaped the rope in England voyage halfway around the globe only to infract new laws and succumb at last to what is variously known as "hemp disease," "wryneck day," or "gallows quinsy." Clark in time discovers that the convicts approach the ritual of a hanging with complex expectations, and that a comely or ironic performance from the condemned as he steps forth toward another type of stage is something to be applauded and remembered. Schooled in duplicity, the felon comes naturally by his love of the theatrical.

Keneally, who is in his early fifties and has written nearly twenty books, most of them novels, darts in "The Playmaker" from revelation to revelation and viewpoint to viewpoint with palpable confidence. Somewhat surprising, then, are the difficulties the reader may experience in seeking to keep straight all the book's characters. Admittedly, a novel that strives, as "The Playmaker" does, for an archival atmosphere is likely to invoke names freely (nearly a hundred settlers are identified before the novel closes), and some confusion is almost unavoidable. But in a number of Keneally's smaller novels the reader undergoes similar confusions. One must conclude that Keneally has not fully mastered that process whereby a skilled novelist, like a good host at a party, carries out the crucial, ongoing business of introductions and reintroductions while deftly steering the conversation elsewhere. But whatever momentary perplexities "The Playmaker" may engender, the reader will follow with eagerness Clark's progress with "The Recruiting Officer," and also his offstage progress with Mary Brenham. Disappointment and possible disaster threaten him on both fronts. Plans keep going awry. The night of the long-awaited performance is marked by, among other surprises, a one-sided fight and the triumphant irruption of a company of marines bearing in their midst a freshly apprehended rapist. That the actors can carry on under such conditions, and the performance be deemed a success, is a tribute to Ralph Clark—and, ultimately, to "The Playmaker" 's maker.

ONE might suppose that with the publication of "Chatterton" (Grove Press; $17.95), his fourth novel, the English writer Peter Ackroyd would have established himself as a placeable stylist. But he creates such singular books that the reader categorizes him warily. His first novel, a brief, entertaining, and finally unsatisfying mosaic called "The Great Fire of London," in less than two hundred pages ambitiously convoked a dwarf who runs an amusement arcade, a professor of Victorian social history, a Canadian homosexual who cruises London's public lavatories, various bureaucrats, a madman, an earnest filmmaker engaged in shooting Dickens' "Little Dorrit," and a young woman (not acquainted with the filmmaker) who becomes possessed by Little Dorrit's spirit. In Ackroyd's second novel, "The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde," he took up the awesome challenge of recounting Wilde's personal life in the first person, and for the most part pulled it off, glittering epigrams and all.

His third novel, "Hawksmoor," proved more daring still. Its chapters alternate between an eighteenth-century architect named Nicholas Dyer, who is overseeing the construction of a London church, and Nicholas Hawksmoor, a detective chief superintendent of New Scotland Yard, who is investigating a string of murders in old London churches. Mysteriously, despite the gulf of time between the two men, their lives convolve. Each of these fictional characters is linked as well—one by profession, the other chiefly by name—to a historical figure, the great English Baroque architect Nicholas Hawksmoor, whose churches remain among London's greatest glories. Dyer, who narrates his own story, reveals himself from the outset as a clandestine Satanist, encoding his complex, imposing structures with cabalistic symbols and "securing" them with the blood sacrifice of a virgin boy. Here is Dyer unashamedly explaining himself in the first chapter:

> The miseries of the present Life, and the Barbarities of Mankind, the fatall disadvantages we are all under and the Hazard we run of being eternally Undone, lead the True Architect not to Harmony or to Rationall Beauty but to quite another Game. Why, do we not believe the very Infants to be the Heirs of Hell and Children of the Devil as soon as they are disclos'd to the World? I declare that I build my Churches firmly on this Dunghil Earth and with a full Conception of Degenerated Nature.

Any difficulties the reader may have with this prose soon disappear; almost before one's eyes—in a process similar to what a theatregoer experiences in a good performance of Shakespeare—the strangeness of the language drops away. By the end of the novel, the reader's gaze drifts fluently and pleasurably over a passage like this one:

> Some children in Blew jackets and Kite-Lanthorned Caps ran past me: *You will be dead before I return* was my Thought as I stared into the Entry of Black Step Lane. With an even Pace I walked forward and at last my Church was rising above me:

like the Noise of Thunder it struck even my own Spirit with an air of Greatnesse beyond any thing I had seen before.

No doubt a philologist might find here things to cavil with, but, whether or not Ackroyd's linguistic fabrications are impeccably true to the eighteenth century, they have an irresistible propulsion and internal consistency. One hesitates to call this feat a tour de force only because that term often suggests something cool and unemotional; the fact is that Nicholas Dyer is a splendidly creepy monologuist in a splendidly, thoroughly creepy book. With its playful erudition, its scumbling of the line dividing history and fiction, and its daring authorial readiness not only to journey into the past but to fabricate "authenticating" documents immediately upon arrival, "Hawksmoor" recalls those ghost stories with which M. R. James (perhaps the only Englishman to rival his namesake and contemporary Henry James as a master of the ghost story) regularly entertained his Cambridge colleagues at candlelit Christmas Eve festivities. Unfortunately, and rather puzzlingly, the chapters of "Hawksmoor" set in modern London lack color and self-assurance. It almost seems that Ackroyd feels more at home in the eighteenth-century city than in the contemporary metropolis.

A sibling to "Hawksmoor" in many ways, "Chatterton" likewise displays unexpected strengths and shortcomings. It, too, leaps around from age to age, from fact to fiction. At its core is the poet Thomas Chatterton, who died by his own hand in London in the year 1770. Although only seventeen when he swallowed arsenic, Chatterton had secured for himself an enduring reputation as perhaps the most famous hoaxer and forger in English literature. Much about his life remains a puzzle, but it is known that when he was seven his mother gave him some scraps of documents found in the muniments room of St. Mary Redcliffe Church in Bristol, where his father had once been a chorister. These enchanted the boy, who later went on to "discover" in the same church a cache of poems composed by one Thomas Rowley, a fifteenth-century monk. Although both the monk and the poems were entirely of Chatterton's devising—he was, like Ackroyd, a natural pasticheur—they managed to hoodwink for a time a number of eminent readers, including Horace Walpole.

A riddling life, then, and one yet

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more wondrous in Ackroyd's novel, where the reader learns that the poet's death, too, may have been a sort of forgery. Ackroyd's modern protagonist, Charles Wychwood, who is himself a struggling poet, uncovers evidence that Chatterton not only simulated suicide but went on to write many of the masterpieces that history has attributed to Blake, Gray, Cowper. It grows dawningly, dizzyingly clear in Charles' mind that "half the poetry of the eighteenth century" was probably written by Chatterton, and that he was "the greatest poet in history."

In this ingeniously involuted novel the reader learns, however, that even a forger's work may be forged. One comes away from "Chatterton" feeling that nothing is real—with perhaps the exception, as in "Hawksmoor," of the intercourse of spirits, the disembodied play of mind with mind across the centuries. Thomas Chatterton and Charles Wychwood share some form of communication. As the novel shuttles between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, the two men conduct an unwitting conversation: they echo each other, speaking in fragments that yield a coherent dialogue only when the walls of time dissolve (as they do at the arsenic-clouded, visionary close of the novel) and temperament stands adjacent to temperament.

Underlying Ackroyd's choice—and Keneally's—of an eighteenth-century setting is a desire to unearth some of the roots of contemporary behavior. But while Keneally inclines toward the naturalistic, perhaps reflecting an impulse on the eve of his country's Bicentennial to invest its sketchy forebears with a tactile reality, Ackroyd drives toward the supernatural, as though he felt an urge to glimpse the real by means of a dematerialization. Characters in "The Playmaker" solidify as time goes on. Those in "Hawksmoor" and "Chatterton" grow fragmentary—become beings whose missing portions quest through another era. In some pointedly mysterious manner, Nicholas Dyer *is* Officer Hawksmoor and Thomas Chatterton *is* Charles Wychwood.

But if "Chatterton" shares the spiritualism of "Hawksmoor" it diverges radically from its predecessor in seeking to become—for all the tragedies it contains—a comic novel. Unfortunately, Ackroyd doesn't seem all that funny—in any case, he gets less funny as he goes along. His characters indulge in relentless, and finally irksome, wisecrackery. As a dark comedian, he possesses neither Evelyn Waugh's piquant ominousness (" 'You will not find your father greatly changed,' remarked Lady Moping, as the car turned into the gates of the County Asylum") nor Kingsley Amis's deft, delightful pseudo-clumsiness with language ("He must be out of his mind to be talking to a girl like this like this"). When Ackroyd is speaking in his own voice (or, at least, what is far nearer to his own voice than to that of Wilde or Dyer or Chatterton), he succumbs to a number of tics, including a throat-clearing overuse of "then" and "and then." The first two chapters provide a choice pair of unhappily characteristic examples:

> And then she added, not able to stop herself smiling, "You look like a dog's dinner."
>
> "Oh yum yum. What's for tea?" Both women laughed, and then sighed deeply.

> It was then that the truth came to him. "He faked his own death." At that moment the telephone rang, and both men clung to each other for a moment in panic. Then Charles laughed.

Naturally, one would like to treat these as trifling oversights, but it is impossible to do so when, as in the second example, the passage represents a climacteric in the narration.

Somewhere in the difficult reconciliation between Ackroyd the prestidigitator and Ackroyd the fumbler resides the quicksilver essence of this admirable and frustrating novelist. If "Chatterton" proves something of a disappointment in the end, the book also enhances one's impression that Peter Ackroyd, who is not yet forty, is a liberally gifted young man, whose originality—curiously and engagingly enough—intertwines with a flair for mimicry. He is a virtuoso ventriloquist, who throws his voice not only from place to place but from era to era. And if his own delivery falters now and then, his dummy speaks with all the cool, clear, vatic force that one would hope to hear when, glass eyes blazing, a quickened construction of wood and paint finds its voice at last.

—Brad Leithauser

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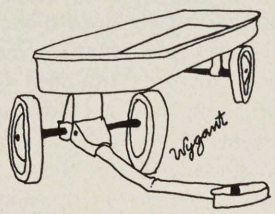
RAISED EYEBROWS DEPARTMENT

[*From the Post*]

Paris—Bic S.A., the French maker of disposable pens and lighters, said it agreed to give up control of its Dim S.A. subsidiary to Sara Lee Corp. of the U.S. Dim makes the leading brand of ladies tight in France.

give it lightness and a trace of enchantment. And John Cusack's performance is distinctive enough for you to think you might remember the name Lloyd Dobler—that he stands for something, like Jacques Tati's Mr. Hulot. There's a sequence with its own pop magic: when Lloyd feels he's lost Diane he tries to puzzle out what happened—he talks into a tape recorder, going over the events of their time together, as he drives through all the places they went to. And I've never seen anything like the image of the forlorn Lloyd serenading Diane with a boom box: he stands in the secluded area outside her house holding the box over his head, with Peter Gabriel's "In Your Eyes" resonating among the trees.



Some of the film's best characters and scenes could be mistaken for throwaways. There's the girl (Lili Taylor) who comes to the graduation party with her guitar, prepared to sing sixty-five songs she has written about the perfidiousness of the ex-boyfriend who drove her to attempt suicide. Crowe lets the scene run long enough for us to see the self-dramatizing elation that's crowding out her self-pity—she's burstingly angry that she was cheated on, and she wants the world to know that she's alive now and making music. Crowe—he wrote "Fast Times at Ridgemont High"—keeps faith with teen-agers; he doesn't generalize about them (or about the older generation, either).

A couple of astonishingly fluid scenes between Cusack and his real-life sister Joan suggest the love and the tensions between Lloyd and his older, divorced sister, whom he lives with—the two of them are Army brats. She crabs at him for a second when he does a comedy routine with her small son, and he reminds her that she used to be "warped and twisted and hilarious." You feel the sourness of her divorce and her single-parent situation; everything clues you in to why Lloyd wants stability and why he's determined that his love for Diane last forever. But none of this is overdone. John Cusack underplays Lloyd's decency and strength—takes them for granted. And Crowe and his editor, Richard Marks, know when to nip a scene off; the movie has abrupt, eccentric rhythms. You don't feel like a ninny for watching a high-school movie.

This first picture that Crowe has directed is a lovely piece of work—despite a dumb idea at its center. When Lloyd is asked what his goal is, he says, "To be with Diane." He doesn't know what he wants to do yet; that makes sense. But there's too much emphasis on Diane's braininess—her genius. It's as if she were going to be his higher calling, as in a magnificent-obsession novel. And all the solicitude about Diane's future as a member of some cosmic think tank is puzzling, because as Crowe has written her, and as Ione Skye plays her, she's just a nice, intelligent, industrious girl—a model grind. The talk of her brilliance seems like some kind of mistake; there isn't a lick of flash or fun in the character. Mostly, she just smiles big.

Diane's father (John Mahoney) has been pushing her to ever higher academic achievement all her life; they have had a mutually adoring relationship. Her shift from being close to Daddy to being close to Lloyd is almost a parody of the lives of properly raised girls who went directly from their fathers' houses to their husbands' houses. (In giving Diane a new protector, the movie seems to be using the excuse of her high intelligence to treat her as a frail creature.) The story turns into a battle of wills between Lloyd and the father. John Cusack and Mahoney have to carry the unconvincing melodramatic portion of the plot, but they carry it stunningly. Mahoney never tries to turn his character into a lovable fellow; there's a mean, self-serving streak in his Mr. Court that's almost dazzling. And Cusack is a wonder: Lloyd's (nearly) blank look tells you that a lot of things are going on inside him—he has a buzz in his blank face. Cusack is a joyous performer, and at the party he's joined by the radiant, blond Kim Walker; Loren Dean, as the face that launched sixty-five songs; Jason Gould, as an amiable drunk; Eric Stoltz; Amy Brooks; and Chynna Phillips, among many others. Every one of them makes you smile. There's no special moviemaking excitement in "Say Anything," but Cameron Crowe is a real director—he loves actors.

—Pauline Kael

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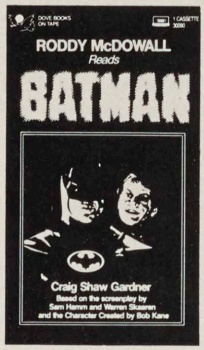

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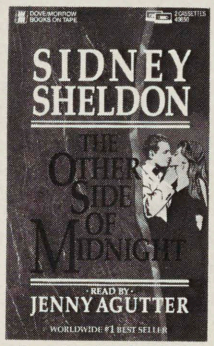

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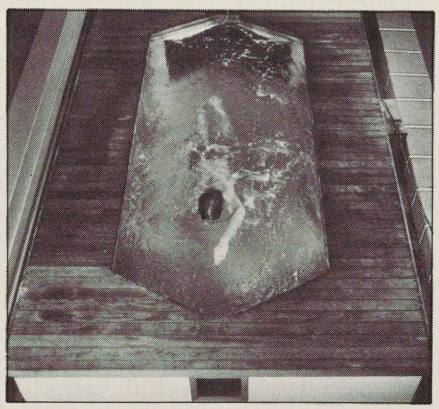

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BOOKS

Demoniasis

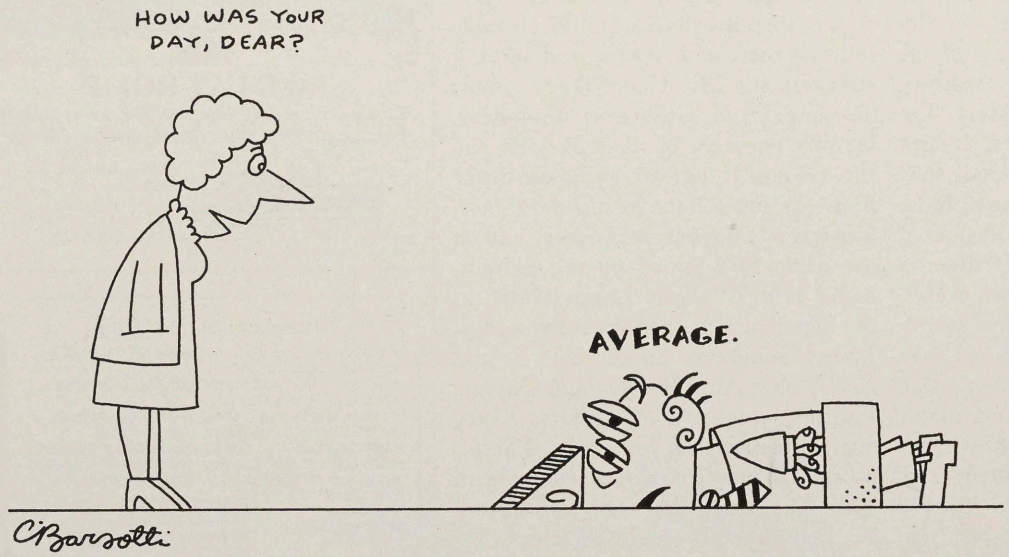
WHAT has befallen Salman Rushdie in recent months defies encapsulation. Time and again, the furor surrounding "The Satanic Verses" (Viking; $19.95) apparently crested, only to erupt in a more vehement, madder guise. One can usually depend on a loose network of contemporary social conditions (among them, the primacy of film over written works, the accelerated turnover of news in our media, and the general din of modern life) to dilute and diffuse any literary controversy, but things have gone otherwise with this novel. When, three months ago, Ayatollah Khomeini issued his "sentence of execution," a sort of infernal standoff was forged: somewhere, in hiding and under police protection, Mr. Rushdie goes on living, but those who would annihilate him remain unplacated. Meanwhile, borders of all sorts—of national sovereignty, of logic, of civilization itself—have given way.

The horrors that have grown up around "The Satanic Verses" make it almost impossible to recollect the time when Rushdie's book seemed merely one controversial novel among many new novels. Yet less than four months ago (to Rushdie, it must seem like four lifetimes ago) he felt free to compose a spirited self-defense for the London *Observer*, in which he lashed out at both the "Thought Police" of militant Islam and the Labour Party politicians who stood ready, in his view, to bargain away creative freedom in a pandering to ethnic voters. But that was before the Ayatollah's decree.

If the various counterdemonstrations in support of "The Satanic Verses" have been heartening reassertions of an artist's right to unfettered expression, Rushdie's sympathizers are left, nonetheless, with a sense of ultimate impotence. In the face of the Ayatollah's pronouncement that the "blasphemer" should be sent "to hell," and that every Muslim should "employ everything he's got, his life and wealth" toward that end, who can grant Rushdie the security of mind and movement which he, as both man and artist, requires? At the moment, little can be done except to comply with his repeated request that his novel be considered as a novel—and that, as such, it be evaluated on its literary merits.

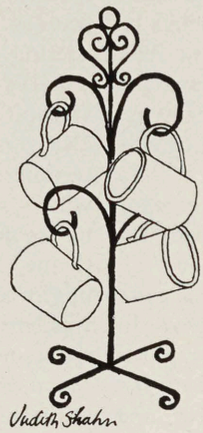
"The Satanic Verses" picks up where Rushdie's last novel, "Shame," left off: in the clouds. "Shame" concluded with a billow of smoke that gradually rose and coalesced into the torso of a man. "The Satanic Verses" begins with a literal bang—the explosion of a hijacked jet as it cruises 29,002 feet over the English Channel—that sends cascading down through a cloud bank "reclining seats, stereophonic headsets, drinks trolleys, motion discomfort receptacles, disembarkation cards, duty-free video games, braided caps, paper cups, blankets, oxygen masks." Among the wreck's "titbits" are "two brown men"—Gibreel Farishta, who was for fifteen years the leading star of Indian cinema, and Saladin Chamcha, who, as the Man of a Thousand Voices, has made a fortune in the British film industry, chiefly in commercials. ("If you wanted to know how your ketchup bottle should talk in its television commercial, if you were unsure as to the ideal voice for your packet of garlic-flavoured crisps, he was your very man.") The two men, neither of them equipped with a parachute, manage not only to survive the descent (they are the disaster's sole survivors) but to bicker and sing and remonstrate with each other on the way down. With characteristic bravado, Rushdie at one stroke casts off the constraints of realism and rings the note of fabulism that echoes throughout this outflung, ambitious novel: "Let's face it: it was impossible for them to have heard one another, much less conversed and also competed thus in song. Accelerating toward the planet, atmosphere roaring around them, how could they? But let's face this, too: they did."

Gibreel and Saladin are linked, it becomes clear, by more than a miraculous escape, careers in film, and Indian ancestry. Their passage together through five and a half miles of sky initiates a number of complementary, surreal transformations. The first of these seems a purely lighthearted touch. Gibreel has long been notorious for what one of his leading ladies has described as "breath of rotting cockroach dung"; but after the two men find themselves deposited, bones unbroken, on an icy stretch of Sussex coast, it is Saladin whose exhalations suggest "ochre clouds of sulphur." It isn't long before other, queerer changes surface: Saladin begins to grow horns and a tail, while Gibreel's head emits a halolike glow. We have entered the realm of Milton's "Paradise Lost"; the novel's opening deto-



nation, the reader comes to see, was nothing less than a fall of angels.

The nascent halo serves as confirmation to Gibreel, who for many months has suspected that he is an incarnation of his namesake Gabriel, the archangel who was sent to Daniel to explain the vision of the ram and the he-goat, who served as the agent of the Annunciation to Mary, and who—more to the point in this novel—revealed to Muhammad the principles of Islam. Large portions of the book are set in Arabia in the early decades of the seventh century A.D., during those incendiary years when Muhammad—who is here called Mahound—became a prophet, attracted a small cadre of followers, time and again eluded and outwitted his persecutors, and eventually invested himself with sufficient authority, both moral and military, to insure the ongoing life of his new faith. One measure of the book's ambition is that it chronicles the founding of a world religion as a sideline to its primary plot.



I might alternatively say that the whole of the book takes place in the twentieth century, since the sections that depict Muhammad arrive by way of the archangel Gabriel by way of the film star Gibreel. Gabriel's revelations come to Gibreel in dreams. The first dream begins after Gibreel, repudiating the dietary laws of his Islamic upbringing, indulges in what must be called a swinish repast: "He loaded his plate with all of it, the pork sausages from Wiltshire and the cured York hams and the rashers of bacon from godknowswhere; with the gammon steaks of his unbelief and the pig's trotters of secularism." Overindulgence of this sort is commonly associated with bizarre dreams, but Gibreel's dreams continue—steadily, in serial fashion—for months on end. He grows convinced of his celestial nature, and who's to doubt him? Readers who would interpret the dreams as guilt-engendered delusions have that troublesome halo to explain away.

Dreams of one sort or another suffuse the novel. There are violent dreams, paradisal dreams, daydreams and nightmares and dreams within dreams. They take on a life of their own. This is a world of permeable sensibilities, in which dreams often "leak" from one state of consciousness into another, from one person to another.

Whether one ought to view the Muhammad of "The Satanic Verses" as an impressionistic dream amalgamation or as the solid, historical figure who founded Islam, it is difficult to square Rushdie's portrait with the international turmoil that the book has produced. Although there is much here to offend the faithful—Rushdie's Muhammad is a manipulative, lecherous, and somewhat cynical man, and the novel also depicts a brothel that becomes an "anti-mosque" when its dozen prostitutes adopt the names and mannerisms of Muhammad's wives—the book, when taken in its entirety, is so dense a layering of dreams and hallucinations that any attempt to extract an unalloyed line of argument is false to its intention. Rushdie, who was raised a Muslim but says he now holds no religious beliefs, pointed out in his *Observer* article that Muhammad always discouraged his followers' attempts to apotheosize him, and argued further that the portrait in "The Satanic Verses" is consonant with a man who continually stressed his own humanity.

Most American readers, I suspect, will feel unqualified to sort through the byways of the debate. To take but one example, many Muslims are enraged by Rushdie's practice of referring to Muhammad as Mahound—a name, Rushdie acknowledged in his article, "which, long ago, was indeed used as a derogatory term." He justified himself with a passage from "The Satanic Verses": "To turn insults into strengths, whigs, tories, Blacks all chose to wear with pride the names they were given in scorn; likewise, our mountain-climbing, prophet-motivated solitary is to be . . . Mahound." Whether Rushdie's analogy is apt or his choice of names is simply, maliciously offensive (that pun on "prophet" does give one pause) remains—for me, anyway—an unresolved issue. But if the American reader is likely to feel removed from

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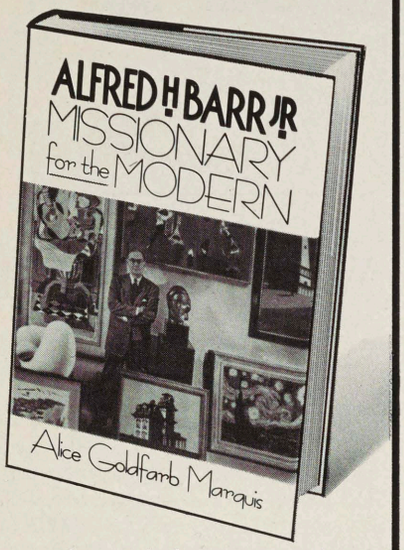

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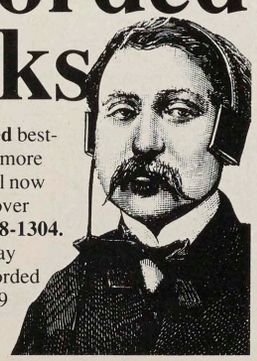

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the controversy's intricacies he will probably enjoy, by way of compensation, an ability to form artistic judgments the more lucidly for not being embroiled in religious issues—to see, specifically, that the weakest portions of the book are those dealing directly with Muhammad. A bridge of dreams, it turns out, is too flimsy and insubstantial a structure to support heavy traffic between the seventh century and the twentieth; the two worlds never completely fuse. In any final accounting, "The Satanic Verses" must stand or fall according to aesthetic criteria. And when the dust settles (or perhaps one should say, given the book burnings, when the smoke clears) it will be evident that "The Satanic Verses" is a book of splendid but segmental components that do not quite cohere into a satisfying whole.

Rushdie is a writer fond of and occasionally besotted with excess. In "The Satanic Verses" he disregards E.M. Forster's distinction between "flat" and "round" characters and seeks to infuse the fullness of life even into peripheral presences. The result is not a sense of enhanced dimensionality so much as of clutter; the propulsion of the tale is forever being retarded by obstructions of its own making. When, for instance, the penmanship of a secondary character is described as "large, looping, back-leaning, left-handed," one can't help thinking that we've been given two, and perhaps three, adjectives too many. A writer blessed with an omnivorous eye, Rushdie at times succumbs to his gift and lets himself be waylaid by any number of things—furniture, faces, advertisements, bibelots, graffiti—that have little bearing on his story.

Still, you must admire the man's titanic energy, proof of which is that his novel, though it runs to more than five hundred pages, often seems too packed but seldom padded. Rushdie has a rare talent for surrealistic invention—an ability to pursue chains of causation and contingency without regard to where they cross or recross the boundary separating the plausible from the fantastic. Curiously, then, the best part of "The Satanic Verses" is a somewhat conventional, thoroughly realistic story. Over the years, Saladin Chamcha, the Man of a Thousand Voices, has grown more English than the English (he weathers his miles of free-fall without losing his bowler), and on one of his trips back to India he is unnerved when a woman named Zeeny Vakil, the first Indian he has ever taken as a lover, speaks of his eventual "reclamation." She prophesies that India is "going to get you back."

Which in some sense it does. After Saladin sheds his satanic horns and tail—his demoniasis (as he thinks of it) departs as mysteriously as it came—he makes another journey to India, to attend to his father, who is dying and from whom he has long been estranged. In the daily business of ministering to a helpless old man—shaving the gaunt cheeks, hauling the atrophied body to the toilet—Saladin discovers a filial love that was lost, seemingly forever, in adolescence, and, what's more, he learns to accept his native country as never before. If the theme of divided loyalties is what might be expected from Rushdie, who was born in Bombay, in 1947, and has spent more than half his life in England, it nonetheless provides the book with the one extended section where the reader's respect and admiration freely give way to something better: empathy.

AT times, the punctuation available to writers who work in English looks inadequate to Rushdie's needs. When he composes a novel, the bottom row of his typewriter, where the comma, period, virgule, and question mark are, gets a heavy workout. He's also keen on dashes, hyphens, colons, semicolons, exclamation points, and parentheses. Literary English has undergone a streamlining of punctuation in this century, of course, which can make the reading of fiction written only a hundred years ago seem a slow business—often pleasurably so. Rushdie offers a kindred typographical density. One is not surprised to come across in his fiction an ellipsis followed directly by a question mark and a dash:

> Then whose head, in my own lap, with my own hands . . . ?—who received caresses, spoke of nightmares, and fell at last singing from the sky?

Or, in unbroken succession, an ellipsis, question mark, quotation mark, and dash:

> "Then how can *I* . . . ?"—With which he snatched up his clothes in an untidy bundle, and fled from her presence.

Or an Emily Dickinsonian onslaught of dashes:

> —And someone else, too,—the one with

whom our Saladin fell to earth,—has come; is wandering within.—Chamcha enters the arena; and is amazed.

In other spots he jettisons most punctuation ("Unable to muster the smallest scrap of dignity, he blubbers whimpers pleads beats his breast abases himself repents"), and even tosses out the spaces between words, thereby coining compounds by the dozen ("redwhiteblue," "goodandproper," "whatstheword," "justlikethat," and so forth).

Rushdie's experiments with punctuation reflect his handling of larger questions of style. He treats the language as though he owned it. At his best, he can wrench syntax to the teasing verge of incomprehensibility without losing his reader, or can burden a sentence with such a weight of clauses that it threatens to collapse and yet stands firm. He is a writer of inspired violence. One feels on every page how much he loves to read and write. His books brim with rapid, glancing allusions. In "The Satanic Verses" he nods at—among others—Ovid, Lewis Carroll, Coleridge, Walt Disney, T. S. Eliot, the Wizard of Oz, Shelley, Forster, Little Black Sambo, and Kafka. (Kafka was probably bound to materialize in a book so devoted to physical metamorphoses; in any event, Chamcha's name seems a thickened variant of Kafka's man-turned-beetle Gregor Samsa, and at one point Chamcha is referred to as "the insect on the floor.")

"Shame," which was Rushdie's third novel, was a considerable feat, and "Midnight's Children," his second novel, was probably better still—but it may be that, so far, his most significant accomplishment lies not in narrative but in language, not in an individual book but in the evolution of a nonesuch style. In borrowing easily from Western and Eastern sources and in experimenting so broadly—with punctuation, sentence construction, abrupt shifts of viewpoint, deliberate incongruities of tone—he has developed a voice we haven't heard before.

As one would suspect, he brings to the English-language novel an invigorating influx of Indian cadences (the Bombay interludes of "The Satanic Verses," particularly when Zeeny Vakil speaks, have an irresistible bounce and sparkle), but he does far more than that. His prose blends elevated diction, an exclamatory, car-

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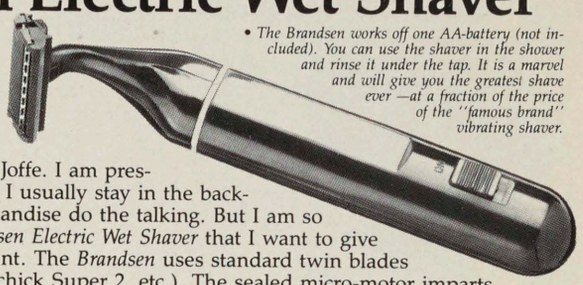

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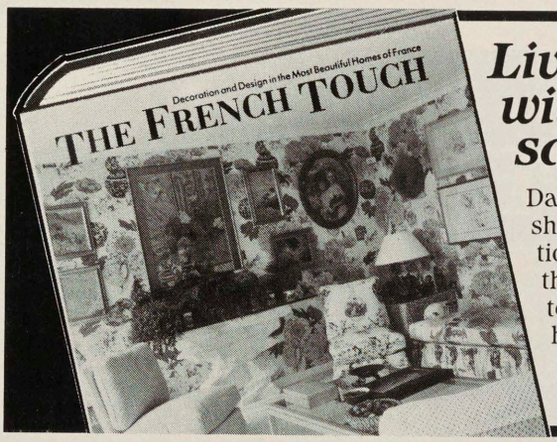

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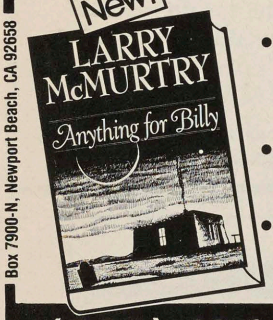

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toony collection of words like "zap" and "boom" and "pow," clanging rhymes ("the jouncing and bouncing of youth," "arms wide, feet with the beat"), reportorial flatness, and a jazzy spontaneity:

> So maybe someone should have been able to forecast, only nobody did, that when he was up and about again he would sotospeak succeed where the germs had failed and walk out of his old life forever within a week of his fortieth birthday, vanishing, poof!, like a trick, *into thin air*.
>
> The city—Proper London, yaar, no bloody *less!*—was dressed in white, like a mourner at a funeral.—Whose bloody funeral, mister, Gibreel Farishta asked himself wildly, not mine, I bloody *hope* and *trust*.
>
> The moment Saladin Chamcha got close enough to Allie Cone to be transfixed, and somewhat chilled, by her eyes, he felt his reborn animosity towards Gibreel extending itself to her, with her degree-zero go-to-hell look, her air of being privy to some great, secret mystery of the universe; also, her quality of what he would afterwards think of as *wilderness*, a hard, sparse thing, anti-social, self-contained, an essence.

In his fondness for needless, playful abbreviations ("as to omnipresence and -potence," "what was possible was possible and what was impossible was im-," "yielding or un-," "whether mortal or im-"), he can even wind up sounding like—of all people!—P. G. Wodehouse; we are not far from Bertie Wooster, lounging in bed while Jeeves carries in "the eggs and b."

The effect of this heterogeneous mixture can be a little wearing. As a stylist, Rushdie is continually breathtaking—and a breathless reader is likely to feel winded at times. There are moments, frankly, when one wishes he would get on with it. Now and then, a sentence slips utterly away from him. His parentheses, in particular, have a python's tendency first to engorge whatever wanders into proximity and then to lie there in a digestive slumber. And his naturally arch temperament has a way—as archness naturally does—of becoming cloying. I don't see how anyone could read the following passages without feeling annoyed by them:

> Love, a zone in which nobody desirous of compiling a human (as opposed to robotic, Skinnerian-android) body of experience could afford to shut down operations, did you down, no question about it, and very probably did you in as well.
>
> Of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they shouldst not eat, and ate. Woman first, and at her suggestion man, acquired the verboten ethical standards, tastily apple-flavoured: the serpent brought them a value system.

Finally, one might wish that Rushdie displayed a greater flair for that variety of beauty whose essence resides in brevity. Although he can produce ravishing imagery, rarely is it of the concentrated type found in those novelists we praise for having a poet's eye. Another novel with an Eastern setting, Forster's "A Passage to India," offers an instructive contrast. It runs about half the length of "The Satanic Verses," and yet no single passage in the latter possesses the distilled beauty that Forster commands when, for instance, he ventures into the Marabar Caves: "There is little to see, and no eye to see it, until the visitor arrives for his five minutes, and strikes a match. Immediately another flame rises in the depths of the rock and moves towards the surface like an imprisoned spirit: the walls of the circular chamber have been most marvellously polished. The two flames approach and strive to unite, but cannot, because one of them breathes air, the other stone." Rushdie, it is true, can enter the mind of either Easterner or Westerner with a conversancy that the more circumspect and wholly English Forster lacked. Still, one sometimes longs, amid the impressive clangor of Rushdie's prose, for the hushed, suspended moment that comes when loveliness is wed to concision.

In the light of such reservations, and of the tragedy and fear that have recently engulfed Rushdie's life, it seems worthwhile to point out that even before this book appeared Rushdie was perhaps the only young novelist in the English-speaking world to have legitimate claims to an international reputation. He is prodigiously gifted. He is especially good on the subject of racism; the reader burns with freshened, reawakened indignation, as though apprised of prejudice for the first time. And in the meeting of East and West he appears to have sufficient subject matter for a couple of dozen novels. One of the strengths of "The Satanic Verses" is the way in which his "East" encompasses not merely India but—in its range of subplots and allusions—Southeast Asia, the Middle East, even Morocco. Worlds within worlds, dreams within dreams . . . One comes away from "The Satanic Verses," as from "Shame" and "Midnight's Children," with an inspiriting sense of multiplicity. —Brad Leithauser

By David Streitfeld

Nabokov's Laura

WHEN Vladimir Nabokov was dying in 1977, he instructed that the novel on which he was then working be destroyed. Considered by many critics one of the century's greatest writers, Nabokov himself held his work in the highest regard. He did not want anything published that was incomplete, unfinished, unperfected. So *The Original of Laura* was destined for the flames.

But his widow, Vera, and son Dmitri have not burned the manuscript (actually a collection of index cards, Nabokov's preferred method of composition). Not yet, at least. It's an issue they're still weighing, and that's received renewed prominence this fall with the publication of *Selected Letters: 1940-1977.*

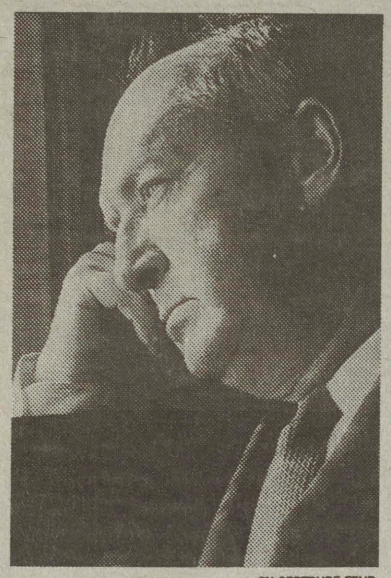
Here's their knotty quandary: "Does one contravene a dead author's wishes, or deprive humanity and posterity of a major work?" asks Dmitri. Having posed the dilemma in such stark terms, however, he then downplays it. "It's an agonizing struggle, but it's been blown out of proportion. Some have gotten the wrong impression, that we're about to burn one of Nabokov's masterpieces."

The Original of Laura would have been a short novel; between a third and a half is in final form. That's perhaps 70 pages, which doesn't sound like enough to make a world-class masterpiece on the order of *Lolita.* Though he won't say much about the content, Dmitri says *Laura* is as revolutionary in form and theme as *Pale Fire,* where the novel exists as footnotes to a poem.

There's been no decision for 12 years, and it doesn't seem as if there will be one soon. Yet refusal to decide will be a decision. "A day comes when everything is free game," says Dmitri, referring to the eventual expiration of copyright. "Not publishing will be a tacit consent to publishing some day down the road." At the moment, "we're in a holding pattern—with traffic controllers yelling over every radio channel."

Meanwhile, other Nabokov books are appearing or reappearing. Most of the major work is coming from Vintage International in strikingly designed trade paperbacks. In the spring of '91, Knopf will publish a collected stories, with the material from the four previous volumes plus a dozen or so stray works. Another assemblage of letters, personal ones this time, is promised for the future, as is a play. And the first volume of Brian Boyd's biography—a major work that is not exactly authorized but had the family's cooperation—will be issued by Princeton University Press next summer.

Busy as he is with attending to the details of this mini-publishing empire, Dmitri Nabokov is also writing his own fiction. After his



BY GERTRUDE FEHR

Vladimir Nabokov

father's death, he says, "He left me the most precious legacy—that of inspiration." To avoid unjustified blame or fame, however, Dmitri will write under a pseudonym. In the beginning, at least. "If it flies on its own wings, I may inscribe the correct name on its tail."

Sheer Fiction

"THE SIREN song of fiction found me out as a willing accomplice, and I have been unable to say it nay ever since," Paul West has remarked of his childhood. Though he's written some two dozen books, ranging from poetry and autobiography to substantial works of criticism, it's the 11 novels that have made his reputation. Sheer fiction, you could call them, to steal a title from one of his nonfiction books: stories that aren't afraid to be just that, but refuse to compromise their intelligence.

West remains impressed by the wonder of it all. "We have this highly sophisticated maneuver where for $20 or whatever you can go out and buy this thing that looks like a tile. You open it up and see black on white. It makes no sound, but you have this weird communion with it and the marks make a noise in the brain. And you stage in your mind's eye a whole psychodrama for hours and hours and hours. Isn't it weird?"

This season, three of West's tile-shaped objects are being released in various forms: *The Place in Flowers Where Pollen Rests,* his prodigious 1988 tale of the Hopi Indians, is newly available in paperback; *The Very Rich Hours of Count von Stauffenberg,* a highly regarded fictional examination of the man who tried to murder Hitler, is being reissued in Overlook hardback; and a new effort, *Lord Byron's Doctor*—the poet seen from the view of his physician, companion and "half-mad plaything"—is winning good reviews.

Lord Byron's Doctor wasn't his title. He wanted to call it *Polidori,* after the hero.

"No one knows who Polidori was," Doubleday told him.

"When they've read this book, they will," West replied.

Writers never win arguments like that.

The origin of the novel might be traced to an early critical title of West's, *Byron and the Spoiler's Art.* Looking back over the book, West realized he mentioned Polidori only once. The absence roused his imagination.

"I looked him up, and thought he's a sort of an accidental man, a superficial man, perhaps a totally unnecessary man, too. I got a sort of Dostoyevskian feeling from him." He then sought out Polidori's journal—"not a very exciting document, I must say, which made me all the more eager to give him one." While West feels his portrait is close to the original Polidori, he admits to providing him with both a more vivid imagination and a more dramatic sex life than the record shows—"although it's very hard to establish these things. Who knows, who cares?"

Born in Derbyshire, England, in 1930, West came to the States more than a quarter-century ago, and became a citizen "somewhere around '70." He identifies himself as a cosmopolitan—"free to raid whatever phenomenon I fancy."

A long-time and prolific reviewer, he says he's cut back in recent years. Publishers continue to send him unsolicited fiction, but much of it he doesn't care for.

"They've all learned to write the same minimalist plod. It's terrifying—the Raymond Carver school. 'He opened the door. He went inside. Then he stood looking at the table. On the table was a pencil. It was a brown pencil.' You can write this with your kneecaps."

In the Margin

IT'S BEEN generally assumed that Oscar Wilde died of syphilis, and this interpretation has colored accounts of his life. But Macdonald Critchley, past president of the World Federation of Neurology, has reviewed Wilde's death certificate (a document still in private hands), and now concludes the cause of death was an ear infection that inflamed the writer's brain. Critchley's findings are based on the fact that the doctor who attended Wilde at the end was an expert in end-stage syphilis and would have known it if he'd seen it. . . .

Villard Books is publishing Robert Fulghum's *It Was On Fire When I Lay Down on It* in two editions: regular and large-print. This is the first time an imprint of Random House Inc. has brought out its own big-type version, rather than selling the rights to a specialty house. It definitely won't be the last. "As America grays, the market for large-print books is growing," says Annik La Farge, the Random House large-print coordinator. "The one thing people don't want to stop doing as they get older is stop reading." The result: it will become easier to find large-print in general bookstores. ■

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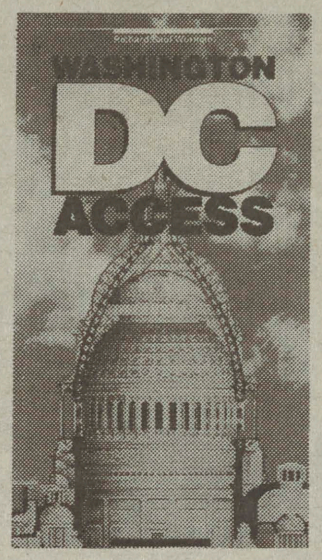

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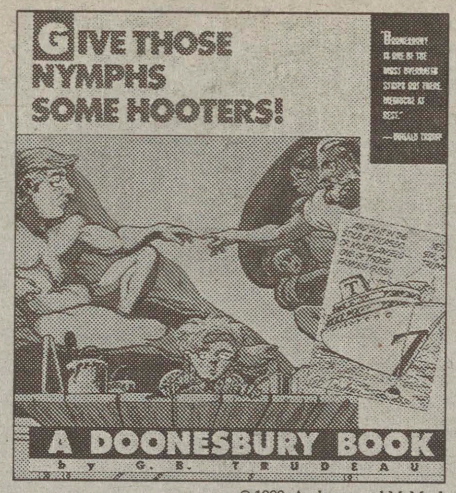

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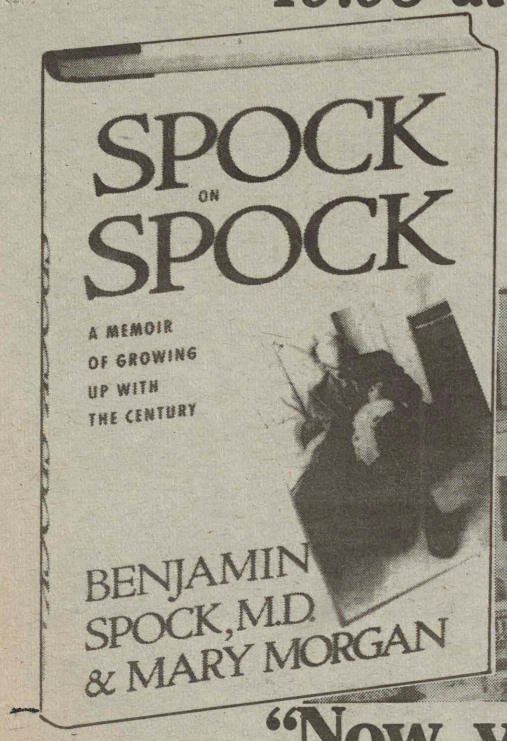

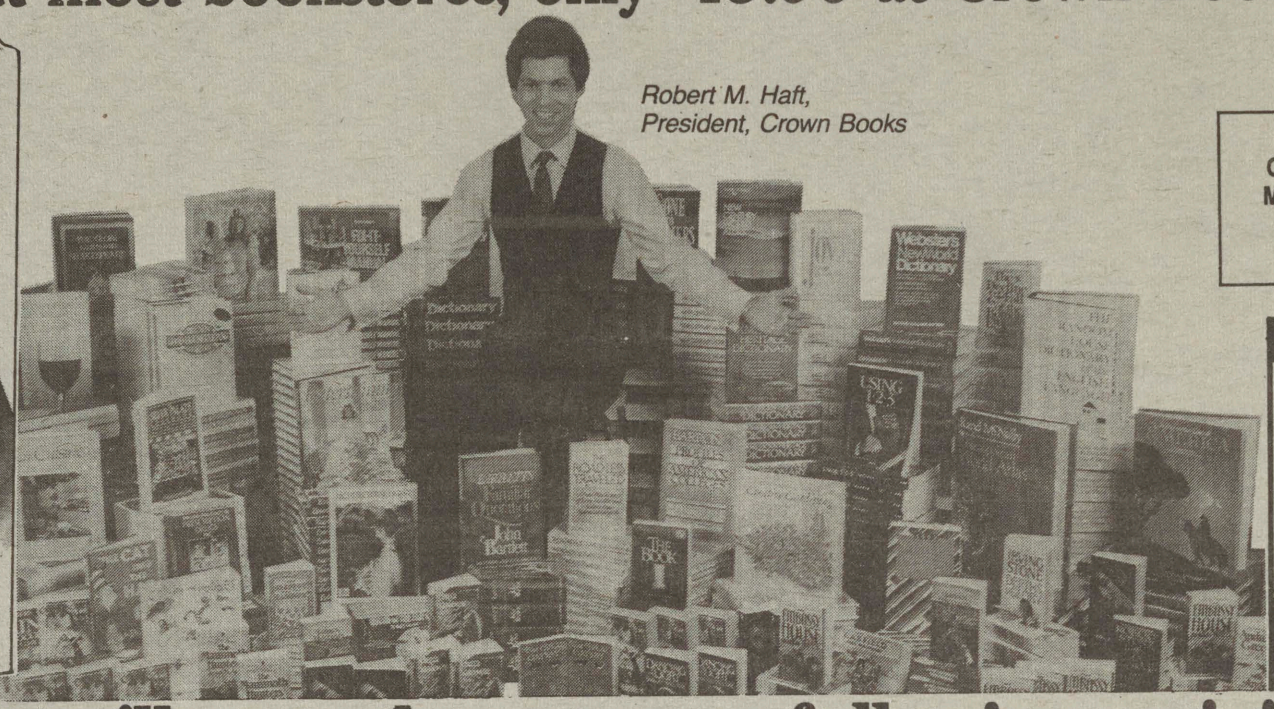

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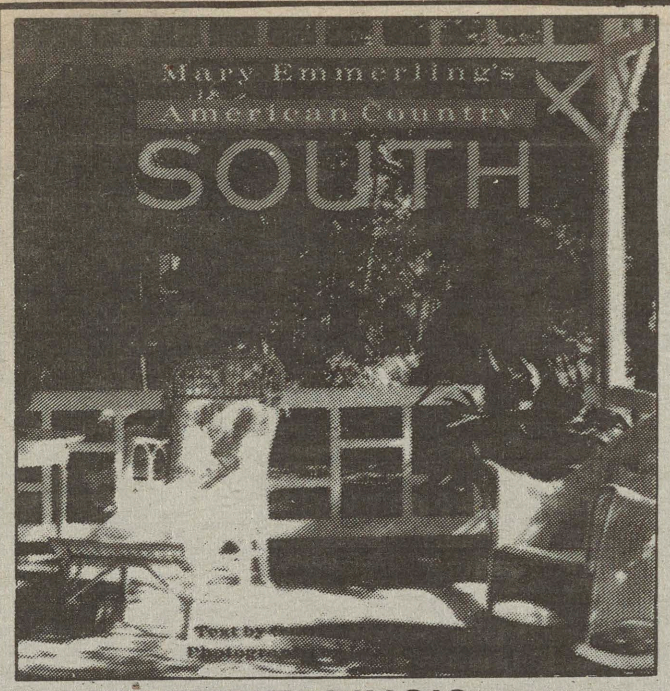

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Ruth Rendell: Chills And Fevers

THE HOUSE OF STAIRS
By Ruth Rendell writing as Barbara Vine
Harmony Books. 277 pp. $18.95

THE BRIDESMAID
By Ruth Rendell
The Mysterious Press. 259 pp. $17.95

By Michael Dirda



PHOTO: JERRY BAUER

Barbara Vine/Ruth Rendell

ANYONE who has put off reading Ruth Rendell, as I did for years, may find one consolation for this error in judgment: More than 30 or so books to look forward to. Her latest, *The House of Stairs* and *The Bridesmaid,* are absolutely stunning suspense thrillers. Each has flaws, though these hardly matter when the plotting is so masterly, the storytelling so perfectly cadenced. Naturally, both contain mysteries and terrors, but they deserve to be called, simply, novels—the first a study of a doomed household, the second a portrait of an almost demonic love affair.

Known generally as a mystery writer, Rendell has long specialized in chilly shockers about creeps and weirdos who make Norman Bates of *Psycho* look almost normal. Even the rather more cozy Inspector Wexford whoduns-its go in for incest, transvestism and other forms of kinkiness. In her Barbara Vine books, Rendell only changes her approach, circling around a sensational crime in a leisurely, tentative fashion until a final heart-sinking revelation.

Since the unfolding of the plot in all such novels is carefully planned I will be deliberately a little vague in describing the action of these latest Rendells. Fans can read on without fear of having the stories spoiled.

In the opening pages of *The House of Stairs,* Elizabeth Vetch, a writer of schlocky pop fiction, glimpses a former acquaintance on the street. Bell, just released after a long prison sentence, has apparently committed a murder. But who was her victim? And when and how and why? And might she kill again?

The sight of Bell stirs Elizabeth's memories. The past which she oh-so-gradually reveals dances around a 50ish woman named Cosette and her large household, but also comes to include the specter of a terrible genetic disease, at least two murders (probably three), love as symbiosis and love as parasitism, and an elaborate fraud. The story itself tracks along alternating time lines: Elizabeth switches back and forth between what she is remembering and what she is living.

These shifts are tricky to do well, but Rendell/Vine manages them smoothly, building tension in the past and then releasing it in the present. Eventually, of course, the locus of anxiety passes from then to now, as Elizabeth finds herself drawn once more to the enigmatic and seductive Bell.

Admittedly, such storytelling is completely artificial, especially in the first person: without seeming too unnatural, the narrator must keep from revealing too much too soon. As it is, suspense-building teasers—assertions of past belief undercut by current knowledge—keep the reader edgy, keyed-up: "I know now that while Cosette had loved Douglas dearly . . ., she was only in love once in her life, and that was neither with Douglas nor Ivor." More than a hundred pages pass before we learn who Cosette really loved.

Echoes of Henry James ring up and down *The House of Stairs.* The name Vetch comes from *The Spoils of Poynton*; a character reminds Elizabeth of Milly Theale in *The Wings of the Dove* (and its plot plays an important role here); the large cast of characters recalls the Master's great tableaux novels, as do the themes of appearance and reality, innocence and corruption, the burden of the past. Rendell/Vine's style, however, is polished smooth, just touched with stateliness and a delicate precision—even in a love scene. At one point Bell puts on Cosette's jewelry and dresses up in a red silk dress; she resembles a Bronzino portrait of a Renaissance beauty. Elizabeth is enthralled:

"Bell pushed the door closed with her toe, a naked toe that had not previously made itself visible under the red silk. Oh, there was such a silence! No words, no sound of breath, after our mouths parted and our eyelids half closed, then, like a roar in the quiet, the rustle of cascading silk and the tinkle of gold and stones, as the dress fell and the jewels fell. A shivering and a rapture of silky skins touching, and we moved into the pool of light shed by that single lamp onto the bed."

Nearly everything in this oddly decorous paragraph is perfect. The disturbingly erotic toe. The onomatopeia of "the rustle of cascading silk." But the real sign of mastery lies in the way Rendell compels the reader to say, "as the dress fell and the jewels fell." By repeating "fell" she makes us see the dress tumble to the floor, followed in a moment by the gold and stones. Like Elizabeth, we shiver before Bell's brazen beauty.

LOVE and self-fulfillment provide the principal themes of *The House of Stairs,* but sexual obsession powers *The Bridesmaid.* From the mannered world of James we enter the dark woods of Robert Graves' White Goddess. We pass from mystery to Mystery.

Philip Wardman, a sober young man with an absolute phobia about violence, meets the pale, silver-haired Senta Pelham at his sister's wedding. He immediately associates her with a statue of a smiling goddess that once adorned the family's scruffy little garden. Later, that night, he is alone in his mother's house when Senta shows up, soaking wet. Before he quite knows what is happening, she strips off her satin bridesmaid's dress and steps into his arms.

A male fantasy come true, Senta seems almost too perfect. Soon she conducts Philip into realms of undreamed-of ecstasy, yet to reach her bed he must first travel through her run-down waste land of a neighborhood, tip a guardian derelict, and descend through a decaying house into a claustrophobic, incense-filled basement room. By turns imperious, child-like and seductive, Senta tells Philip that theirs is a love beyond that of mere mortals, a joining of souls that is indissoluble, dreadful, god-like. She murmurs, "I don't just want to love you Philip, I want to *be* you." To cement their love that knows no limits, Senta suggests—with echoes of Dostoevsky and Patricia Highsmith—that each should kill for the other.

While *The House of Stairs* is a study in delay, *The Bridesmaid* tears along with an almost sexual urgency. Enraptured, Philip can hardly distinguish fact from fantasy: Is Senta a dream or a nightmare? Whatever, she engulfs him, besots him; she is Venus and Kali, a frail, dependent young actress and the Belle Dame Sans Merci. But is she also mad?

Compared to the reserved diction of *The House of Stairs,* the language here revels in the lush, provocative, almost surreal: "Her bright silver hair was like needles, like the blades of knives. She put her mouth up to his, her little hands on his neck. Her tongue darted into his mouth, a little warm fish, withdrew itself with delicate slowness. . . ."

This is an extremely disturbing novel, but so beautifully composed that no one could wish it otherwise. It's like some old master painting of Judith holding the head of Holofernes—gruesome and wonderful, shocking and irresistible.

In Ruth Rendell's vision a pitiable mankind is prey to chance, nemesis and disaster. No one is safe. Even the smallest misstep can topple the universe, turn an idyll into an ordeal, a mistress into an avenging angel. But such is life. ■

Michael Dirda is a writer and editor for Book World.

Recommended Reading

Arthur Ransome's Tale

ANYONE WHO grew up loving Arthur Ransome's stories of sailing and adventure in the English Lake District and Norfolk Broads will be equally enchanted by his *Autobiography* (in print from David and Charles). First published in 1976, Ransome's book recounts his lifelong passion for the Lake Country, and for sailing and fishing; his youthful determination to be a writer of essays and tales for children; and his unexpected second career as a foreign correspondent in revolutionary Russia.

Defying family pressure to complete a degree in science, Ransome went to London in 1901 to work in a publishing firm and to teach himself to be a writer. In 1914, a published essayist and collector of folk stories, Ransome traveled to Russia to escape a disastrous marriage and to hunt material for a book of Russian folktales. When Russia entered the war, Ransome stayed on as a foreign correspondent. The authenticity of his accounts of his visits to the Russian front, the collapse of the Czar, and the coming of the Bolsheviks alone would justify reissuing his superb autobiography.

Ransome left Russia in 1918, but returned the next year. While reporting on the intervention of the Allies, a move which he strongly opposed, he managed to bring his fiancee, Evgenia, Trotsky's former secretary, out of Moscow to safety in Estonia. There, Ransome introduced Evgenia to the pleasures of sailing on the Baltic, an experience that he recounted in his sailing classic, *Racundra's First Cruise.*

In 1929 Ransome gave up political reporting and returned to his beloved Lake Country to start writing *Swallows and Amazons,* the first in a series of 12 books that have delighted thousands of young readers ever since. Ransome's autobiography ends in 1932 when he knew that for the first time he could support himself and his family by writing the tales for children that he had set his heart on 30 years before.

Anne Carpenter
Washington

The Snakes of Enigma

AMID THE PATRIOTIC fervor in 1976, a dark parable entitled *A Feast of Snakes* by Harry Crews was published. During a rainy night I tramped through this gory, gothic tale—one you don't forget. Crews, who writes prose as gritty, colorful and lean as James M. Cain's, has a penchant for freaky characters and hometown violence.

In *A Feast* he casts his eye on Enigma, Ga., during the annual rattlesnake rodeo. The menacing snakes become an obsession. Tourists in Winnebagos descend on the rural hamlet to fan the local madness. The backwoods are poisoned by competition in weight-lifting, dog-fighting and drag-racing. Joe Lon, the protagonist, is an illiterate ex-gridiron hero. The only person sensitive to the craziness of the bloodletting around him, he has little chance to escape it.

The surprise, horrible ending is unlike any other I've read. But Crews is also an inventive comic, employing slapstick and barracks humor to spell the story's intensity. *A Feast* is a gritty and sweet companion to enliven any evening.

Edward C. Lynskey
Warrenton

Cultivating Sleep

AFTER FIGHTING insomnia for many years with mysteries, biographies and novels, I discovered gardening books—not the kind that give step-by-step directions for raising perfect roses but, rather, books of beautiful prose by writers for whom gardening is a happy avocation. The following five I keep by my bedside for the comfort they dispense:

Onward and Upward in the Garden (Farrar Straus Giroux), Katharine S. White's collection of sprightly, opinionated reviews of garden catalogues, originally appeared in The New Yorker.

Vita Sackville-West's *Garden Book,* edited by Philippa Nicolson (out of print), and Sackville-West's *The Illustrated Garden Book,* edited by Robin Lane Fox (Atheneum), are different collections of her weekly columns for the Observer. The second has the added attraction of beginning each chapter with one of Vita's poems.

A Cordiall Water, by M.F.K. Fisher (North Point) provides—to quote the cover—"A Garland of Odd and Old Receipts to Assuage the Ills of Man and Beast," which is to say, folkloric remedies from plants.

In *Journal of a Solitude* (Norton), May Sarton shares her soul, an important part of which seems lovingly grafted to the garden at her house in Maine.

"Falling asleep is a study in trust," says John Updike in *Self-Consciousness.* Indeed it is, trust that we will, once again, awaken. These four writers, with their joyous celebration of the ever-renewing things of the earth, inspire my trust and confidence.

Sonja Jane David
Lakewood, Colo.

Book World readers are invited to send in recommendations of favorite books for possible inclusion in "Recommended Reading." (We ask that you not recommend current or recent best sellers or books that have been widely reviewed within the last year.)

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Kingdom By The Sea

THE BOURBONS OF NAPLES
By Harold Acton (1956)

By Robert Louis Benson



The Bay of Naples

EVER the wit, Harold Acton tells us in the preface that "this history is intended for the general reader—if he still exists outside the writer's imagination," and, to that end, "such distracting paraphernalia as footnotes have been dispensed with as much as possible. The cult of the footnote is no doubt a proof of diligence, but it may also be a form of exhibitionism." The joke? The very text of this wonderful book reads like a footnote, a situation quite apparent to the general reader who will, however, find it never tedious. For while many great historical works invite reading from bottom to top, footnotes first (try John Lukacs or Hugh Thomas for example), here we have it all together: chronological narrative, disgression, long quotations from letters and diaries, discussion of sources and much comment on earlier historians.

Sir Harold Acton (b. 1904 in Italy) is well known through fiction, the presumed inspiration for Evelyn Waugh's outrageous character, Anthony Blanche, in *Brideshead Revisited*. The literary historian Martin Green, in his superb *Children of the Sun*, describes Acton as a general esthete, connoisseur of all the arts, and the leader of the Oxford dandy-esthetes of the period after the First World War. Usually living in Italy, he has remained the wealthy connoisseur, the friend and adviser to the literary and artistic world.

His rich and complicated family provided inspiration for this book. His father, Arthur, was connected to an English family that had lived in Italy and served the Bourbon dynasty since the 18th century; one ancestor was the celebrated historian, Lord Acton. Arthur Acton, extending this cosmopolitanism, worked in the United States for many years, in association with the architect Stanford White, and he married Hortense Mitchell, daughter of a rich and cultured Chicago family.

So, Harold Acton was quite prepared to recall his family's association with Italy and to deal with the immensely lush and complicated dynastic, cultural and political scene of the Bourbon kingdom of Naples, which had begun this way: "When the Spanish [prince] Don Carlos came in 1734 to plant the Bourbon dynasty in Naples, that 'piece of Heaven dropped to earth' had suffered grievously from twenty-seven years of Austrian domination after more than two centuries under Spanish viceroys good, bad and indifferent, but mostly bad." He ruled there in peace and prosperity until being recalled to Spain as King Charles III in 1759, being succeeded in Naples (also called the Kingdom of Two Sicilies) by his son Ferdinand who ruled for 67 years. Father and son oversaw, witnessed or suffered the creation of some of the greatest architecture in European history (notably the palace of Caserta), the rise and fall of the Freemasons and Jesuits, Napoleon, Lord Nelson, revolution and counterrevolution, constitutions; these along with carnivals and pageants, intrigue and romance. Here are characters grotesque and sympathetic (sometimes in the same person, as King Ferdinand himself); place names that delight the ear: Calabria, Cosenza and Catania; Pantelleria, Paola and Petelia.

Acton's theme is that however odd the Bourbons, they were patriotic and energetic, surprisingly tolerant and much beloved by their people. This is boldly revisionist history, conservative, Catholic and at odds with the Gladstonish liberal view of southern Italy, a view that came to dominate British thought and policy, and that eventually contributed to the fall of the Bourbons.

The main figures of Acton's story are King Ferdinand and his intelligent and brave wife, Queen Maria Carolina, a sister of Marie Antoinette. Her brother, Emperor Joseph of Austria, left a most remarkable description of King Ferdinand as a young man—a masterpiece of unintended comedy by the well-meaning, supremely intelligent emperor. Joseph could not quite come to grips with Ferdinand's simpleminded and coarse behavior (mouse chasing, wrestling with ladies of the court, chamber pot contests, strenuous rowboating in a swimming pool). The emperor even administered an intelligence test to King Ferdinand, which consisted of Joseph telling him complicated jokes and noting Ferdinand's level of comprehension to each category of story (apparently he understood the ones in which someone got beat up). For good measure the emperor concluded that, "although an ugly Prince, he is not absolutely repulsive."

BUT THE SCENE is quite crowded; interesting, often noble and courageous figures abound (the author's ancestor, Sir John Acton—though efficient and devious, as the queen's chief adviser—seems bland). As Acton aims to rescue reputations, let us consider Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo, former treasurer to Pope Pius VI. Generally called a bloodthirsty mob leader, he seems to have been an extraordinary battle captain and strategist, and a wise and humane man. As Napoleon's army approached Naples in 1798, the royal family and government retreated to Sicily. Cardinal Ruffo promptly crossed back to the mainland, landing at Punta del Pezza with eight companions and the royal standard. He then put together a popular uprising of Calabrians and men of Abruzzi: "they loved arms better than women—the first and sometimes the only thing they learned was the use of firearms." So reported an agent of Napoleon. In the name of King Ferdinand, and with the help of Lord Nelson, Ruffo's army retook Naples in 1799, and threw out the rather pathetic dupes who had delivered their country to Napoleon. During the brutal campaign, Cardinal Ruffo's well known attribute of being *inciarmato* (protected by an enchantment) had served to guard him and, on at least one occasion, to help him instruct his men in small-unit tactics when, as he was drawing heavy fire because of his prominent appearance, he told those around him to spread out. For while the bullets could not harm him, "I should be sorry if any of you were injured."

But we have only reached the middle of this splendid book, hardly touching what is before and to come. And as for King Ferdinand, "if he did not grow younger, he grew no sadder: he lived for the passing moment without regret." ■

Robert Louis Benson often writes for Book World on literary and historical topics.

Note on Availability: "The Bourbons of Naples" and its sequel, "The Last Bourbons of Naples," are unfortunately out of print.

America's Rome

Continued from page 1

old Pope enthroned upon his cushions—and then glance at those imperial legs swinging in their immortal bronze, you cry out that here at least was a man."

By 1930, however, a major alteration in the image of the pope had occurred, mainly as a result of the accumulating weight of adulatory comment by American Catholics. Another landmark period in the transformation of the papacy in American eyes occurred in 1944, for in the wake of the city's liberation from German control, Pius XII became highly visible, blessing the multitudes in St. Peter's Square, receiving thousands of G.I.'s and breaking with the Vatican's traditional stand-offishness toward the press; even an "enormously fat" female journalist in pants, the correspondent Eric Sevareid noted, was admitted to His Holiness's presence. The papacy had entered the era of public relations.

Yet another of the complicated traceries in *America's Rome* involves the baroque city that was created between the late 16th century and the completion of the Spanish Steps and commencement of the Trevi Fountain in the early 18th. Certain 19th-century Americans were outraged by the sight of this city that stood in their minds for wicked popes, worldly princes and the insidious successes of the Counter-Reformation, but a far greater number simply ignored it; if Hawthorne and Henry James were among the few who appreciated some of its monuments, they fell back in their most notable works of fiction that reckon with Rome—*The Marble Faun, Roderick Hudson, Daisy Miller, The Portrait of a Lady*—on images of romantic classicism and medievalism, the exception to this rule being their evocations of the ambiguously baroque St. Peter's Cathedral.

References in 19th-century American guidebooks to the baroque creations of Bernini were few in number and for the most part vituperative; so low, indeed, was his prestige that James Russell Lowell could handle his admiration for Bernini's colonnades in St. Peter's Square only by ascribing them to the Renaisssance master, Bramante. As for Borromini, he was almost never referred to in the guidebooks, even though one of his most notable churches,

> *"The ruined Colosseum offered a vision of America's own imperial possibilities and a prophecy of our inevitable doom."*

San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, was located close to the site of the building that for many years housed the American consulate. Only after World War II did "the grand stride, the profound suggestion, the fantastical arrangement" and the "esoteric expansion of spirit" of the baroque, as Eleanor Clark defined it in *Rome and a Villa* (1952), come to dominate the American idea of Rome.

While Professor Vance's book is fascinating, it is, unfortunately, somewhat unreliable. An examination of the opening paragraph of his chapter, "The Vatican: The Popes in Their Places," may serve as an illustrative example. The author says that the first of the popes whom Americans in Rome had a chance to see and comment on was Pius VII. He also states that Pius VII "had been constrained to crown Napoleon emperor in Paris in 1804 but had reestablished the papal court at Rome in 1815." Finally, he asserts that throughout the tenure of the seven popes of the 19th century the American image of the bishop of Rome remained remarkably static. None of these statements is accurate. The first pope in Rome whom Americans could see and comment on was Pius VI. While Pius VII consented to anoint Napoleon emperor in 1804, his residency was not removed to France until 1809, and he reentered Rome not in 1815, but on May 24, 1814, a day which marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the papacy. And there were six popes, not seven, who held tenure in the 19th century. ■

see Barbara Benish letter in Helena file, for story of Sky's "circle of murmur" for Montana City librarian and teacher friend.

THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 1989

The Living Arts

The New York Times

Yeats at the End: A Hum and Labored Writing

By STEWART KELLERMAN

William Butler Yeats sat on a lawn chair by the garden of the Idéal Séjour, his old, cold bones wrapped in a rug that sheltered him from the sea breeze of Cap-Martin.

At the hotel on the Côte d'Azur, a refuge from Ireland's sodden winter, he hummed to himself, right hand beating time as he labored over the last lines of "The Death of Cuchulain."

It was 1939 and the dying poet, like the Irish warrior of the play, was getting ready to give up a world brushed by the wings of the Morrigu, Celtic goddess of war.

"He'd been getting steadily weaker, but I hadn't realized it," the poet's son, Michael Yeats, said recently in a telephone interview from his winter home in Tallahassee, Fla. "I was a

Commemorating the poet 50 years after his death.

teen-ager and all I knew was that we had wonderful conversations and for the first time in my life I really got to know him a bit."

Mr. Yeats, a former chairman of the Irish Senate, and his wife, Grainne, who sings and plays the Irish harp, will be in New York City this weekend to take part in two observances of the poet's death 50 years ago in the South of France.

The Yeatses will be guests of honor on Saturday in a benefit at Lincoln Center for the Yeats Drama Foundation, which is raising funds to put on the poet's plays at the Abbey Theater in Dublin.

Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, former Senator Eugene J. McCarthy, former Gov. Hugh L. Carey and the actresses Tammy Grimes and Viveca Lindfors will read from Yeats's work. The program, "The Poet on Politics," begins at 5:30 P.M. in the Bruno Walter Auditorium at the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center, 111 Amsterdam Avenue at 65th Street.

At 1 P.M. on Sunday the Yeatses will open a five-day conference at Queens College, 65-30 Kissena Boulevard in Flushing, with a lecture and recital, "Words and Music of W. B. Yeats." The conference will include lectures by scholars, a poetry reading and performances of Yeats plays.



William Butler Yeats in his study in 1923. The 50th anniversary of the poet's death is being observed.

Michael Yeats, who was born in 1921, when the poet was 56 years old, found it awkward to have a father so much older. "He wasn't one for romping with children," he said. "But he wasn't such a severe and somber kind of person, either. He had a great sense of humor, often rather malicious."

"He occasionally put himself out to amuse the children by telling stories," Mr. Yeats said. "I remember one about this young fellow who won a sausage-eating competition. The prize was one of those big old fob watches. The only trouble was he couldn't tell time. So for the rest of his life people would ask the time and he'd look at his watch and say, 'Oh, my God, I didn't know it was so late,' and then he'd rush off. That kind of silly story."

Yeats was lost to the world while at work on a new poem. "He'd make a low, tuneless hum and his hand would start beating time," his son said. "We knew then to creep away and leave him alone. He was oblivious to everything else. Once he was on the bus from Dublin and my sister, Anne, got on. She saw he was busy, so she sat by herself. When they got out at our gate, he looked at her vaguely and said, 'Oh, who is it you wish to see?' "

He said his earliest memories were of his mother, George (Georgie before Yeats rechristened her), saying: "Now, children, don't make noise. Your father's working."

"He would write in his notebooks and then, when he thought he had a poem right, he'd give it to my mother and she would type it out," Mr. Yeats said. "Sometimes he'd tear up things and throw them in a wastebasket. But my mother would rescue them and tape them and put them in files so they could be read nowadays by scholars."

In the last years of his life, as his heart and lungs grew weaker, the poet wintered in the north of Italy or the South of France.

For Mr. Yeats, those days at Cap-Martin in late 1938 and early '39 let him finally get to know the old man who had shared his home but not much of himself.

"I was 17 and out of school for the Christmas holidays," he said. "He was a lot older and we'd had very little in common until then. But at the

Continued on Page 18

Warfare

common soldier or sailor.

For instance, Mr. Keegan describes how at the onset of the Battle of Trafalgar (Oct. 21, 1805), the decks of the wooden fighting ships "were sluiced with water against fire, and sand sprinkled on top, partly to give a better grip to bare feet of the gun crews, partly 'for the blood,'" as a sailor new to sea-fighting was told.

And as much loose timber as possible was either stowed below or sent over the side because "shot — solid, it must be remembered, not explosive — in striking ribs, scantlings, decks, indeed anything wooden, split off razor-sharp splinters a few inches, sometimes several feet, long, which — travelling at speeds close to that of the primary projectile — became terrible man-killing instruments."

Or, for instance, the author quotes an observer aboard a British warship at the Battle of Jutland, May 31, 1916, describing the sight of incoming German shells: "They always seemed to be coming straight for one's eye ... [they] appeared as dots getting larger and larger, till they burst short or droned past and fell beyond us. ... Ricochets were also clearly visible, turning end over end, and making a noise like the rumbling of a distant train."

•

These are just a few of the more vivid passages in "The Price of Admiralty." Others include a terrifying account of men trapped in the engine room of a stricken battleship at Jutland, and the dramatic five-minute interval that averted an American defeat at the hands of Japan's navy at the Battle of Midway, June 4, 1942.

Yet Mr. Keegan's purpose in describing Trafalgar, Jutland, Midway and the Battle of the Atlantic waged between German U-boats and Allied merchant convoys during World War II is not only to evoke the experience of fighting at sea. It is also to trace the evolution of naval warfare from wooden-ship days through the arrivals of armor-plated steam-driven gunships and then aircraft carriers bristling with dive bombers and torpedo planes to a future of nuclear submarines, when, as far as the author can predict, the oceans may appear empty again, yet "in their deeps new navies of submarine warships, great and small, will be exacting from each other the price of admiralty."

This tracing of an evolution Mr. Keegan also achieves dramatically. He conveys how rarely sea battles prove decisive, what an exceptional event Trafalgar was, when Admiral Nelson's British fleet routed the combined French and Spanish forces under Admiral Villeneuve by exploiting the rarest of tactical innovations. He makes it clear how much like grandmaster chess naval warfare tends to be, with advantages accruing incrementally instead of through decisive thrusts, and the winner sometimes determined by marginally perceptible strategic advantage.

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Unfortunately, Mr. Keegan, who is

The Price of Admiralty
The Evolution of Naval Warfare
By John Keegan
Illustrated. 292 pages. Viking. $21.95.



Mark Gerson
John Keegan

the defense correspondent for The Daily Telegraph in London, sometimes pursues both of his objectives at once, reporting eyewitness accounts of battle while simultaneously developing an abstruse point in his analysis. This may explain why some sections of his book seem out of focus, and possibly even why his prose is so impacted with subordinate clauses and parenthetical remarks. (Is it because of its density that the text has been so sloppily proofread, with multiple typos once or twice showing up in a single sentence?)

This double focus may also account for a certain obduracy in Mr. Keegan's outlook. He reports the most terrible suffering. Men lose eyes, limbs, heads, entrails; they get burned, suffocated, caught in machinery and flayed by boiling steam. Admiral Nelson, hit in the chest by a musket ball, announces accurately: "My backbone is shot through." Yet nobody ever complains, or is afraid. Men buck each other up while being mutilated. Nelson, dying, asks only for drink and cool air.

Not a single person in these pages ever admits to pain. This may well reflect that on the verge and in the heat of battle most people have passed beyond the point of fearing for their lives. Still, there is an unbelievable stiffness of lip in Mr. Keegan's outlook. It makes you want an admission of vulnerability, a bleeding heart. It makes you long for the ending of Joseph Heller's "Catch-22," where Snowden, mortally wounded, cries out "in a frail, childlike voice," that he's cold and "It's starting to hurt me."

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All the same, "The Price of Admiralty" is an essentially humanistic book. It stands alongside Mr. Keegan's earlier works, among them "The Face of Battle," "Six Armies in Normandy" and "The Mask of Command," in its power to impart both the big and little pictures of war. Within a few pages, it explains that the key to victory at Trafalgar was not ship-killing but man-killing, and that the French never heaved their dead overboard in time of action as the English did because "a Catholic widow needed the evidence of burial of her husband's body if she was to remarry."

Such details lend a human dimension to the most abstract of military calculations.

The Final Days of Yeats: Writing to a Quiet Hum

Continued From Page 17

end I could finally have conversations with him on a relatively adult level."

At the Idéal Séjour, the 73-year-old poet spent the mornings in his room on the third floor. "Then in the afternoon he would come out on the lawn and sit in a chair with a rug over him," Mr. Yeats said. "He was all there, mentally very active, working until the end."

"On the day before he died, he was collecting his last poems, correcting proofs, putting things in order," he said. "He died in his room. He just sort of sank into a coma in bed and it was clear that he hadn't long and he died the next day."

It was Jan. 28, 1939.

Prof. James Flannery of Emory University, who is to lecture at the Queens College conference, says he sees Yeats as one of the most important dramatists as well as poets of modern times. He expects a rush of interest in Yeats's poetry and plays as the century comes to a close, drawing people to apocalyptic works like "The Second Coming" — perhaps to wonder what rough beast or revelation awaits them after "twenty centuries of stony sleep."

"We're moving into the 90's, when we always get a reckoning on fundamental questions," he said. "And Yeats asked those fundamental questions: What is reality? Is there a God? Is there a soul?"

But maybe that's why college students are often more comfortable with T. S. Eliot than with Yeats. "The one poem you can count on every undergraduate to have read in high school is 'Prufrock,'" said Prof. Hugh Kenner of Johns Hopkins University, who will also be at Queens College. "They dig it because it's an expression of what they think of as their own kind of insecurity. Yeats comes on in so magisterial a way that they sort of want to cover their heads and cry."

For Prof. Edmund Epstein of Queens College, another participant at the conference, Yeats stalks a reader's mind as an Eskimo hunts a polar bear. The Eskimo freezes bent whale bone in seal fat for the bear to eat, he said, then the fat thaws and the bone straightens, piercing the bear's throat. "That's what Yeats's poems are like," he said. "There's an enormous latent energy in them that explodes in your mind."

Senator Moynihan loves to collect Yeatsiana as well as to read Yeats.

"I'm surrounded by Yeats, by golly I am," said the Senator, who proudly possesses (or is possessed by) such treasures as a first edition of "The Collected Poems" inscribed to Lady Augusta Gregory, the poet's patron and confidante, and a collection of paintings by Yeats's brother, including "the only Jack Yeats with an American flag in it."

Former Senator McCarthy has made an old friend of "The King's Threshhold," a Yeats play about a poet who brings a king to his knees.

"Yeats is not a poet you can read when you're young," he said. "It's like the Irish god of love, who could be about 60 years old. But I'd rather read Yeats than speak about him. You kind of let him speak for himself."

And speak for himself Yeats has, even to having the last word. As the poem "Under Ben Bulben" foretells, he is buried amid ancestors in Drumcliffe churchyard below limestone cut with the words:

Cast a cold eye
On life, on death.
Horseman, pass by!

Bridge | Alan Truscott

The women trim the men's lead in the Marathon Battle of the Sexes.

The big lead held by the men's team in the Marathon Battle of the Sexes reached a peak of 290 imps at midday on Tuesday. But it was then eroded: The women cut the lead by 141 in the next 14 hours of play.

Two weeks of nonstop play at the Cavendish Club in Manhattan and the Club du Bridgeur in Paris will break many records. The chief organizer at the French end is José Damiani, who is president of the French Federation and the European Bridge League. Sitting East on the diagramed deal, he was the victim of brilliant play by Danielle Gaviard.

She landed in five diamonds as shown, after a weak opening two-bid on her left. It might seem that she was due to lose a trump trick, a spade trick and a club trick, but she took advantage of a subtle defensive error.

West led his singleton club, and

NORTH
♠ Q 4
♡ A K 9 4
◇ A Q
♣ A 10 8 7 5

WEST (D)
♠ K J 10 8 6 3
♡ Q 8 3
◇ K 7 3
♣ 6

EAST
♠ A 9 7 5
♡ J 10 6 2
◇ 8
♣ Q J 4 2

SOUTH
♠ 2
♡ 7 5
◇ J 10 9 6 5 4 2
♣ K 9 3

Both sides were vulnerable. The bidding:

West	North	East	South
2 ♠	Dbl.	4 ♠	5 ◇
Pass	Pass	Pass	

West led the club six.

Do you know

Nothing lost in the transmission

THESE COLLECTIONS OF COMPACT TALES HOLD THE POWER OF TRANSPORT

S. Times Feb. 12, '89

by Richard Wakefield

Short stories are like buses: If you don't like this one, there'll be another along in a minute. But reading a collection of stories can also be like spending an afternoon in a Greyhound terminal – so much sound and fury, so many faces, that all the commotion seems contrived and pointless.

Richard Ford's introduction to **"The Pushcart Prize: Best of the Small Presses, 1988-1989"** (Pushcart Press, $27.95) is a good reminder that each story deserves our attention. Each story has a real human being inside it. Ford recalls trying to get his own first stories into print, remembering how he was so thrilled to be accepted by a little magazine in New Zealand that he considered moving to the Southern Hemisphere. Anyone who has struggled for publication knows Ford isn't kidding.

A story is someone's effort to satisfy what may be a primal human urge: the desire to say something and have it heard. A good story satisfies in a way that seems natural, downright inevitable. "Let me tell you something about what makes what we ended up doing to Vic's horse Buster all the worse," begins the second paragraph to Mark Richard's "Happiness of the Garden Variety," in the annual Pushcart Press collection. Try to read that line in a careless, hasty way and it will twist out from under you like an icy road. But slow down, speak it, and you'll be sharing the illusion of a real voice telling of a real moment.

A good story satisfies in a way that seems natural, downright inevitable.

A reviewer of three "best" collections is sure to succumb to the temptation to pick a best of the best. My vote is for "The Pushcart Prize." It has greater variety, and not merely because it includes essays and poems. It has stories that are goofy, some that are not very good, and some that will make you wonder why you have never heard of someone who can write so well. Read "Star, Tree, Hand," by Lynne McFall: A woman refuses to make the small concession of overpaying for a car repair, thinking, "We are considering no trivial question, but how a person should live." Sure enough, her apparent aimlessness is a monologue – acted rather than spoken – on how a person should live.

"Prize Stories: The O'Henry Awards, 1988" (Doubleday, $9.95 paperback) and **"The Best American Short Stories, 1988"** (Houghton Mifflin, $17.95) tie for second. Both include "Errand," one of Raymond Carver's last stories. His account of Chekhov's death from tuberculosis is especially moving in light of Carver's own struggle against lung cancer, and I won't try to separate the story from the circumstances of its composition. If you haven't read it, do so.

Here's something to tip the silver medal to "Best American Short Stories." Familiar or not, Robert Stone's "Helping" deserves the permanence of hardcover. Stone seems incapable of writing a limp line: Watch how one word, "almost," electrifies these sentences from the story of a recovering alcoholic: "Day in, day out, he was sober. At times it was almost stimulating."

So, yes, short stories are like buses, but in more ways than one. There are a lot of them out there, and they often make a lot of noise for a very brief journey. But, once aboard, you may see small and rewarding things you'd have otherwise missed.

■ Richard Wakefield is a former fiction editor of The Seattle Review and has taught creative writing at the University of Washington.

EM! A HIT!"
—Time Magazine

BROCK
S PETERS
in



RIVING
SS DAISY
A New Comedy

PETERS
AISY

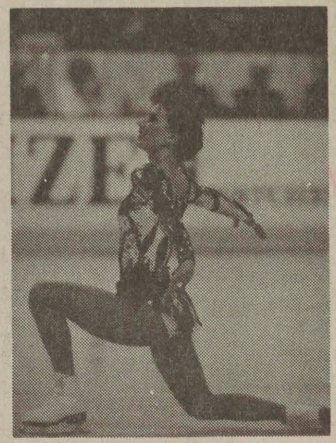
"A TOTAL



Viktor Petrenko
USSR



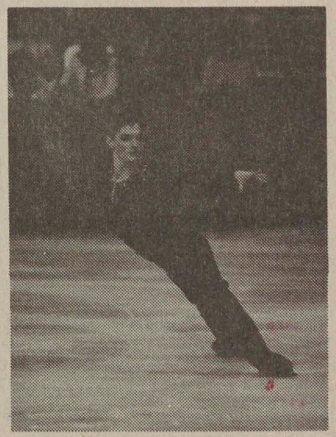
Wilson and McCall
Canada



Caryn Kadavy
USA



Kurt Browning
Canada



Paul Wylie
USA



Annenko and Sretenski
USSR

axe

Go





The New York Times

Book Review

September 17, 1989

NONFICTION

1 AMONG SCHOOLCHILDREN. *By Tracy Kidder.*

3 ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOUTHERN CULTURE. *Edited by Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris. Associate editors, Ann J. Abadie and Mary L. Hart.*

9 BERNARD SHAW. Volume Two: 1898-1918. The Pursuit of Power. *By Michael Holroyd.*

11 THE PITCH THAT KILLED. *By Mike Sowell.*

12 BIG SUGAR: Seasons in the Cane Fields of Florida. *By Alec Wilkinson.*

12 HARLAN ELLISON'S WATCHING. *By Harlan Ellison.*

13 GERMANY, AMERICA, EUROPE: Forty Years of German Foreign Policy. *By Wolfram F. Hanrieder.*
THE TWO GERMAN STATES AND EUROPEAN SECURITY. *Edited by F. Stephen Larrabee.*

15 THE WRITING LIFE. *By Annie Dillard.*

20 GROWING UP HAPPY: Captain Kangaroo Tells Yesterday's Children How to Nurture Their Own. *By Bob Keeshan.*

22 MOVING PICTURES. *By Anne Hollander.*

26 THE LOST CONTINENT: Travels in Small-Town America. *By Bill Bryson.*

28 REINVENTING SHAKESPEARE: A Cultural History, From the Restoration to the Present. *By Gary Taylor.*

32 STRAIGHT SHOOTING: What's Wrong With America and How to Fix It. *By John Silber.*

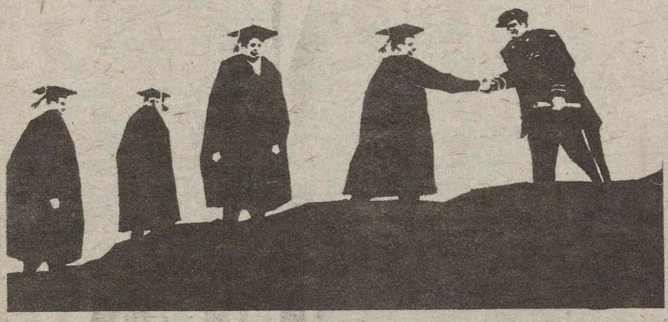
38 JANACEK'S UNCOLLECTED ESSAYS ON MUSIC. *By Leos Janacek. Edited by Mirka Zemanova.*

44 IN THE SHADOW OF THE SACRED GROVE. *By Carol Spindel.*

FICTION

7 AFFLICTION. *By Russell Banks.*

13 OUT OF MIND. *By J. Bernlef.*



14 ARMY BLUE. *By Lucian K. Truscott 4th.*

15 FIRST LIGHT. *By Peter Ackroyd.*

18 AND AGAIN? *By Sean O'Faolain.*

34 QUEEN LEAR. *By Molly Keane.*

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30 SPIES & THRILLERS. *By Newgate Callendar.*

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AND BEAR IN MIND.

42 PAPERBACK BEST SELLERS.
PAPERBACKS: NEW & NOTEWORTHY.

45 LETTERS.

47 NOTED WITH PLEASURE.

Getting

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SOUTHERN CULTURE

Edited by Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris. Associate editors, Ann J. Abadie and Mary L. Hart. Illustrated. 1,634 pp. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. $49.95; after Jan. 1, $59.95.

By Howell Raines

GOV. ROSS BARNETT of Mississippi was unique among the segregationist demagogues of the 1960's in his willingness to say the word "nigger" in his speeches. He was also capable of lying or, at least, changing his mind without telling anyone. In 1962, for example, he promised President John F. Kennedy that he would see to the peaceful integration of the University of Mississippi. Later, he turned up at an Ole Miss football game and, inspired by the sight of 40,000 white people waving Confederate flags, decided to renege. Barnett's duplicity led to a bloody riot on the Oxford campus in which two people were killed and Federal marshals resorted to hand-to-hand combat with a mob opposed to the enrollment of James Meredith, a black taxpayer seeking admission to a tax-supported institution in the state of his residence.

These useful facts are unflinchingly recorded in the



DRAWINGS BY RICK GEARY

"Encyclopedia of Southern Culture," a 1,634-page reference work assembled by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi and published by the University of North Carolina Press. The mere fact of its publication is noteworthy. Ole Miss, which was once Dixie's most reactionary state university, now houses a center that aspires to fill the place in regional scholarship occupied by the University of North Carolina in the 1930's.

The appearance of the book also coincides with the emergence of a Mississippi governor, 40-year-old Ray Mabus, who may be a prototype for the next generation of Southern leaders. Educated outside the South, he has returned to tackle twin demons — property tax reform and education funding — that have made cowards of generations of Southern politicians. Mississippi, through its university and its Government, is bidding to jump ahead of Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and, of course, Alabama as the avatar of Sunbelt progressivism. Such matters are pertinent because they remind us that books, especially those that involve an effort at self-definition, are cultural events. And this book's significance reaches beyond Mississippi. It provides an opportunity to examine how the South thinks of itself as it emerges from a quarter-century of potent change.

This is a big, serious and ambitious book that has the virtue of avoiding what might be called the Southern Living disease, in honor of that relentlessly cheerful magazine devoted to depicting the region as one end-

Howell Raines, the Washington editor of The New York Times and formerly the paper's Atlanta bureau chief, is the author of "My Soul Is Rested," a book about the civil rights movement.

Nabokov's Letters

Continued from page 1

the desire to hand it with a grim expression to some girl, then forget it, for you are wasting your time.

If, on the other hand, it is the latter (and I would very much like it to be so), then one must first of all realize what a difficult, responsible job it is, a job one must train for with a passion, with a certain reverence and chastity, disdaining the seeming facility with which quatrains fall together (just tack on a rhyme and it's done). . . .

If you have the urge to write, do so as conscientiously as you can and try to avoid the absurdities I have noted above.

•

Although his work was later to cause a sensation, Nabokov disdained vulgarity or sensationalism. Late in 1938, he explained his tastes to a New York literary agent attempting to place translation rights to his work.

To Altagracia de Jannelli

Nov. 16, 1938

I quite understand what you have to say about "old-fashioned themes," — but let me be outspoken too. I am afraid that the "ultra-modernistic" fad is in its turn a little passé in Europe! That sort of thing was much discussed in Russia just before the revolution and in Paris just after the war, and we had a good many writers (most of them clean forgotten at present) doing a roaring trade by depicting the kind of "amoral" life on which you comment in such a delightful way. It may be curious, but what charms me personally about American civilisation is exactly that old-world touch, that old-fashioned something which clings to it despite the hard glitter, and hectic night-life, and up-to-date bathrooms, and lurid advertisements, and all the rest of it. Bright children, you know, are always conservative. When I come across "daring" articles in your reviews — there was one about condoms in the last Mercury — I seem to hear your brilliant moderns applauding themselves for being such brave naughty boys. Buster Brown has grown up. America is beautifully young and naif, and has a magnificent intellectual future, far beyond its wildest dreams, perhaps. But I am afraid that at present the kind of modernism you mention is only another form of conventionality — old as the hills.

•

James Laughlin, the publisher of New Directions, published Nabokov's "Real Life of Sebastian Knight" in 1941. The writer struggled for a year to complete a book on Nikolai Gogol, sharing his woes with the publisher at intervals until its publication in 1944.

To James Laughlin

May 26, 1943

I have just mailed you my "Gogol through the Looking-Glass."

This little book has cost me more trouble than any other I have composed. The reason is clear: I had first to create Gogol (translate him) and then discuss him (translate my Russian ideas about him). The recurrent jerk of switching from one rhythm of work to the other has quite exhausted me. The book has taken me exactly one year to write. I never would have accepted your suggestion to do it had I known how many gallons of brain-blood it would absorb. . . .

There are probably some slight slips of the pen here and there. I would like to see the Englishman who could write a book on Shakespeare in Russian. I am very weak, smiling a weak smile, as I lie in my private maternity ward, and expect roses.

•

After the end of World War II, Nabokov was living with his wife, Vera, and his 11-year-old son, Dmitri, in Cambridge, Mass. Dmitri brought home a Christmas plea from Sunday school, to which his father replied.

To the Rev. Gardiner M. Day, Christ Church

Dec. 21, 1945

I regret to inform you that Dmitri cannot comply with your request to take part in a collection of clothing for the German children.



FROM "VLADIMIR NABOKOV: SELECTED LETTERS, 1940-1977"/MAX FLEISSEL

Vladimir Nabokov in Switzerland, 1963.

I sincerely endorse the idea of help and forgive — in regard to our enemies. In my opinion, however, this rule can only stand if what we give comes from depriving ourselves, not from depriving our friends. . . .

When I have to choose between giving for a Greek, Czech, French, Belgian, Chinese, Dutch, Norwegian, Russian, Jewish or German child, I shall not choose the latter one.

•

Beginning in the mid-40's, Katharine A. White was Nabokov's editor at The New Yorker. The following letter and one below from 1951 are typical of the friendly but often prickly expressions of the wary writer to his editor.

To Katharine A. White

Nov. 10, 1947

As I wrote to you at the time, I deeply appreciated your sympathetic handling of "My Uncle." It is the principle itself of editing that distresses me.

I shall be very grateful to you if you help me to weed out bad grammar but I do not think I would like my longish sentences clipped too close, or those drawbridges lowered which I have taken such pains to lift. In other words, I would like to discriminate between awkward construction (which is bad) and a certain special — how shall I put it — sinuosity, which is my own and which only at first glance may seem awkward or obscure. Why not have the reader re-read a sentence now and then? It won't hurt him.

•

Sorry was the lot of an editor who really offended Nabokov. Witness the scolding given the editor of The Atlantic Monthly, who declined a section of Nabokov's memoir "Conclusive Evidence" and reproached Nabokov for reserving his best work for The New Yorker.

To Edward Weeks

October 1948

I have received your letter of September 30 and can only excuse its contents by assuming that you were in your cups when you wrote it. . . . I *never* send editors anything that I consider to be of inferior quality. In fact, the piece I sent you is better than those I have published in the New Yorker so far. Your letter is so silly *and* rude that I do not think I want to have anything to do with you or the Atlantic any more. I am sending you a cheque for $800 and shall send the rest as soon as I am able to.

•

When an editor at The New York Times Book Review invited Nabokov to become a contributor, he displayed his usual candor in his response.

Continued on next page

Nabokov's Letters

Continued from preceding page

To Herbert Lyons

March 31, 1949

I shall be glad to do an occasional review for you. I have been wanting for a long time to take a crack at such big fakes as Mr. T. S. Eliot and Mr. Thomas Mann; apart from this, any new work by a well-known writer, American, English, French or Russian, would be welcome.

May I add that if you could pay me more for this kind of work, I would be able to devote more time to it.

•

To Katharine A. White

March 17, 1951

I am sorry the New Yorker rejected my story. It has already been sent elsewhere, so that I feel free to discuss certain points without being suspected of trying to persuade the New Yorker to reconsider their decision.

First of all, I do not understand what you mean by "overwhelming style," "light story" and "elaboration." All my stories are webs of style and none seems at first blush to contain much kinetic matter. . . . For me "style" *is* matter.

I feel that the New Yorker has not understood "The Vane Sisters" at all. Let me explain a few things: the whole point of the story is that my French professor, a somewhat obtuse scholar and a rather callous observer of the superficial planes of life, unwittingly passes (in the first pages) through the enchanting and touching "aura" of dead Cynthia, whom he continues to see (when talking about her) in terms of skin, hair, manners etc. The only nice thing he deigns to see about her is his condescending reference to a favorite picture of his that she painted — frost, sun, glass — and from this stems the icicle-bright aura through which he rather ridiculously passes in the beginning of the story when a sunny ghost leads him, as it were, to the place where he meets D. and learns of Cynthia's death. At the end of the story he seeks her spirit in vulgar table-rapping phenomena, in acrostics and then he sees a vague dream (permeated by the broken sun of their last meeting), and now comes the last paragraph which, if read straight, should convey that vague and sunny rebuke, but which for a more attentive reader contains the additional delight of a solved acrostic; I C-ould I-solate, C-onsciously, L-ittle. E-verything S-eemed B-lurred, Y-ellow-C-louded, Y-ielding N-othing T-angible. H-er I-nept A-crostics, M-audlin E-vasions, T-heopathies — E-very R-ecollection F-ormed R-ipples O-f M-ysterious M-eaning. Everything S-eemed Y-ellowly B-lurred, I-llusive, L-ost. The "icicles by Cynthia" refers of course to the setting at the beginning of the story and is a message, as it were, from her forgiving, gentle, doe-soul that had made him this gift of an iridescent day (giving him something akin to the picture he had liked, to the only small thing he had liked about her); and to this, in eager, pathetic haste, Sybil — a little ghost close to the larger one — adds "meter from me, Sybil," alluding of course to the red shadow of the parking meter near which the French professor meets D.

You may argue that reading downwards, or upwards, or diagonally is not what an editor can be expected to do; but by means of various allusions to trick-reading I have arranged matters so that the reader almost automatically slips into this discovery, especially because of the abrupt change in style. . . .

I am really very disappointed that you, such a subtle and loving reader, should not have seen the inner scheme of my story. I do not mean the acrostic — but the coincidence of Cynthia's spirit with the atmosphere of the beginning of the story.

. . . I am really quite depressed by the whole business. The financial side is an entirely separate trouble. But what matters most is the fact that people whom I so much like and admire have completely failed me as *readers* in the present case.

I expect to be in New York end of May. . . . Before then I hope to send you another story which will come back to me in a "Rush" envelope, on yellow paper.

•

Nabokov had a weakness for jingles and his "Collected Letters" are sprinkled with light verse. Here is his unsuccessful try at a Burma Shave roadside sign, submitted under his wife's name.

To the Burma-Vita Company

Aug. 22, 1953

I am writing to offer you the following jingle for your entertaining collection:

He passed two cars; then five; then seven;
and then he beat them all to Heaven.

If you think you can use it, please send cheque to address given above.

•

This limerick was composed on the night train from New York City to Ithaca for his friend, the chairman of the Romance literature department at Cornell University.

To Morris Bishop

Nov. 2, 1953

The old man who devised the Roomette
Now in Hades is bedded, I'll bet:
To make water, his bed
He must prop on his head —
— A ridiculous doom, or doomette.

•

The first mention of "Lolita" in this correspondence is in a 1951 letter to Pascal Covici, an editor at Viking Press. Nabokov describes the book as a novel "which deals with the problems of a very moral middle-aged gentleman who falls very immorally in love with his stepdaughter, a girl of thirteen." From then on, for several years, he wrote to editors, friends and publishers here and abroad, in a well-known struggle to get the book published. Typical of these letters was one to his old publisher at New Directions.

To James Laughlin

Feb. 3, 1954

Would you be interested in publishing a time-bomb that I have just finished putting together? It is a novel of 459 typewritten pages.

If you would like to see it, the following precautions would have to be observed:

First of all, I would have to have your word that you alone would read it. Everything else could be settled later. You would further have to give me an address where the MS could reach you personally and directly. This is a very serious matter for me, as you will understand after reading the work.

•

After a series of rejections from American publishers, the book was finally published in Paris, first in English by Olympia Press, then in French by the more mainstream Gallimard. Its first American edition was in 1958, by Putnam.

To Morris Bishop

March 6, 1956

I have just learned that Gallimard wants to publish LOLITA. This will give her a respectable address. The book is having some success in London and Paris. Please, cher ami, do read it to the end!

Frankly, I am not much concerned with the "irate Paterfamilias" [unidentified]. That stuffy philistine would be just as upset if he learned that at Cornell I analyze "ULYSSES" before a class of 250 students of both sexes. I know that LOLITA is my best book so far. I calmly lean on my conviction that it is a serious work of art, and that no court could prove it to be "lewd and libertine." All categories grade, of course, into one another: a comedy of manners written by a fine poet may have its "lewd" side; but "LOLITA" is a tragedy. "Pornography" is not an image plucked out of context; pornography is an attitude and an intention. The tragic and the obscene exclude each other.

•

Nabokov's passionate attention to detail extended to every aspect of his work. Whether dealing with matters literary or lepidopterological, he detested imprecision.

To Pyke Johnson Jr.

March 15, 1959

Many thanks for sending me the designs for

jacket and title page of the Collected Poems.

I like the two colored butterflies on the jacket but they have the bodies of ants, and no stylization can excuse a simple mistake. To stylize adequately one must have complete knowledge of the thing. I would be the laughing stock of my entomological colleagues if they happened to see these impossible hybrids. I also want to draw your attention to the fact that nowadays butterflies are being displayed on birthday cards, lampshades, frocks, curtains, candy boxes, wrapping paper and all kinds of ads.

. . . Now, turning to the title-page butterfly, its head is that of a small tortoise, and its pattern is that of a common Cabbage White butterfly (whereas the insect in my poem is clearly described as belonging to a group of small blue butterflies with dotted undersides), which is as meaningless in the present case as would be a picture of a tuna fish on the jacket of *Moby Dick*. I want to be quite clear and frank: I have nothing against stylization but I do object to stylized ignorance.

•

When his compatriot Boris Pasternak's "Doctor Zhivago" was published to wide acclaim and popularity in the United States, Nabokov made his thoughts clear on the subject, calling the book "a sorry thing, clumsy, melodramatic, with stock situations and trite characters." Here he sounds off on the subject to an old acquaintance, a scholar, teacher and literary critic.

To Prof. Gleb Struve

July 14, 1959

I wish I knew what idiot could have told you that I found "antisemitism" in *Doctor Zhivago:* I am not concerned with the "ideas" in a bad provincial novel, but how members of the Russian "intelligentsia" can avoid being jarred by the complete dismissal of the February Revolution and by the overblown treatment of the October one. . . . And how could you, orthodox believer that you are, not be nauseated by the cheap, churchy-sugary reek? "The winter was a particularly snowy one. A frost hit on St. Pafnuty's Day" (I quote from memory). . . . And the good doctor's poems! "To be a woman is a gigantic step. . . ."

Sad. Sometimes I feel as if I had disappeared behind some remote dove-gray horizon while my former compatriots are still sipping cranberry drinks at a seaside stall.

•

Although consummately affectionate and sociable among friends, a joiner Nabokov was not. When elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters, he apologized to the novelist and officer of that organization who conveyed the good news.

To Glenway Wescott

Feb. 7, 1960

This is a difficult letter to write. I have to choose between bad manners and the betrayal of principle. Sadly, but without hesitation, I choose the first. Believe me, I am deeply touched and feel greatly honored by the distinction you propose to confer upon me, and the little rosette is perfectly charming but, alas, I must return it.

I could not imagine belonging to an organization without being active in it — yet, in my case, any organizational activity is utterly out of the question. Socially, I am a cripple. Therefore all my thinking life I have declined to "belong." I have never joined any union or club (not even a faculty club), have never served on any committees, taken part in faculty meetings, or been a member of any organization whatsoever. . . . Even making a speech at a public ceremony is as impossible for me as saying grace is for a good atheist. In consequence, my name on your distinguished list would be meaningless.

•

Nor would Nabokov play the publicity game. Here he responds (through his wife) to someone on the staff of a London publication who had asked him how he wrote, when he wrote, where he wrote and how he found inspiration.

To Ernest Kay

March 3, 1964

My husband asks me to send you his answers to your questions of December 27th:

1. Pencil
2. Anyhow
3. Anywhere
4. It finds me

He has also a question for you: Why do you spell his name with two "a"s?

•

For a man so jealous of his privacy, a biography may have seemed the ultimate intrusion. Although he initially cooperated with Andrew Field on the project, he was outraged by the manuscript Mr. Field sent him. (The book was eventually published under the title "Vladimir Nabokov: His Life in Part.")

To Andrew Field

Aug. 8, 1973

Your ignoble letter of July 9, 1973 arrived only now. . . . I would attribute to the workings of a deranged mind some of its wild rubbish — such as my dreading the blood of the Tsars in my veins . . . or my telling my three-old-year son in Berlin: "Spit on those flowers that look like Hitler faces" (in our set, children were forbidden to spit); but mental derangement is one thing, and blackmail another, and blackmail is the word for your threats to publish my informal utterances on two afternoons of tape-recording, the garbled recollections of strangers, and the various rumors that fell into your unfastidious lap. . . .

I shall persevere and send you my corrections, as promised, in the course of this month, and if you refuse to accept them you will take the consequences. I shall not hesitate to sue you for breach of contract, slander, libel, and deliberate attempts to damage my personal reputation. . . .

I put you in touch with relatives and friends of mine and gave you much of my own time. If you violate my trust, you cannot use any information supplied by people who thought they were acting on my request; nor can you use excerpts from my diaries, letters, and other texts received directly from me; and, of course, those famous tapes, no matter how innocent, are also taboo.

But not all is lost! Both your typescripts, with all my copious notes to them, as well as our entire correspondence, will be ambushed, ready to appear and stop you in your tracks — if I am no longer there to demolish the travesty of my life that you might plan to publish.

•

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn recommended Nabokov for the Nobel Prize in 1972. The first chapters of Mr. Solzhenitsyn's "Gulag Archipelago" were published last month in Novy Mir, the official Soviet literary journal. "Lolita" and most other works by Nabokov have also been released there.

To Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn

Nov. 14, 1974

I was happy to learn today of your passage to the free world from our dreadful homeland. I am happy as well that your children will be attending schools for humans, not for slaves.

Only now is it possible for me to thank you for your letter of May 16, 1972, with your appeal to the Swedish Academy enclosed. I was keenly touched by your words. If I have not answered you until now, it is because for a long time I have made it a rule not to write to Soviet Russia, so as not to subject my benevolent correspondents to additional danger: I am, after all, some kind of scaly devil to the Bolshevik authorities — something that not everyone in Russia realizes. I doubt if even you have read my poems, articles, stories and such novels of mine as *Dar, Podvig, Priglashenie na kazn'*, and especially *Bend Sinister*, in which, ever since the vile times of Lenin, I have not ceased to mock the philistinism of Sovietized Russia and to thunder against the very kind of vicious cruelty of which you write and of which you will now write freely. . . .

I never make official "political" statements. Privately, though, I could not refrain from welcoming you.

I shake your hand. □

Excerpted from "Vladimir Nabokov: Selected Letters, 1940-1977," edited by Dmitri Nabokov and Matthew J. Bruccoli, to be published later this month by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

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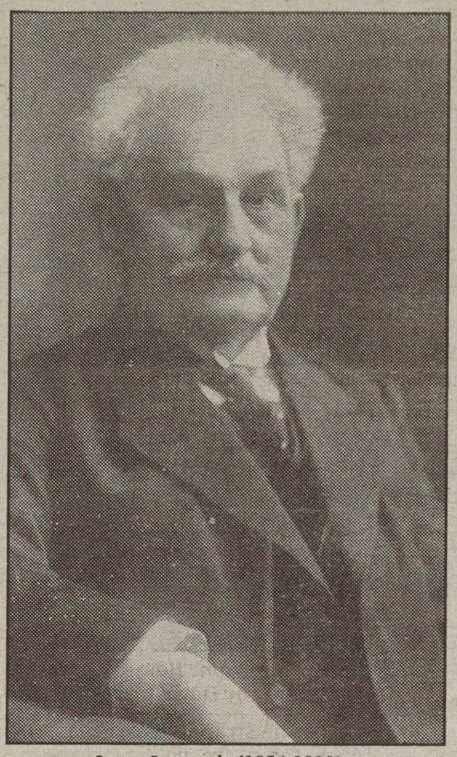

Leos Janacek (1854-1928).

cek's Uncollected Essays on Music," the most comprehensive selection of his writings, is to be greeted with gratitude. Janacek's ideas are conveyed in all their detail, with both passion and elegance.

Two themes recur. One is Janacek's identification with Moravian culture and his resistance to the Austrian and German domination of his country. His nationalist feelings were so strong that he wrote of Dvorak: "He has taken melodies from my heart. Nothing on earth can sever such a bond." But he rejected Beethoven: his "works have never inspired me, never drew me out of myself . . . never transported me into the world of ecstasy. I got to the bottom of them too soon."

A second theme deals with what he called speech melody. "Furtively," Janacek writes of the research for "Jenufa," his first major opera, "I had been listening to the speech of passers-by, reading the expressions on their faces, following with my eye every raised voice. . . . How many variations of melody could be found for the same word! Here it shone and dissolved, there it hardened and pierced the skin. But I suspected in these melodies something far deeper still. . . . There were lines of inner growth, kept secret. . . . In speech melodies I felt the presence of 'spiritual mysteries.' "

But how is one to explain the enormous chasm between the skillful translation of Janacek's own words and the infelicitous English of Ms. Zemanova, identified by the publisher as editor and translator? Here is a characteristic sentence from her 12-page biographical sketch: "Although they were reconciled later, when Janacek sought permission to see his daughter born in 1882, after the death of a longed-for son Vladimir in 1890 at the age of two, the hopes of a happy, stable relationship were never fulfilled."

MS. ZEMANOVA'S method of organization is no more felicitous than her English. In dividing Janacek's writings into subject areas — "Speech Melody and Czech Nationalism," "What I Admit," "Performances and Composers," "Travel and Places" — she has sacrificed chronology. In his introduction to this volume, John Tyrrell, author of the Janacek entry in the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, writes of the composer's self-education that it took in "not just musical theory but also psychology and the formalist philosophy of the period." But we don't get any of that from Ms. Zemanova. Nor can we find out here how Janacek grew from a regionalist to a composer of internationally recognized operas. □

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ment that ought to be preserved in a book of this sort. Closer attention to such forgotten footnotes would have served to reinforce the editors' accurate assessment that a South that was politically, culturally and racially monolithic existed only as the stuff of legend.

DESPITE its lapses, the encyclopedia offers some important correctives to accepted history. The editors are to be credited with picking scholars who consistently point up the exploitation of the pre-World War II South as an economic colony by Northern corporations and the later collusion between indigenous corporations and reactionary politicians. And J. Wayne Flynt of Auburn University, a historian of the Southern poor, justly exposes the shameful record of the American Federation of Labor in maintaining segregated unions.

This kind of scholarship represents progress for a region that has always been hostile to the voicing of uncomfortable truths on the campus, in the pulpit or the legislatures. Sometimes, the conflict between clear-eyed scholarship and traditional Southern courtesy surfaces in comical ways. For example, in a single paragraph, we see the aristocratic Episcopalians and Presbyterians condemned for sustaining religious and class discrimination at state universities and then hastily congratulated for founding, respectively, Davidson College and the University of the South.

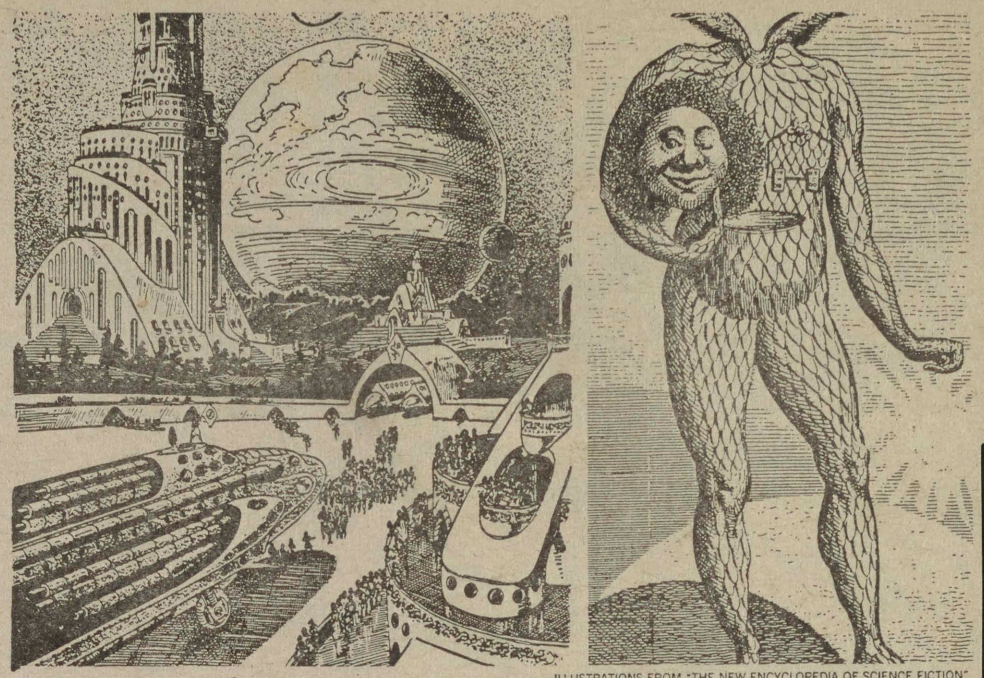
Alas, the section on "Literature" is dated and sometimes wrongheaded. The Nashville Agrarians are praised out of all proportion and let off too easily on the race issue, while the best artist of the lot, Robert Penn Warren, gets too little credit for the magnitude of his achievement in creating the enduring masterwork on Southern politics, "All the King's Men."

The entry on journalism is even more dated and thunderously silent on the most obvious analytical questions. What was the role of Northern chain ownership in the failure of Southern newspapers to meet the challenge of desegregation? How is it that the most widely read Southern columnist of the 50's was Ralph McGill, a crusader for social justice, while today that role is filled by Lewis Grizzard, whose humor often reeks of fraternity house bigotry?

This book represents a step forward for Southern scholarship, but not a great leap. The leap will come when the biographical entry in the law section for Atticus Finch, the fictional lawyer in "To Kill a Mockingbird," is joined by one for Fred D. Gray, the pioneering black civil rights lawyer who represented Rosa Parks and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. during the Montgomery bus boycott. □

Lost In the Galaxy

By Gregory Feeley



ILLUSTRATIONS FROM "THE NEW ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SCIENCE FICTION"

Drawing of Jupiter as envisioned by Frank R. Paul (left); an 18th-century image of aliens (right)

JAMES GUNN'S **The New Encyclopedia of Science Fiction** (Viking, $24.95) is, as its title implies, a latecomer to the field of sf encyclopedias, which it hopes to supplement by dint of being up to date. It bears no relation to Peter Nicholls' *The Science Fiction Encyclopedia* (1977), and probably would not exist if that exemplary volume had enjoyed a second edition. Gunn acknowledges that both that work and Curtis C. Smith's *Twentieth-Century Science-Fiction Writers* (1981, 1986) provide the "foundations" on which his work is built. The metaphor implies that the successive volumes, building on each other, are getting better; in fact they are getting worse. Smith's volume was badly flawed, while the Gunn—less comprehensive than the Nicholls (which included every sf writer ever to publish a book), and less rigorous than the Smith (which strove to offer complete bibliographies)—sets a low standard, and fails to meet it. The result—and it's a word I do not use lightly—is a scandal.

First and most apparent, the text is riddled with errors. On first opening the book I turned to the entries on writers with whom I can claim some familiarity—James Blish, Jack Dann, Avram Davidson, Joanna Russ, Gene Wolfe—and found errors in dates and titles in all of them. Two title errors (Dann's *Timetipping* and Davidson's *The Enquiries of Doctor Eszterhazy*) prompted suspicion: they were neither simple typos nor misprints, but looked (*Timetripping*; *Dr. Esterhazy*) like memory errors of contributors who did not check their work. I then drew up a list of sf titles whose punctuational features lent themselves to frequent misspelling (*We Who Are About To . . .*, *Circumpolar!*, "For I Am a Jealous People!", *Titans' Daughter*, "All You Zombies—", *"The Number of the Beast—"*), and checked the book against it. Gunn's volume scored an astonishing zero.

Nearly every author's entry has more than one date wrong; the total over the work's 523 pages must exceed a thousand. The publication date for *Under Heaven's Bridge* by Michael Bishop and Ian Watson is given as 1982 in the Bishop entry, 1980 in the Watson, and 1981 under "Collaboration." One of these dates is in fact correct, but what good does that do the reader who doesn't already know?

Second is inconsistent methodology. Authors are listed by that form of their names under which they were published, with middle names sometimes given and sometimes not. We are told that Michael Swanwick's middle name is Jurgen, a datum of no bibliographic moment, but nothing to indicate authors who sometimes use middle initials and sometimes not, such as Jack Dann, Joe Haldeman and Howard Waldrop. Pseudonyms are not cross-referenced; the work of James Tiptree Jr. and Anthony Burgess is listed under these long-established bylines, but all others, such as Lewis Padgett, Anson MacDonald or Raccoona Sheldon (the name under which "Tiptree" published one of her best stories and won an award), can be found only under other entries. Some contributors note whenever a cited work won an award, some don't, and the year given can be either that of publication or that in which the award was made. For novels that saw magazine publication prior to their appearance as books—an important and frequent occurrence in the history of science fiction—some contributors give both dates, others not.

Third, and most distressing, is bad judgment. Numerous entries have been written by interested parties, an astonishing lapse that the contributors' notes show Gunn to have been aware of. The entry for Harlan Ellison is written by one of Ellison's associates, who offers a gushing encomium full of statements like "All of Ellison's writing is deeply persuasive and highly personal," which even Ellison would hesitate to claim for himself. The entry omits Ellison's many failed projects of the last 15 years, failing even to mention *The Last Dangerous Visions*. This would be equivalent to a Random House publicist writing a puff about Truman Capote's career and neglecting to mention *Answered Prayers*.

Less egregious conflicts of interest abound. Gunn should not have written the entry for the movie based on his novel *The Immortal*, whether he liked the movie or not. A.E. van Vogt credits himself with inventing the term "fix-up," which may be true but should come from another source. Greg Bear, writing on "Biology," has to decide how much discussion to accord the importance of his own novel *Blood Music*. He finally gives it the several lines it warrants, but seems embarrassed in doing so.

Too much emphasis is given to awards and award nominations, so much that it comes to resemble filler. Michael Swanwick's entry (also written by Gunn) comprises little more than a list of his many prize nominations—the last of them incorrect. Contributors seem to have been given their own head as to how much space to accord each entry, which leads to peculiar distortions. Avram Davidson is given less space than John Jakes, James Blish less than Jerry Pournelle.

Some of the errors can be traced to Smith's *Twentieth-Century Science-Fiction Writers*, which evidently was often consulted in place of the original sources. A number of the same contributors were used—Sandra L. Miesel on Poul Anderson and Gordon R. Dickson, Jeffrey M. Elliot on Pamela Sargent and George Zebrowski—which only heightens the volume's sense of offering little new. The entry on George Turner, written by Gunn himself, is so plainly cribbed from Smith as to warrant a failing grade in any college course.

Nothing in the encyclopedia can be accepted except by someone who already knows the subject, which is to say that the book cannot be trusted. As a reference work sitting on library shelves to be consulted by students, journalists and other non-specialists, *The New Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* will prove actively harmful. The book should not simply be overhauled for its next edition: it should be withdrawn from sale.

Inflated Coinage

JAMES P. BLAYLOCK is not listed in the *New Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*—a surprise considering his World Fantasy and Philip K. Dick Awards—but his six novels over the past seven years have attracted a growing audience for his style of bookish, Anglophile whimsy. **The Last Coin** (Ace, $17.95) was heralded as his best work well in advance of publication, and its dustjacket resembles the site of a grand entente between the cyberpunks, steam punks and fantasy free agents: William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, Tim Powers, Lucius Shepard and several others all offer lavish praise, with Lewis Shiner (doubling as one of the novel's dedicatees) trumping the lot by hailing it as "One of the best books I've ever read!"

One may feel like a spoilsport in offering a demurrer, but *The Last Coin* is a book with problems. Blaylock's love for the leisured pace and discursive freedom of the British essayists he so frequently cites in epigraph—Sterne, Hazlitt and, especially, Stevenson—is everywhere manifest in his prose, but he has not yet mastered their only seemingly prolix style, where the eddy of each subordinate clause in fact contains a vortex. Blaylock's prose just eddies, and his paragraphs run longer than their matter merits.

The Last Coin concerns the evil wrought by the 30 pieces of silver of antiquity, their malignity here long antedating Judas. Scattered since the time of the Gospels, they accord corrupting power to those who amass them, and as the story opens the evil Pennyman has secured 25 of them. As readers of *The Lord of the Rings* will soon guess, the number outstanding quickly diminishes to a

Gregory Feeley frequently writes about fantasy and science fiction. His novel, "The Oxygen Barons," will be published next year.

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this book will intrigue need-
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alike. ■

writes the papal nuncio, "I have with me a Chinese whom I should not have brought."

In Paris, Hu slips away again. He roams the streets beating a small drum and preaching in Chinese to the amused Parisians. When apprehended, the Jesuits beat him. Eventually he is sent to Charenton, the famous asylum whose most celebrated inmate, decades later, will be the Marquis de Sade. Though incarcerated, he is not forgotten. The Jesuits, if not Foucquet, feel guilty. They provide funds to send Hu back to China, and he arrives back home in Canton in 1726. No doubt he had many tales to tell.

Was Hu in fact psychotic? Was he somehow excited by faith, or did he hope to become a sort of reverse Marco Polo? Who can really say at this late date? Certainly not Spence, who merely lays out the known facts and makes no medical or moral judgments, confining himself to an elegant epigraph from the 16th-century French poet Joachim Du Bellay: "*Heureux qui, comme Ulysse, a fait un beau voyage* (Happy the man who, like Ulysses, makes a beautiful voyage)." What can be definitely asserted is that Hu's story, so deceptively simple, makes powerful reading. And Foucquet, what happened to him? He was honored with a titular bishopric, and his researches into Chinese religion ignored. He did write a long, defensive report about John Hu, which provides the basis for this splendid book. ■

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Illustration by Russell Farrell

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THE SHORT STORY

Henry James to Elizabeth Bowen.
By John Bayley.
197 pp. New York: St. Martin's Press. $35.

By Louis Menand

HENRY JAMES published his first short story, "A Tragedy of Error," in 1864; Elizabeth Bowen's last volume of stories, "A Day in the Dark," appeared in 1965. Despite its subtitle, John Bayley's book is not a survey of the short story in those 101 years. It is a study of what Mr. Bayley calls the short story's "special effects," which he discovers for us in readings of a dozen stories by nine of the genre's best-known modern practitioners: James, Conrad, Kipling, Hemingway, Chekhov, Lawrence, Hardy, Joyce and Bowen.

"Special effects" is a term associated with movies, but it is an apt phrase for the literary features Mr. Bayley is interested in. A special effect in a movie cuts esthetically in two contradictory directions. It makes what you see look real, but by artifice. Although he doesn't make the analogy, this effect is not unlike the one Mr. Bayley finds in the successful short story. The modern story, he proposes, is founded on the idea that "Art can only work with total success by conjuring a world which is its opposite, which is dedicated wholly to moments in life." To realize this idea, the writer must commit himself to the paradox that the more complete the "literariness" of his story, the more fully it will evoke what Mr. Bayley calls "a mystery which is beyond art," a "situation not to be got behind," an "impression that there is something more to come" — something we associate with life itself, with experience unmediated by art.

• • •

To refer directly to this mystery or to undertake to represent it is fatal, Mr. Bayley argues, to a story's success. It is the writer's willingness to tend to the machinery and to let the ghost appear unbeckoned that produces the best results. Thus, according to Mr. Bayley, the effectiveness of Kipling's stories. Looked at with a cold eye, they seem melodramatic and gimmicky, shot through with didacticism about race and empire. But when we recover from "the expert falsity of [Kipling's] art" and "say 'I don't believe a word of this,' there is something left none the less in which he makes us believe very deeply."

This is a highly appealing critical approach, not least because it is committed to honoring something that was of supreme importance to the writers Mr. Bayley is concerned with, but that is very hard to get at using most conventional critical methods: the *sensation* reading a story produces. Most discussions of Joyce's story "The Dead," for instance, emphasize the irony of the style, and thus the fatuity of the story's protagonist, Gabriel Conroy, and the false bonhomie of the party he attends. "The Dead" is therefore read as saying that all the living in the story are in effect dead, and that the only live presence is the dead man, Michael Furey, whom Gabriel's wife is reminded of by a song. Mr. Bayley's point is that this is merely what the story is saying; what the story cannot say, but what is undeniably there in everyone's experience of it, has to do with our feeling that Joyce's characters are indeed living in an entirely real sense, but a sense that lies outside the reach of literary style.

SOME of the stories Mr. Bayley discusses are standards — Conrad's "Secret Sharer," Chekhov's "Lady With the Dog," Hemingway's "Indian Camp." Some are relatively neglected — James's "Landscape-Painter," Hardy's "On the Western Circuit." In every case, he not only points us in the direction of the "mystery" the story cannot describe, but analyzes intelligently the situation the story does describe.

Like its subject, "The Short Story" is suggestive rather than inclusive, and it is possible to feel a little impatient with its author's diffidence. Mr. Bayley refers to claims that the story is experiencing a renaissance today, but seems uninterested in evaluating their accuracy. He implies that the modern story is the product of late-19th-century ideas about art, flourishing only as long as those ideas were persuasive; but he avoids developing a historical argument. And although he makes some striking points about the story effect in poems and the poetic effect in stories, he doesn't mention the genre that seems most comparable to the story — the drama, where what we experience is both unquestionably real, since those are actual people on the stage, and transparently fake, since those people are pretending to characters not their own. And the sensation that the play is referring to a "something" that goes on after it is over is clinched at the very moment its artificiality is most nakedly exposed: the curtain call. □

Louis Menand teaches in the English department at Queens College and at the CUNY Graduate Center.



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An Era Too Good to Be True

GEORGE WASHINGTON SLEPT HERE
Colonial Revivals and American Culture 1876-1986.
By Karal Ann Marling.
Illustrated. 453 pp. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. $39.95.

By Michael Kammen

MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE, the shrewd 16th-century *érudit*, once quipped that "there is more ado to interpret interpretations than to interpret the things, and more books about books than upon all other subjects; we do nothing but comment upon one another." How much more true that is today than it was four centuries ago. "George Washington Slept Here," however, is not merely a book about books — nearly all of the influential books written about The Founder ever since Parson Weems's opportunistic fable first appeared as a pamphlet in 1800 — but is also about the things that either evoked those books or else were prompted by them, such as birthdays, centennial exhibitions, the discovery of scandalous love letters; or souvenir hatchets, colonial costumes and tea sets.

This book, written by an astute professor of American studies and art history at the University of Minnesota, is intriguing because it also concerns the role of that on-again, off-again colonial revival in popular culture from 1876 until the present. Karal Ann Marling's discussion demonstrates her skill at interweaving words and images, books and the bizarre detritus from our commercialization of the past that stand (or perhaps languish) in need of explication. Despite Montaigne's lament, that wry essayist would have liked the irreverent Ms. Marling. They are well matched in spirit.

One of the most persistent problems the author traces, and which she must deal with as a transformational phenomenon in American lore, is that for so long George Washington seemed too good to be true. That explains why, eventually, iconoclasts would find it irresistible either to sensationalize or else trivialize him. In 1857 an Episcopalian bishop affirmed the legend of Washington holding a lonely prayer vigil: "When in crowded lodgings at Valley Forge, where every thing was unfavorable to private devotions, his frequent visits to a neighboring wood were for this purpose [prayer]." Contrast that with H. L. Mencken's sniggering query three generations later: If Washington were now alive, "where would he go on idle nights?" Presumably in search of Sally Fairfax, the wife of his best friend. In 1925, Ms. Marling writes, the son of J. P. Morgan "bought up a number of autograph Washington letters of a 'smutty' nature in order to suppress them forever. 'Could we afford to pay the price and destroy our investment? We could and did,' said the millionaire's private librarian, who had probably burned some of the many forgeries in circulation in a period that craved sensational keepsakes a more innocent age would have recognized for fakes."

Because the book is richly descriptive, readers will encounter many unfamiliar and enchanting tales: about the genuine Miss Mary Northend of Salem, for example, a "decayed gentlewoman" who by 1912 had accumulated "the most wonderful collection of negatives in the country, bearing upon colonial and historic homes, which now numbers nearly sixty thousand [the negatives, not the homes]." Or the mishaps that occurred off Manhattan's shoreline in 1909 when the Hudson-Fulton double celebration took place. A replica of Henry Hudson's "Half Moon," manned by a crew unfamiliar with old-time canvas and rope, rammed into one of Fulton's "Clermont," shattered 20 feet of rail and bashed in a section of her hull. When a tugboat rushed to the rescue, it slammed into the "Half Moon" and brought down her main boom.



George and Martha Washington paper dolls by Grace Drayton were reprinted in 1982. Souvenir match holder dates from 1901.

More arrogantly absurd than comic-pathetic, some 15 years later Henry Ford tried (but failed) to buy Philadelphia's Independence Hall. Hence he built himself a bigger version in Dearborn, Mich., to serve as a museum. I must question, by the way, Ms. Marling's belief that to Ford "the past was just like the present: clean, prosperous, busy, mobile, and stocked with every imaginable consumer durable." She underestimates the propulsive impact of sheer nostalgia on his antiquarian shifts and drives. The 1920's seemed many decades removed from his sentimental recollections of a rural boyhood. Ms. Marling misses Ford's acute ambivalence about the transformed America for which he bore a considerable burden of responsibility.

Zany things have happened to the American heritage. Unfortunately, however, most of them have grown dim in our collective memory. If Ms. Marling's major achievement in this work is her exhaustive exhumation of forgotten memorabilia mixed with a sprightly determination to fit thousands of informative fragments together in a coherent manner, her most serious shortcoming is that, at times, she tends to revel in trivia for its own sake and overwhelms us with details — too many of which require more meaningful explanation. Her chapters covering the decade from 1923 until 1932, especially, are mélanges of miscellaneous topics that remain ill-connected by strained generalizations.

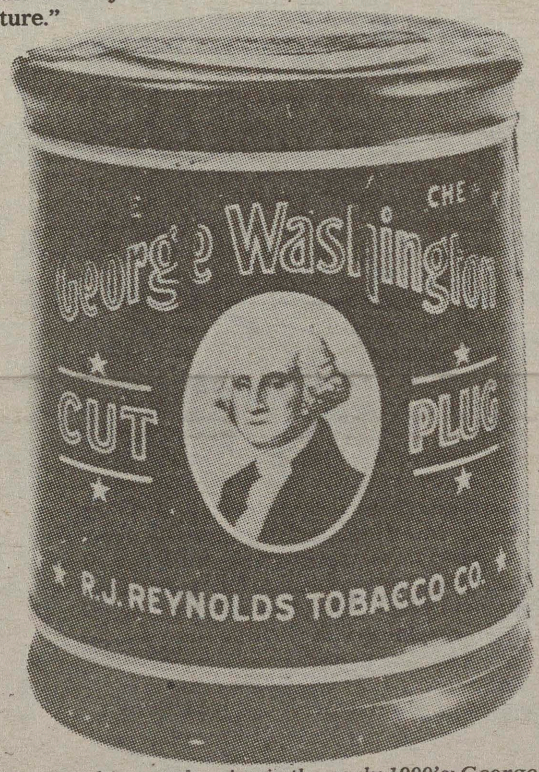
Moreover, Ms. Marling's muse nods on occasion, especially when she seeks to provide political and social context. Some senators are identified with the wrong state; and Abraham Lincoln did not grow up in New Salem. We are told early on that enthusiasm for colonial bric-a-brac "reached a crescendo" in 1876, even though it subsequently becomes crystal clear that the enthusiasm really peaked half a century later in an age of "authentic reproductions." At times Ms. Marling also assumes that the endeavors of politicians and commercial entrepreneurs must have accurately reflected values shared by the populace at large. Treacherous quicksand lies hidden beneath such an assumption, even though she does use advertising effectively to sustain some of her assertions.

ALTHOUGH this book is stronger in the realm of description than of explanation, its essential emphases are fundamentally sound. Ms. Marling asserts, correctly I believe, that Washington's meaning and memory have become increasingly vague in American culture since 1939. For symptomatic evidence she does not cite, one might mention that in 1980, for the first time in 50 years, Congress decided not to hold a special session on the occasion of George Washington's Birthday in order to read aloud his Farewell Address.

Ms. Marling has salvaged quantities of consequential colonial ephemera. These are the accretions which simultaneously embellish yet enshroud our national myths; and she has sandblasted those hollow shrines while preserving all the rubble and dust for our delectation. The result is a lively exposé whose persuasiveness owes much to the banality, snobbery and ubiquity of the treasures turned up by Ms. Marling.

Although the American Legion may not love the book, it will augment the author's reputation as an energetic and observant practitioner of American studies. Our overall perception of the complex functions filled by American history in popular culture is exuberantly enhanced in "George Washington Slept Here." □

Michael Kammen, who teaches history at Cornell University, is the author of the forthcoming "Sovereignty and Liberty: Constitutional Discourse in American Culture."



For smoking or chewing in the early 1900's: George Washington Cut Plug Tobacco in red, white and blue cans bearing the slogan "Greatest American."



ILLUSTRATIONS FROM "GEORGE WASHINGTON SLEPT HERE"

"George Washington," a 1932 wood statue by Frank Weston Moran, a Vermont hermit and folk artist.

ABOUT THE ARTS/John Gross

'Little Dorrit': Fine Performances, Vivid Faces — Gaunt Cheek by Comfortable Jowl

THE NEW FILM OF "LITtle Dorrit," written and directed by Christine Edzard, must be the most ambitious movie adaptation of a Dickens novel ever made, and, setting aside David Lean's superlative 1946 version of "Great Expectations," the most successful. Moreover, in "Great Expectations" David Lean was working with a relatively compact story, while "Little Dorrit" is a great urban sprawl of book, Dickens at his most profuse.

Faced with the problem of bringing this superabundance of material under control, Miss Edzard's solution has been to divide the story into two sections — each running for three hours — and to regroup the major episodes accordingly. Part 1 is called "Nobody's Fault," which is the title Dickens originally planned to give the novel; Part 2 is called "Little Dorrit's Story."

"Nobody's Fault" centers on Arthur Clennam, who returns to London after 20 years in China — in the first instance, to the dark family home presided over by his harsh, sternly religious mother. Intrigued by the seamstress who works for her, a diminutive young woman called Amy Dorrit, he gets to know her and her family. They have been inmates of the Marshalsea debtors' prison for many years: Amy's father, William Dorrit, is the patriarch of the place, and Amy herself was born there.

Clennam tries to help them as best he can. Then they unexpectedly come into a fortune, and leave the jail for a life of foreign travel and high society — while Clennam, after a business failure, ends up in the Marshalsea himself.

In "Little Dorrit's Story" we retrace the same events through Amy's eyes. We also learn about her early life, and follow her and her family abroad to Italy and back to London in their new post-Marshalsea prosperity.

In particular, we see them entering the opulent world of Merdle, a fraudulent company promoter whose eventual crash drags down thousands of investors with him (Clennam among them). It is only then that Amy and Clennam are united, never again — once Clennam has left the Marshalsea — to be separated.

■

The movie built around these twin narratives is fluent, intelligent and atmospheric. It abounds in pungent performances and memorable faces — gaunt cheek by comfortable jowl; it moves with equal conviction from the jostling streets to the silent gloom of the Clennam house, from the ramshackle poverty of Bleeding Heart Yard to the smooth corridors of the Circumlocution Office. The sounds of the drama are haunting, too, as haunting as the images: above all the restless noises that echo through the Marshalsea.

If you haven't read "Little Dorrit," you may well find that the film makes you want to; and if you do, you will find that for the most part the film is commendably true to the spirit in which Dickens wrote. In one respect, indeed — the depiction of the two central characters — it represents a distinct improvement.

In the novel, where she isn't a blur, Amy Dorrit comes close to being an embarrassment, a stunted Dickensian child-wife of uncertain sexual status. And though the characterization of Arthur Clennam is more successful, he is only half brought to life. It is as though his heavy spirits infected the way Dickens drew him.



Susan Tanner as Little Dorrit as a child and Alec Guinness as her father, the selfish, pathetic William

In the film, by contrast, both characters are fully realized. Derek Jacobi endows Clennam with the presence that Dickens was only half able to supply; Amy, as played by Sarah Pickering, has the selflessness and sweetness of temper that the novelist was aiming for, without the sentimental haze in which he enveloped her.

A convincing Clennam and Amy are essential to the two-part structure that Christine Edzard has imposed on the story. They provide a unifying principle, each in turn; they lend credibility to the central contrast between the oppression and frustration of Part 1 and the redemption of Part 2.

It says something about the peculiar nature of Dickens's genius that they don't have the same degree of importance in the novel, that their inadequacies don't prevent the book from being a major masterpiece. For many readers it may seem to confirm the view that construction was his weakest point, that his work typically consists, as George Orwell put it, of "rotten architecture and wonderful gargoyles."

But it would be truer to say that there are two kinds of structure in a Dickens novel. There is the plot, often melodramatic and far-fetched; and there is what you might call the poetic structure — a dense network of images and motifs, often linked by the finest verbal filaments, and an underlying narrative rhythm.

■

In Miss Edzard's rearrangement of "Little Dorrit," some of this rhythm has undoubtedly been disrupted. The Merdles, for example — the financier and his wife — make their first appearance little more than a quarter of the way into the book; and the Merdles represent Dickens at the height of his powers. In the movie, however, Miss Edzard's scheme insures that we don't encounter them until Part 2 — which is one reason why Part 1 starts to drag.

Conversely, there is the public unmasking of Casby, the landlord of Bleeding Heart Yard: a silky-haired, hard-hearted humbug who eventually has his locks sheared and his impostures denounced by Mr. Pancks, his rent collector. This occurs far too early in the film. There isn't time for the requisite build-up, and the contrast between Casby and Pancks gets blunted.

As for the verbal energy of the book, the film can't hope to match it, by its very nature. You can show Merdle looking preoccupied (he is contemplating suicide); you can't show him looking down into his hat "as if it were some 20 feet deep." You can show Pancks bustling about, but you can't show him bustling about "like a little coaly tugboat."

Still, all this simply means that the film must be judged on its own terms; and though it has its slow patches and its occasional lapses, they don't seriously detract from a remarkable achievement.

Who could have foretold, for example, than any film maker would have done as well as Miss Edzard does with the potentially B-movie scenes in Mrs. Clennam's house? The glimmering dark brown interiors take on an almost Rembrandtesque quality; the late Joan Greenwood invests Mrs. Clennam herself with extraordinary power.

Then there is Alec Guinness, whose career stretches back to "Great Expectations" and to the controversial 1948 movie of "Oliver Twist." He has rarely given a more finely judged performance than he does as selfish, pathetic William Dorrit, cadging his "testimonials" from new arrivals in the Marshalsea, reverting to his Marshalsea self (but has he ever escaped from it?) in the unforgettable scene where he breaks down at a Merdle banquet.

But it isn't a question of one or two star performers. Even the least of the characters on screen is apt to have his or her sudden piercing moment; and it is here, in its overflowing detail, and its eye for the rejected and disregarded, that the film is at its most truly Dickensian. □



INTO THE FIRE

A Seductive Thriller

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Letting the Record Speak

COLLUSION ACROSS THE JORDAN
King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine.
By Avi Shlaim.
Maps. 676 pp. New York: Columbia University Press. $40.

THE BIRTH OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE PROBLEM, 1947-1949
By Benny Morris.
Maps. 380 pp. New York: Cambridge University Press. $39.50.

By Ronald Sanders



King Abdullah of Jordan, right, salutes the commander of the British Ninth Infantry Brigade in Palestine, en route to a meeting in Jerusalem in 1947. At center is John Glubb (Glubb Pasha), head of the Arab Legion in Jordan.

IF revisionist history means a kind of writing that differs, on grounds of scholarly objectivity, from popular assumptions and myths, then all serious historical writing is revisionist. Even as one puzzles at King Hussein's recent severing of Jordan's legal and administrative ties to the West Bank and the proposals of the Palestine Liberation Organization to assume political responsibility there, it is useful to know the historical background so brilliantly presented in two new books by Israeli historians. Both re-examine aspects of their country's origins as a state and are not afraid to be tough toward their own when truth requires that they be so.

Indeed, Avi Shlaim, a fellow of St. Antony's College at Oxford, is tough toward the Israelis even when he does not have to be. His "Collusion Across the Jordan" — which is largely based on hitherto unavailable source materials — is a lucid and meticulous study of the 30-year political relationship between the Zionist (later Israeli) leadership on one side of the River Jordan and the Emir (later King) Abdullah on the other, ending only with the assassination of the latter by a Palestinian nationalist in 1951. This strange and mostly clandestine, yet crucial, relationship stands now as a demonstration that even in 1948, when the new state of Israel was being invaded by Arab armies on all sides, the lineup against it was not really so monolithic as it seemed.

The fact was that the Israelis and Abdullah's Jordanian monarchy, brought together by geography and their common origins in British Mandatory Palestine, had as many crucial interests in common with each other as Jordan had with the Arab world in general. Foremost among these, as Mr. Shlaim demonstrates with occasional though not consistent disapproval, was a common desire not to see an independent Palestinian state established west of the Jordan. Abdullah, still harboring his Hashemite dynastic dreams of ultimate rule over the entire Arab world, had for a while aspired to a kingship over Jordan and Palestine, one that would even have tolerated the growth of a Jewish national home in its midst. But at last, perceiving the inevitability of Jewish statehood, he was ready to confine his ambition to sovereignty over the parts of Palestine that did not become Israeli. At the same time, the Zionist leadership was persuaded that Jordanian sovereignty over the areas that have since become known as the West Bank was preferable to another Arab state there.

It is with regard to the question of the West Bank that Mr. Shlaim's book is particularly instructive. For the fact emerges quite clearly that the 1949 armistice border between Israel and Jordan — and, above all, the line that cut Jerusalem in two — was not so purely an accident of war as may once have seemed to be the case. Rather, it was to some extent the product of understandings (albeit strained at times) between Abdullah and the Israelis. Mr. Shlaim demonstrates that if Jerusalem in particular came to be divided between Jordan and Israel, it was largely because this was the arrangement preferred by both countries' leaders to the internationalization of the city proposed by the United Nations in November 1947. If the fighting over Jerusalem and its access corridor became fierce in 1948, this was because the Israelis occasionally showed signs of wanting more than the Jordanians thought they should have. But throughout the war, as Mr. Shlaim shows, the Jordanians were scrupulous about not engaging Jewish troops in areas that had been designated as part of the proposed Jewish state in the November 1947 United Nations resolution.

This, then, is the thrust of the "collusion" of Mr. Shlaim's title, though the reader is often led to wonder why the author imposes on the whole story the harsh judgment implied by that word. Abdullah and the Israelis were, after all, only doing what nations do when they discover that a mutual acknowledgment of claims is a better way to peace than the pursuit of distant visionary goals. To be sure, they were ignoring any possible Palestinian Arab claims to statehood: Mr. Shlaim is never more severe regarding this point than when he writes that the book focuses "in particular on the clandestine diplomacy that led to the partition of Palestine between the two sides and left the Palestine Arabs without a homeland." Yet, through the course of more than 600 pages of narrative, he often slips into a rather more approving tone as he describes the repeated efforts of Israelis and an Arab king to achieve some kind of reconciliation with each other.

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That this was the path of simple political realism is implied by the facts themselves as exhaustively assembled by Mr. Shlaim. For there is virtually nothing in his book to indicate that the Palestinian Arabs were ready, with a viable political leadership, to step in and take control of the West Bank for themselves in 1948. This never appears in his narrative as a practical alternative. Rather, what the reader sees is two functioning political entities behaving no more cynically than other nations in the same circumstances.

"Collusion Across the Jordan" ends with a brief sketch of the ways in which some of the outlines of the Israeli-Abdullah relationship have extended down through the reign of Abdullah's grandson, King Hussein, the present ruler of Jordan. (Golda Meir, who made two clandestine diplomatic visits to Abdullah in 1947-48, is said to have met with King Hussein 10 times while she was Prime Minister of Israel.) Of course, there have been some crucial changes in circumstances: the West Bank is now in Israeli hands, and a vigorous Palestinian Arab national movement has clearly emerged.

A good many popular assumptions and myths surround the mass flight of Palestinian Arabs during Israel's war of independence in 1948 and none of them are left unchallenged by Benny Morris's scholarly study, "The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949." Mr. Morris, the diplomatic correspondent for The Jerusalem Post, is a rare combination of journalist and painstaking research historian, whose thorough use of Israeli, British and American archives — many of the materials unavailable until now — has enabled him to present a definitive history of his subject. Moreover, he does not succumb to the temptation of moralizing. Rather, he depicts both the Jewish and the Arab sides in all their human reality — aspiring, fumbling, succeeding, failing, gradually evolving their positions and constantly making errors of conduct and judgment under the stress of war.

The gist of Mr. Morris's story is summed up by him thus: "The Palestinian refugee problem was born of war, not by design, Jewish or Arab. It was largely a by-product of Arab and Jewish fears and of the protracted, bitter fighting that characterized the first Israeli-Arab war." In other words, as Mr. Morris demonstrates, we must put aside notions often cherished either by Jews or by Arabs, of an Israeli grand plan of expulsion on the one hand, or an Arab grand plan of encouraged popula-

Continued on next page

Ronald Sanders is the author of "The High Walls of Jerusalem," a history of the Balfour Declaration, and, most recently, "Shores of Refuge: A Hundred Years of Jewish Emigration."

The Rich Fled First



ASSOCIATED PRESS

An Arab refugee on the way to Gaza, 1949.

The Palestinian Arab exodus began in December 1947-March 1948, with the departure of many of the country's upper and middle-class families, especially from Haifa and Jaffa, towns destined to be in, or at the mercy of, the Jewish-State-to-be, and from Jewish-dominated districts of western Jerusalem. Flight proved infectious. Household followed household, neighbour followed neighbour . . . The prosperous and educated feared death or injury in the ever-spreading hostilities, the anarchy that attended the gradual withdrawal of the British administration and security forces. . . .

Most of the . . . families . . . probably thought their exile would be temporary. These families had the financial wherewithal to tide them over; many had wealthy relatives and accommodation outside the country. The urban masses . . . however, had nowhere to go, certainly not in comfort. For them, flight meant instant destitution; it was not a course readily adopted. But the daily spectacle of the abandonment by their "betters," the middle and upper classes, with its concomitant progressive closure of businesses, schools, law offices and medical clinics, and abandonment of civil service and municipal posts, led to a steady attrition of morale, a cumulative sapping of faith and trust in the world around them: their leaders were going or had gone; the British were packing. They had been left "alone" to face the Zionist enemy. *From "The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949."*

Letting the Record Speak

Continued from preceding page

tion withdrawal in anticipation of a triumphant return on the other.

On the Israeli side, Mr. Morris is able to describe, through a detailed use of archival materials, how a policy emerged among a military leadership at war to encourage the flight of Arab villagers in troubled areas and even forcibly to send them packing. Such departures were eventually followed by the mass evacuations of some major Arab urban populations.

Mr. Morris does not seek any facile explanations for these mass evacuations, which in some cases — mainly that of the almost overnight departure of about 50,000 Arabs from Haifa at the end of April 1948 — were mystifying, discouraged as they were by some Jewish leaders and seemingly unjustified by the conditions of the Jewish conquest. He allows for the element of panic that spread among Arabs as a result of the massacre of villagers at Deir Yassin on the western outskirts of Jerusalem by Jewish guerrillas of the Irgun and the Stern Gang on April 9, 1948 — and later, of other Israeli atrocities that he does not flinch to describe — but he sees this as part of a "multi-layered" causal picture. A typical Arab merchant of Haifa, he writes, "did not leave only because of the weeks or months of sniping and bombings; or because business was getting bad; or because of intimidation and extortion by [Arab] irregulars; or because he feared the collapse of law and order when the British left; or because he feared for his prospects and livelihood under Jewish rule. He left because of the accumulation of all these factors."

ONE factor still insisted on by many, but which Mr. Morris's firm allegiance to the documentary record will not allow him to acknowledge, is the alleged use of broadcasts by Arab leaders urging Palestinians to withdraw en masse until the Jews had been defeated. Referring to the start of the main Arab exodus in April 1948, Mr. Morris writes: "I have found no contemporary evidence of such blanket, official 'calls,' by the Syrian government or the other Arab governments, to Palestine's Arabs to leave." Among those who have challenged this careful formulation is Heskel M. Haddad, the president of the World Organization for Jews from Arab Countries, who maintained in a letter published in The Times in July that he himself heard such broadcasts when he was in Baghdad in 1948.

It should be pointed out that Mr. Morris does acknowledge "minor exceptions" in the case of "orders, apparently by Syrian officials, to some of the Arab inhabitants of Eastern Galilee to leave a few days prior to, and in preparation for, the invasion of 15 May." Perhaps, then, Mr. Haddad is recalling one of these "minor exceptions"; or perhaps Mr. Morris's inability to find "blanket calls" represents a gap in the available record that he has so thoroughly examined. It is true that the official Arab sources on this period have not yet been opened to researchers; on the other hand, Mr. Morris's Israeli and British sources include reports thoroughly monitoring Arab broadcasts. The question apparently remains moot, but Mr. Morris's conclusions must be regarded with the utmost respect.

What is incontrovertible is that, as these two books demonstrate, historical scholarship by Israelis on the Arab-Jewish conflict can be as reliable and illuminating as that produced by any other national group. □

A Bond of Braided Histories

JACK OF DIAMONDS
And Other Stories.
By Elizabeth Spencer.
184 pp. New York:
Viking. $15.95.

By Madison Smartt Bell

ELIZABETH SPENCER is a Southern writer who doesn't always write about the South: of the five stories in "Jack of Diamonds," her 11th book, two are set in Montreal, one in New York, one in Tyler, Miss., and one on an axis between Europe and Martinsville, Ala. Locale is inextricably involved with what happens in each story, and Ms. Spencer has a master's touch for rendering the spirit of the setting, not only the landscape and architecture but the traditions and social manners that make a place what it is for the people who inhabit it. This quality gives her stories much greater depth than is commonly found in contemporary short fiction; every one of them is substantial enough to make up an entire novel.

Of the two Montreal stories the briefest is "The Skater," about a woman who misses her grown children so sorely that as a substitute she enters first an affair and then a complicated intrigue involving forgery of wills. Though thick with event, the story is simpler than the others in the group, perhaps because it concentrates on the consequences of a single driving emotion. "Jean-Pierre," drawn from a similar background, concerns a young woman named Callie who marries the French-Canadian Jean-Pierre Courtois against the advice of her family (whose petty snobbery is set forth with a wonderful asperity). Jean-Pierre, who comes from a culture alien and mysterious to Callie, shares few of his secrets with her, and so when he inexplicably disappears she has nowhere to turn for comfort or explanation.

The story is as much about two pasts in conflict as it is about two people, and Callie senses early that Jean-Pierre has vanished into his own history, without knowing how to bring him back. Resuming her old job in a library, she takes solace of a kind from Emily Dickinson: "She learned that nature was marvelous but cruel, that death was inexorable, that to lose your love was another sort of death, that God was somebody whom, if you had any sense at all, you had to argue with." Against the backdrop of such wisdom, Jean-Pierre's eventual return seems as sensible or nonsensical as the loyalty of the cat that has adopted Callie during his absence — a positive ending but still a strange one.

"The Business Venture," in the hands of another writer, might have been only a story of racial unrest, and Ms. Spencer does supply an ample slice of the social history of the small-town South. The issue is Nelle Townshend's effort to run a dry-cleaning business in equal partnership with a black man, Robin Byers, which offends her "crowd" less because of racism than because, as a minor character puts it, "She thinks she can live her own life." The symbiosis of the group is beautifully described by the peripheral narrator, Eileen: "We were all like one person, walking around different ways, but in some permanent way breathing together, feeling the same reactions, thinking each other's thoughts. What do you call that if not love?" Suffocation, possibly, and yet in essence it's both. As the story unfolds Eileen discovers more than she may want to know about how individuals' motives fuse with those of the group, to produce both the rewards and the horrors of life lived among others, where stability is *naturally* in jeopardy. "I think we are all hanging on a golden thread," she realizes near the conclusion, "but who has got the other end?"

A Jamesian discovery of evil underlying the placid surfaces of upper-middle-class life is at the core of "Jack of Diamonds": Rosalind, as she turns 18, finds in her father an unpleasant capacity for betrayal. Years previously, she lost her mother in a car wreck, and she already suspects that a quarrel over her father's infidelity may have contributed to this catastrophe. What she has still to learn is that her father is also willing to betray her mother's memory and herself, that his and his new wife's elaborate solicitude amounts to a conspiracy against her. Finally she sees him as her mother did, accommodating and empty as the title's face card: "fixed and mysterious as the painted image, unchanging from whatever it had changed to."

The richest and most complex of the group is "The Cousins," loosely about a grand tour five young people take to Europe. The evolving intricacy of the relationships between them is the center of attention, more than the foreign scene; they are all simultaneously sustained and restrained by familial ties, the bonds of their own braided histories. "Things go deep in our family," recalls the narrator, Ella Mason; and from those depths the shifting liaisons among the cousins are controlled, on the journey itself and for decades afterward. Ella also has her metaphor for how individual life is informed by personal history, "the way a number can contain powers and elements that have gone into its making, and can be unfolded, opened up, nearly forever."

All of the stories have in common that special historical sense. Far from nostalgic, they treat the past as the actual substance of which the present and future are made, a quality that permits them to convey not only lyric moments of experience but the quality of entire lives. Few contemporary short-story writers have mastered or understood this art, and one can be grateful to Elizabeth Spencer for keeping it so marvelously alive. □

Madison Smartt Bell's most recent novel is "The Year of Silence."



BARTEK MALYSA

Brotherly Love

Ben was dark. He had straight, dark-brown hair, dry-looking in the sun, growing thick at the brow.... Eric had sandy hair, softly appealing and always mussed....

I guess I was in love with both of them. Wouldn't it be nice, I used to think, if one were my brother and the other my brother's best friend, and then I could just quietly and without so much as thinking about it find myself marrying the friend (now which would I choose for which?) and so we could go on forever? At other times . . . I would plan on doing something spectacular, finding a Yankee, for instance, so impressive and brilliant and established in some important career, that they'd have to listen to him, learn what he was doing and what he thought and what he knew, while I sat silent and poised . . . the cat that ate the cream, though of course too polite to show satisfaction. Fantasies, one by one, would sing to me for a little while. *From "Jack of Diamonds."*

The New York Times
Book Review
November 6, 1988
Section 7 ©The New York Times

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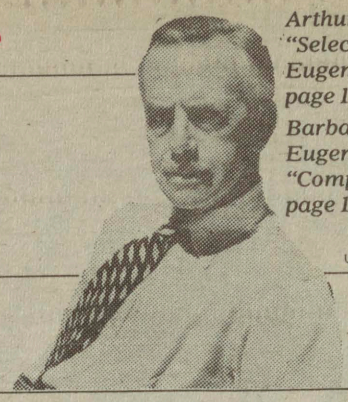


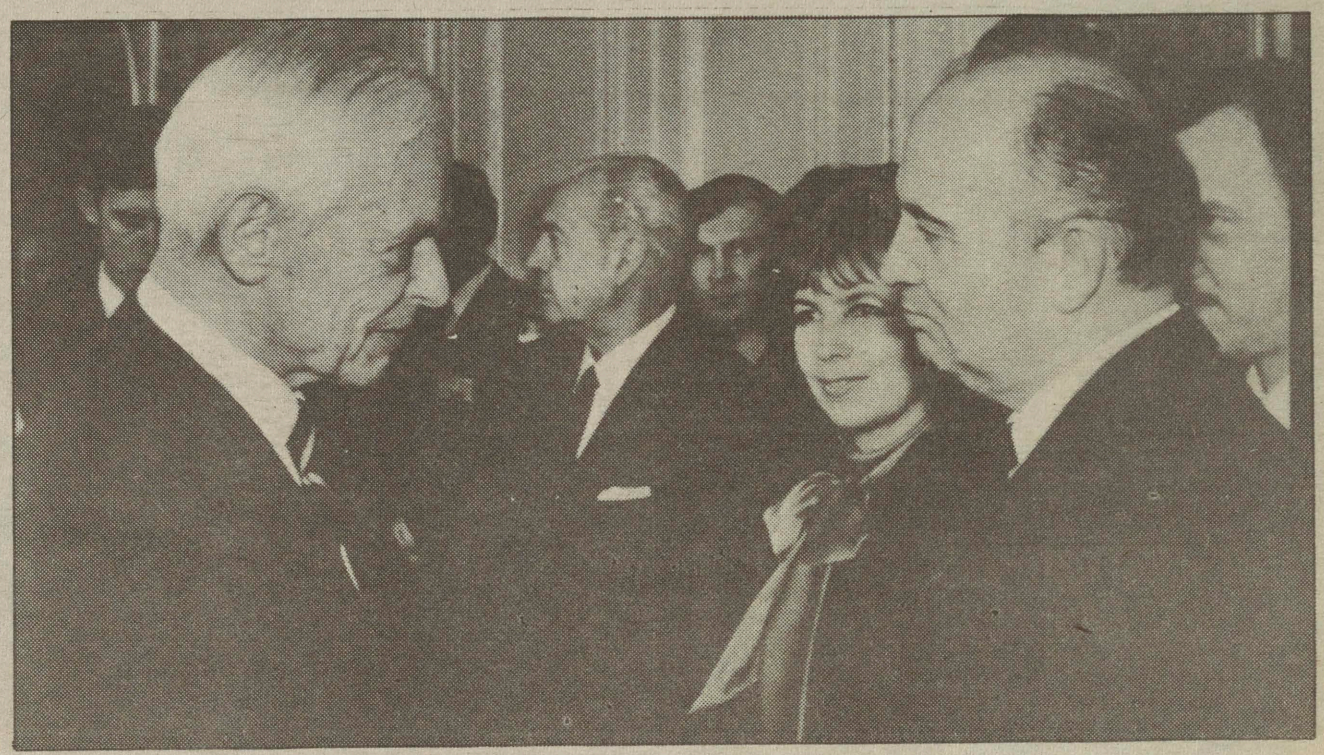
UPI/BETTMANN NEWSPHOTOS

Arthur Miller on "Selected Letters of Eugene O'Neill," page 12.
Barbara Gelb on Eugene O'Neill's "Complete Plays," page 13.

In Search of the Grand Compromise

THE MASTER OF THE GAME
Paul Nitze and the Nuclear Peace.
By Strobe Talbott.
416 pp. New York:
Alfred A. Knopf. $19.95.

By Lawrence Freedman



Paul Nitze, left, senior arms control adviser to the President and Secretary of State, and the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev at November 1985 summit meeting in Geneva. Raisa Gorbachev is next to her husband.

NOT long before the 1984 Presidential election, Strobe Talbott's "Deadly Gambits: The Reagan Administration and the Stalemate in Nuclear Arms Control" described in vivid detail the struggle within the Government to forge an arms control policy during President Reagan's first term. In "The Master of the Game," a sequel to "Deadly Gambits" and to "Endgame: The Inside Story of SALT II," Mr. Talbott, a senior correspondent for Time magazine, demonstrates his own mastery of bureaucratic drama, combining a gift for characterization and an eye for the revealing anecdote with a firm grasp of his subject. His sources are enviable, allowing him to offer an instant history that rings true throughout. For later historians of the President's Strategic Defense Initiative and the remarkable Reagan-Gorbachev summits, this will be a standard text.

"Deadly Gambits" conveyed a keen sense of what came to be described euphemistically during the Iran-contra affair as the President's "managerial style." The policy-making process had become a bureaucratic battle for the opportunity to play on the President's prejudices. With nobody at the Cabinet level proficient in the admittedly arcane details of arms control, the struggle was largely conducted by middle-ranking officials in the State Department and the Pentagon — between those who thought the Administration should try seriously to make a deal with the Soviet Union, even if that meant a degree of compromise, and those who engaged in arms control largely to legitimize a program of strategic rearmament and for whom about the worst thing one could say about an American proposal was that it was negotiable.

By 1984 the hawks had won the day, aided by a tired and petulant Soviet leadership. When in late 1983 the Kremlin had to come to terms with its failure to prevent the entry of cruise and Pershing missiles into Europe, it responded by walking out of the Geneva arms control negotiations. This did President Reagan a great favor; the lack of a superpower dialogue was not his responsibility but that of the ailing Konstantin U. Chernenko.

If the Soviet walkout and the consequent lessening of pressure on President Reagan to come up with an arms control agreement reduced the immediate political impact of "Deadly Gambits," the narrative still provided a disturbing portrait of a flawed policy-making process, although whether the flaw was "fatal" (as American political rhetoric requires all flaws to be) was a question left open for the President's return to office and the Russians' return to the negotiating table.

The cast of characters for the arms control drama in President Reagan's second term was similar to that in the first. Of the two Richards —

Continued on page 28

Lawrence Freedman is a professor of war studies at King's College, University of London.

Hip-Deep in Post-modernism

By Todd Gitlin

JOURNALS, conferences, galleries and coffeehouses are spilling over with talk about post-modernism. What is this thing, where does it come from, and what is at stake? If it is nothing more than chat to keep the cocktail parties humming, why the volume, why the heat? True, in literature as in art, fashion, architecture, etc., style always attracts interest. On matters of style careers turn and cease to turn; commentators and consumers alike "position" themselves to be à la mode. But what is striking in recent years is that elements of a post-modern style have attracted attention (and dismay) in field after field, genre after genre — so that it is reasonable to surmise that a general sensibility is among us.

Clearly it cannot be explained by the esthetic problems and history of any particular art form. Post-modernism in the arts corresponds to post-modernism in life, as sketched by the French theorist Jean-François Lyotard: "One listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonald's food for lunch and local cuisine for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and 'retro' clothes in Hong Kong." To argue about post-modernism, therefore, is to argue about more than post-modernism. Post-modernism is more than a buzzword or even an esthetic; it is a way of seeing, a view of the human spirit and an attitude toward political as well as cultural possibilities. It has precedents, but in its reach it is the creature of

Continued on page 35

Todd Gitlin, a professor of sociology at the University of California, Berkeley, is the author of "The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage" and editor of "Watching Television," a collection of essays.

The Book That Stunned Beijing/3

SUSAN HOWATCH

Glamorous Powers



SUSAN HOWATCH

First advance reviews

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"A powerful novel" —Booklist

IN THIS major new novel Susan Howatch gives us a protagonist of immense fascination.

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Photo © Jerry Bauer Jacket art: Paul Bacon

Hip-Deep in Post-modernism

Continued from page 1

our recent social and political moment. In style, more than style is at stake.

To get beyond vague talk and knowing genuflection, it is never a bad idea to start by deciding what we are talking about. We can get a rough fix on post-modernism by contrasting it to its main predecessors, realism and modernism.

IN the realism that rode high in the 19th century, the work of art was supposed to express unity and continuity. Realism mirrored reality, criticized it and consoled. The individuals portrayed were clearly placed in society and history. High culture was just that — higher, more valuable, than popular culture.

In modernism, voices, perspectives and materials were multiple. The unity of the work was assembled from fragments and juxtapositions. Art set out to remake life. Audacious individual style threw off the dead hand of the past. Continuity was disrupted, the individual subject dislocated. High culture quoted from popular culture.

Post-modernism, by contrast, is indifferent to consistency and continuity altogether. It self-consciously splices genres, attitudes, styles. It relishes the blurring or juxtaposition of forms (fiction-nonfiction), stances (straight-ironic), moods (violent-comic), cultural levels (high-low). It disdains originality and fancies copies, repetition, the recombination of hand-me-down scraps. It neither embraces nor criticizes, but beholds the world blankly, with a knowingness that dissolves feeling and commitment into irony. It pulls the rug out from under itself, displaying an acute self-consciousness about the work's constructed nature. It takes pleasure in the play of surfaces and derides the search for depth as mere nostalgia for an unmoved mover. It regards "the individual" as a sentimental attachment, a fiction to be enclosed within quotation marks. "The individual" has decomposed, as "reality" has dissolved; nothing lives but "discourses," "texts," "language games," "images," "simulations" referring to other "discourses" "texts," etc. "Characters" can step out of character; they can die, as in Philip Roth's novel "The Counterlife," only to live again. High culture speaks the same language as popular culture, even blurs into it.

One post-modernist trope is the list, as if culture were a garage sale, so it is appropriate to evoke post-modernism by offering a list of examples, for better and for worse: Michael Graves's Portland Building, Philip Johnson's AT&T, and hundreds of more or less skillful derivatives; Robert Rauschenberg's silk screens, Warhol's multiple-image paintings, photo-realism, Larry Rivers's erasures and pseudo-pageantry, Sherrie Levine's photographs of "classic" photographs; Disneyland, Las Vegas, suburban strips, shopping malls, mirror-glass office building facades; William Burroughs, Tom Wolfe, Donald Barthelme, Monty Python, Don DeLillo, Isuzu "He's lying" commercials, Philip Glass, "Star Wars," Spalding Gray, David Hockney ("Surface is illusion, but so is depth"), Max Headroom, David Byrne, Twyla Tharp (choreographing Beach Boys and Frank Sinatra songs), Italo Calvino, "The Gospel at Colonus," Robert Wilson, the Flying Karamazov Brothers, George Coates, the Kronos Quartet, Frederick Barthelme, MTV, "Miami Vice," David Letterman, Laurie Anderson, Anselm Kiefer, John Ashbery, Paul Auster, the Pompidou Center, the Hyatt Regency, "The White Hotel," E. L. Doctorow's "Book of Daniel," "Less Than Zero," Kathy Acker, Philip Roth's "Counterlife" (but not "Portnoy's Complaint"), the epilogue to Rainer Werner Fassbinder's "Berlin Alexanderplatz," the "language poets"; the French theorists Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida and Jean Baudrillard; television morning shows; news commentary cluing us in to the image-making and "positioning" strategies of candidates; remote-control-equipped viewers "grazing" around the television dial.

Consider also Australia's Circus Oz, whose jugglers comment on their juggling and crack political jokes in a program infused by (their list) "Aboriginal influences, vaudeville, Chinese acrobatics, Japanese martial arts, fireman's balances, Indonesian instruments and rhythms, video, Middle Eastern tunes, B-grade detective movies, modern dance, Irish jigs, and the ubiquitous present of corporate marketing." Consider the student who walks into my office dressed in green jersey, orange skirt and black tights.

There are important differences, of course. Donald Barthelme is wistful about the dignity of the pre-modernist tradition ("In the Tolstoy Museum"); Kathy Acker ransacks and trashes it. But whether disassembling or dissembling, post-modernists know that they, we, are living hip-deep in debris.

So what's new? It has been argued that post-modernism is nothing more — or less — than the current phase of a modernist tradition (nice oxymoron!) already nearly a century old. True enough, for all the fanfare, post-modernism is, by definition, known by the company it follows. It is too modest (or is that only a ploy?) to pretend to be more than a sequel — which may be nothing more than an aftermath or a hiatus. Still, post-modernism peels away from its predecessor in several respects: its blasé tone, its sense of exhaustion, its self-conscious bemusement with surfaces. The question remains, whether brand new or a "new improved" modernism, just what does post-modernism express (and repress) at this historical moment? Why should this spirit have surfaced recently and why is it so anxiously debated?

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A phenomenon this sweeping cannot be traced to a single cause. In the recent debates, I detect six theories. They are not incompatible, but their emphases are different. Each contributes to an explanation; none is sufficient.

• The Marxist critic Fredric Jameson, among others, has argued that post-modernism is an ideology well suited to express and further the global economic system that capitalism has become. High-consumption capitalism requires a ceaseless transformation in style, a connoisseurship of surface, an emphasis on packaging and reproducibility: post-modernist art echoes the truth that the arts have become auxiliary to sales. In order to adapt, consumers are pried away from traditions, their selves become "decentered," and a well-formed interior life becomes an obsolete encumbrance. Even "life styles" become commodities to be marketed.

In effect, post-modernism expresses the spiritless spirit of a global class linked via borderless mass media with mass culture, omnivorous consumption and easy travel. Their experience denies the continuity of history; they live in a perpetual present garnished by nostalgia binges. Space is not real, only time. The post-modernist style makes sense to the new consumer. In the global shopping center (as Richard Barnet and Ronald Müller have called it), local traditions have been swamped by the workings of the market; anything can be bought, and to speak of intrinsic value is mere sentimentality. Post-modernist literature cultivates place names in the same way consumers flock to the latest cuisine: in the spirit of the collector, because the uniqueness of real places is actually waning. It makes much of brand names (even ironically) because they have become the furnishings of our cultural "home." How else to represent this new world than through post-modernist flatness? The post-modernist motto is: You can't beat trash culture, so join it.

The trouble is, this sweeping, impressive argument, once carved out from beneath the murk, is too sweeping. Aiming to explain so much, it glides over actual artists and the relation between specific experience and artistic choices. Moreover, the economic changes have been at work for 50 or 75 years; then why are their artistic consequences showing up only now?

• Perhaps, it has been argued, scientific reason is the corrosive force that has eroded the authority

Continued on next page

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Deep in Post-modernism

Continued from preceding page

of narrative style and especially of the grand "metanarratives" (the Enlightenment, capitalism, Marxism, etc.) that purported to justify not only philosophical but artistic claims to have rendered things as they are. Quantum theory and microphysics have undermined certainty and continuity. Voilà, post-modernism, which enshrines the discontinuous and "reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable." Something like this has been argued by the theorist Lyotard ("The Postmodern Condition"), whose slapdash style, in the French mode, is to insist rather than to argue. But the argument, if I understand it, is clumsy: the impact of science has been accelerating for centuries, yet the post-modernist style is no more than two decades old.

• More concretely and modestly, the critic Cecelia Tichi argues that post-modern fiction — at least the work of Ann Beattie, Bret Easton Ellis, Bobbie Ann Mason and Tama Janowitz, among others — is "video fiction." Anesthetized writing recreates the experience of watching television to the saturation point, taking it for granted. Attention span shriveled, a new generation of fictionists writes in televisionese. They write in the present tense because that is television's only tense: everything is always happening right now, in the middle; there are no beginnings or ends. Growing up on fragmented television, to which they gave their fragmented attention, these writers produce "short scenes juxtaposed almost at random." Their characters live inconclusively, "forever poised for action rather than engaged in it," because that is what television-watching feels like. I would add to Ms. Tichi's speculation that post-modernism echoes (or produces) the Couch Potato phenomenon, which renders ironic the slug-a-bed passivity that literary moralists deplore: you can mainline your television and mock it. But if fiction simply transcribes an impoverished experience, is it not impoverished fiction? Ms. Tichi's observation is acute, but television cannot explain all of post-modernism.

• It is also irresistible to observe that post-modernism extrapolates the long-established eclectic logic of American culture. Post-modernism was born in the United States because juxtaposition was always the essence of a polyethnic culture, less melting pot than grab bag. "There is no distinctively American culture," the essayist Randolph Bourne wrote in 1916. "It is apparently our lot rather to be a federation of cultures." One side of American culture since Alexis de Tocqueville's description 150 years ago is the marketplace jamboree, amazing diversity striving for recognition, the shimmer of the evanescent, the tall tale meant to be simultaneously disbelieved and appreciated. No style, no subject is intrinsically superior to any other. Vulgarized pluralism is the cultural logic of laissez-faire — "anything goes" is the motto of an elbows-out, noisy, jostling version of cultural democracy (or, if you don't like it, leveling). What could be more American than humbling the highbrow? In this sense, the essence of American culture is the variety show, finding a place for everyone — post-modernism's prototype. The raucous, disrespectful side of post-modernism has a root here. Unfortunately, so does the bland side. For the cult of the least common denominator is also an American tradition; we keep cultural peace by forcing everyone to sheathe swords.

• Post-modernism is above all post-1960's; its keynote is cultural helplessness. It is post-Vietnam, post-New Left, post-hippie, post-Watergate. History was ruptured, passions have been expended, belief has become difficult; heroes have died and been replaced by celebrities. The 1960's exploded our belief in progress, which underlay the classical faith in linear order and moral clarity. Old verities crumbled, but new ones have not settled in. Self-regarding irony and blankness are a way of staving off anxieties, rages, terrors and hungers that have been kicked up but cannot find resolution. Paul Fussell has made the point that irony became standard in English writing after World War I as a way to navigate around the unspeakable. The blank, I've-seen-it-all post-modernist tone, in this light, is self-imposed cultural anesthesia, a refusal to feel (except for punkish rage, in which only one thing can be felt: loathing). The fear is that what's underneath hurts too much; better repress it.

• To which I would add a generational corollary. Post-modern currents run especially strong among readers and audiences born in the 1950's and 1960's. Post-modernism, in other words, has a demand- as well as a supply-side. From this angle, post-mod is, let's face it, a yuppie outlook. It reflects an experience that takes for granted not only television but suburbs, shopping malls, recreational (not religious or transcendent) drugs and the towering abstraction of money. To grow up post-1960's is an experience of aftermath, privatization, weightlessness; everything has apparently been done. Therefore culture is a process of recycling; everything is juxtaposable to everything else because nothing matters. This generation is disabused of authority, except, perhaps, the authority of money; theirs is the bumper sticker, "THE ONE WITH THE MOST TOYS WINS." (Perhaps the ultimate post-modern experience is to shift information bits and computer bytes around the world at will and high speed.) The culture they favor is a passive adaptation to feeling historically stranded — after the 1960's but before what? Perhaps the Bomb, the void hanging over the horizon, threatening to pulverize everything of value. So be cool. In this light, post-modernism is anticipatory shell shock. It's as if the Bomb has already fallen.

If fiction simply transcribes an impoverished experience, is it not then impoverished fiction?

Post-modernism, which fancies itself ever so disdainful of history, turns out to be all too embedded in (guess what) history. Such a variety of forces have funneled together to nourish post-modernism, it would appear the tendency will be with us for some time. What, then, is its impact on our literature? Pastiche lives off borrowed energies. The post-modern mode is compilation, recombination. In the visual and performing arts, this can wonderfully represent the oneness of the world — and the immigrant diversity of New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. But pastiche writing tends to become a scrapbook, a compendium of anti-moralism that shrieks moralistically, Look at me! and Who cares? When writing is imprisoned within previous writing, it can't attend to what hasn't been written, what hasn't yet been imagined. Numb, recombinant fiction therefore fails to bring the real news of subsurface feeling, sense and sensibility. Nor can it be a criticism of life. At its worst, it veers toward tourism, mannerism and mood music. Bret Easton Ellis's jejune "Less Than Zero" is an easy target, but I am more discouraged by the evasions of such novels as Joan Didion's "Democracy" and Denis Johnson's "Stars at Noon," in which a stylized third world stands as a shaky backdrop for opaque intrigues. In this fiction, the larger world, whether banal or exotic, is blank; marooned "characters" stare and gesture in its direction. Neither person nor place quite exists, only portents.

BY contrast, there is a trenchant side to the post-modernist phenomenon. Consider Donald Barthelme's fiction, which hints at emotion beyond the junkyards of alluringly empty, mass-produced signs. Consider Art Spiegelman's brilliant "Maus," which uses the form of a comic book (!) with talking animals (!!) to tell a story about a survivor telling a story about the Holocaust to his son — not for evasion's sake, and not to trash narrative form as such, but to tell the untellable to those for whom the Holocaust has become "a story." Consider Don DeLillo's "White Noise," which goes beyond post-modernist blankness by suggesting (mockingly) that something is being evaded. The white noise of TV/death is disturbing because something out there — beneath images, surfaces, everyday banality — is trying to break through. Mr. DeLillo's fragments of TV speech are chilling, disruptive, shocking because out there in the wings is a baseline life capable of being chilled, disrupted, shocked. Television intrudes into something which is not television; there are real children, real toxic chemicals, real death.

These works are exceptions; purists would deny they are post-modernist at all. But for the most part, post-modernist writing confesses (or celebrates!) helplessness. Make the most of stagnation, it says; give up gracefully. That is perhaps its defining break from modernism, which was, whatever its subversions, a series of declarations of faith — Constructivism's future, Joyce's present, Eliot's unsurpassable past. What is not clear is whether post-modernism, living off borrowed materials, has the resources for continuing self-renewal. A car with a dead battery can run off its generator only so long. Exhaustion is finally exhausting. But if it is true that deep social forces have been at work for a long time to produce the present cultural anesthesia, then post-modernism is not going to fade easily. Writers will have to do something else. They will have to cease being stenographers of the surface. They will have to decide not to coast down the currents of least resistance. □

Adapted from an essay by Todd Gitlin in "Cultural Politics in Contemporary America" edited by Ian Angus and Sut Jhally, to be published in January by Routledge.

The Book That Stunned Beijing

Continued from page 3

tion. The causes can be laid at the feet of China's privileged classes and their political cronies, who have consistently obstructed and undermined the reforms. On the one hand, they oppose these economic reforms that threaten their very existence, and even more strongly oppose political reforms — specifically, democratization. Meanwhile, they exercise their special privileges to take advantage of opportunities created by the economic reforms and by the nationalized commodities, raw materials and enterprises that they control, brazenly dealing in graft, bribery, smuggling, profiteering and the commercial sale of national interests for their private benefit. The mistakes of Mao Zedong continue to be made, 13 years after the fall of the Gang of Four; the old political systems remain intact, inevitably resulting in the unrestrained and unsupervised authority of the privileged classes.

Chinese readers of "Blood-Red Sunset" can see the relatively small role this sort of dark power played on the eve of the Cultural Revolution and how it gradually turned the revolutionary zeal of tens of thousands of young intellectuals into dejection and demoralization. Over the past 12 years the people of China have been faced with unchecked corruption within a party organization that is once again turning hope into despair. The people's morale is now at an all-time low, a result of dissatisfaction with the present and a lack of confidence in the future. This crisis of spirit surely accounts for the large audience and the sympathetic reception of "Blood-Red Sunset."

The 10 bitter years of the Cultural Revolution have not been a wasted experience for the author of "Blood-Red Sunset" and his generation. China's hope lies principally in this generation of young intellectuals, for they are the survivors of the maelstrom of the Cultural Revolution; they have known passion, suffering and disillusionment, and these have been the source of their awakening. Having paid a higher price for Mao's mistakes than others, they are a more mature generation. They are the backbone of China's future progress.

I am convinced that many of the hundreds of thousands of Lao Gui's readers are members of his generation who underwent identical or similar ordeals. While they relive their bitter experiences through this work, it is inevitable that they ponder: What should we do now? □

Translated by Howard Goldblatt.

years. Himes's mother doted on him for his own light skin; she oiled and brushed his hair every night to straighten it, and let him brush her hair and file her nails; she was morbidly sensitive to racial slights from whites and to the encroachment of those blacker in color or manner than she, including her husband, whom she viewed with resentment and disgust.

Not surprisingly, then, throughout *If He Hollers Let Him Go* Bob Jones treats most of his fellow blacks with a contempt almost equal to his fury at white people; his single, obsessive concern is to stand tall as a black *man*. Thus too the gross sexist sadism of the Harlem novels. Yet the male hysteria that pervades Himes's work, and the Oedipal pathology behind it, are themselves just two more symptoms of the widespread violence wrought by a racist culture, intertwining love and aggression, rage and fear, hatred and self-hatred in the soul of the oppressed. In an interview conducted relatively late in his life, Himes told fellow black novelist John A. Williams, "I would like to see produced a novel that just drains a person's subconscious of all his attitudes and reactions to everything. . . . Since [the black writer's] reactions and thoughts will obviously be different from that of the white community, this should create an entirely different structure of the novel." And, from the same interview: "That's one of the saddest parts about the black man in America—that he is being used to titillate the emotions of the white community. . . . I want these people to take me seriously. I don't care if they think I'm a barbarian, a savage, or what they think; just think I'm a serious savage." The first quote tells us how, intentionally or not, he wrote his Harlem novels; the second, how we ought to read Chester Himes. □

The Whiny White Whine

APRIL BERNARD

ANAGRAMS: A Novel. *By Lorrie Moore. Alfred A. Knopf. 225 pp. $15.95.*

Lorrie Moore is a highly evolved specimen of the wisecracking yuckster. In her new book, *Anagrams*, a classroom of freshmen in a community college is "Twenty faces with the personalities of cheeses and dial tones." One character says, "I think maybe I'm just too exhausted from work," to which another replies, "Yes, well . . . I guess that's why they call it *work*. I guess that's why they don't call it *table tennis*." Two women meet periodically for a drink; "It entailed what Eleanor called, 'The Great White Whine': whiney white people getting together over white wine and whining."

That Moore is a serious writer who deserves to be taken seriously may not readily be apparent. So seemingly endless are her one-liners, whether they emanate from a (sometimes) invisible narrator or from the characters themselves, that reviews of her first book, *Self-Help*, misled the likes of me by referring to those stories as comedies, and to the writer as a humorist. A reading of that book reveals something quite different. "How to Be an Other Woman" is a painstaking account of a casual affair that gets serious, then bad, and then breaks. "To Fill" is told by a fat, desperate kleptomaniac who is ultimately caught, institutionalized and separated from her beloved son. "Go Like This" is the narrative of a woman with incurable cancer who decides to kill herself. A hapless child with only the barest of survival skills offers "The Kid's Guide to Divorce." These are, then, grotesque tragedies, ten-handkerchief dramas. In which everybody cracks jokes. The biggest joke of all, though I am not sure Moore intends it, is the utter uselessness of all advice, the impossibility of applying the specifics of one person's pain to another.

Self-Help was tremendously popular, and Moore, now teaching at the University of Wisconsin, has come out with *Anagrams: A Novel*. That this is actually only sort of a novel is not surprising; Moore had already shown a Church of the Latter Day Modernists interest in form. This is the novel's "experiment": two young people, Gerard and Benna, live in Fitchville, U.S.A., and they have a relationship. That's the given. But in each of the five chapters, the relationship is a different beast. In one, Benna teaches aerobics to the elderly, and Gerard is an amateur opera singer who winds up with Benna's best friend, Eleanor. In

April Bernard is a poet and a critic.

Spanish at the Taller

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another, Gerard and Benna are both academics, and he's married with a child. In another, she's the singer and he teaches aerobics to small children. In two of the stories, he leaves her after a long sexual involvement; in the other three, they are just close friends, and no one "leaves." Eleanor, a wisecracker like Benna, has different jobs but remains a constant personality in the four stories in which she appears.

Yet, by the final story—chapter, whatever—of the book, we are presented with an entirely different way to read it. "The Nun of That" takes up at least two-thirds of *Anagrams*, but more than length qualifies it as the "true" account of Gerard and Benna. Here, Benna is teaching a course at a college and has a close, non-sexual relationship with Gerard, who works as a lounge singer. Benna has an affair with one of her students, Darrel; he eventually leaves her. Gerard then has a freak accident and dies. Various other complications—an "imaginary" daughter, Georgianne, with whom Benna has long, intimate conversations at home; Benna's late ex-husband, oft-discussed; a holiday visit to her brother that ends miserably; and the constant switching from first to third person, and from past to present tense—all add to the reader's troubles. (There's nothing wrong with giving the reader a hard time, as long as there's a payoff.) When Benna confesses to Gerard, who's in his hospital bed, that she has an imaginary daughter (which we already knew) and that she also has an imaginary friend, Eleanor (whom we had thought real)—we realize that the first four stories may well have been Benna's own revisions, alternate versions of this final, "real" story, futile devices to kill its pain.

There's a crucial moment in the second chapter when the reader is clued in to the higher purpose of this exercise in plot. "I kept trying," says Benna, "to make anagrams out of words that weren't anagrams: *moonscape* and *menopause*; *gutless* and *guilts*; *lovesick* and *evil louse*." Thus, these five stories are bad anagrams—which is to say, not anagrams at all—of one another. What are we to make of this? Unfortunately, I think, Moore, like her fictional counterpart, has not yet accepted that an anagram isn't an anagram if the letters don't match exactly. But even more important, even if there is a correspondence of letter for letter in each word, and character for character in each plot, "live" and "evil" are only the same in certain theologies. A couple that casually breaks up because one of them is going to law school, and then sells everything in a tag sale, is the same as another couple that breaks up messily because the woman suspects she's pregnant, but only in certain other theologies, not including mine. For that matter, one couple that breaks up and has a tag sale is not the same as another couple that breaks up and has a tag sale. Contemporary clichés such as Moore strews before us are not the final judgments that can be made about our lives. These equivalencies are insidious.

Moore may, of course, be well aware that things don't fit. She often writes about the very thing that she does. Benna says,

> When I was little, I didn't understand that you could change a few sounds in a name or a phrase and have it mean something entirely different. When I told teachers my name was *Benna* and they said, "*Donna* who?" I would say, "Donna Gilbert." I thought close was good enough, that sloppiness was generally built into the language. . . . It was a shock for me quite late in life to discover that Jean Cocteau and Jacques Cousteau were not even related. Meaning, if it existed at all, was unstable and could not survive the slightest reshuffling of letters. One gust of wind and Santa became Satan. . . . In a . . . bathroom, early in the morning, a plea for sight could twist, grow slightly, re-issue itself as an announcement of death.
>
> "You want to see again?" I asked, incredulous. His vision had always been fine. And he looked at me. He was standing in front of the sink. Then he looked into the drain, the stopped-up drain. He shook his head and said, "I never want to see you again."

Even as Moore explicates the central flaw in her use of equivalencies, she uses the humor of the error to undercut her point, to deflect from the emotional agony at hand. The overall effect of *Anagrams* is one great, tedious sameness, one enormous sigh of "Oh, rats" about the way we live and love today. Benna and Gerard are the same couple no matter who's got the career in aerobics, who leaves whom, or who hurts more. Moore reveals herself to be a writer who does believe that "close is good enough." And it isn't.

Moore's confusion is a shame, since she is, in spots, an exceptional writer, capable of much more than just very good jokes. There are soft, lyrical passages unimpeded by wisecracks: between a mother and child, between a sister and a brother, between lovers. Moore also writes well about how friendships mutate, she does the sex scenes without titillating or nauseating the reader (very tricky, that) and she has a commendable, if slightly drunken, love of the language. But just as the jokes deflect attention from the tragedies, so the machinery of this novel impedes an otherwise unselfconscious narrative gift. It would be interesting to see what Moore could do with the final story of this book if the daughter and the friend were real, if there were no fussing about with point of view, if she had more room to stretch out and if she ditched the anagrams.

False equivalence is the basis for puns as well as anagrams, after all, and Moore has an almost clinical weakness for puns. "The ants are my friends/ They're blowing in the wind," sings the imaginary daughter. The line is incanted once or twice thereafter. It's funny, it's endearing, but what does it mean here? That the original line, and the original sense, of "Blowing in the Wind" means the same as this? Or what? "Give to seizure what is seizure's," says Benna, aiming for a laugh. When worried about love, and feeling insomniac, she also throws puns into the air for protection. "I clasp my bare breasts to make sure that they're still there. Oh, where is the snooze of yesteryear? Where are the negligées downtown?"

Moore's whistling past the graveyard gets pretty shrill. Somehow, her message seems to be that all tragedies are alike, and they all merit the same jokes. This is, no doubt, perfectly tenable from the point of view of stand-up comedy. That popular genre informs Moore's sensibility quite markedly; her characters perpetually tell jokes to one another, self-consciously trying out lines in preparation for a routine in the classroom or at a party. It's as if they were all lined up in the greenroom at Dangerfield's.

No matter how funny Moore is, she isn't on the stage, and cannot use the potentially redemptive personal link of performer to audience to offset her pessimism and avoidance. Her jokes represent an effort to assert control over a frightening, chaotic world, and Moore typically tries to get over by evening things out, making everything the same. As surely as the asphalt spreaders are

paving over the fields and streams of America, this kind of writing paves over the culture. This is not social commentary; it is capitulation to the very things it purports to despise: sloppiness, easy outs, heartlessness. □

This Life Is Pain

JOSEPHINE HUMPHREYS

FRIEZE. *By Cecile Pineda. Viking. 224 pp. $16.95.*

It is possible that American fiction has American duties, if fiction has duties at all. Maybe our books should try to say what it is like here, now. Certainly those books that do this well, like *Love Medicine*, *Ironweed* and *Bloods* (not a novel but good enough to be one) achieve a startling, almost thrilling intensity, and in the process open up new territory. Our best books have a way of discovering America.

But there is always room for something so far removed from the knot of our own time and trouble that it refreshes our vision. Imagine picking up a new book and finding no Southern towns, no troubled youth, no divorce-in-the-malls, nothing that has been covered in a television special—something remote. Very remote. The story, say, of a stonecarver in eighth-century Java. The pure distance of it is mouth-watering, like a sweepstakes vacation.

Not that Cecile Pineda's *Frieze* is escapist reading, as novels of other centuries and other lands can be. It is short, strange and dead serious. So was her first novel, the widely acclaimed *Face*, in which a Brazilian peasant performs plastic surgery on his own face. *Frieze* is about a master carver named Gopal who is traded by his Indian lord to Java to work on the great Buddhist temple at Borobudur. Pineda explains in a preface that she got the idea for this book after visiting the temple, where she was struck by "the highly elegant iconography of those panels . . . devoted to the lives of the Buddhas, and the astonishing vigor that animates depictions of the more vernacular Buddhist legends." The same combination of elegant form and vigorous detail is what gives *Frieze* its mesmerizing power.

The formality comes partly from language. Any novel with so remote a setting is automatically limited to a style free of colloquialism. The contemporary American idiom is not admissible, and the period Javanese idiom not available. *Frieze* is told in a formal but simple style, as elegant in its timelessness as a fabulist's voice. The danger of such a voice is that it might tell a fable, not a novel. But Pineda fixes this story in real time and place by using the first person, the present tense and carefully positioned details that leap from an otherwise dreamy landscape. On his wedding night, for instance, Gopal encounters a shy bride. "I offered the tail of my nightshirt to her timid sniffle," he says. "In a burst of courage, she gave a mighty blow. A tide of giggles overtook her. We rolled in the waves of that terrifying bed, drowning in a sea of laughter."

The nose-blowing transforms the scene from a pretty one to something suddenly real and moving. Elsewhere it might be a baby monkey saved from the mower's scythe ("the moist snuffle of snout, toes sharp as rice grains") or sandals scraping in stone dust, a glass bowl filled with water, a stew of jungle rat, a man without a nose. This is the vigor of fiction, not fable. It is exactly the technique of Gopal's own art when he carves a tiny lizard, "cunningly concealed amidst the branches, sunning itself half hidden," or when he gives every female figure the face of his wife.

The novel is constructed in 120 short sections, some no more than half a page long, presumably to echo the 120 panels of Gopal's frieze; and the final chapter ends where the first began, with the blind and aged Gopal reflecting on the course of his life. But this idea of the book as a frieze does some harm to the novel. As in a frieze, there is a certain diffuseness, and many of the best stories become peripheral. Gopal's first wife, Maya, for example, rejects her daughter at birth, loses her wits and wanders at night in search of the lost child. But Maya's story fades off and is itself lost. The most powerful scene, an abortion performed by midwives pounding a woman's belly from morning till evening, is so brief that you will reread it to make sure it really happened. It is as if these panels of small human drama are only

Josephine Humphreys is the author of Dreams of Sleep *(Viking/Penguin).*

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background for Gopal's life, which moves on.

Gopal is not a Buddhist, or even much of a Hindu; he is an artist. All his passion is for the stone; he thinks of it continually, neglects three wives for it and has little real sympathy for the peasants who are forced to work on the temple. A poor man himself, he hardly notices that others are far more desperate. Karto, his assistant, finally offers his wife to Gopal because she is pregnant and they have no food. In the end Gopal is blinded by his employers, the traditional reward for high artistic achievement. The temple, built at an incredible expenditure of human suffering over a period of eighty years, with as many as 10,000 workers on the site at a time, is finally finished just as the regime that built it collapses. Sightless, attended only by the woman given to him by another man, Gopal ends his days carving gravestone ornaments, his great work abandoned to the misty jungle.

Although he seems to have learned at last the lesson of the Holy One—"Know, O my brothers, this life is pain"—his mind is still the mind of the artist, to whom this life, though painful, is the only beauty. He imagines the scene before him, envisioning his wife

> pounding the rice flour, arms quivering to the thud of pestle against the stone, raising a hand, perhaps, to brush off the sweat, or to lift the straying tendril from the eyes; pouring oil into the vats, or the squeal of winch that tells me the play of arms as she draws water, raising the jug to shower my head, my neck, washing, drying, flapping the clothes free to air out in the sun, spreading them on a bush to dry. . . .
>
> I sit on the mat, the tools idle, sunk in my lap. I imagine her standing there listening to the rain. . . .
>
> I begin to hum.

The imagination of the artist cannot be blinded, but will see and see, and hear, and sing. And none of this, of course, is irrelevant. Cecile Pineda points out in her preface the parallel between the building of Borobudur and the nuclear arms race, but it isn't necessary to make such equations. The mystery of fiction is that it does its duties secretly. There may be similarities between Borobudur and any number of our own methods of ruin and waste, but what seems most chillingly contemporary about *Frieze* is its whole hooded vision of a severely restricted existence in which food is scarce and "our living here is not easy." That world is no distant land. □

ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

Morris Louis

The eye is an extruded part of the brain, absorbing through the thin retinal tissues whatever emits or reflects quanta in the surrounding world, and serving as a way station for the production of neural images that enable us to stop at red lights and avoid meandering cows. Enough of its mechanisms were known in Darwin's time for him to have written, "The thought of the eye made me cold all over." Darwin's thought makes me cold all over when I think of how much remains to be discovered about the visual system we use so casually. For the eye is also a part of the mind, and what we see depends, demonstrably, on what we feel and how we believe. At the philosophical cross-point of mind and brain, the eye is bound to be a contested salient in the border wars of metaphysics, and today there is little consensus on the degree to which the apparatus of cognition penetrates the physiology of sight.

Not long ago there were those who believed the penetration all but total, that our perception of the visible world is so laden with preconceptions that, in science as in common life, there is no sharp line to be drawn between observation and theory. Philosophers, anthropologists, linguists, sociologists of knowledge and social psychologists insisted that perceptual experience is thoroughly relativistic, as though the human organism were completely plastic and the perceived world nothing but a construct we acquire with our language and our culture. Deep incommensurabilities were believed to divide period from period, culture from culture, gender from gender, race from race and language community from language community, with space, shape, color, even size, fluctuating so radically as to raise the question of whether there is a shared world at all.

There is today a palpable retreat from this giddy position. Color discrimination has proved to be remarkably more invariant than anthropologists dared to believe a decade ago. Cognitive science has been coming up with striking evi-

Did James Dean use "Well then now" phrase in Rebel Without A Cause?

STAGE VIEW/Benedict Nightingale

A Stage Wizard Conjures Much From Little

THERE ARE SEVERAL MOments in Hugh Whitemore's "Breaking the Code" when Derek Jacobi fulfills our conventional expectations of a major actor. He expresses pain, anger, grief, desolation and, once or twice, a curious mix of them all, making one's eyes pop at the authenticity of his emotions and the potency of his performance. And yet it's his playing of the small moments, not the big ones, that we should perhaps be treasuring the most. Again and again he reminds us that the art of acting is the art of conjuring much out of little, or more out of less, or something out of nothing. It's the art of making silence articulate and platitude eloquent. It's the art of taking a line as flat as a parking lot in a small Midwestern town and somehow suggesting that there's an abundance of animal life in the fissures and crannies beneath its surface.

The contemporary actor most obviously

Derek Jacobi seems unable to utter a sentence without filling it with thought, feeling and subtlety.

adept at maximizing the minimal is of course Laurence Olivier, who was Mr. Jacobi's employer and mentor when he was an apprentice actor at Britain's National Theater in the 1960's. No one who saw Sir Laurence's Macbeth in 1955 is likely to forget the power he found in the three tiny words with which he greeted Banquo's murderers-to-be. "Well," he said, summoning them to his side with a smile and a crook of the finger. "Then," he added, firmly pointing out where he wanted them to stand. "Now," he finished with sudden, curt and unanswerable authority. A seemingly empty phrase became an assertion of absolute dominance. "Well then now" — and Macbeth's lackeys were ready to commit any atrocity he might demand.

That's admittedly an extreme example, displaying a wider gap between word and meaning than you'll find in "Breaking the Code." Mr. Jacobi is an audacious actor, but he can't match Sir Laurence (who can?) when it comes to creating outrageously unexpected effects onstage. Again, he is not playing Macbeth, but Alan Turing, not a crazed medieval tyrant bloodily at odds with God and humankind but an eccentric modern mathematician and computer pioneer in trouble with the authorities because of a homosexual indiscretion. Yet if his invention is less sensational, it's also more consistent. He spends most of "Breaking the Code" onstage, and much of his time onstage speaking. And he seems incapable of uttering a sentence without filling it with all the thought, all the feeling, all the subtlety, all the *life* which it can possibly contain. Consider, as a sort of case study, Act One, Scene Five.

It's wartime Britain, a country house north of London. Here, scientists are struggling to unscramble the Nazi codes, and most particularly those being dispatched via the Enigma machine to the U-boats imperiling the merchant convoys in the Atlantic. If the war is to be won, it's imperative that this device be penetrated and broken. Enter the precocious Turing for a job interview with the institution's boss, a genial old mandarin called Dillwyn Knox, played at the Neil Simon Theater by Michael Gough. "So you found us all right," says Knox. "Yes, thank you, no problem," replies Turing. And for a time that's very much the conversational level: unsurprising, bland, even banal, and dramatically effective only insofar as it feeds us the background information we need to absorb if we're to understand what ensues.

Yet that is the impression one receives from the page, not the stage. With Mr. Jacobi on one side of a table, Mr. Gough drooped over it or perched on it, and electricity flowing quietly between them, Mr. Whitemore's understated script becomes not just real, but fascinatingly real. One might at first wonder if this is because Turing's mannerisms are being presented in such rich and arresting detail. Mr. Jacobi gasps and stammers, snorts and whoops, gives little gauche titters,

Continued on Page 14



Martha Swope

Derek Jacobi and Michael Gough in "Breaking the Code"—With electricity flowing quietly between them, Mr. Whitemore's script becomes fascinatingly real.

Act 3, Scene 1

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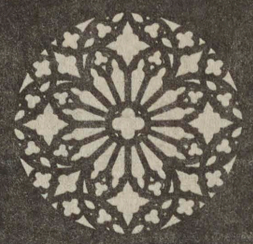

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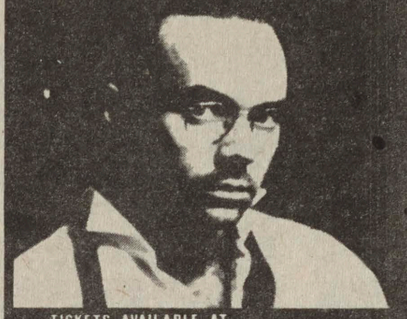

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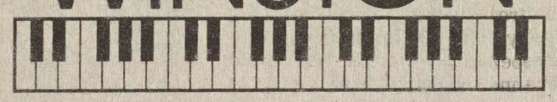

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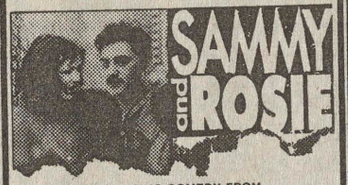

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Derek Jacobi Conjures Much From Little

Continued from Page 5

and at one point honks weirdly through his nose, like a migrating goose. As if that weren't enough, he wrinkles his nose and scratches at it, nibbles at his nails, bends down to fiddle with his shoelace or rub his knee. But that can hardly explain the scene's growing tension, because we've already observed plenty of awkward, clumsy social behavior from the same source. We know that Turing, the mathematical genius, is also a post-adolescent muddle and mess, with his stuttering consonants and nervous tics, his baggy pants and ineffably shabby tweed jacket.

■

But that's only the external Turing and, in this instance, pretty obviously the outer expression of an inner unease. If one watches Mr. Jacobi carefully, one can see that he's carefully studying Mr. Gough's Knox. After all, Knox is in charge of a lab where Turing knows that both his intellect and his imagination are going to face challenges greater than any they've confronted before. So he's anxious to impress yet resentful at having to impress, cooperative yet deeply doubtful about the mental caliber of the man on the other side of the table.

"There's no need to be alarmed," says Knox as he opens Turing's file.

"I'm not," replies Turing a little too abruptly, his head suddenly moving forward and then backward, like a tortoise wondering how far it's safe to emerge from its protective housing.

But this isn't a one-man scene, far from it. Mr. Gough is acting too, and acting very well. He looks like a benign old mole, blinking half-comprehendingly at the unaccustomed light. There's something vague and even lost about his manner, and something oddly off-the-point about several of his remarks; and yet one senses that he's actually listening most earnestly. Is he exaggerating his inadequacy? Is he trying to reassure and draw out Turing, who eventually admits he's worried about coping with institutional discipline? If so, the strategy is successful, because the mathematician's confidence visibly increases as the scene proceeds. When Knox asks him about his interest in codes, he leans forward and momentarily becomes dreamy and nostalgic, remembering and sharing a boyhood enthusiasm. When he's asked how he reconciles his new job with his one-time pacifism, he allows his "well, I'm here" to sound just a little mocking and patronizing. A minute or two later, he's exasperated and even angry, one hand jabbing forward as he emphasizes his patriotism and his eagerness to battle the Enigma, the other betraying a continuing insecurity by absently scratching at his leg.

A willingness to experiment in front of the audience is the sign of a major actor.

Yet by now Mr. Jacobi's Turing is almost relaxed enough to launch into one of the play's longest and most important monologues. Knox hasn't exactly won his trust. Indeed, one senses that Turing feels a slight contempt for this shambling, apologetic and sadly unscientific old man. But Knox has achieved something more important, which is to allow Turing to feel his superiority and even assert a certain toughness of spirit. So, grudgingly and suspiciously at first, but with accelerating pace and excitement, he talks of the art of math. A splutter of weary derision at the public's ignorance of the great theoreticians, a triumphant shout of laughter as he describes the complexity of his own work, then a moment of gravity and quiet as he comes to his most significant contribution to date: the conception of a thinking machine. Who would have thought so abstract a subject could excite passion so intense, mobile and various?

■

Mr. Jacobi is an actor who conscientiously refuses to preplan a performance, trying always to react as spontaneously as he can to dialogue and events that are, after all, supposed to be occurring for the first time ever. Consequently, he may play the same moment in the scene quite differently from night to night. When I saw him in London he spoke the line "Godel's theory is the most beautiful thing I know" with a kind of rapt awe, like a worshipper at a shrine; at the Neil Simon recently it was more a half-embarrassed mumble, and he played with his shoe as he spoke, as if the subject were too sacred to share with an unbeliever like Knox. That, too, is a sign of the major actor: a willingness to experiment, up there, on the stage, in front of the audience; a recognition that reality isn't fixed and unchanging, but can shift with whatever emotional winds have been generated during the evening.

And there's plenty more that Mr. Jacobi manages to find in that downbeat encounter in Act One, Scene Five. For instance, his Turing tells Knox he's spent the morning before the interview seeing "Snow White" in the local cinema, and in two sentences manages to mention both that its heroine eats a poisoned apple and, flashing a tiny smile as he speaks, that its ending is "quite touching." Just for a moment one notices an innocence, sweetness and vulnerability inside the uncouth intellectual. It's incongruous, it's interesting in itself, and it's also important, because at the end of "Breaking the Code" Turing will kill himself by devouring an apple laced with cyanide. It is an act that may be despairing, but may be an escape into what he perceives as a fairy-tale world of imaginative thought beyond the restrictions of the adult body. Perhaps Mr. Jacobi is preparing for the future as well as inhabiting the moment.

Certainly, he's enriching the character even further. Imagine an amalgam of Einstein, Peter Pan, the Emperor Claudius, a scarecrow and a bum — and, no, you've scarcely begun to describe Turing as he surreptitiously emerges in what, believe it or not, is still just a short interview for a job. □

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Vile as Smoke

There was another one of those smoke fights on an airplane the other day. It's always the same: a smoker so desperate for a cigarette he's ready to start screaming in pain. Somebody willing to die rather than be subjected to cigarette smoke. Pandemonium in the sky, police meeting the plane at the gate. Much assertion of human rights vis à vis tobacco smoke.

Having tried both ways of life, tobacco-stained and nicotine-free, I sympathize with both sides, but pray I never end up on one of those planes where they fight it out. I use the words "end up" by design. It's bad enough up there when you're wondering whether the pilot is using something to revise his brain. We don't need passenger riots to put the thrill back into air travel.

Still, the passion of the smoke haters is phenomenal. You don't see comparable fury applied to curbing any other social habit, like, say, getting drunk or talking dirty.

This last is a particular grievance of mine. Sidestream smoke, as the Surgeon General reports, may rot lungs, heart and other innards, but dirty talk rots the mind, and I'd like to see a vigorous, aggressive campaign waged against the people who do it. When you try to get a clean talk movement started, though, people think you're joking.

At the airport, for instance: "Smoking or nonsmoking?" they ask.

A campaign against dirty talk.

What do I care? I have smoked and I have nonsmoked, and can put up with either condition.

What I'd rather be asked is, "Dirty talking or nondirty talking?" I have dirty talked and I have nondirty talked, and I never want to dirty talk again or associate with the kind of people who do.

For two years in the military I lived immersed in dirty talk. If Eddie Murphy had come into our outfit and started talking, we would have washed out his mouth with mud for talking clean.

Near the end of my tour, a trusted companion asked, "Hey, you (dirty talk)ing (dirty talk)er. What the (dirty talk) you gonna do when those (dirty talk)ing (dirty talk)s hand you the (dirty talk), (dirty talk), (dirty talk) pen and ask you to (dirty talk)-ing sign up for another two (dirty talk)ing years?"

"I'm (dirty talk)ing gonna tell the (dirty talk)ing, (dirty talk)s to take that (dirty-talk)ing pen and shove it . . ."

At this point I broke down and told my friend, "I'm getting out, pal."

"You're (dirty talk)ing kidding!" he expostulated.

"I mean it," I said. "I want to go once again to a place where a man can ask, 'What in the world do you think you're doing?' and 'Isn't this a devil of a mess?' and 'By George, he's got it; I think he's got it!' without being exiled for talking weird."

I am not an absolutist on this. Live and let live is my philosophy. Jonathan Yardley of The Washington Post recently noted the spread of vile language into almost every movie made for adolescents, which is almost every movie made nowadays. This suggests that American youth is now as firmly hooked on dirty talk as its parents once were on nicotine.

Just as millions of those parents have broken their cigarette addiction, so millions of American youngsters can probably break their dependence on dirty talk. It would be cruel, however, to expect them to break the habit cold turkey. Few of their parents were able to give up cigarettes without a struggle; few of the children will find it easy to free themselves from their enslavement to vile and foul-mouthed speech.

For humane reasons, then, an all-out attack on dirty talk would be excessively cruel. We must proceed gradually, subtly. Just inside doorways, windows or attic dormers through which adolescents enter the house, let us place small signs that say, "Thank you for not talking dirty."

Let taxicab drivers plaster the interiors of their cars with stickers that say, "No vile language. Driver allergic to dirty talk."

Let restaurants establish dirty talking sections for diners too weak to break the chains that bind them.

A ban on dirty talk in movies and television? Absolutely not! No censorship! Never!

With sufficient bullying by an aroused public, however, theater marquees and printed television schedules might carry the message: "Warning: This entertainment contains dirty talk which may perpetuate your adolescence or create the depressing illusion that you are trapped in a military barracks with people who think you are weird."

Crusaders against smoke want everybody to live longer, but if it means everybody will have more years to spend talking dirty, what's the point? □

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Moscow Journal NYT Jan 15, '87

Pen Breathes Revenge; Stalin Is Steeped in Evil

By BILL KELLER
Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, Jan. 11 — Less than two months after Mikhail S. Gorbachev delivered his official verdict on Stalin, Mikhail F. Shatrov made it clear the Soviet leader would not have the last word on the subject.

Mr. Gorbachev, speaking on the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, pronounced Stalin a loyal Communist guilty of terrible crimes. Mr. Shatrov, the preeminent political playwright of the Soviet Union, delivered a much harsher judgment in the most daring play of his career.

His Stalin is an altogether darker figure, a cynical murderer and, most startling to the Soviet public, a traitor to the principles of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Mr. Shatrov's play "Onward . . . Onward . . . Onward!" is a work jammed with suppressed details of Soviet history and tantalizing speculation that has made the playwright the talk of the town — but not for the first time.

Playwright as a Historian

It is the latest proof that in this country the writer or artist may play a role with no modern counterpart in the West, the role of surrogate historian.

"They are the pioneers in opening history, not the sociologists, not the economists, and certainly not the historians," said Yuri N. Afanasyev, a historian who has written forcefully of the need for full disclosure of the Soviet past. "If we had a good, well-developed historical science, there would be no job for Shatrov."

Mr. Afanasyev, rector of the State Historical Archives Institute, said that since czarist days historians have been counted as part of the official establishment, their word regarded as "a form of official prayer." Even under Mr. Gorbachev's policy of providing the people with the information they need to make the economy work better, called glasnost, the history institutes, professional journals and official history books have been slow to change.

Playwrights and novelists are not regarded so solemnly and so, like the wise fool in a Shakespeare tragedy, they speak truths the others dare not.

Mr. Shatrov's play, published in the January issue of the literary monthly Znamya, has already been taken up for production by leading companies in Moscow and Leningrad.

In Moscow, where no fewer than five of his earlier plays are in repertory at various theaters, "Onward" is being hailed as the biggest achievement so far in a career that has been devoted almost entirely to dramatizing the founding fathers of the Soviet state.

Like many Soviet intellectuals of his generation — Mr. Shatrov is 55, one year younger than Mr. Gorbachev — he is a passionate anti-Stalinist for reasons that transcend ideology.

"My father participated in the Revolution," the playwright recalled the other day over coffee at his apartment in the old world riverside building immortalized by the novelist Yuri Trifonov in "House on the Embankment."

"He joined the party when he was 17. He took part in the Civil War, then studied and became an engineer, a chemist. He was the director of a cellulose plant. He was executed in 1937, at the height of the Stalin purges. For what?"

Uncle Died With Bukharin

"For what?" he repeated. "For nothing. My mother was arrested in 1949. For what? For being the wife of her husband 12 years earlier."

Mr. Shatrov's uncle by marriage was Aleksei I. Rykov, who was executed along with Nikolai Bukharin in 1938 after a political show trial in which the two men confessed to false charges of intrigues against party leaders, espionage and plotting to bring capitalism to the Soviet Union.

Denied entry to a prestigious school because of his family background, Mr. Shatrov entered a mining college and graduated with an engineering degree in 1956. By then Nikita S. Khrushchev's campaign to expose Stalin was under way, and Mr. Shatrov became a professional playwright.

Originally called Mikhail Marshak, he took the name Shatrov from a character in his first play to avoid confusion with a prominent writer of children's literature and poetry, Samuil Y. Marshak.



Tass

Mikhail F. Shatrov, the preeminent Soviet political playwright.

Stalin as a Criminal

"If you read my plays you will see that all of them are in essence about one thing: Stalin is not Lenin's heir," Mr. Shatrov said. "Stalin is a criminal of the kind the world has never had. He is not a Communist for me, because if he is a Communist I have to leave the party immediately."

Mr. Shatrov works from extensive historical sources, often borrowing his dialogue from minutes of party meetings, unpublished memoirs or other documents. He said he also relies on his own interviews with participants in history, including Khrushchev, former President Anastas I. Mikoyan, and others.

The result is a powerful but complicated genre that is too tied to its sources to be fully satisfying as theater, but too fictionalized to win unalloyed approval from historians.

Mr. Afanasyev, who is an outspoken anti-Stalinist, expresses deep admiration for Mr. Shatrov as a pioneer, but objects to the playwright's reverential treatment of Lenin.

Lenin as a God

"His central theme is that the main reason of all problems in Soviet society is deviation from what Lenin wrote, and once we return to Lenin everything will be better," the historian said in a recent interview. "I think this is a kind of religious notion, not scientific and not dramatic. It is a gross mistake, not unique to Shatrov, this view that Lenin is a kind of god."

Mr. Shatrov's retort to such criticism: "Let the historians be disappointed, and maybe they will do their job better."

"Stalinism is taking some blows these days," he added. "But blows from literature are not enough. Facts are needed."

It is probably Mr. Shatrov's devotion to Lenin that has allowed him to get away with pushing the boundaries of anti-Stalinism. Even so, his play "The Brest Peace," which features such nonpeople as Trotsky and Bukharin, sat on the shelf for 25 years before it was published last year. It is now on stage at the Vakhtangov Theater.

"Onward," completed in August, is a series of dialogues among the Bolsheviks, who look back on history with full knowledge of what came later.

In the play Stalin is accused of masterminding the 1934 murder of the Leningrad party chief Sergei M. Kirov, an event Stalin then used as a pretext for a wave of reprisals. That version of the events surrounding the Kirov murder, accepted by many Western historians, would be news to most Soviet readers.

The play also relates how Trotsky was assassinated in Mexico. Trotsky himself blames Stalin for the murder. And Stalin does not deny it.

While Mr. Gorbachev praised Stalin for upholding Leninist principles against the view of Trotsky, Mr. Shatrov paints Stalin as an enemy of Lenin, an enemy who even conspires to isolate the party leader from his comrades at crucial periods in party history.

"But you won't deny that my convictions are based on Communist principles?" Stalin asks Lenin in a climactic scene.

"I absolutely deny it!" Lenin replies.

The play ends with a reminder that Stalin still has a popular following, although he is now fair game for critics. Mr. Shatrov's final stage direction notes: "Everybody wants Stalin to leave . . . But he still remains on the stage."

NATO May Meet Before Reagan Soviet Visit

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 14 — Western officials are considering plans for a rare meeting of NATO leaders to review Western policy toward the Soviet Union and to demonstrate the alliance's solidarity before President Reagan visits Moscow this spring.

The White House spokesman, Marlin Fitzwater, said today that "there are tentative plans for the President to attend such a meeting if it is established" but that such a meeting "has not been set at this point."

Other Administration officials said that a meeting was very likely and that it might be held in March.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain recently announced support for a "full-scale NATO summit" before President Reagan visits Moscow in May or June. It would draw together the leaders of 16 nations.

Administration officials said the leaders could review Western policies toward the Soviet Union, reaffirm United States support for the defense of Western Europe after the new missile accord to ban medium- and shorter-range missiles, and demonstrate that NATO will maintain a unified stand in the coming talks on conventional arms.

The NATO leaders last met in Bonn in 1982.

Japanese Scientist Will Head World Health Organization

Special to The New York Times

GENEVA, Jan. 14 — A Japanese s
cialist in psychopharmacology,
Hiroshi Nakajima, was elected to
be Director General of the
Health Organization.

He will succeed Dr. Halfd
of Denmark, who has held
15 years and will retire in

Dr. Mahler's decisio
fourth five-year term
to condidates repre
Middle East, Eur
and Asia. Succes
all but Dr. Na
Guerra de M
the Pan-Am
Washingt

that the new President would "rely more on public opinion and on grass-roots support."

Even if that forecast proves correct, native Taiwanese who advocate independence from the mainland have no reason to feel encouraged. Mr. Lee makes clear that his policies are those of Mr. Chiang and his Kuomintang, or Nationalist Party. And they most definitely include the "great task" of eventually reunifying Taiwan with Beijing, he said Wednesday night.

Taiwanese took the passing of Chiang Ching-kuo in stride today with restrained mourning and with business as usual, for the most part.

Led by Mr. Lee, some 6,000 people trekked to a veterans hospital on the outskirts of Taipei, where Mr. Chiang's body was taken after he died at home. There was no announcement about when the funeral will be held.

Lee Teng-hui (the name is pronounced lee tung WHEY) was born in a rural village in northern Taiwan, where his family owned a small rice and tea farm. Among his childhood friends was a girl named Tseng Wen-hui. Years later they were married, and had two daughters and a son who died several years ago.

As a high-school student during the 50-year Japanese occupation of Taiwan, Mr. Lee was one of only four Chinese students in a class that was otherwise all Japanese. But even though educational opportunities for Taiwanese were few, he managed to win admittance to the prestigious Kyoto Imperial University, as the Japanese college was then known.

He later switched his studies in agricultural economics to National Taiwan University. After staying on as an instructor for a few years, he went to Iowa State University for his master's degree, and then earned a doctorate from Cornell University.

From 1957, Mr. Lee was part of the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction, a group sponsored by the United States and Taiwan to modernize farming here. But his real government service began in 1972 when, under the tutelage of Chiang Ching-kuo, then Vice President, he agreed to leave academic life and become a Government minister.

From 1978 to 1981 he was the appointed Mayor of Taipei, and then, until his designation as Vice President in 1984, he was Governor of Taiwan Province. Among his accomplishments over the years were vocational-training programs, a new dam to ease Taipei's water shortages and continued agricultural changes.

Now that he no longer stands in Mr. Chiang's shadow, the question is whether he can put enough of a personal stamp on the Government to win re-election — should he so desire — in 1990, when his predecessor's unfinished six-year term expires.

Mr. Lee received a lift today when the Defense Minister, Cheng Wei-yuan, and the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Hao Pei-tsu, made public a cablegram they had sent to the President pledging their loyalty. ...even if life at the top does not ...t, there are signs that Mr. Lee ... necessarily be distraught. ...out Christian, and in the ... that he would like to be ...ary when he retires.

...n Talk:
...t Works

be used on behalf of humankind. Whatever is accomplished during the ... Conference will leave an imprint somewhere—on one person, perhaps on many.

The Conference, *Facing the 21st Century: Threats & Promises*, was jointly convened by M. François Mitterrand, the President of France, and Mr. Wiesel, the 1986 Nobel Peace Laureate.

The Conference was made possible in part by a major grant to The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity from Mutual of America.

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Physics 1970 USA

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Peace 1947 USA

Amnesty International
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Chemistry 1972 USA

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Physics 1964 USSR

Baruj Benacerraf
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Int'l Law Institute
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Int'l Peace Bureau
Peace 1910 Suisse

Int'l Phy/Prev Nucl War (1)
Peace 1985 USSR

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