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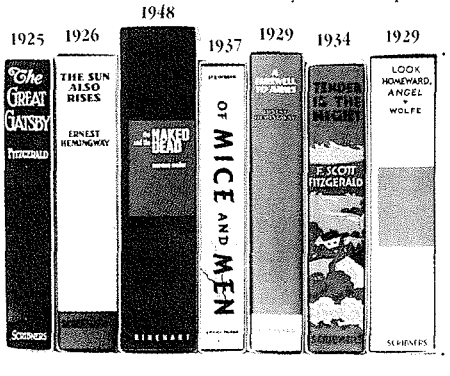

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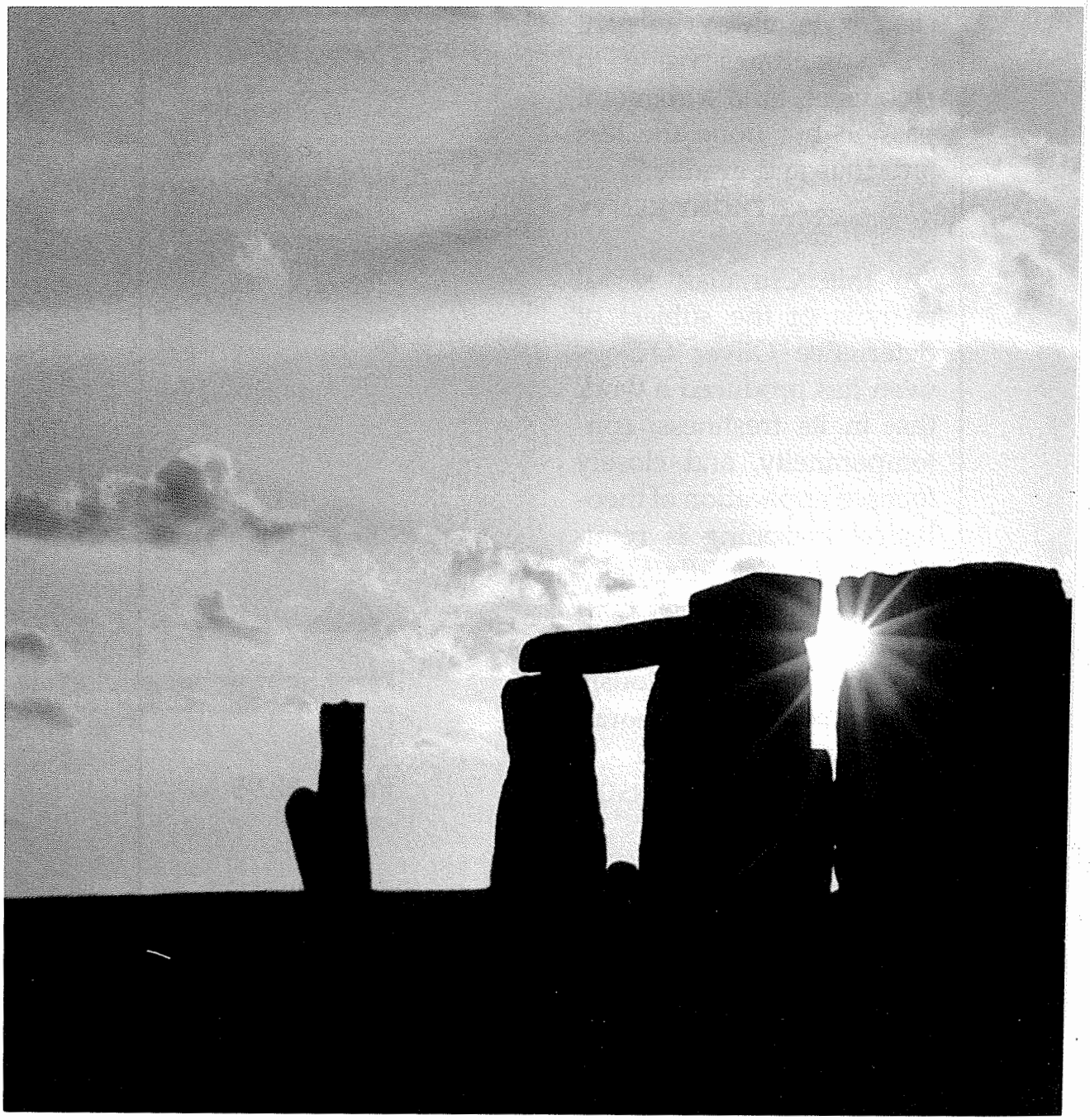
STONEHENGE AND THE SPACE TELESCOPE

Over 4,100 years ago a Neolithic people built a remarkable monument on the Salisbury Plain in what is now southern England. As an engineering feat alone, Stonehenge stands as one of the wonders of the world. But a recent discovery has revealed that it served not only as a temple, but as an astronomical computer.

We know very little about the life of the people who built Stonehenge. But one thing that has become increasingly evident is that they were far more sophisticated than was previously believed. Even though they worked only with Stone Age



technology, they built a monument which apparently acted as an astronomical clock. With Stonehenge they could predict eclipses, the exact days of the solstices, the long-term cycles of the moon and sun, and other important heavenly events. They could begin to understand that the universe had order and how it worked.

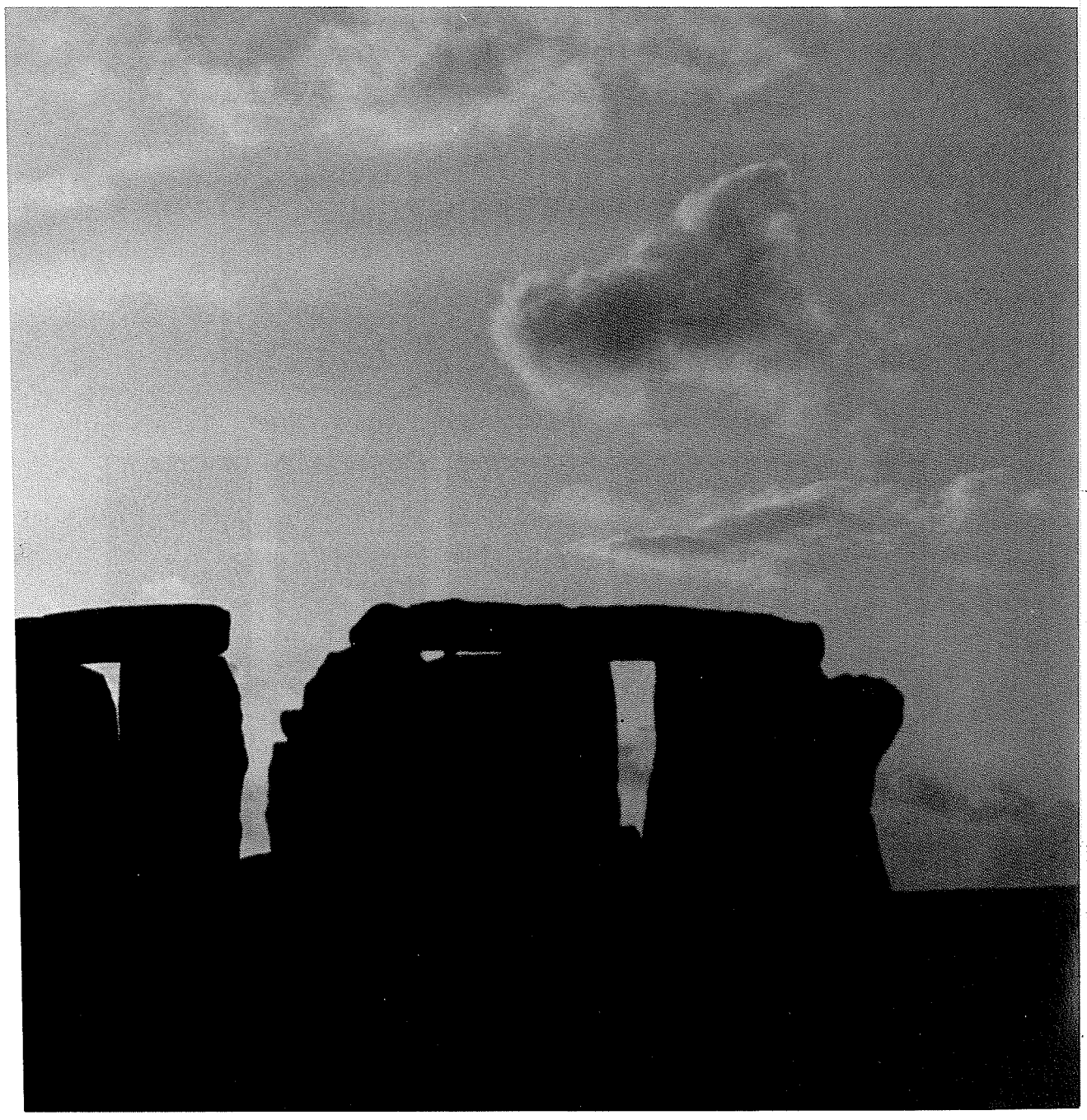
The need to understand the workings of the universe is very ancient in man. One might even say that it is instinctual, that it is part of what makes us human.

A leap of forty-one centuries and we find ourselves still confronted with the same questions that drove the prehistoric Britons to build Stonehenge. How does the universe work? How did it begin? Will it ever end?

The Hubble Space Telescope will help us solve these primeval mysteries. Once in Earth orbit, the telescope will be able to detect objects as far as fourteen billion light-years away, which is to see fourteen billion years into the past; past the birth of the Earth; past the birth of our galaxy; to the very beginning of time.

The Space Telescope represents a momentous leap in the history of mankind. The builders of Stonehenge must have felt themselves on the verge of the same kind of moment as they discovered that creation actually had order. Within our own grasp is a view of the creation itself.

Lockheed
Giving shape to imagination.



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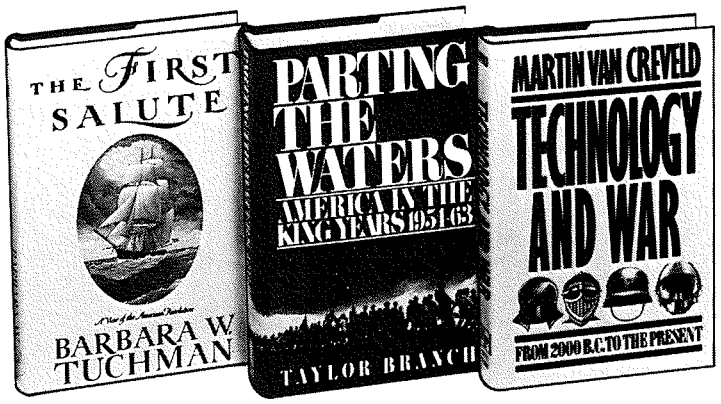

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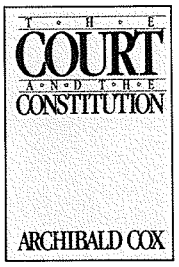

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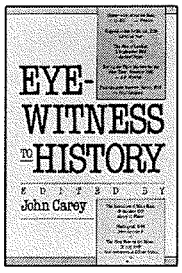

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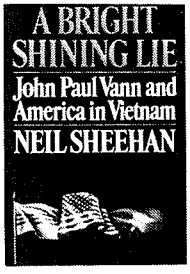

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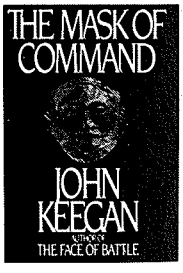

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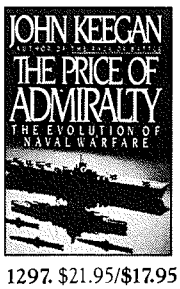

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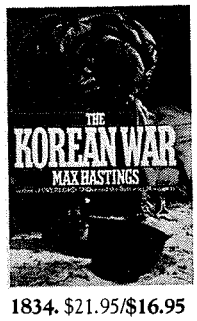

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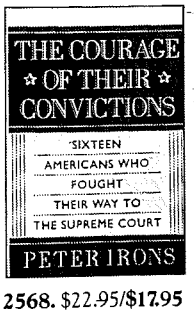

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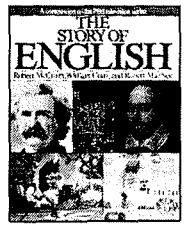

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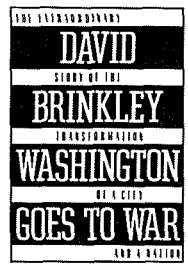

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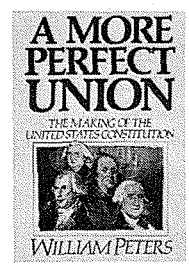

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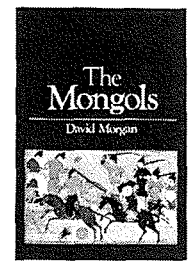

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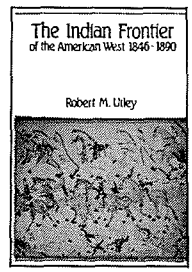

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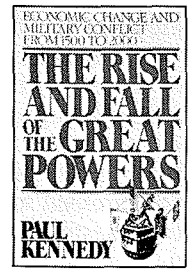

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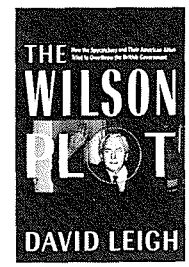

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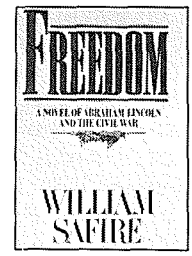

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Editor's Comment

To arms, citizens! The words from the *Marseillaise* resound with particular force during this, the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution. But what was accomplished during the stormy days of 1789, and what are the Revolution's legacies? Two of our contributors ponder these questions (p. 36) .... Closer to home, the Wilson Center celebrated its 20th anniversary on March 7 this year, an occasion honored by President George Bush, who delivered the anniversary address. Prominent among his topics was America's drug problem and his commitment to combatting it. In this issue, we look at the nation's first cocaine epidemic and how it was conquered (p. 59) .... Like the French Revolution, we citizens of the Western world are largely products of the Enlightenment faith in reason, science, and law. Yet even that legacy requires close scrutiny, as novelist Walker Percy in his essay reminds us (p. 77) .... Finally, the *WQ* bids farewell and good fortune to its Founding Father, Peter Braestrup, an editor of vision and a committed citizen. His influence will endure here—in formal and informal ways.

The Wilson Center has published the *Quarterly* since 1976. It also publishes Wilson Center Press books, special reports, and a series of "scholars' guides" designed to help researchers in specific fields, from Soviet studies to film and video, find their way through the vast archival riches of the nation's capital. All this is part of the Wilson Center's special mission as the nation's unusual "living memorial" to the 28th president of the United States.

Congress established the Center in 1968 as an international institute for advanced study, "symbolizing and strengthening the fruitful relation between the world of learning and the world of public affairs." The Center opened in 1970 under its own presidentially appointed board of trustees, headed by former vice president Hubert H. Humphrey.

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Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

Beware the Good Prince

"Of Conservatives and Kings" by Rep. Mickey Edwards, in *Policy Review* (Spring 1989), 214 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20002.

"The reigns of good princes have always been most dangerous to the liberties of their peoples," wrote the philosopher John Locke (1632–1704), because "their successors, managing the government with different thoughts, would draw the actions of those good rulers into precedent."

American conservatives, writes Rep. Edwards (R-Okla.), chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee, have forgotten Locke's warning as well as the views of America's Founding Fathers. They have become advocates of the Imperial Presidency. In 1984, President Ronald Reagan launched a campaign to win a line-item veto for the president, and conservatives in and out of Congress (including George Bush) joined in. Complaints about congressional "meddling" in foreign policy—Central America, arms control treaties, weapons sales to other nations—have become standard fare in Republican stump speeches.

"The call for a line-item veto," says Edwards, "became a convenient shorthand means of blaming congressional Democrats (correctly, I believe) for excessive federal spending." But the precedents for congressional power of the purse are clear. In 17th-century England, the king was denied the power to amend money bills passed by the House of Commons. At the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the Founders only barely agreed to give the chief executive any veto power at all; even then, they made the vote subject to congressional override.

Yet, the Founders specifically reversed English precedent on war powers—raising fleets and armies, declaring war—vesting powers that had belonged to the king in Congress alone.

How quickly conservatives have forgotten that Democrats controlled the White House for 32 of the 48 years before Reagan! During those years, Edwards reminds his colleagues, congressional Republicans used their power to challenge, among other things, President Jimmy Carter's SALT II treaty. Edwards shares their frustration with the Democratic Congress. But he maintains that the answer is to win more House and Senate seats, not to cloak the presidency in royal purple.

Dividing the Spoils

"Blacks and Hispanics in Urban Politics" by Kenneth R. Mladenka, in *American Political Science Review* (March 1989), 1527 New Hampshire Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

The Irish did it, the Italians did it, the Poles did it, and so did other American ethnic groups. In city after city during the 19th and early 20th centuries, these ethnic communities gathered their strength, elected one of their own to city hall, and then reaped the rewards: an array of municipal jobs, from street sweeper to budget director. Are blacks repeating this storied pattern of upward mobility?

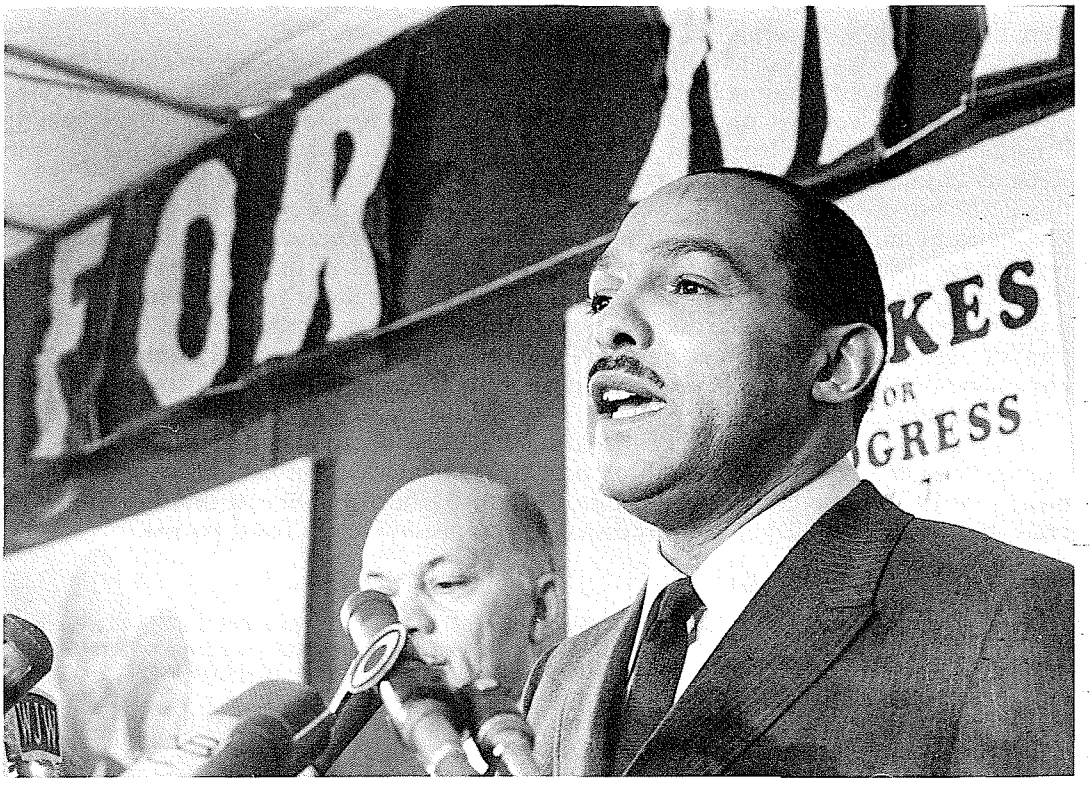
Not in ways one would expect, reports Mladenka, a political scientist at Texas A&M University. Surveying 1,224 U.S. cities in 1984, he found that the 36 black mayors included in the study were unable to deliver many jobs. But if black mayors were unable to deliver (often because older, black-governed cities such as Newark and Detroit were in financial trouble), blacks managed to hold an impressive 20 percent of all municipal jobs in the cities Mladenka studied. How did they get them?

Using sophisticated "multiple regression analyses," he found that the black share of a city's total population was far and away the most significant factor. Plain old politics—white officials need black votes—affirmative action, and the realities of the labor market explain that. But Mladenka also discovered that the strength of black representation on city councils was often very important.

In the South and Midwest, blacks elected to city councils in cities with "reformed" governments (where members are elected "at large" by all the voters) were virtually powerless to award jobs. But blacks elected under the old-fashioned "ward" system (where members represent districts) were better able to "bring home the bacon."

Just to complicate matters, the form of government made no difference in the Northeast. And most western cities, where black council members were able to deliver the greatest number of jobs to other blacks, have "reformed" city governments.

What explains the differences? In the South and Midwest, Mladenka speculates, racial polarization (and neighborhood segregation) is high: Blacks elected at large are few, and the winners must trim their sails to make themselves acceptable to their white constituents. Blacks who rep-



In 1967, Cleveland's Carl B. Stokes became the first black mayor of a big U.S. city. Today, blacks govern several major cities, including Los Angeles, Detroit, and Baltimore.

resent black districts, however, are free to lobby for black interests. In the West, where the races are less polarized, blacks find it easier to win elections and to join the ruling coalition in city hall.

The lesson is clear, says Mladenka. Blacks need not rely solely on Washington or white allies for a larger share of the political pie. In most cities, they can make the political process work in their favor.

Age and the Court

"While Justice Sleeps" by Terry Eastland, in *National Review* (April 21, 1989), P.O. Box 96639, Washington, D.C. 20077-7471.

In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, angered by the "nine old men" on the Supreme Court, asked Congress to empower him to appoint one additional Justice for each sitting Justice over 70. FDR's politically inspired "court packing" scheme was a disaster, notes Eastland, a researcher at the National Legal Center for the Public Interest, but the issue of age and incompetence on the Court has never gone away.

The Justices are appointed for life, and many are determined to die on the bench. In 1974, the Court was crippled until Justice William O. Douglas, victim of a disabling stroke, reluctantly agreed to retire.

Today's Court—eight men and one woman, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor—includes several octogenarians. Justice William J. Brennan is 83 and Justices Harry Blackmun and Thurgood Marshall are both 80. Justice Byron White, the next oldest, is 72. Brennan and Blackmun remain spry, according to Eastland, although Blackmun's intellectual interest in the law appears to have waned. Marshall "is said to watch lots of television, in chambers."

"An aging Justice who uses his law-clerk bureaucracy skillfully can, like a smart athlete, conserve his diminishing energy and extend his career," says Eastland. It was not until the 1930s that every Justice employed a clerk—almost always a recent law-school graduate. A second was added in 1947, a third in 1970, and a fourth shortly thereafter. They do much of the Court's work, including the drafting of the 15 or so opinions each Justice is assigned each year. Only Justice John Paul Stevens is known to draft all of his own opinions. Others frequently assign the writing to clerks, then edit the drafts. (A joke has it that Justice Blackmun's clerks assign him the opinions they are not interested in.)

"Can an editor be a great judge?" asks Eastland. Try to imagine Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes polishing the draft opinions of his law clerks.

What to do? Short of endorsing a Constitutional amendment requiring Justices to resign at age 75 or 80, Eastland says, Congress could reduce its appropriation for the Court's clerks. Half as many would do. The Court's opinions would improve, he argues, and "Justices who couldn't cut it would be forced to step down." Justice Holmes, incidentally, was 91 when he retired in 1932.

The Media Mandate

What happens when the news media define our politics? Wilson Carey McWilliams, a Rutgers political scientist offers one opinion in Commonweal *(March 10, 1989):*

We lack the peer review that, in earlier years, was provided by party leaders and opinion makers who controlled nominations and guided campaigns. In 1884, the discovery that Grover Cleveland apparently had fathered an illegitimate child provoked the response that such private failings, then as now the focus of media attention, are not the most important indices of *political* character, and Cleveland won the election. In 1988, by contrast, while Gary Hart's derelictions shattered his candidacy, voters did not appear to notice that, after all his years in the Senate, Hart was endorsed by only one incumbent Democratic senator. Judgment by peers is yielding to an audition by the media, and private proprieties may now outweigh public virtues.

FOREIGN POLICY & DEFENSE

Pax Nipponica?

"The U.S. and Japan: Sharing Our Destinies" by Mike Mansfield, in *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1989), 58 E. 68th St., New York, N.Y. 10021, and "Four Japanese Scenarios for the Future" by Takashi Inoguchi in *International Affairs* (Winter 1988–89), 80 Montvale Ave., Stoneham, Mass. 02180.

Mike Mansfield, the recently retired U.S. ambassador to Tokyo (1977–89), minces no words: "The most important bilateral relationship in the world today is that between the United States and Japan." Together, the two nations account for 40 percent of the world's gross national product. He believes that the United States must avoid nasty trade disputes with its Pacific ally. Apparently, much of official Washington is not quite ready to heed him.

The Japanese themselves, writes Inoguchi, a political scientist at Tokyo University, are bewildered by their newfound global prominence. Now that they have met their postwar goal of economic security, they are groping to define a place for themselves in the world. According to Inoguchi, the Japanese are currently considering four "scenarios" for the next 25 to 50 years:

Pax Americana II. Things remain much as they are, with the United States exercising "enlightened hegemony" in the Pacific. Trade throughout the Pacific is liberalized. Japan concentrates on its own economic growth, increasing development aid to other nations but not its military role. (Mansfield seems to favor this approach.)

"Bigemony." Japan joins the United States as a major military power in the Pacific, as advocated by former prime minister Yasuhiro Nakasone. Economic cooperation between the two powers increases.

Pax Consortis. A world of shifting alliances in which Japan exerts moral leadership to avoid wars.

Pax Nipponica. Japan plays a global role comparable to that of Britain during the 19th century, when it was the "balancer" among the continental powers. Japan uses economic, not military, power.

Which way will the Japanese go? Growing national pride, anger at the United States over trade disputes, and Japanese pacifism have increased the popular appeal of the last two scenarios. Inoguchi himself favors the eventual rise of *pax consortis.* But "a large majority of responsible Japanese leaders have found it virtually impossible to think beyond a world where the United States is of primary importance to Japan," he says, "and where the Japan-U.S. friendship is a major pillar of global stability."

Europe 1992

"After 1992: Multiple Choice" by Anthony Hartley, in *The National Interest* (Spring 1989), P.O. Box 3000, Dept. N.I., Denville, N.J. 07834.

To the degree that Americans have been thinking about the economic integration of Western Europe in 1992, they tend to wring their hands over the prospect of a protectionist Fortress Europe. They would be better advised, says Hartley, editor of Britain's *Encounter*, to worry about a disarmed and neutral Europe.

The Soviet Union, long cool to the European Economic Community (EEC)—the 12-nation organization whose members are melding their economies—has suddenly granted it official recognition and begun talks. Mikhail Gorbachev now speaks in dulcet tones of "our common European home."

In fact, Western Europe's economic unification poses no inherent threat to the So-

viet Union. But even in the age of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, the Soviets maintain a keen interest in preventing the emergence of a united Europe with a common defense and foreign policy—a long-term goal favored by some Europeans—and, as always, splitting the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Europe 1992 gives Gorbachev the opportunity to do both.

Already, Hungary and Poland have sought stronger ties to the EEC. Assuming a continuation of today's era of good feelings, "a request for membership by an East European country, made in the name of peace and reconciliation . . . would be difficult to reject." That would short-circuit European political union and make impossible the EEC's current political role—"the economic base for the European end of the Atlantic alliance."

Meanwhile, Gorbachev has been courting West Germany (a member of both NATO and the EEC), where neutralist sentiment is already strong. So far, Bonn has withstood his entreaties, but a sweeping offer by Gorbachev might ultimately detach West Germany from NATO, weaken the alliance, and, again, prevent the political unification of Western Europe.

A neutral Europe "would satisfy the requirements of the Soviet Union for security and for economic improvement," says Hartley. The Europeans would be guaranteed prosperity and "a quiet life." And the United States would see its international influence much diminished.

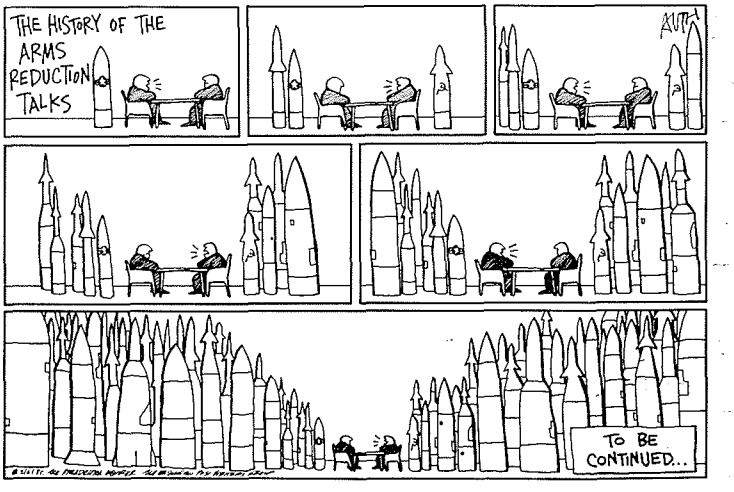
Getting STARTed

"START: Completing the Task" by Max M. Kampelman, in *The Washington Quarterly* (Summer 1989), 55 Hayward St. Cambridge, Mass. 02142.

Sitting on President George Bush's White House desk is a several hundred-page draft of the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) treaty. The product of seven years of U.S.-Soviet negotiations in Geneva, the draft treaty's turgid legal language contains grand compromises on key issues and empty pages where sticking points need to be resolved. Now Bush has to decide what to do next.

Kampelman, who headed the U.S. delegation in Geneva during 1985–89, notes that the draft contains several landmark agreements: 1) a ceiling of 4,900 warheads on each side's intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles; 2) a limit of 1,540 warheads on big "silo buster" ICBMs; 3) an overall 6,000-warhead limit for bombers and missiles.

In essence, the treaty forces the Soviet Union to reduce its ICBMs by about 50 percent. Such weapons, which can be launched in a "first strike" attack, undermine nuclear deterrence. On the other hand, both sides are allowed to fly more bombers. These relatively slow weapons are useful only for retaliation; they thus strengthen deterrence.



After seven years, the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) still face large obstacles. Even if completed and ratified, a START treaty would reduce only certain kinds of nuclear weapons.

The chief criticism of START is that, despite the ICBM reductions, the United States would be more vulnerable to a Soviet first strike. The Soviets now have three ICBM warheads for every one of the 1,000 U.S. Minuteman III and MX silos; after START they would have four for each of the remaining 300–400 U.S. silos. However, Kampelman says, nothing in START forbids the United States from replacing some big multiple-warhead missiles with a larger number of single-warhead missiles, shifting the odds again. But in reality virtually nothing can be done, with or without START, to make these missiles invulnerable again.

Such paradoxes, says Kampelman, underscore the reality that popular euphoria about 50 percent cuts in nuclear arsenals is unfounded. If the treaty is completed and approved, the United States will still have to invest in the modernization of its nuclear forces, possibly building single-warhead missiles or new nuclear submarines. A post-START nuclear war would still devastate the planet. START would moderate the arms race and make it more difficult for one side to gain the upper hand—not the stuff of dramatic TV "sound bites," notes Kampelman, but vitally important. He hopes that the Bush administration will resist the urge to tinker with START's compromises and begin resolving the remaining issues.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

Zoned Out

"The Kemp Cure-All" by David Osborne, in *The New Republic* (April 3, 1989), 1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Jack Kemp, the new Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, may be the only bona fide activist in the Bush cabinet. So it is a safe bet that federal "enterprise zones," Kemp's panacea for the nation's blighted inner-city neighborhoods, will become reality before too long.

The problem, contends Osborne, the author of *Laboratories of Democracy* (1988), is that enterprise zones have already been tried by the states and found wanting.

The theory behind the zones is appealing: By slashing business taxes and regulations in selected areas, government can encourage a thousand entrepreneurial flowers to bloom, providing jobs for many inner-city residents. The reality is that some 30 states have created between 500 and 700 enterprise zones—with mixed results at best. The state of Connecticut, for example, claims that it has created or saved 10,000 jobs in enterprise zones; an independent study found that the zones had suffered a loss of 250 jobs. Meanwhile, zone-less Massachusetts became the star of the Rust Belt's revitalization during the 1980s. Studies of enterprise zones in Maryland, Illinois, and Louisiana have found little or no impact.

What's wrong, Osborne argues, is that the zones offer benefits of relatively little real importance to businessmen. When employers in two Maryland enterprise zones were asked what had attracted them, they ranked "financial inducements" 12th out of 13 factors. Notes John Sloan, president of the National Federation of Independent Businesses: "No amount of 'less government' can create money, security, or a market where none exists."

True, says Osborne, Washington can offer much greater financial incentives than state governments can. But even if Kemp's plan nourishes new businesses in the ghettos, it may not help the people it is supposed to assist. Indiana has created 10 relatively successful enterprise zones, but the chronically unemployed local residents have remained just that—they claimed only 6.3 percent of the new jobs.

Help people, not places, urges Osborne.

Create federal enterprise zones if you must, he says, but add incentives to entice states and nonprofit groups to include job training programs, low-interest business loans, management advice, and other self-help encouragement.

Should Detroit 'Go Hollywood'?

"The Effects of Industrial Specialization on Industrial Politics and the Labor Market: The Motion Picture Industry" by Susan Christopherson and Michael Storper, in *Industrial and Labor Relations Review* (April 1989), 207 ILR Research Bldg., Cornell Univ., Ithaca, N.Y. 14851-0952.

How can America's smokestack industries save themselves? "Flexible specialization," answer many management specialists. The concept is not just a business-school buzzword, report Christopherson and Storper, of Cornell and UCLA, respectively. Steel, autos, and a few other industries are already experimenting with it. But in only one place has flexible specialization become a way of life: Hollywood. And the results, say the authors, have been good for the movie business but bad for Hollywood's workers.

Unlike traditional mass production, with its fixed assembly lines and high output, flexible specialization involves the quick redeployment of workers and machines to turn out relatively small batches of goods.

Screenwriters won this 1988 battle, but the film industry's restructuring is weakening unions.

The fabled Hollywood "studio system" of 1920–50 was essentially a mass-production system for churning out movies. The studios functioned like giant factories, keeping everybody, from stagehands and cameramen to actors and directors (all of them unionized) on their payrolls.

During the 1950s, as the industry stagnated (like autos and steel in recent years), filmmaking changed. The studios shrank, concentrating on financing and distributing films; independent producers organized production, subcontracting everything from casting to film editing to small, mostly nonunion, specialized firms on a film-by-film basis. The result: more workers, many of them part-timers, dividing up less work among themselves.

Between 1958 and 1982, Hollywood's movie output dropped from 327 annually to 209; employment climbed from 53,569 to 127,209. During the same period, pay per employee fell from $9,954 annually (in constant 1967 dollars) to $6,654.

By enlarging their old roles to become, in effect, film entrepreneurs, a few actors, writers, and directors have benefited. But most Hollywood workers have been forced into narrower roles—a makeup artist, for example, may now specialize in "latex sculpting." Hourly pay in Hollywood is very high—an average of $18.24 in 1983, compared to $8.66 in manufacturing—but relatively few workers are able to work full-time, year-round.

What are the implications for a brave new world of increased "flexible specialization" in the nation's factories? In the old days, there were two chief sources of income inequality, say the authors: the divide between white- and blue-collar work-

ers, and that between low-wage industries (e.g., textiles) and high-wage ones. Flexible specialization creates a new breech between those who are able to work full time and those who are not. Without legal safeguards, the authors warn, more flexibility for employers could mean "insecurity and exploitation" for employees.

Peter Robbed, Paul Paid

"Trade Protection Comes to Silicon Valley" by Arthur Denzau, in *Society* (March/April 1989), Box A, Rutgers Univ., New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

Washington has leaped to defend American manufacturers of computer chips against foreign competition; as a result, it has wounded the U.S. computer manufacturers that use the chips.

This tale of perverse consequences, recounted by Denzau, a Washington University economist, begins in 1986. In July of that year, the Reagan administration signed an agreement with Tokyo, ending alleged Japanese "dumping" of computer chips, chiefly the Dynamic Random Access Memory Chips (DRAMs), key components in mainframe and personal computers. The idea was to protect the two remaining U.S. "merchant" chip-makers—Texas Instruments and Micron Technology—from "unfair" low-cost competition. (A few U.S. computer companies, notably IBM, manufacture their own DRAMs.)

Predictably, the price of common 256 kilobyte memory chips (containing 256,000 memory bits) jumped after the agreement, from $2 to as much as $7. Before 1986, prices had been dropping. As a result of the price hike, Denzau estimates, 5,000 to 10,000 jobs were saved at Texas Instruments and Micron Technology. But the high price and scarcity of chips cost computer manufacturers and other electronics firms 2.6 percent of their business—an estimated $1.2 billion in 1986 alone—and between 7,000 and 11,000 workers their jobs. Essentially, every job saved in the chip industry cost a job in the computer industry. And the Japanese still dominate the DRAM market.

Despite the U.S. trade barriers, Denzau says, it is not likely that many American firms will be lured back into the risky DRAM business. More ominous, Japanese chip-makers now have an incentive to shift their attention to fields still free of trade restraints and dominated by U.S. firms, such as application-specific integrated circuits and central processing units. "We are in danger," warns Denzau, "of sacrificing our future to regain the past."

SOCIETY

Race or Class?

"Growing Up in Poor Neighborhoods: How Much Does It Matter?" by Susan E. Mayer and Christopher Jencks, in *Science* (March 17, 1989), P.O. Box 1722, Riverton, N.J. 08077.

Common sense suggests that growing up in a "bad" neighborhood hurts a child's chances of future success. That concern underlies much of today's debate about the apparent growth of the "underclass"—the increasing *economic* segregation of poor blacks, Hispanics, and a few whites in wretched inner-city neighborhoods.

But after surveying some two dozen studies, Mayer and Jencks, both researchers at Northwestern University, find only mixed or contradictory support for "common sense." The nub of the problem, they find, is sorting out the relative significance of class and race.

Two studies only tentatively suggest that poor children attending "middle-class" elementary or intermediate schools score higher on standardized tests than similar students in lower-class schools.

What about the effect of racial desegregation? One 1965–72 study found that it helped black students in the North but had no effect in the South. There are no studies of long-term effects.

The results from high schools are more complete. Two studies show that students entering the ninth grade with comparable test scores are just as likely to graduate and attend college whether they attend high school in a poor or an affluent neighborhood.

But racial segregation does have a clear impact: Dropout rates are highest at predominantly black high schools, no matter what the individual student's race or socioeconomic background. Studies of northern blacks who attended all-black high schools during the 1960s and early '70s showed that they had higher aspirations than their black counterparts in integrated schools but were ultimately less successful in college. (Yet, in the South, blacks attending integrated high schools in 1972 enjoyed less collegiate success than blacks in segregated schools.)

Teenage crime is more complicated. A study of Nashville during the 1950s found that poor youths attending middle-class schools were less likely to commit serious crimes; a study of Chicago teenagers during the early 1970s found that such youths were *more* likely to commit crimes.

Two studies show fairly conclusively that black teenage girls growing up in predominantly black neighborhoods are more likely to become pregnant.

Overall, the authors write, two things are clear. First, as researchers learn more about the causes of particular problems, socioeconomic factors seem to diminish in importance relative to racial segregation. Second, the effects of socioeconomic factors and race are rarely straightforward. A poor black youth attending a well-to-do integrated school may be spurred to greater achievements, or he may feel resentment towards his more privileged classmates and turn to crime.

Almost Heaven

Visiting California during the 1950s, diplomat George F. Kennan was amazed by its sun 'n surf culture. From his memoirs in *The Atlantic* (April 1989):

California reminds me of the popular American Protestant concept of heaven: There is always a reasonable flow of new arrivals; one meets many—not all—of one's friends; people spend a good deal of their time congratulating one another about the fact that they are there; discontent would be unthinkable; and the newcomer is slightly disconcerted to realize that now, the devil having been banished and virtue being triumphant, nothing terribly interesting can ever happen again . . . .

These people practice what for centuries the philosophers have preached: They ask no questions; they live, seemingly, for the day; they waste no energy or substance on the effort to understand life; they enjoy the physical experience of living; they enjoy the lighter forms of contact with an . . . indulgent and undemanding natural environment; their consciences are not troubled by the rumblings of what transpires beyond their horizon. If they are wise, surely the rest of us are fools.

Culture, Chicago-Style

"Encountering Mass Culture at the Grassroots: The Experience of Chicago Workers in the 1920s" by Lizabeth Cohen, in *American Quarterly* (March 1989), Univ. of Md., 2100 Taliaferro Hall, College Park, Md. 20742.

In 1926, admen at the J. Walter Thompson Company proclaimed that an "economic millennium" and the universal availability of standardized merchandise, motion pictures, and radio were erasing class distinctions in America. During the 60 years since, critics, Left and Right, have turned the ad agency's boast into an indictment. American "mass culture," they argue, spawned an apolitical materialism across the land, creating a bland, homogenized society.

Nice theory, says Cohen, a historian at Carnegie Mellon University, but that is not what happened, at least not in Chicago.

During the 1920s, the city's working-class Italians, Poles, Slavs, and Irish made the new mass culture conform to their own way of life. True, they loved the new movies coming out of Hollywood. But they watched them in neighborhood theaters—with nicknames like "The Garlic Opera House"—where Buster Keaton's hilarious adventures were punctuated by local amateur acts and impromptu film criticism. "The old Italians used to go to these movies," recalled one patron, "and when the good guys were chasing the bad guys . . . they'd say [in Italian]—Getem—catch them—out loud in the theater." Local radio broadcasts (e.g., "The Irish Hour") were usually tuned in at neighborhood social clubs and were likewise subjected to community comment.

No sale: During the 1920s, Chicago's Marshall Field department store sold its stylish wares only to the affluent, not to the working class.

Chicago's workers bypassed the impersonal A&P supermarkets and Walgreen drugstores. "Go to A&P they ain't going to give you credit like I give you credit here," warned one grocer in Little Sicily. The workers were still buying sugar from barrels when the housewives of Evanston were stocking their pantries with Del Monte canned goods and other national brands.

Only blacks, Cohen notes, wholeheartedly accepted the new American mass culture—and promptly made it serve their own interests. Lacking local black-owned shops, they flocked to chain stores. Black consumer boycotts—"Don't spend where you can't work"—forced the chains to hire black workers. And the new mass media enabled "Fats" Waller and other black jazzmen to reach a national audience.

As the decade ended, "mass culture" made greater inroads. But Cohen is not convinced that Chicago's workers were swept into the Great American Mixmaster. It may be, she says, that "mass culture did more to create an integrated working-class culture than a classless American one."

Child Abuse

"The Child Abuse 'Crisis': Forgotten Facts and Hidden Agendas" by Bryce Christensen in *The Family in America* (February 1989), P.O. Box 416, Mount Morris, Ill. 61054.

Last year's trial in New York of attorney Joel Steinberg for fatally beating his adopted daughter Lisa raised new alarms about a nationwide plague of child abuse. "Child abuse has been allowed to remain the hidden tragedy of too many middle-class families," warned a writer in *Ladies' Home Journal*, echoing an increasingly common view.

Nonsense, says Christensen, editor of *The Family in America*. Child abuse is not nearly as widespread in America as it is said to be. "Of the 2.1 million children who were reported to state authorities in

1986 as abused or neglected," Christensen notes, "only about 30 percent had been physically abused and only about 10 percent of these children (3 percent of the total) had suffered injury serious enough to require professional attention."

Alarming as these reduced estimates are, they do not bear out the charge that the middle-class family is a chamber of horrors. In fact, they are the result of the *breakdown* of the traditional family.

Single-parent families receiving public assistance, a tiny fraction of the total population, account for 30 percent of all battered children, according to Douglas Besharov, former director of the National Center on Child Abuse. A 1985 McMaster University study found that preschoolers living in families with a stepparent are 40 times more likely to become victims than are kids who live with their natural parents. By contrast, a report by the National Institute for Mental Health shows that violence against children "appears to be decreasing in America's intact families."

Christensen thinks that the "crisis" is largely the creation of certain feminists, academics, and social workers with a hidden anti-family agenda. The very "solutions" they advocate—more intrusive investigations, sex-abuse education in the schools—would further erode parental authority and undermine the family. Claudia Pap Mangel, a Washington, D.C. attorney, has gone so far as to advocate government licensing of parents.

The welfare state "deserves credit for shielding some children from abuse," says Christensen, "and blame for persistently undermining the moral purpose and family commitment that prevent such abuse in the first place." As it is, 65 percent of all parents accused of child abuse are cleared, but only after long and devastating investigations. Today's vague laws need to be reformed, he concludes, to make it harder for social workers and others to intervene in the family.

PRESS & TELEVISION

The End of Time?

"The Newsweeklies: Is the Species Doomed?" by Bruce Porter, in *Columbia Journalism Review* (March/April 1989), 200 Alton Place, Marion, Ohio 43302.

Oh, how the mighty have fallen!

Since Henry Luce founded *Time* in 1923, newsweeklies have been a mainstay of the nation's news media. Now they—or one or two of them—could be nearing extinction. Circulation (a combined total of 10 million for *Time*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *Newsweek*) has been virtually flat since 1970; ad pages have slipped by around 20 percent during the last decade.

"Where once the newsmagazines were the general public's only source of news about special areas such as the law [and] medicine," writes Porter, who teaches at Columbia's School of Journalism, "today all the large dailies [have] specialists dealing in these subjects." And Americans even in the hinterlands can now get the *New York Times* or *USA Today*, not to mention all kinds of television news. "You have to ask yourself," says Roger Rosenblatt, editor of *U.S. News*, "why a reader needs us if he gets told a fact on Monday and you tell him the same fact a week from Monday."

He doesn't, and in order to survive the newsmagazines are changing. *Time* has resorted to splashy color graphics to ensure that "readers get a fast idea of what a story says without having to undergo the inconvenience of actually reading it." Yet, it has also hired well-known essayists, such as the *New Republic*'s Michael Kinsley, to write weighty opinion pieces.

U.S. News emphasizes "news you can use": articles on personal finance, health, nutrition, and education. At *Newsweek*, soft-edged "stories are pitched to a slightly hipper, more urban set of readers, people in their thirties and forties." Cultural edi-

tor Sarah Crichton explains,"we're tracking a generation."

One assumption behind all of these changes, notes Porter, is that educated Americans will not read anything unless it is served up like baby food. But it could be, as one former "big three" editor puts it, that readers simply did not care for the pabulum that the newsmagazines were dishing out in the first place.

The Bad News Bias

"Economic News on Television: The Determinants of Coverage" by David E. Harrington, in *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Spring 1989), Univ. of Chicago Press, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Ill. 60637.

As a rule, good news is no news in the minds of many journalists.

That formula certainly seems to apply to TV network news coverage of the U.S. economy—with some curious exceptions.

Harrington, a Kenyon College economist, surveyed the three television networks' reports on inflation, unemployment, and the gross national product (GNP) during the economy's turbulent years between 1973 and 1984. He found "reports about increases in the unemployment rate were, on average, 48 percent longer and 106 percent more likely to lead the evening newscasts than reports about decreases in unemployment. For the inflation rate, reports about increases were, on average, 29 percent longer and 61 percent more likely to lead the evening news broadcasts." Reporting on the GNP likewise emphasized the bad news.

But these patterns prevailed only during *nonelection* years. Harrington found that the bad news/good news differences shrank during congressional election years; they virtually disappeared during the presidential election years, 1976, 1980, and 1984.

Why? Possibly because TV newsmen deem favorable economic news more politically significant during election years, Harrington speculates. Or broadcasters may strive for greater "balance" during election campaigns. In any event, network coverage of the economy is not balanced much of the time, and that has consequences. As economist Herbert Stein notes, Washington "must respond to the picture that is in the public mind, even if that picture is unrealistic."

RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

James vs. James

"William and Henry James" by Ross Posnock, in *Raritan* (Winter 1989), Rutgers Univ., 165 College Ave., New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

"I'm always sorry when I hear you're reading anything of mine, and always hope you won't," Henry James wrote to his brother William around 1904. "You seem so constitutionally unable to 'enjoy' it."

William James (1842–1910), the philosopher and father of Pragmatism, and Henry (1843–1916), the famous novelist, often chose to regard (and portray) themselves as a study in contrasts, and most scholars have agreed. Posnock, who teaches at the University of Washington, says it comes down to a series of all-too-tidy dualisms: "active, manly, inquisitive William; contemplative, sissified, withdrawn Henry."

Their father, Henry Sr., had inherited great wealth and acquired a rococo taste for intellectual and theological speculation. The boys' various homes, an exasperated William wrote in 1865, swarmed with people "killing themselves with thinking about things that have no connection with their merely external circumstances."

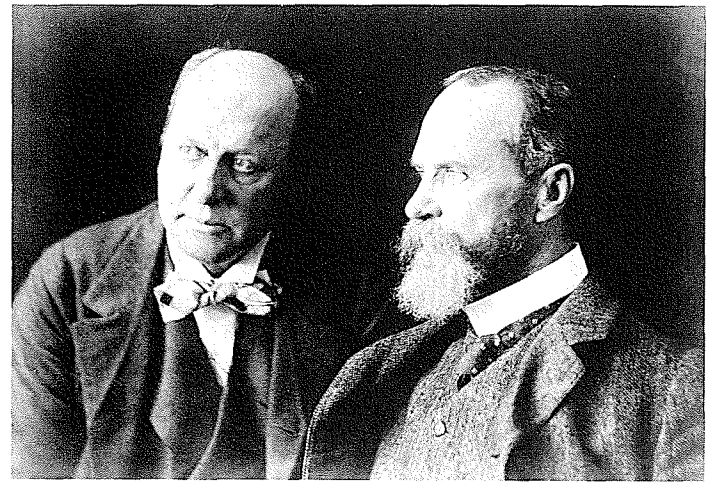
It was too much for him. During the late

1860s, he suffered a prolonged bout of "neurasthenia," as depression was then known. He emerged only after latching on to the principle of "free will" and the importance of action over thought. "I will abstain from the mere speculation . . . in which my nature takes most delight," he wrote in 1870. He declared that "there is something diseased and contemptible, yea vile, in theoretic grubbing and brooding."

Strange thoughts for a philosopher. Yet, they were characteristic of William and of Pragmatism. What he really tried to do, argues Posnock, was to build a body of thought to *confine* rather than free his will—his will to speculate.

Pragmatism was, in effect, William's attempt to clear what he regarded as the paralyzing underbrush of metaphysics from philosophy, opening a path for the autonomous, energetic individual. Yet, even as he came to be celebrated (wrongly) as a prophet of hard-nosed efficiency, he defined the radical pragmatist as "a happy-go-lucky anarchistic sort of creature." And he retained a certain sympathy for those who indulged in the idle curiosity that he so sternly repressed in himself, though he relegated them to the margins of life as mystics, saints, or primitive peoples.

Henry, by contrast, had thrived in his father's house. The boundless curiosity that his brother found so enervating, he found energizing. He soaked up experience, says Posnock, and converted it into fictions. Yet, the two were in fact not so very different. Henry, though younger, was in many ways the more mature of the two brothers. At least he grasped more rapidly the truth that thinking *was* doing. After reading *Pragmatism* (1907), he wrote to William, "I was lost in wonder of the extent to which all my life I have . . . unconsciously pragmatised." And an interest in the turbulent flow of human consciousness was as much a hallmark of Henry's novels as it was of William's philosophical writings.



Henry James and his brother William at the turn of the century. Henry once wrote that he was grateful to live on the "crumbs" of his elder brother's "feast" and "the echoes of his life."

God and Country

"A Lost Chance to Save the Jews?" by Conor Cruise O'Brien, in *The New York Review of Books* (April 27, 1989), 250 W. 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10107.

It is one of the great might-have-beens of history. In July 1938, two Jesuit priests drafted a papal encyclical condemning racism and anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany at the request of Pope Pius XI. But the head of their order, Wladimir Ledochowski, who feared communism more than fascism, delayed the transmission of the document to the Pope. Pius XI died in 1939, probably never having seen it. His successor, Pope Pius XII, was not inclined to challenge Hitler.

Could the encyclical have prevented the Holocaust? O'Brien, a visiting professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania, thinks that it might have. Earlier, in 1937,

Hitler had backed away from confrontation with the Church, fearing that it would hurt the morale of Nazi Germany's armed forces, and he did so again in 1940–41, when Catholics and Protestants protested the *Führer*'s euthanasia program, which would have claimed the lives of "unfit" Gentiles. Hitler postponed it.

On their own, Germany's Catholic and Protestant clergymen were of no mind to oppose the anti-Semitism that led to the Final Solution. Germany's churches were so saturated in nationalism, writes O'Brien, that "the *Volk* [the German people] came ahead of any Gospel message in their hearts and minds."

Nationalism, ironically, was a product of the Enlightenment, which had aspired to replace religion with reason. "War, persecution, and the spirit of intolerance would fade away along with the [religious] authority which had legitimized these things," writes O'Brien. Instead, the Enlightenment bred new creeds, none more virulent than nationalism. And nationalism nowhere became more virulent than in Nazi Germany.

It soon infected Germany's Protestant theologians. They came to view the German *Volk* as "the carriers of God's will in history." From there, it was but a short step to declaring Hitler, "a 'pious and faithful sovereign'" sent by God to save the *Volk*, as a relatively moderate Lutheran thinker, Paul Althaus, wrote in 1937.

Catholic doctrine was made in Rome, and thus did not bend as easily to Nazism. But, without papal leadership, German Catholics also succumbed to the nationalist disease. Like the Protestants, they accepted Hitler's depiction of the Jews as enemies of the *Volk*, responsible for Germany's humiliating surrender in 1918. The Christians "preserved a frigid and universal silence" when Hitler launched the first pogroms during the 1930s, and the *Führer* "understandably, took that Christian silence for consent."

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Shuttle Trouble

"U.S. Access to Space" by John M. Logsdon and Ray A. Williamson, in *Scientific American* (March 1989), Box 3187, Harlan, Iowa 51593.

Three years after the *Challenger* disaster, the U.S. space shuttle is flying again. The bad news is that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has not learned from its past mistakes.

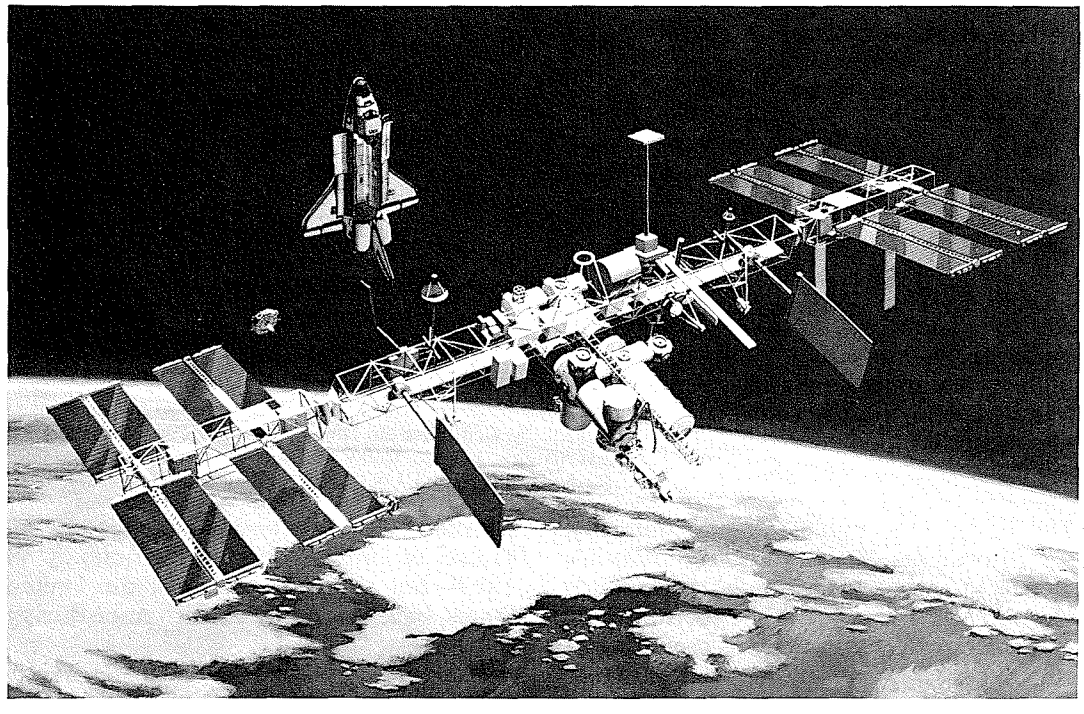
According to Logsdon and Williamson, of George Washington University and the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, respectively, NASA's exaggerated hopes for the shuttle booster and orbiter during the early 1970s led it to abandon development of other space launchers. Entrepreneurs were discouraged from creating new rockets as long as NASA offered to launch scientific and commercial satellites into orbit at (subsidized) low prices. When the *Challenger* blew up in January 1986, the United States had only a few Delta, Atlas, and Titan missiles (all based on the technology of the early 1960s) to fill in. They failed, too. Today, up to five years after their scheduled launch, several important satellites remain in mothballs.

Although the Pentagon is now developing updated versions of the old rockets to launch military satellites, NASA still has all its eggs in one basket, the authors say. After a fourth orbiter comes into service in 1992, it plans 12 to 14 flights per year, at a cost of between $250 and $500 million per launch. Fortunately, if NASA's plans again prove too optimistic, new private and foreign rockets will be available to launch most U.S. civilian satellites. But NASA also plans to complete a manned space station

by 1998, relying almost exclusively on the shuttle. What if the shuttle fleet is grounded again after the station is manned?

So far, NASA has rejected scientists' pleas to create either new rockets or a larger unmanned version of the shuttle.

NASA *has* begun long-term research into a 21st-century replacement for the shuttle. The new craft may take off from airfields like normal jet aircraft and then enter outer space at hypersonic speeds. Significantly, the work is under the Pentagon's control. Such a craft could finally realize the goals set for the shuttle—putting people into space cheaply and often. But even if the project succeeds, the authors warn, NASA may repeat the fundamental error that has plagued the shuttle program: "substituting a decision about a means . . . for a decision about the purposes [of] U.S. activities in space."



*The U.S. space station has a name (*Freedom*), a price tag ($29 billion), and a completion date (1998), but lacks a clear mission.*

Savant Syndrome

"An Unlikely Virtuoso" by Darold A. Treffert, in *The Sciences* (Jan.–Feb. 1989), 2 E. 63rd St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Blind, stooped, and palsied, Leslie Lemke, 36, has for 15 years astonished audiences with flawless renditions of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* and Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1.* He has mastered not only the piano but the ukelele, the concertina, the xylophone, and the bongo drums. His performances are all the more amazing because Lemke has an I.Q. of 58. The same fingers that adroitly navigate the 88 keys of the piano cannot begin to fit a wooden block into a square hole.

Lemke is in many ways typical of the several hundred reported cases of "savant syndrome," writes Treffert, a Wisconsin psychiatrist. Savants are mentally re-

tarded, often autistic; six out of seven are males. Most excel at "right-brained" activities, such as music and art. Other savants are "left-brained" mathematical wizards or "lightning calculators" who can, for example, instantly determine whether Christmas fell on a Sunday in 1654.

Researchers for more than a century have sought the causes of this rare endowment of gift and affliction—without great success. Recently, says Treffert, Harvard neurologists Norman Geschwind and Albert Galaburda have made a number of promising discoveries.

Studying the brain's development in the fetus, they found that the formation of neurons suddenly accelerates during the 10th through 18th weeks of prenatal life. Just before birth, all the neurons that have failed to link up with others die off in a "mass extinction." And, significantly, the right hemisphere of the brain matures before the left hemisphere. So it may be that an injury to the left side during the formative stage may spark a "migration" of neurons to the more "creative" right side, thus strengthening its functioning.

The Harvard scientists also found that high levels of the male hormone testosterone in the fetus impair the creation of neurons. Thus, an abnormally large dose of testosterone, arriving in the fetal brain after the right hemisphere has completed its development but before the left hemisphere has, may explain why most savants are males and "right-brained."

Even if the Harvard research ultimately solves most of the riddles of savant syndrome—some people have become savants because of brain injuries *after* birth—it will not help the savants themselves. Their treatment is a vexing problem. Often, says Treffert, simple therapy to improve their mental abilities mysteriously diminishes their unique gifts—a curious "cure" indeed.

Fixing Nuclear Power

"Making Nuclear Power Work: Lessons from Around the World" by Kent Hansen, Dietmar Winje, Eric Beckjors, Elias Gyftopoulos, Michael Golay, and Richard Lester, in *Technology Review* (Feb.–March 1989), M.I.T., Cambridge, Mass. 02139.

The ailing U.S. nuclear power industry, which provides 19 percent of the nation's electricity, has one of the poorest records of operating efficiency in the world. Utility executives blame overzealous government regulators and the public's anti-nuclear "hysteria." The authors, a consortium of nuclear engineers, say that utility managers themselves are largely to blame.

Between 1975 and 1984, they found, "the best [managed] U.S. reactors performed as well as any of their counterparts abroad. But the worst did significantly worse." Overall, the nation's 52 pressurized water reactors (the most common type) were "on line" only 60 percent of the time during 1984: The rates were 89 percent in Switzerland; 83 percent in West Germany; 82 percent in France; 73 percent in Japan; and 67 percent in Sweden. Each percentage point of lost capacity can cost $10 million in replacement power.

Nuclear industries everywhere have stumbled in the past—Japan's reactors operated at only 35 percent efficiency in 1979—but all, except that of the United States, have improved performance during the 1980s.

Overcautious officials of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission do deserve part of the blame. U.S. reactors lost an average of 10 percentage points of capacity to "regulatory" shutdowns over the years, far more than those of other nations. But differences in accounting methods exaggerate the burden, the authors argue.

Rate regulation also hurts. Overseas, nuclear power is cheaper than electricity generated from fossil fuels, so utilities are relatively free to set their own prices. In the United States, where cheap coal keeps electricity prices low, state regulators pressure utilities to keep costs down, often to the detriment of long-term efficiency.

Overall, U.S. utility managers and regulators hurt each other in ways unimagin-

able abroad. And nuclear power specialists in other countries are "baffled" by the U.S. utilities' reluctance, until recently, to cooperate among themselves to exchange information, improve equipment, and assess performance. If the U.S. nuclear industry is to succeed, the authors believe, the worst must learn from the best.

RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT

The Desert Doesn't Grow

"The Myth of the Marching Desert" by Bill Forse, in *The New Scientist* (Feb. 4, 1989), Oakfield House, 35 Perrymount Rd. Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH 16 3DH, England.

The headlines warn that the world's deserts are growing at an alarming rate, burying farms, forests, and pastureland in drifting sand. A third of the planet's surface is at risk, according to Mostafa Tolba, director of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and 850 million people stand to lose their land. In Africa's Sahel region, the Sahara is said to have pushed 60 miles south during the last 20 years. Needed, says UNEP, is a $4.5 billion international preventive effort.

Wrong on two counts, contends Forse, a writer for the *New Scientist*. The UNEP estimates of "desertification" are based on a poorly designed questionnaire sent to African governments in 1982, a time of extraordinary drought. "There is extremely little evidence based on field research or remote [satellite] sensing for the many statements about the extent of desertification," says Ridley Nelson of the World Bank.

Satellite pictures of the Sahara taken during the 1980s depict a fluctuating desert border that changed in accordance with normal variations in rainfall. From 1982 to 1984, the desert did creep south. But during the next three years it retreated as rainfall returned to normal levels. A Swedish study of the Sudan concluded that "the creation of desert-like conditions seemed to occur mainly in drought periods." When the rains resumed, farm "productivity recovered."

The tragedy, says Forse, is that poor countries such as Mali have wasted precious dollars to create "greenbelts" against an illusory threat. The money would be better spent on temporary food aid during droughts and research to improve farm methods in desert borderlands.

Recycling Plastic

"Solid Waste Concerns Spur Plastic Recycling Efforts" by Ann M. Thayer, in *Chemical & Engineering News* (Jan. 30, 1989), P.O. Box 28597, Central Station, Washington, D.C. 20005.

America's "garbage crisis" is lending new urgency to efforts to recycle newspapers, bottles, aluminum cans, plastic, and other municipal solid wastes.

Today, the United States generates about 320 billion pounds of such wastes annually, reports *Chemical & Engineering News*'s Thayer, of which 85 percent is simply dumped into landfills. Because about one third of these landfills are scheduled to shut down during the next five years, many more localities are going to have trouble getting rid of their trash—at least at a reasonable cost.

Only 10 percent of America's trash is now recycled: 30 percent of all aluminum, 20 percent of all paper. Bottles, wrappers, cups, and other plastic products account for 30 percent of the nation's solid waste, in terms of volume (or seven percent by weight), yet only one percent of plastic is reclaimed.

Surprisingly, says Thayer, technology is not the major barrier to increased recycling. The vast majority of plastic consumer goods are made from one of five resins, each of which can be fairly easily melted down and re-used. (Biodegradable plastics, on the other hand, remain for the most part a distant prospect.) "Most people in the plastics recycling business will tell you they can always use more plastic than is currently available, but that the bottleneck is in getting the materials collected from consumers," notes Thayer. The nation's few plastic recycling plants are supplied mostly by the nine states that have passed deposit laws requiring the return of plastic soda bottles. Such obligatory programs ensure 70 to 90 percent participation rates by consumers; only 10 to 30 percent participate in the purely voluntary recycling efforts of towns and cities.

Collecting, sorting, and reprocessing plastics remains an expensive proposition. But the plastics industry, fearful of legislative efforts to curb the use of plastics, is working hard on these problems. It will have to. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is aiming to ensure that, ultimately, 25 percent of the nation's solid wastes are recycled.

ARTS & LETTERS

Jazz Comes Marching In

"Jazz and American Culture" by Lawrence W. Levine, in *Journal of American Folklore* (Jan.–March 1989), 1703 New Hampshire Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

In the house of music, wrote the editors of the *New Orleans Times-Picayune* in 1918, the jazz spawned by the city belonged "down in the basement, [in] a kind of servants' hall of rhythm. It is there we hear the hum of the Indian dance . . . the click of Slavic heels, the thumpty-tumpty of the negro banjo."

Some blacks agreed. The music critic of Harlem's *New York Age* declared that jazz appealed "only to the lover of sensuous and debasing emotions." Such critiques of jazz, argues Levine, a Berkeley historian, were a product of America's misdirected search for cultural identity around the turn of the century. American artists and intellectuals who clung to European culture, he says, invented an artificial distinction between "high" and "low" culture, scorning all things American as inferior. The very term "highbrow" derived from the era's pseudoscience of phrenology, which held that a race's intelligence, reflected in the size of the forehead, diminished with distance from northern Europe.

"It required the stubbornness of Europeans," observed French critic Phillipe Adler, "to convince America that she had . . . given birth to one of the most dazzling arts of the 20th century." The turn-

Elite Aliteracy

The *Harvard University Gazette* (March 3, 1989) asked Richard Marius, director of Harvard's expository writing program, what degree of recognition the names of his favorite essayists—Joan Didion, Joe McGinnis, George Orwell, and Helen Vendler—would elicit from his students. Marius replied:

Probably nil. I asked one of my classes recently to tell me how many of them read a weekly news magazine. I had 15 people in the class, and three of them held up their hands. I said how many read a daily newspaper and three of them, the same three, held up their hands . . . . They do read, they read [thriller novelist] Stephen King. I have Stephen King coming here to lecture next month because my students read him and I think he is a wonderful writer.

about began after World War II, when Louis Armstrong and other jazzmen toured Europe to the riotous acclaim of critics and audiences. Jazz, declared a 1955 headline in the *New York Times*, was America's "Secret Sonic Weapon."

As jazz came to be accepted as "art," Levine explains, it also "helped to transform our sense of art and culture," breaking down the old distinction between "highbrow" and "lowbrow" in music, dance, and other fields. By 1973, Duke Ellington could remark with pleasure that it had become "difficult to decide where jazz starts or where it stops, where Tin Pan Alley begins and jazz ends, or even where the borderline lies between classical music and jazz."

Miró's Heresy

"Miró's Paradox: What Happened After 'the Death of Painting'" by Hilton Kramer, in *The New Criterion* (Jan. 1989), 850 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10019.

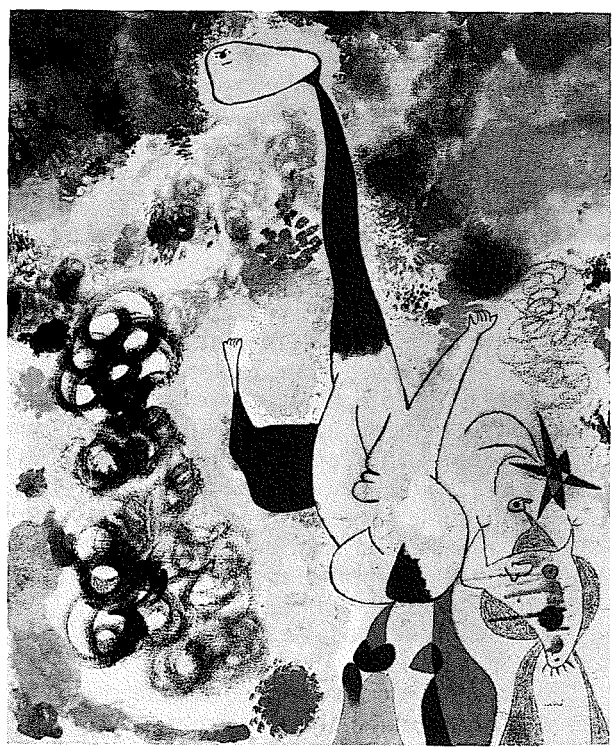
"I want to assassinate" painting, Joan Miró announced in 1930.

What now sounds like a typical Soho press release was, at the time, no mere exercise in self-promotion, as the subsequent career of the Spanish-born Miró (1893–1983) shows, writes Kramer, editor of the *New Criterion.*

Miró's disenchantment with the medium led him to abandon painting for several years to experiment with collages and constructions, using what he called "the most sordid and incongruous materials possible." By 1934, however, he was back at his easel after what he termed his "crisis of personal consciousness." The crisis, Kramer believes, had been caused by the sudden popularity of his fellow Surrealists. "Today, my young contemporaries know how to struggle when they are poor," scoffed Miró in 1936, "but all that stops the moment they balance their budgets.... What can I say about those buffoons . . . who need no more than a living room carpet and a princess to begin groveling and showing off?"

Miró was careful to distance himself from the Surrealists. Unlike them, he was determined to continue to "struggle" with the canvas. In his heretical experiments during the early 1930s, Kramer argues, and in his devotion to improvisation, Miró "found the means to re-form painting for himself and others."

To Miró's painterly "syntax" of accident, incongruity, and improvisation on canvas, the Abstract Expressionists of the 1940s and '50s owe much, says Kramer. But only artists of long experience and great inspi-



Miro's Shooting Star *(1936).*

ration can hope to make such methods work. Today, when the latest self-proclaimed "assassin" finds himself quickly embraced by the art world, Kramer laments, Miró's method has fallen into lesser hands and become a "shallow orthodoxy."

The Digitized Word

"The Electronic Word: Literary Study and the Digital Revolution" by Richard A. Lanham, in *New Literary History* (Winter 1989), Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 701 W. 40th St., Ste. 275, Baltimore, Md. 21211.

Despite the onslaught of television the printed word is still alive, if not well. But will it survive the arrival of the computer?

So far, the personal computer has been used chiefly as a writing aid, notes Lanham, a professor of English at UCLA. But in the future, when Chaucer and Shakespeare, as well as contemporary potboilers and romances (and music and pictures) are put on interactive compact disks and viewed on computer screens, people are likely to read in different ways.

"Digitized films can now be released with alternative outtakes, or alternative endings, from which each viewer will assemble a private ideal version at home," notes Lanham. "Interactive literary texts will share this fundamental irresolution." Some day, it may even be possible to push a button and have a computer read a book aloud, or help set the text to music and create illustrations. Ultimately, the reader may exercise as much control over the "book" as the author. Indeed, the barriers between the arts and letters may come tumbling down, as the computer allows more and more "authors" to orchestrate them all in one work.

Is this a prospect to be feared? Not according to Lanham. He sees the promise of a great "democratization" of culture, as "invidious distinctions between high and low culture, commercial and pure usage, talented or chance creation, visual or auditory stimulus, iconic or alphabetic information" all vanish.

OTHER NATIONS

Futility in South Africa

"Prospects for Revolution in South Africa" by Jeffrey Herbst, in *Political Science Quarterly* (Winter 1988–89), 2852 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-7885.

Five years have passed since the latest mass protests against white minority rule erupted in South Africa's black townships. Growing in fury and intensity with every passing month, the rebellion that broke out in June 1984 seemed sure to sweep away white rule, just as mass movements deposed the Shah of Iran and Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines.

That, says Herbst, a Princeton political scientist, is one of the false analogies used to describe the South African uprising.

The Shah and Marcos were corrupt leaders who maintained their regimes only through personal authority. Not so in South Africa, where the government relies on "an institutionalized system of repression" to ensure the rule of an entire racial group. The Shah's repressive measures were mild compared to what white South Africa brings to bear. The Shah refused to permit an attempt on the Ayatollah Khomeini's life or destruction of his "mosque network"; South Africa's security forces operate under no such constraints. In 1985, Trevor Manuel, a leader of South Africa's 2.5 million member United Democratic Front, assessed the impact: "Two thirds of our national and regional executive members are out of action through death, detention, or trial."

South African police have confined most

Don't Worry, Be Angry

Arguing that Japanese are too restrained in the presence of foreigners, novelist Junichi Watanabe offers his countrymen some pointers on getting mad in the monthly *Chuo Koron* (Jan. 1989), translated by the Asia Foundation's Translation Service Center:

For one thing, few Japanese can speak a foreign language well enough to respond to a rude remark.... I've often racked my brain trying to figure out how to say something [in English] as simple and direct as "You're a creep." But I find the right words too late to dish out the insult. Timing is crucial. If you don't respond immediately, there's no point in saying anything at all.

In Tokyo, I often see foreigners arguing among themselves or yelling at Japanese employees in hotels and restaurants.

When abroad, Japanese, too, should express themselves freely.... Many Japanese wonder how you can express outrage in a language you don't speak. That's not a problem.... If you can't express yourself, use Japanese, especially when you're furious. Facial expressions and gestures will get the message across. When in doubt, shout.

protests to the segregated black townships—many of them accessible only by one road. After a 1985 uprising in the township of Langa, South African security forces abolished the township and forcibly relocated thousands of residents.

During the early 1960s, notes Herbst, the revolutionary African National Congress (ANC) renounced popular insurrection as futile. Nelson Mandela warned that it would lead to strife among blacks. In fact, perhaps one third of the 2,600 blacks who were victims of political violence between 1984 and November 1987 were killed by other blacks. But the ANC has been no more successful with its chosen strategy—guerrilla warfare. South African troops have deprived it of sanctuaries in neighboring countries. With 10,000 men under arms, the ANC is able to keep only 400 men inside South Africa. Outgunned and penetrated by spies, the ANC has been a military failure. In 262 attacks between 1976 and 1985, most of them minor, it lost 249 men killed or captured.

In Herbst's view, neither popular protest nor guerrilla war poses significant threats to white rule. Ahead, he sees only increasingly violent protests, harsher repression, and more black suffering.

Who Created the Welfare State?

"The Scandinavian Origins of the Social Interpretation of the Welfare State" by Peter Baldwin, in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (Jan. 1989), Cambridge Univ. Press, 32 East 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Scandinavia is widely regarded as the birthplace of the modern welfare state, and embattled working-class socialists are seen as its midwives.

Such perceptions are only half accurate, contends Baldwin, a Harvard historian. The early architects of Scandinavia's "middle way" were its prosperous farmers, and their motives were far from altruistic.

The Scandinavian welfare state was born not after World War II, as is commonly supposed, but around the turn of the century. Scandinavians took a cue from Bismarck's Germany, which launched the first national old-age pension system in 1883. But Bismarck's system, designed chiefly to avert working-class discontent, was limited in scope and financed by regressive payroll "contributions."

In Denmark, the push for social security came from the nation's numerous small farmers. Growing in importance but still

denied government aid, the farmers, who backed the liberal Venstre Party, "used social policy tailored to their specifications to squeeze concessions from a state they did not yet control," writes Baldwin. A national old-age pension fund would reduce the burden of the countryside's increasingly costly local poor relief. Tax financing spread the costs to urban workers and manufacturers. Universal coverage allowed the farmers themselves, after retiring, to reap some of the benefits. In 1891, the conservatives gave in, agreeing to a social security scheme partly financed by a new tax on workingmen's beer.

Sweden trod much the same path when it created its social security system in 1913, notes Baldwin. Only later would Scandinavia's socialists take credit for (and build upon) measures which many of them had in fact opposed.

Scandinavia's welfare states, says Baldwin, are not the product of "supposedly unique Scandinavian social virtues or . . . socialism's heroic march in these most quintessentially petty bourgeois of European nations. The origins of virtue turn out to be mundane"—even rustic.

The Middle East's Missing History

"The Map of the Middle East: A Guide for the Perplexed" by Bernard Lewis, in *The American Scholar* (Winter 1989), 1811 Q St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

The Middle East is one of the "cradles of civilization." Yet, today, it is a region without any fixed identity, comprised of "nations" which lack unity, tradition, or history. That, contends Lewis, a Princeton historian, partly explains the region's frightening instability.

Unlike the civilizations of China and India, which have been relatively unified by language and faith for millennia, "Middle Eastern civilization began in a number of different places and evolved along different lines," notes Lewis.

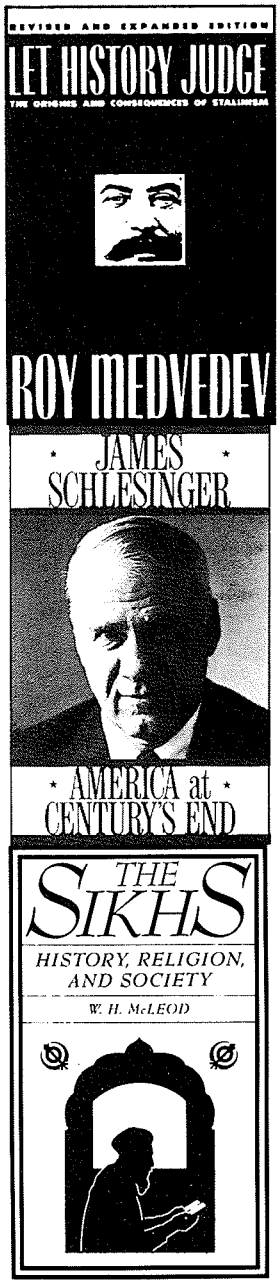
To make matters worse, most of the various cultures that did flourish in the Middle East were buried by a succession of cataclysms: Greek and Roman invasions; the coming of Christianity; and finally, during the seventh century, Islam. (Only Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia bear any significant geographic or ethnic resemblance to ancient empires.) By the late Middle Ages, most of the Middle East's "ancient languages were dead, its writings locked in scripts that no one could read. Its gods and their worship [were] known only to a small number of specialists and scholars." Islam provided the region's only unifying identity—a not altogether successful one at that, as the failure of pan-Islamic movements from the 19th century to Khomeini suggest.

Beginning during the early 19th century, European colonialists repeatedly redrew the map of the Middle East, utterly disregarding whatever pockets of local historical, ethnic, or linguistic unity remained. As a result, even many of the names of today's Middle Eastern countries are artificial "restorations and reconstructions" of ancient (and usually alien) names. In 1934, for example, the Italians combined two former Ottoman *sanjaks* and dubbed the new entity Libya, a name they plucked from ancient Greek atlases. The French named Syria in a similar way.

By the late 19th century, some Middle Eastern peoples, notably the Egyptians, began trying to "rediscover and repossess" an ancient identity. This search for a usable past has often been quixotic, Lewis remarks. Today, Saddam Hussein, the leader of ethnically divided Iraq (and arch-foe of Iranian leaders), evokes the memory of an ancient Iraqi nation that never existed and proudly cites Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar as a national hero who resolved "the Zionist problem" of his day.

Throughout the Middle East, Muslim fundamentalists are aggressively calling for a supra-national Islamic community. But Lewis believes that the borders drawn by Europeans will retain "their power to enclose and to divide" for years to come.

THE FACES AND PLACES OF POWER



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RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research at public agencies and private institutions

"Direct Democracy: The Politics of Initiative, Referendum, and Recall."

Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, Mass. 02138. 289 pp. $25.
Author: *Thomas E. Cronin*

Direct democracy in America is as old as the New England town meeting. Yet the Founding Fathers, wary of popular passions, shunned it in favor of representative democracy. Only around the turn of the century did Populists and Progressives begin to persuade many states—mostly in the West—to adopt ballot initiatives (proposed by citizens), referendums (referred by legislatures), and recalls of elected officials.

Today, about half the states permit initiatives or referendums, or both. A 1987 Gallup survey showed that, by a margin of 48 to 41 percent, Americans favor a Constitutional amendment to allow national referendums. During the 1980s, more than 200 initiatives and 1,000 referendums have appeared on state ballots, on matters ranging from abortion to bond issues.

How has direct democracy worked for the states? Fairly well, says Cronin, a political scientist at Colorado College. Voters are "not as competent as we would like them to be, yet not as ill informed or irrational as critics insist."

The most disconcerting fact uncovered by researchers is that many voters make up their minds on initiatives and referenda at the last minute, "perhaps as much on the basis of a television campaign blitz as on any detailed knowledge of the issues." Sometimes, confusion reigns. In 1980, California voters were so mixed up by a "vote yes if you mean no" proposition that a majority of the people who opposed rent control laws wound up voting in favor of them.

Yet, somehow, voters generally cast ballots that reflect their preferences; they are level-headed. A 1980 New York State Senate panel concluded: "In none of the 52 initiatives on the ballot [nationwide] in 1978 did voters approve what might be termed a 'disaster' for state and society." Overall, liberal and conservative measures succeed with about equal frequency. Occasionally, the voters have erred—Oklahomans disenfranchised blacks in a 1910 initiative—but their representatives in the state legislatures have only slightly fewer blots on their records, Cronin notes.

Ballot initiatives have not been the great tool of grassroots democracy that advocates hoped. Through superior polling and advertising, "big money" (often corporations and trade associations) beats the underdog about 80 percent of the time. Reforms are needed.

On balance, Cronin concludes, direct democracy has been a slight plus for the states because it has encouraged citizen participation in politics. Would it work on the national level? He thinks not. The stakes are higher and the issues bigger. And, as the Founding Fathers recognized, public opinion and the public interest are not always synonymous.

"Why Nations Arm."

Basil Blackwell, 432 Park Ave. So., Ste. 1503, New York, N.Y. 10016. 247 pp. $27.50.
Author: *James L. Payne*

Some nations arm themselves to the teeth. Others, such as Gambia and Mauritius, have neither arms nor teeth. But such vast disparities are seldom based on rational assessments of threats to national security. Then what are they based on?

To find out, Payne, a visiting scholar at Bowling Green State University's Social Philosophy and Policy Center, surveyed 137 nations. He created, among other measures, an indicator called the "force ratio": the number of full-time military personnel per 1,000 population in 1982. Although only a rough gauge of defense burdens, it is more accurate, he believes, than the traditional one, defense spending as a percentage of gross national product, which is marred by unreliable statistics.

By Payne's measure, Israel, with a ratio of 46.2 armed forces personnel per 1,000 population, was the most "militaristic" nation in the world in 1982. Not too surprising. But why was North Korea (41.8, per 1,000) second on the list, while South Korea (14.8, per 1,000) was 19th? And the two superpowers? The Soviet Union (force ratio: 16.3) ranked 17th. The United States

(force ratio: 9.5), ranked 40th. The world average: 8 military personnel per 1,000 people.

Israel aside, Payne found only a moderate correlation between force ratios and real threats to national security. Of the 49 nations engaged in hostilities between 1970 and 1984, the average force ratio was 10.8; the average for the 88 nations at peace was 6.4.

The 22 nations facing armed domestic insurgencies during that 14-year period—including Angola, Morocco, the Philippines—were actually less militarized than other nations. Their force ratio was 6.7.

What matters most, Payne says, are "non-rational" factors: "orientations toward military force rooted in culture, ideology, and religion." And of these factors, Marxism and Islam are by far the most compelling.

Thus, the 29 Marxist nations of the world had far higher force ratios in 1982 than the non-Marxist nations: 13 men under arms per 1,000 population versus 6.7. (Even the 36 non-Marxist societies ruled by military dictators were less militaristic, with an average force ratio of 7.5.) Likewise, the world's 25 overwhelmingly Muslim nations—from Turkey to Afghanistan to Niger—boasted an average force ratio of 11.8, compared to 7.1 for the rest of the world.

Historically, Payne argues, both Marxism and Islam are "cultures of war." Marxism was founded on the doctrine of class struggle, Islam on the sword of Mohammed during the 7th century and the Koran's command, "Make war on them [non-believers] until idolatry is no more and Allah's religion reigns supreme." (Four countries that embraced Islam long after its initial century of military expansion—Bangladesh, Gambia, Senegal, and Niger—had markedly lower force ratios than other Muslim countries.)

By contrast, the 57 predominantly Christian nations of the world had an average force ratio of 5.8, versus 9.5 for non-Christian nations.

England and the 32 nations that it once ruled—from the United States to Botswana and India—likewise had low levels of militarization: an average force ratio of 3.4. Payne attributes this to what he calls the English tradition of "romantic pacificism"—an idealistic reluctance to *prepare* for war which does not, however, translate into less *participation* in war.

Of course, Payne says, there is an element of rationality in nations' decisions about how heavily to arm themselves. But it is a small element. In designing U.S. defense and arms control policies, he warns, it would be dangerous for Washington to assume that potential adversaries will respond like dispassionate accountants.

"Is There A White Underclass?"

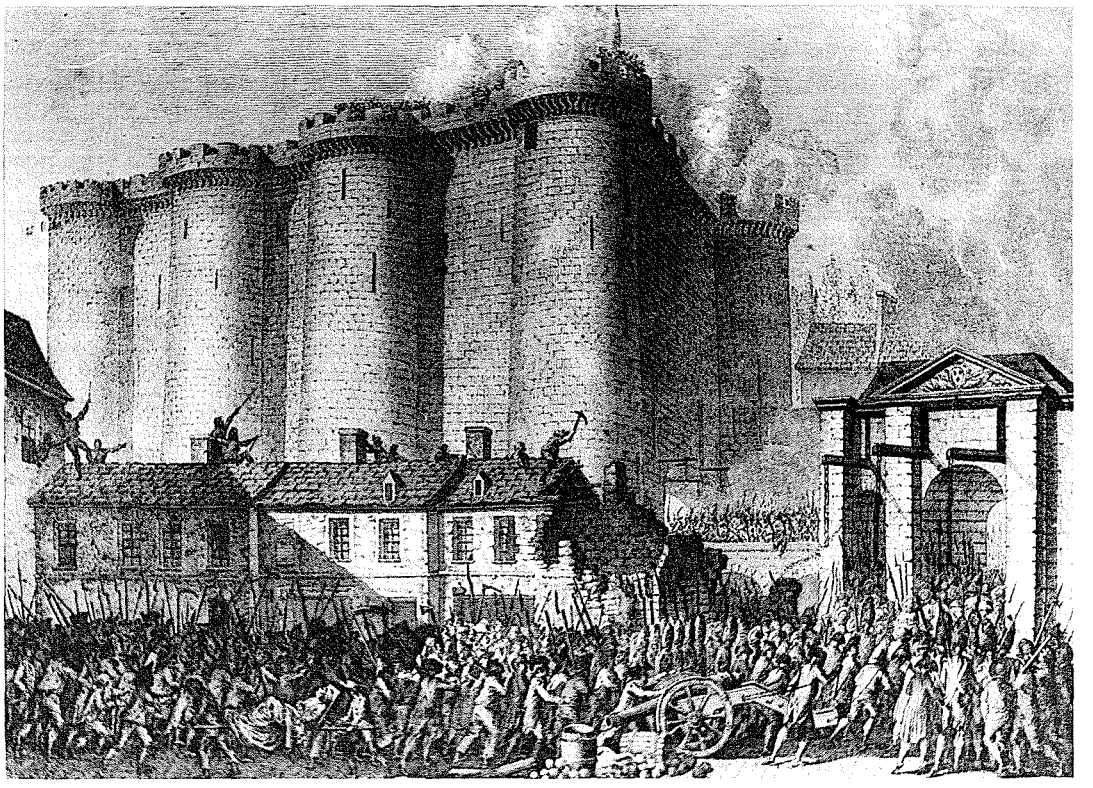
The Urban Institute, 2100 M St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20037. 24 pp. $6.
Author: *Ronald Mincy*

Underclass. The word conjures up images of single mothers on welfare or unemployed youths loitering on street corners—all black or Hispanic. In fact, says Mincy, an Urban Institute researcher, a substantial minority of the underclass is white.

Estimates of the size of the entire underclass range from 1 to 3.5 percent of the U.S. population. About one thing, most researchers agree: What makes the underclass special is its concentration in certain urban neighborhoods. Thus, Erol Ricketts and Isabel Sawhill count the number of poor people living in big city U.S. Census tracts where "underclass social problems"—female-headed families, unemployment, and high drop-out rates—are common. They put the total in 1980 at 2.5 million (1.1 percent of the population). Another way is to count the poor people in Census tracts with poverty rates higher than 40 percent.

Reformulating the Ricketts/Sawhill data and including small cities, Mincy arrived at a new profile of the underclass: 81 percent black and Hispanic, 16 percent (about 390,000 people) non-Hispanic white, 3 percent others. Using the "concentrated poverty" measure, whites make up 12 percent of the total. Whites were a majority in about 25 percent of the 880 underclass Census tracts Mincy examined.

The existence of a sizeable white underclass suggests to Mincy that race-specific policies, such as fair-housing laws and affirmative action, are not the best solution to the worrisome underclass problem.



1789

Premier Zhou En-lai of China was once asked what the significance of the French Revolution was. "It's too soon to tell," he replied. If only Zhou had lived until 1989. This year, which marks the 200th anniversary of the Bastille's fall, a torrent of books, articles, journals, conferences, and exhibitions is telling—or at least attempting to tell—the significance of the Revolution. Here, two eminent scholars provide complementary approaches to the "founding event" of the modern world. Historian Keith Michael Baker explores the French Revolution partly by looking at the revolution it was not: Contrasting the American and the French revolutions, he sheds light on both. Political scientist and biographer Maurice Cranston examines the long-term effects of the Revolution. Surveying its global legacies, Cranston uncovers a significant irony: He finds a revolution whose consequences in its own country were radically different from those it would produce, so explosively, throughout the rest of the world.

A WORLD TRANSFORMED

by Keith Michael Baker

"My dear philosopher, doesn't this appear to you to be the century of revolutions . . . ?" So wrote Voltaire to his fellow apostle of enlightenment and reform, the mathematician d'Alembert, in 1772. The remark was more prescient than its writer knew. Within a few years, the elegant, aristocratic, and oppressive France to which Voltaire belonged was to explode.

The traditional social order whose injustices Voltaire had done much to publicize was to be swept away. His countrymen were to be seized with a passion to create a new society whose ramifications went far beyond anything the philosopher had expected or desired. Novel ideas, radically different modes of political practice, unprecedented forms of civic and military mobilization, were to fan out from Paris across Europe, as the French set out in 1789 to do nothing less than make the world anew.

The events that began to unfold in France in 1789 gave a profoundly new meaning to the notion of "revolution," a meaning that has transformed world history and touched the lives of all nations. When Voltaire's contemporaries heard the term, they generally thought of abrupt and unexpected changes occurring in human affairs, without the conscious choice of human actors. A new sense of the meaning of the word revolution was beginning to meld in the minds of Frenchmen when they heralded the outcome of the American War of Independence as "the American Revolution." But it was not until 1789 that these various elements fused so dramatically into a powerful new conception.

In presenting their actions to the world, the spokesmen of 1789 conceived of "the French Revolution" as a radical break with the past achieved by the conscious will of human actors, not simply a historical mutation suffered passively by them. No longer a simple moment of change, a revolution became an act of universal significance, pregnant with meaning for humankind and its future. Although carried out by a single people, the revolution was seen by its actors as the conjuncture of eternity and the present, with the fate of all humanity hanging in the balance. The modern conception of revolution was born.

If our own century, too, has been a century of revolutions, this is because men and women throughout the world have continued to play out, in one way or another, that script for modern politics invented by the French in 1789. Not only the modern notion of revolution itself but our contemporary political vocabulary—the distinction between "Right" and "Left"; the notions of nationalism, liberalism, conservatism, socialism; even our modern understanding of democracy and human rights—derive, directly or indirectly, from the French Revolution. Two centuries later, in the bicentennial year of the French Revolution, we find ourselves still confronted by the challenge of understanding the meaning and implications of its extraordinary events.

This challenge is a particularly fascinating one for Americans. For the French Revolution was at once closely linked to the American Revolution, inspired by many of the same ideals, and yet radically differ-

ent in its course, its implications, and its outcomes. The most immediate link between the two revolutions was financial and political. The French monarchy that undertook to support the Americans in their War of Independence against the British was already crippled by accumulated debts from previous wars. It could not long continue to support these debts, nor to incur new ones, while enjoying an inefficient and inequitable tax system. Yet Louis XVI (1774–92) could not reform this system without admitting some version of the principle of consent to taxation, which the absolute monarchy had resisted for almost 200 years. Paradoxically, the monarchy also found itself in the position of supporting and popularizing American arguments for liberty and government by consent as part of its war against the British.

When French participation in the American war eventually pushed the monarchy into virtual bankruptcy (as Turgot, the finance minister from 1774 to 1776, predicted it would), the government was forced to press for extensive reform of the administrative and fiscal system, including the elimination of traditional tax privileges enjoyed by the nobility and the clergy. The nobility and clergy seized upon the American example and refused taxation without representation: They countered the government's reform initiatives with demands for government by consent, fiscal responsibility, and an end to arbitrary power. To resolve the resulting conflict, Louis XVI, on August 8, 1788, was forced to call the meeting of the Estates General for May of the following year. It was a thrilling moment. Every French king since 1614 had refused to consider convening the ancient consultative assembly of deputies from the three social orders (Estates).

Imagine the excitement, the expectations of reform, and the hopes for relief of grievances occasioned at every level of society by this momentous decision of an absolute monarch to call representatives of his people together in a general assembly for the first time in almost two centuries.

Imagine, too, the political problems involved in this resurrection of an institution long thought dead. How was the Estates General to meet, and how were its deputies to be chosen? We can get some sense of the difficulty of resolving these questions if we reflect upon what it would be like if no national assembly had met in America since the Constitutional Convention and it suddenly became necessary to call one today. Should Vermont be given the same proportion of delegates it sent in 1787; and what about the (then-nonexistent) state of California? Would the electoral procedures be the same as they were in 1787? And what about the requirements for eligibility to vote or to be elected? Questions such as these would amount to deciding the nature of national political identity and the meaning of citizenship all over again.

In fact, on crucial points of detail, the French government had no reliable records of how the elections of deputies to the Estates General had been conducted almost 200 years earlier. Abandoning its traditional propensity for secrecy and absolute authority in deciding important matters, it even turned to the public at large for information and advice regarding

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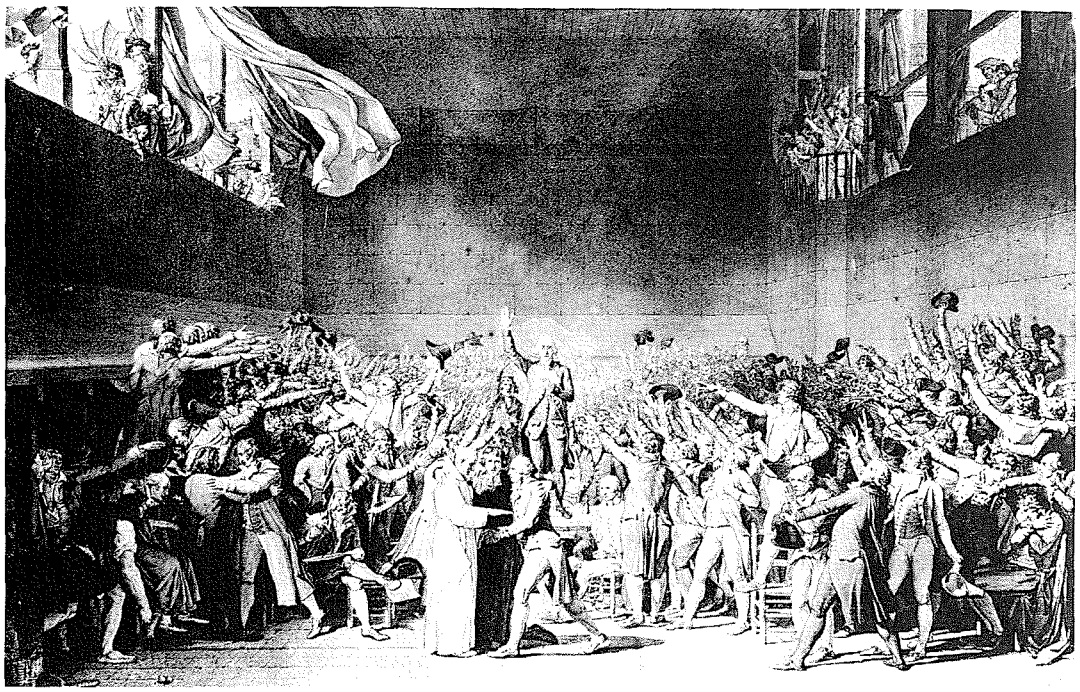


June 20, 1789. Locked out of Versailles, the Third Estate met at a tennis court, swearing an oath "never to be separated until we have formed a solid and equitable Constitution."

the appropriate forms of election (though this may also have been a political tactic to divide and defuse opposition to royal policies). Profound disputes arose over whether the procedures used by the deputies in 1614 to vote on measures should again be followed in a society changed by the passage of two centuries. In the waning months of 1788, as the date for the meeting of the Estates General approached and the government hesitated to announce the procedures to be followed, France was consumed by a bitter pamphlet war.

In 1614, the three Estates of the realm—the clergy, the nobility, and the unprivileged remainder of the people, the so-called Third Estate—had sent three separate delegations, each deliberating and voting separately, with essential issues decided by a majority of two out of the three Estates. Hoping to defend traditional privileges, many pamphleteers who wrote on behalf of the clergy and the nobility at the end of 1788 argued for the continuation of these procedures as part of the "ancient constitution" of the realm. The pamphlets emanating from the Third Estate argued for a modification of the traditional procedures that would favor its interests: They demanded that the Third Estate elect a number of deputies equal to those of the combined privileged orders and that the decisions of the Estates General be made by a majority of all the deputies voting as a single body. Their authors calculated that deputies of the Third Estate would then form a majority together with liberal deputies from the clergy and nobility.

But the most celebrated pamphlet of this period—indeed, of the entire French Revolution—went far beyond these claims on behalf of the Third Estate. In fact, it was

written by a member of the minor clergy, Emmanuel-Joseph Sieyès, one of those sons of the unprivileged who used a clerical career as an avenue for social advancement, only to find their ambitions blocked by the hold of the aristocracy on important positions within the church. Sieyès turned his personal frustrations into an indictment of the entire regime. Published at the very beginning of 1789, his celebrated pamphlet, *What Is The Third Estate?*, did for the French what Tom Paine's *Common Sense* had done for the Americans little more than a decade earlier. It recast the terms of public debate, and, by doing so, transformed the political situation into a moment ripe for revolution.

Sieyès's argument was radical in its simplicity. Where more moderate spokesmen for the Third Estate objected that the privileged were a minority whose power and pretensions within the nation should be reduced, Sieyès asserted that they could form no part of the nation at all. If a nation, Sieyès argued, were a civil society satisfying the needs of its members through productive economic activities, then the idle and unproductive privileged classes were no more than parasites upon it. Or if a nation were a political association of citizens living equally under a common law, then the claims of the privileged to unequal status and a separate legal identity automatically set them outside it. In either case, Sieyès proclaimed, the Third Estate constituted the entire nation in and of itself.

The argument of Abbé Sieyès reduced to an image: Nobility and Clergy ride the Third Estate.

So even before the Estates General had met, Sieyès had announced the fundamental principle of the French Revolution: A nation is and must be one and indivisible. This claim implied a complete rejection of the traditional social and political order in France, which assumed a multiplicity of heterogeneous entities made one only by their common subjection to the sovereign will of the king. Sieyès's argument was a radical refutation of the assumption that the division of the Estates General into three separate assemblies was or could be legitimate. Three assemblies meeting separately could never represent the common will of an indivisible nation.

Indeed, in an argument with profound consequences for subsequent French history, Sieyès went so far as to argue that the national will could never be bound by any existing constitutional form. The nation was a pure political being, prior to any constitution; it had only to express its will, in any manner, for existing political and legal arrangements to be suspended. "The nation," he argued, "is all that it can be by the very fact of its existence. Not only is the nation not subject to a constitution, but it *cannot*, it *must not* be."

This is an amazing conclusion, well worth reflecting upon, because its implications transformed an entire world. By arguing that the nation is the natural and essential human collectivity in which individuals must secure their liberty, citizenship, and rights, Sieyès called upon the French to break with the past. The French not only took up this call but fashioned it into the modern principles of national sovereignty and national self-determination, which they announced in the name of all peoples. The entire history of the 19th and 20th centuries has been shaped (for better or worse) by the efforts of one people after another to recover their national identity and to exercise their sovereignty in a state of their own. Nationalism as a political ideology dates from the French Revolution.

Sieyès's arguments also made the French Revolution, from the very beginning, far more radical than the American Revolution. The Americans could resist the tyranny of George III and his Parliament by invoking the rights of Englishmen and the tradition of the Common Law. In repudiating British rule, they were not renouncing their entire history. The logic of Sieyès's argument, by contrast, necessarily implied a radical break with the past. The authority of history was shattered forever by his call to the principles of natural right and sovereign will.

Natural rights, the new idea of nationality, the necessity of a radical break with the past—these were the revolutionary principles Sieyès offered his compatriots in 1789. They were not slow to accept these principles—for themselves and in the name of humanity at large. The message of *What Is The Third Estate?* was clear: Because the Third Estate constituted the entire nation, the deputies it sent to the Estates General were really the sole national representatives and should act accordingly.

And this indeed is what they decided to do. When the Estates General met on May 5, the Third Estate deputies refused to form a separate chamber. Six weeks later, they broke the resulting political deadlock by proclaiming themselves a National Assembly which alone could express the national will. This was their first revolutionary act. It was reaffirmed three days later, on June 20, 1789, when they swore in the famous Tennis Court Oath not to disperse until the nation had been given a new constitution. And it was doubly confirmed: first, when Louis XVI capitulated by ordering the deputies of the nobility and the clergy to join the new National Assembly; second, when the people of Paris stormed that great citadel of despotism, the Bastille, in order to save the Assembly from the threat of being forcibly dispersed by the royal armies. A "nation" had spoken, not only through its

The "world turned upside down." This etching from 1789 shows the Third Estate in control.

representatives but also through popular action.

Popular action was to drive the Assembly even further in realizing the logic of a revolutionary break with the past. The fall of the Bastille on July 12–14, 1789, was the signal for disorders throughout France, as townspeople overthrew municipal oligarchies, and peasants impatient for reforms attacked the castles of the aristocracy and destroyed the records of hated feudal exactions. These actions left the new representatives of the nation no choice but to exercise the sovereignty they had claimed on its behalf.

In an emotion-laden session lasting far into the night of August 4, 1789, the deputies extended revolutionary principles far beyond anything they had originally intended. They declared the "feudal regime" abolished: Not only feudal dues but the privileges of the nobility and the clergy, as well as of provinces and towns—in a word, the entire administrative, financial, and judicial order of what was soon to be called the Old Regime—were in principle swept away. This celebrated "holocaust of privileges," perhaps the most momentous act of the entire French Revolution, in effect created the modern individual, a person free from traditional status bonds, in a new society that was to be based on property, contract, and individual rights. It also inaugurated a philosophical and psychological dynamic which set the French to exploring the hazardous modern conviction that society can be made anew through the exercise of political will.

Even before the dramatic "Night of the Fourth of August," the assembly had been debating the necessity of a Declaration of Rights. Some members, inspired by the American Declaration of Independence, called for a declaration to proclaim to the nation and to humankind at large the abstract principles upon which the new constitution should be based. Others, fearing social disorder as a consequence of an abstract declaration of rights, preferred the enactment of specific positive laws to prevent abuses of power. After August 4, 1789, however, the outcome was clear. Within three weeks, the assembly had drafted its statement of the philosophical principles upon which a new constitution would rest and a new society be inaugurated. Coincidentally, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen was adopted within a few days of the vote on the Bill of Rights in the U.S. Congress.

Drawing as they did upon a common philosophical heritage, sharing a common concern to protect individual citizens from any exercise of arbitrary power, these two great enactments of the principles of human rights nevertheless differ in fundamental ways. The American Bill of Rights took the form of amendments to the Constitution. Individuals in America were protected from arbitrary government by the judiciary functioning under specific rules already stated in the Constitution. The Declaration of the Rights of Man, by contrast, was adopted before the National Assembly had even begun to enact a new constitution. It enunciated the universal, founding principles which a constitution had to implement, and became the philosophical measure against which any constitution might be found wanting.

The Declaration thus preceded the French Constitution eventually adopted in 1791. And within months of its implementation, that Constitution was repudiated in the name of the very principles enshrined in the Declaration. It was to be the first of many so repudiated, as the French sought not only during the revolutionary period but throughout the 19th century to match successive constitutions to the universal principles set forth in the Declaration.

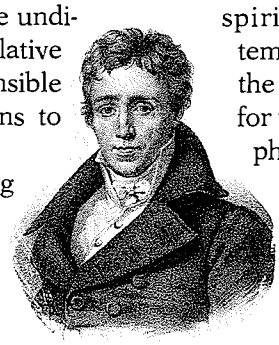
None of these principles was more important, none made the achievement of a stable constitution more difficult in France, than that enunciated in Article III: "The source of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation." The statement clearly echoed clauses in the American Constitution insisting that the source of all power inhered in the people. But the French were to give the proposition a more radical meaning, which led them almost immediately to reject the Anglo-American example of a separation and balance of powers.

The American Constitution was, in fact, one of the models considered when the Assembly turned from drafting the Declaration of the Rights of Man to a debate over constitutional principles. Within two weeks, however, the Anglo-American model had been definitely rejected in accordance with principles already announced by Sieyès in *What Is The Third Estate?* For a majority of the deputies, national sovereignty was by definition one and indivisible. The idea of the balance of powers—far from being a safeguard of liberty—appeared to be a recipe for constitutional confusion and an impediment to the univocal expression of a supreme national will. Preferring arguments drawn from Rousseau's *Social Contract* to those in Montesquieu's *Spirit Of the Laws*, they looked for liberty not in a constitutional balancing of interests but in the undivided authority of a single legislative assembly made directly responsible for its deliberations and actions to the will of people.

This decision goes a long way to explain the very different constitutional and political histories of the two countries during the past two centuries. The American Founders sought to secure individual rights by dispersing power through a system of checks and balances. The French Founders sought to secure human rights by constructing a unitary form of government, based on the general will emanating from the citizens as a single body. They opted, in other words, to limit particular powers and functions by generalizing power and extending it to all.

From a constitutional perspective, this choice made the representation and delegation of power profoundly difficult. For as soon as a representative body was elected to legislate for the nation, or its deliberations issued in laws or decrees, there was the risk of these actions being perceived as emanating from a particular will which no longer corresponded to the general will of the nation. The dramatic assertions of popular will during the subsequent years of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic experiment with referendums would be replayed through the course of the following century, in efforts to resolve this problematic relationship between sovereignty and representation created by the National Assembly in 1789. The problem has remained at the heart of the fertile history of French experimentation with constitutional forms down to our day.

The American and French revolutions were closely linked in time and, initially, in spirit. But while the Americans attempted in their Revolution to perfect the work of history, the French opted for the far more radical experiment of a philosophical break with the past that would create the world anew. In this bicentennial year of 1989, we are still living amid the consequences of decisions and actions taken 200 years ago on the other side of the Atlantic.



The Abbé Sieyès

THE UNFOLDING OF A REVOLUTION

We know the exact moment when the idea of—even the word for—revolution was first used in its modern political sense. On the night of July 14, 1789, the Duc de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt informed Louis XVI that the Bastille prison had been stormed and royal troops had defected before a popular attack. The King's response was almost nonchalant: "C'est une révolte." Liancourt corrected him, "Non, Sire, c'est une révolution."

The King was familiar with revolts; they were popular defiances which could be put down with the means at his disposal. In using the old astronomical term, revolution, Liancourt was not suggesting, however, that there would be a revolving or return. It was, rather, the "irresistibility," such as propels heavenly bodies in their courses, which Liancourt saw entering human events. Control was now out of the hands of the king and his ministers.

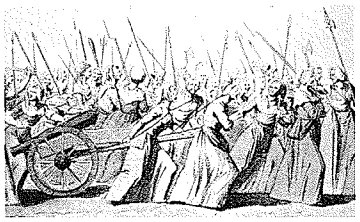
The irresistibility Liancourt noted would sweep away much of the world as it was known. Below is a calendar of a world transformed.

1789

May 5: Pressed by a desperate need for revenues, Louis XVI convenes the Estates General, the first national parliament to meet in nearly 200 years. Without any living precedent to guide it, the Third Estate (the new middle class) pits itself against the aristocracy. In June, the Third Estate declares itself The National Assembly, determined to write a new constitution.

July 14: A Parisian mob liberates the Bastille, a nearly empty prison but a symbol of the oppressions of the *ancien régime.* Its "liberation" incites revolutionary actions throughout France.

July 20–August 6: Peasants arm themselves against looting brigands in the countryside but instead turn upon the castles and burn the records of their manorial debts and feudal obligations. Feudalism is, in effect, ended.



October 5–6: A Parisian crowd made up largely of women, the so-called Women's March, proceeds to Versailles and forces the King to return to Paris, where he is now forced to reside.

November 2: The property of the clergy is confiscated and put on sale. Although the sales initially benefit only those who already have property, the Revolution is propelled toward a new redistribution of landed wealth.

1790–1791

February: Religious orders are abolished in France. The church of France becomes a national church, with priests ordered to swear loyalty to the *Civil Constitution of the Clergy.* The resulting schism will later spark the counter-Revolution.

February 1790–June 1791: The constitutional monarchy, based on the English model from the Revolution of 1688, proves ineffective. The Marquis de Lafayette's compromises fail to reconcile an aristocracy living on feudal dues and a peasantry determined to do away with them. Civil war rages in many regions of the country.

June 21, 1791: Louis XVI, disguised as a valet, attempts to flee the country, only to be captured at Varennes. Thus ends the experiment with constitutional monarchy. Sympathetic to Louis's plight, Prussia and Austria threaten intervention, while inside France almost every interest sees its salvation in a foreign war.

1792

April 20: The Legislative Assembly—led by the progressive bourgeoisie, the Girondins—declares war on Austria. Ensuing military defeats, combined with economic crisis, revive popular discontent and raise revolutionary sentiment to a fever pitch.

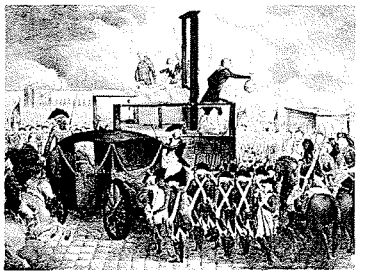
August 10–11: Spurred by popular insurrection, the Assembly abolishes the monarchy and forms a convention to write a new constitution. Active participation of the *sans-culottes* (literally, without trousers, or those who wear britches; in other words, lower-class artisans who have little or no property) leads to universal suffrage and the arming of lower-class citizens. During this so-called Second Revolution the more moderate Girondins lose control.

September 20: A new National Convention is elected. The Revolutionary Army finally halts the invasion of Prussian troops just north of Paris at Valmy. Witnessing the battle, the poet

Goethe declares, "From this day and this place dates a new era in the history of the world."

September 22: Under the new calendar, this day is designated the first day of the new era—Vendémiaire I, Year I. The new calendar (which remains in effect till January 1, 1806) reveals the revolutionary inclination to remake everything, including time.

December 11: The trial of Louis XVI begins. On January 14, 1793, he is declared guilty and on January 21, executed.



1793

February 1: The Convention declares war on Great Britain and the Netherlands and, a month later, on Spain. The government passes into the hands of the far more radical Montagnards under Robespierre's leadership.

March: A series of defeats is suffered by the Revolutionary Army, as counter-Revolution breaks out.

September 25: The Convention silences all opposition. The Committee of Public Safety, led by Robespierre, commences a series of public trials and executions, which becomes the infamous "Terror." By December 1, there are 4,595 prisoners in the jails of Paris.

October 16: Marie-Antoinette is executed.

November 10: The Cathedral of Notre Dame is converted into the Temple of Reason. A tide of de-Christianization leads to the closing of Parisian churches; elsewhere, cemeteries bear the slogan, "Death is an eternal sleep."

December 6: The Convention, pressed by Robespierre who fears alienating neutral foreign powers, reaffirms the principle of worship. In effect, the 12-member Committee of Public Safety under Robespierre takes the revolutionary momentum away from the popular insurrections.

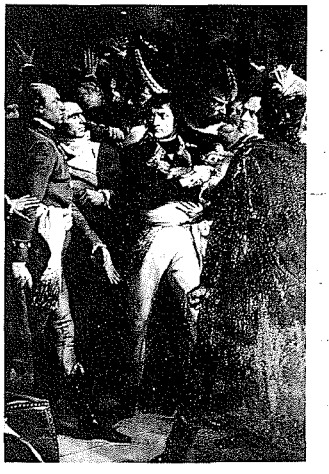
1794

December (1793) to July: The revolutionary government stabilizes itself—chiefly by executing its enemies and stifling internal dissent. Production, distribution, and profits are all strictly controlled in order to generate revenues for conducting the war. By spring, the government has amassed an army of a million men, an unprecedented instrument for waging war.

July 27–28: The irony of the Revolution is that its success leads to its demise. With its enemies on the right and left liquidated, with popular insurrections subdued and victory in its foreign wars likely, the revolutionary government can no longer intimidate the Convention. In July, the government falls into internal dissension, and during two dramatic days—8 and 9 Thermidor—Robespierre is outmaneuvered by a ramshackle coalition of his enemies. The execution of Robespierre, Saint-Just, and their partisans on 10 Thermidor is the date cited by many historians to mark the end of the Revolution.

Aftermath

During the next two years, known as the Thermidorian reaction, the Notables, or "men of substance," attempted to force the *sans-culottes* out of political life and also to abandon the controlled economy. But the government they formed under the Directory floundered, equally afraid of royalism and democracy. Moreover, it proved impotent in the face of persistent financial and social crises. The more discredited the Directory became, however, the greater rose the prestige of its conquering generals, especially of the victorious general of the Italian Campaign of 1796–97—Napoleon Bonaparte. In 1799, the Coup d'État of 18 Brumaire brought Napoleon to power, initially as First Consul, then as Consul for Life, and finally as Emperor. Yet even as he became Emperor, Napoleon consolidated and exported many revolutionary reforms—from judicial equality to the metric system—and indeed, in the eyes of aristocratic Europe, Napoleon remained the "soldier of the Revolution."



THE FRENCH REVOLUTION IN THE MINDS OF MEN

by Maurice Cranston

On July 14, 1989—Bastille Day—political and cultural leaders of every ideological persuasion assembled in Paris to celebrate the bicentennial of the French Revolution. Was there something strange about their unanimous applause? All subsequent major revolutions, such as those that took place in Russia and China, remain controversial today. But the French Revolution, which served as the direct or indirect model for these later upheavals, now passes for an innocuous occasion which anyone, Marxist or monarchist, can join in celebrating.

Was this proof only of the anaesthetizing power of time, that two centuries could turn the French Revolution into a museum piece, an exhibition acceptable to all viewers, even to a descendent of the old Bourbon monarchs? Or is there something about the French Revolution itself that, from its beginning, sets it apart from later revolutions?

The *tricouleur*, the *Marseillaise*, the monumental paintings of David—all celebrate a series of connected events, alternately joyous and grim, which make up the real, historical French Revolution. But there is another French Revolution, one which emerged only after the tumultuous days were over and the events and deeds became inflated or distorted in the minds of later partisans. This is the French Revolution as myth, and it is in many ways the more important of the two.

It is so, one could argue, because the myth, and not the reality, inspired the scores of revolutions that were to come. The actors of the French Revolution, announcing their principles on behalf of all mankind, clearly intended their deeds to have a mythic dimension. They wanted to inspire others to follow their example. Consider the Declaration of the Rights of Man, passed in August of 1789. At no point does it refer to the specific conditions or laws of France. Instead, it speaks in grand universals, as if it were the voice of mankind itself. Replete with terms like citizen, liberty, the sacred rights of man, the common good, the document provides the lexicon for all future revolutions.

By contrast, the earlier revolutionary models which stirred the French in 1789 to act—the English Revolution of 1688 and the American Revolution of 1776—had been essentially political events, limited in scope and conservative in objectives. The English revolutionists claimed to restore the liberty that the despotic James II had destroyed; the American revolutionaries made the kindred claim that they were only defending their rights against tyrannical measures introduced by George III. Neither revolution sought to change society.

The French Revolution, however, sought to do exactly that. Indeed, to many of the more zealous French revolutionaries, the central aim was the creation of a new man—or at least the liberation of pristine man, in all his natural goodness and simplicity, from the cruel and corrupting prison of the traditional social order.

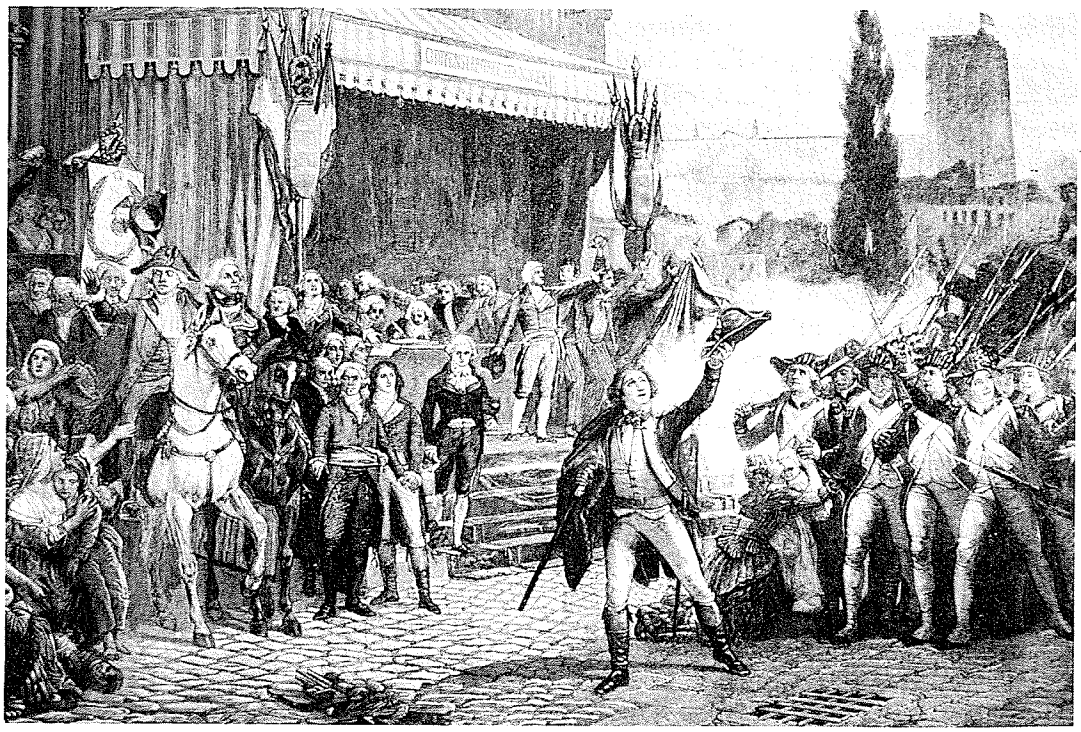
It is easy to see how this grandiose vision of the Revolution's purpose went hand-in-hand with the emergence of Romanticism. The great Romantic poets and philosophers encouraged people through-

out the West to believe that imagination could triumph over custom and tradition, that everything was possible given the will to achieve it. In the early 1790s, the young William Wordsworth expressed the common enthusiasm for the seemingly brave and limitless new world of the Revolution:

> France standing on the top of golden
> hours,
> And human nature seeming born again.

Here we encounter one of the many differences between reality and myth. The reality of the French Revolution, as Tocqueville maintained, was prepared by the rationalist philosophers of the 18th-century Enlightenment, by Voltaire, Diderot, Helvétius, d'Alembert, and Holbach no less than by Rousseau. Its myth, however, was perpetuated during the 19th century by Romantic poets such as Byron, Victor Hugo and Hölderlin. Byron in his life and in his poetry bore witness to that romanticized revolutionary idealism, fighting and then dying as he did to help the Greeks throw off the Turkish yoke and set up a free state of their own.

The grandeur of its lofty aims made the French Revolution all the more attractive to succeeding generations of revolutionaries, real and would-be; the violence added theatrical glamor. The guillotine—itself an invention of gruesome fascination—together with the exalted status of its victims, many of them royal, noble, or political celebrities, made the Terror as thrilling as it was alarming. The wars which broke out in 1793, when France declared war on Great Britain, Holland, and Spain, were fought not by professional soldiers but by conscripts, ordinary men who were ex-



During the 1790s, the French Army became the "school of the Revolution," where volunteers learned to "know what they fought for and love what they know."

pected to "know what they fought for and love what they know." These wars were thought of as wars of liberation. It hardly mattered that Napoleon turned out to be an imperialist conqueror no better than Alexander or Caesar; he was still a *people's* emperor.

If historians of the French Revolution are unanimous about any one point, it is this: that the Revolution brought the people into French political life. To say that it introduced "democracy" would be to say too much. Although popular suffrage in varying degrees was instituted as the revolution unfolded, no fully democratic system was set up. But popular support came to be recognized as the only basis for legitimating the national government. Even the new despotism of Napoleon had to rest on a plebiscitary authority. These plebiscites, which allowed voters only to ratify decisions already made, denied popular sovereignty in fact while paying tribute to it in theory. (The vote for the Constitution which made Napoleon emperor in 1804—3,500,000 *for* versus 2,500 *against*—hardly suggests a vigorous democracy.)

But if Napoleon's government was not democratic, it was obviously populistic. The people did not rule themselves, but they approved of the man who ruled them. The end of Napoleon's empire in 1815, which was also in a sense the end of the historical French Revolution, could only be brought about by the intervention of foreign armies.

Those foreign armies could place a king on the throne of France, as they did with Louis XVIII in 1815, but they could not restore the principle of royal sovereignty in the hearts of the French people. They simply put a lid on forces which would break out in another revolution 15 years later, this time not only in France but in other parts of the Western world.

The French Revolution had turned the French into a republican people. Even when they chose a king—Louis-Philippe—to lead that revolution of 1830, he was more of a republican prince than a royal sovereign in the traditional mold. Louis-Philippe, the "Citizen King," had to recognize, as part of his office, "the sovereignty of the nation." And what kind of sovereign is it, one may ask, who has to submit to the sovereignty of the nation? The answer must clearly be, one who is king neither by grace of God nor birth nor lawful inheritance but only through the will of the people, who are thus his electors and not his subjects.

The "sovereignty of the nation" was a new and powerful idea, a revolutionary idea, in the 19th century. At the philosophical level, it is usually ascribed, with some justification, to the teaching of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whom Edmund Burke, Alexis de Tocqueville, and many lesser commentators considered the ideologue of the French Revolution. What Rousseau did was to separate the concept of *sovereignty*, which he said should be kept by the people in their own hands, from the concept of *government*, which he urged the people to entrust to carefully chosen elites, their moral and intellectual superiors. Rousseau held that neither hereditary kings nor aristocrats could be considered superiors of this kind. Rousseau was uncompromisingly republican. To him a republic could be based only on the collective will of citizens who contracted to live together under laws that they themselves enacted. "My argument," Rousseau wrote in *The So-*

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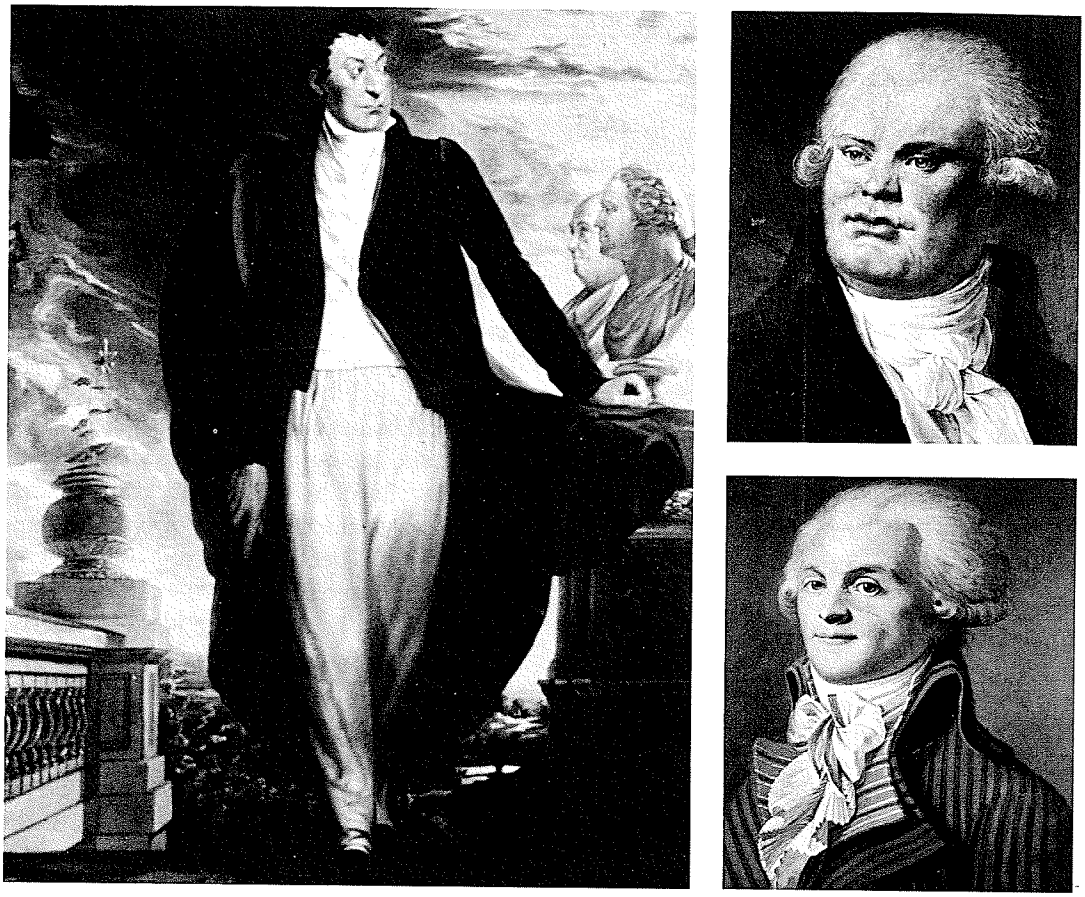


Three Leaders—Three Phases of the Revolution. *The liberal Marquis de Lafayette initially guided the Revolution. Georges Danton helped overthrow the monarchy, but was executed for being too moderate. Robespierre was both director and victim of the Terror.*

cial Contract, "is that sovereignty, being nothing other than the exercise of the general will, can never be alienated; and the sovereign, which is simply a collective being, cannot be represented by anyone but itself—power may be delegated, but the will cannot be."

The sheer size of France, however, with a population in 1789 of some 26 million people, precluded the transformation of the French kingdom into the sort of direct democracy that Rousseau—a native Swiss—envisaged. Still, the Americans had very recently proved that a nation need not be as small as a city-state for a republican constitution to work. And as an inspiration to the average Frenchman, the American Revolution was no less important than the writings of Rousseau.

The American Revolution thus became a model for France, despite its conservative elements. Moreover, the American Revolution later served as a model for others largely because its principles were "translated" and universalized by the French Revolution. In Latin America, the Spanish and Portuguese colonies could not directly follow the American example and indict their monarchs for unlawfully violating their rights; Spain and Portugal, unlike England, recognized no such rights. But following the example of the French Revo-

lution, Latin Americans like Simón Bolívar and José de San Martín were able to appeal to abstract or universal principles. To describe Bolivia's new constitution in 1826, Simón Bolívar used the same universal and idealistic catchwords which the French had patented 37 years before: "In this constitution," Bolívar announced, "you will find united all the guarantees of permanency and liberty, of equality and order." If the South American republics sometimes seemed to run short on republican liberty and equality, the concept of royal or imperial sovereignty was nonetheless banished forever from American shores. The short reign of Maximilian of Austria as Emperor of Mexico (1864–1867) provided a brief and melancholy epilogue to such ideas of sovereignty in the New World.

Even in the Old World, royal and aristocratic governments were on the defensive. In 1815, the Congress of Vienna, under Prince Metternich of Austria's guidance, attempted to erase the memory of the Revolution and restore Europe to what it had been before 1789. Yet only five years after the Congress, Metternich wrote to the Russian tsar, Alexander I, admitting, "The governments, having lost their balance, are frightened, intimidated, and thrown into confusion."

The French Revolution had permanently destroyed the mystique on which traditional regimes were based. No king could indisputably claim that he ruled by divine right; nor could lords and bishops assume that their own interests and the national interests coincided. After the French Revolution, commoners, the hitherto silent majority of ordinary underprivileged people, asserted the right to have opinions of their own—and to make them known. For once the ideas of liberty, democracy, and the rights of men had been extracted from philosophers' treatises and put on the agenda of political action—which is what the French Revolution with its "universal principles" did—there could be no security for any regime which set itself against those ideals.

The revolutionary uprising in Frankfurt in 1848. "The dull sound of revolution," which Victor Hugo had detected "pushing out under every kingdom in Europe," grew dramatically loud that year.

In old history textbooks one can still find the interpretation of the French Revolution first advanced by Jules Michelet and Jean Jaurès and other left-wing historians who explained the Revolution as one abolishing feudalism and advancing bourgeois capitalist society. While few historians still view the Revolution this way, the Michelet interpretation was widespread during the 19th century, and its currency prompted many an aspiring Robespierre to "complete" the revolution.

Completing the revolution meant overthrowing

the bourgeoisie in favor of the working class, just as the bourgeoisie had supposedly overthrown the feudal aristocracy in 1789. The convulsive year of 1848 was marked in Europe by several revolutions which attempted to complete the work of 1789. Their leaders all looked back to the French Revolution for their "historic justification." Tocqueville observed of these revolutionaries that their "imitation [of 1789] was so manifest that it concealed the terrible originality of the facts; I continually had the impression they were engaged in playacting the French Revolution far more than continuing it."

If the 19th century was, as many historians describe it, the "century of revolutions," it was so largely because the French Revolution had provided the model. As it turns out, the existence of a proper model has proved to be a more decisive prod to revolution than economic crisis, political unrest, or even the agitations of young revolutionaries.

Indeed, the role of professional revolutionaries seems negligible in the preparation of most revolutions. Revolutionaries often watched and analyzed the political and social disintegration around them, but they were seldom in a position to direct it. Usually, as Hannah Arendt observed, "revolution broke out and liberated, as it were, the professional revolutionists from wherever they happened to be—from jail, or from the coffee house, or from the library." Tocqueville made a similar observation about the revolutionaries of 1848: The French monarchy fell "before rather than beneath the blows of the victors, who were as astonished at their triumph as were the vanquished at their defeat."

Disturbances which during the 18th century would hardly have proven so incendiary ignited one revolution after another during the 19th century. They did so because now there existed a revolutionary model for responding to crises. During the 1790s, revolutionaries outside of France such as Toussaint L'Ouverture in Haiti and Wolfe Tone in Ireland tried simply to import the French Revolution, with its ideals of nationalism, equality and republicanism, and adapt it to local conditions. And well into the 19th century, most revolutionaries continued to focus their eyes not on the future but on the past—on what the French during the 1790s had done in roughly similar circumstances.

To be sure, the French Revolution possessed different and even contradictory meanings, differences which reflect the various stages of the historical Revolution. The ideals and leaders of each stage inspired a particular type of later revolutionary. The revolutionary men of 1789–91, including the Marquis de Lafayette, inspired liberal and aristocratic revolutionaries. Their ideal was a quasi-British constitutional monarchy and suffrage based on property qualifications. The revolutionaries of 1830–32 realized this liberal vision in France and Belgium.

The Girondins and moderate Jacobins of 1792–93 became the model for lower-middle-class and intellectual revolutionaries whose political goal was a democratic republic and usually some form of a "welfare state." The French Revolution of 1848, with its emphasis on universal manhood suffrage and the state's obligation to provide jobs for all citizens, initially embodied their vision of society.

A third type of revolutionary, the extremists of 1793–94 such as Robespierre and Gracchus Babeuf, inspired later working-class and socialist revolutionaries.

A reactionary such as Prince Metternich would hardly have distinguished among these three types of revolutionaries. But a later observer, Karl Marx, did. Seeing that the nationalist revolutions of his time ig-

Lenin (shown here in a 1919 photograph) exploited the precedent of the French Revolution to legitimize the Bolshevik Revolution in the eyes of the world.

nored the socialist-radical strain of the French Revolution, he came to deplore its influence on later revolutionaries.

Marx, who by 1848 was already active in communist politics, condemned what he considered the confusion of understanding in most of these revolutionary movements. An emotional yearning to reenact the dramas of 1789–1815 seemed to him to stand in the way of a successful revolutionary strategy. In a letter to a friend in September, 1870, Marx wrote: "The tragedy of the French, and of the working class as a whole, is that they are trapped in their memories of momentous events. We need to see an end, once and for all, to this reactionary cult of the past."

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin had no such reservations. He passed up no rhetorical opportunity to present his Russian Bolsheviks as the heirs of the French revolutionary tradition and the Russian Revolution of 1917 as a reenactment of France's Revolution of 1789. Lenin went so far as to call his Bolshevik faction "the Jacobins of contemporary Social-Democracy."

It is not difficult to understand Lenin's motives. Throughout the 19th century, most of the successful revolutions in Europe and Latin America had been nationalist revolutions. (Indeed, when the revolutionary German liberals of 1848 issued their Declaration of Rights, they ascribed those rights to the German *Volk* as a whole and not to private persons.) But the

example of the French Revolution suggested that a revolution could be more than just a matter of nationalism. Taking the example of the French Revolution under the fanatical Robespierre, one could argue, as Lenin did, that the true goal of revolution was to alter the way people lived together, socially and economically.

Yet, as we know, Lenin looked back upon a century when attempts at radical social revolutions had been ultimately and uniformly abortive. The French Revolution of 1848, which removed the "liberal" King Louis-Philippe, briefly gave greater power to the working class. During its most promising days, the anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865) even accepted a seat in the legislative chamber. But the coup d'état of Napoleon III in 1851 soon brought an end to all this. The communist movement, which Marx described as a specter haunting Europe, produced no more tangible results than most specters do. Before World War I, Marx was notably less influential as a theoretician than were the champions of "revolutionary socialism" such as Proudhon and Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–1864) who persuaded the workers that their interests would be better served by reform and democratic process than by revolution.

It was World War I which put revolutionary socialism back on the agenda again. The "war to end all wars" gave Lenin the opportunity to persuade the world that the French Revolution could be repeated as a communist revolution in, of all places, Russia. Not only did the upheavals of war play into his hands but the ideology and propaganda adopted by the Allied powers in World War I did so as well. When their early military campaigns went badly, the Allies attempted to make the war more popular, and the enormous casualties more tolerable, by declaring their cause to be a war for "liberty." In the name of liberty, Great Britain, France, and the United States encouraged the subject nations of the German, Austrian and Turkish empires to throw off the imperial yoke.

But in championing national liberty, the Allies were guilty of hypocrisy. Neither Great Britain nor France had any intention of permitting nationalist revolutions within their own empires or those of any neutral power. But Lenin was able to catch them in the trap of their own contradictions.

By declaring to the world that the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917 was a reenactment of the French Revolution, he was able to attach to his regime all those

"Robespierre with a Chinese face": Mao's Cultural Revolution hoped to realize Robespierre's dream of pushing beyond political reform to remake man and society.

strong, if mixed, emotions which the French Revolution had kindled in the outside world from 1789 on. In symbolic ways, both large and small—such as naming one of their first naval ships *Marat*, after the French revolutionary leader—the early Soviets underscored their connection with the earlier revolution. The attempts of the Allied powers to send in troops to save Tsarist Russia from the Bolsheviks was immediately seen by a war-weary world as a reactionary, counter-revolutionary "White Terror," and public opinion soon put an end to that intervention.

After 1917, the Soviet Union's self-image became less that of a revolutionary regime and more that of a well-established socialist empire. This transition unexpectedly enabled its adherents at last to obey Marx's injunction to abolish the cult of the revolutionary past and to fix their eyes on the present. The idea of revolution thus passed from the left to the ultra-left, to Stalin and Trotsky and, later, to Mao Zedong and his Cultural Revolution in China.

Yet even during the extreme phase of the Cultural Revolution, Mao still evinced his debt to the French Revolution, a debt which he shares with the later "Third World" revolutionaries. Whenever a revolutionary leader, from Ho Chi Minh and Frantz Fanon to Fidel Castro and Daniel Ortega, speaks of a new man, or of restructuring a whole society, or of creating a new human order, one hears again the ideas and assumptions first sounded on the political stage during the French Revolution.

In fact, there can be no doubt that a "cultural revolution" is what Robespierre set afoot in France, and what, if he had lived, he would have tried to bring to completion. As a disciple of Rousseau, he truly believed that existing culture had corrupted modern man in all classes of society, and that an entirely new culture was necessary if men were to recover their natural goodness. The new religious institutions which Robespierre introduced—the cult of the Supreme Being and the worship of Truth at the altar of Reason, as well as the new patriotic festivals to replace the religious holidays—were all intended to be part of what can only be called a cultural revolution. Robespierre did not believe that political, social, and economic changes alone, however radical, would enable men to achieve their full humanity.

But while the ideals and the language of the cultural revolution sound nobler than those of the political revolution, such elevation of thought seems only to authorize greater cruelty in action. Robespierre's domination of the French Revolution lasted for only a short period, from April 1793 until July 1794, when he himself died under the same guillotine which he had used to execute his former friends and supposed enemies. Moderation was restored to the French Revolution after his execution by the least idealistic of its participants— a cynical Talleyrand, a pusillanimous Sieyès, and a crudely ambitious Napoleon. Likewise, moderation was restored to the Chinese Revolution by the Chinese admirers of Richard Nixon. Yet while moderation had been restored to the real historical French Revolution, the inevitability of the return to "normalcy" was often conveniently ignored by later revolutionaries.

And what of France itself? At first glance, all the major subsequent "dates" of French history seem to be in a revolutionary tradition or at least of revolutionary magnitude—1830 (Louis-Philippe); 1848 (the Second Republic); 1852 (the Second Empire); 1871 (the Third Republic); 1940 (the Vichy French State); 1945 (the Fourth Republic); 1958 (the Fifth Republic). Yet these headline dates, all suggesting recurrent tumult, may be misleading: France has not been wracked by major upheavals nor

by social earthquakes that left the structure of society unrecognizable, as Russia and China were after their revolutions. Continuity may be the most striking feature in French life. Robert and Barbara Anderson's *Bus Stop to Paris* (1965) showed how a village not more than 10 miles from Paris remained unaffected year after year by all the great rumblings in the capital. Are we dealing with a revolution whose myth is all out of proportion to the facts?

Tocqueville, that most dependable of all political analysts, offers an answer: The major change effected by the Bourbon kings during the 17th and 18th centuries was the increasing centralization of France and the creation of a strong bureaucracy to administer it. This bureaucracy, in effect, ruled France then and has continued to rule it through every social upheaval and behind every facade of constitutional change. This bureaucracy has provided stability and continuity through the ups and downs of political fortune. The French Revolution and Napoleon, far from making an abrupt break with the past, continued and even accelerated the tendency toward bureaucratic centralization.

Tocqueville almost broached saying that the French Revolution never happened, that the events not only looked theatrical but were theatrical: The French could afford to have as many revolutions as they pleased, because no matter what laws they enacted, or what persons they placed in their legislative and executive offices, the same civil servants, the functionaries, the members of *l'Administration*, would remain in command.

How many revolutions can the historian cite as having left the people better off at the end than they were at the beginning? Unfortunately the discrepancy between its myth and its reality may have made the French Revolution a deceptive model for other nations to imitate. The myth treated society like a neutral, ahistorical protoplasm from which old corrupt institutions could be extracted and into which new rules for human interaction could be inserted at will. The reality was that France, with its unusually strong state bureaucracy, could withstand the shocks and traumas of radical constitutional upheaval.

In modern history, revolution often seems a luxury that only privileged peoples such as the French and the Americans and the English can afford. Less fortunate peoples, from the Russians in 1918 to the Cambodians in 1975, on whom the burden of the established regimes weighed more cruelly, have often enacted their revolutions with catastrophic results. It is perhaps one of the harsher ironies of history that, since the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, the more a country appears to need a revolution, the less likely it will be able to accomplish one successfully.

1789: THE LONG DEBATE

The study of the French Revolution seems, at times, like its continuation. Pro or contra, approving or condemning, the historians of the Revolution have continued to battle for the meaning of those tumultuous years. Instead of weapons, declarations, and guillotines, the battle of interpretations employs words, detailed research, and ever subtler arguments.

The classical republican argument for the Revolution found an early and ardent advocate in Jules Michelet, author of the **History of the French Revolution** (1847–1853). Practically converting democracy into a religion, Michelet declared that the "noble people" of France had cast off their chains during their righteous struggle against privilege.

The opposing case was powerfully made by Hippolyte Taine in his three-volume **French Revolution** (1878–85). Unlike Michelet, Taine refused to identify the Revolution with the nation; indeed, he labelled the revolutionaries vagabonds and bandits who caused France to lose a grandeur which it never regained.

Taine, and most subsequent conservative interpreters, owe a great debt to a work contemporary with the Revolution itself, Edmund Burke's **Reflections on the Revolution in France** (1790). The British political thinker argued that the revolutionaries' determination to treat society as a *tabula rasa* became a rationale for destroying traditions of accumulated wisdom so laboriously acquired over time.

There has, of course, been a position between the partisan extremes. And, indeed, the one work from the 19th century which continues to be mined for fresh insights is a model of the dispassionate approach—Alexis de Tocqueville's **The Old Regime and the French Revolution** (1856).

Tocqueville, an aristocrat by birth, advanced the ironic view that the Revolution was not truly revolutionary. Although the French in 1789 intended "to tear open a gulf between their past and their future" and "to leave every trace of their past condition behind them," Tocqueville found "that they unconsciously retained most of the sentiments, habits, and ideas which the Old Regime taught them." Tocqueville concluded that most developments popularly ascribed to the Revolution—particularly, national centralization—were already occurring under the Old Regime.

So much for the 19th century. If the first victims of the French Revolution were the politicians and nobles who fell under the guillotine, the Revolution's prime victims during the 20th century have been trees. Whole forests have been "guillotined" for the more than 100,000 books, monographs, and articles that have been written about the "founding event of the modern world."

Dominating the first half of the 20th century was the argument set forth by four French scholars, François Aulard, Albert Mathiez, Georges Lefebvre, and Albert Soboul, successive holders of the Chair of Revolutionary Studies at the Sorbonne. The Chair spoke, and its verdict was *Good.* A good revolution. Aulard's **The French Revolution: A Political History** (Unwin, 1910), Albert Mathiez's **The French Revolution** (Russell, 1962), Lefebvre's **The Coming of the French Revolution** (Princeton, 1947), and Soboul's **The Sans-Culottes and the French Revolution** (Clarendon, 1964) made both more "scientific" and more radical the romantic arguments of Michelet.

Georges Lefebvre, in particular, refuted the notion that either Taine's low rabble or Michelet's noble "people" caused the Revolution. He made the case that it was, instead, the handiwork of the rising middle class.

Until the 1960s, Lefebvre held sway: Historians tended to see the Revolution as a "class war" in which the middle class violently repudiated an obsolete aristocracy. The middle class, according to Lefebvre, represented the future of "a society in which modern capitalism was barely beginning, and in which the increase of productive capacity seemed the essential corrective to poverty and want."

Opponents of the Revolution invoke the Terror to condemn the whole revolutionary enterprise; even the pro-Revolutionary Michelet blanched before the violence of that extreme period. But Lefebvre and some writing in his wake mitigated the horror of even those bloody

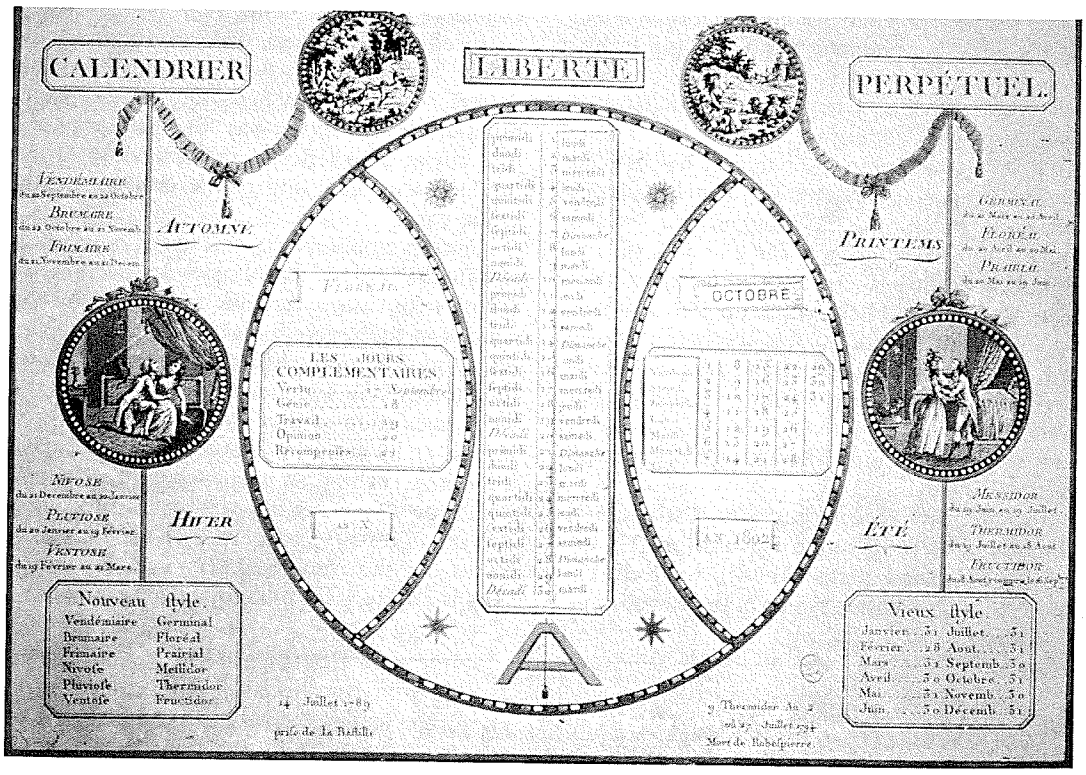
days. For example, R. R. Palmer in **Twelve Who Ruled** (Princeton, 1941), while not justifying the violence of the Terror, made the actions of Robespierre and his faction more plausible by placing them in the context of a beleaguered wartime government.

While Lefebvre's work is generally considered among the finest histories written during this century, it is hardly surprising that the "Lefebvre school" met opposition among those scholars who found its class-struggle approach too Marxist, too neat.

Alfred Cobban, for instance, in **The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution** (Cambridge, 1964), argued that the Revolution actually delayed rather than accelerated the rise of an industrial middle class in France. Following Cobban's revision came George Taylor's 1967 article in the *American Historical Review*, "Non-capitalist Wealth and the Origins of the French Revolution." Taylor showed that no substantial economic difference existed between the nobility and the bourgeoisie before 1789. Since the Revolution, in his view, was not the result of a class struggle but a strictly political movement, he concluded that "the phrases 'bourgeois revolution' and 'revolutionary bourgeoisie,' with their inherent deceptions, will have to go."

Many recent studies are noteworthy less for their contributions to the long partisan struggle than for their exploration of neglected questions and odd corners of the Revolution's history. Whether one's interest is popular culture, militarism, or feminism, the Revolution has provided many scholars with a helpful "distant mirror."

The role of women emerges clearly in the original source materials collected by Darline Levy, Harriet Applewhite, and Mary Durham Johnson in **Women in Revolutionary Paris, 1789–1795** (Univ. of Ill., 1979). Initially, women protesters voiced traditional economic grievances, but their demands for bread and subsistence were "a bridge to modern political activities." What began "as if the women were in rehearsal trying out new roles" ended by their "emerging as autonomous political actors." These women set a precedent, the editors claim, that "was not to be forgotten."



Another useful anthology illuminates the **Revolution in Print: The Press in France 1775–1800** (Univ. of Calif., 1989). These 14 essays edited by Robert Darnton and Daniel Roche remind us that, in a world without telephones, radio, or televisions, a revolution would have been unthinkable without the press. "When the revolutionaries grasped the bar of the press and forced the platen down on type locked in its form," Darnton says, "they sent new energy streaming through the body politic. France came to life again, and humanity was amazed."

As important as the press in shaping the Revolution—and more ominous for future politics—was the creation of the Revolutionary army. Richard Cobb's **The French Revolutionary Armies** (Yale, 1987) and Jean-Paul Bertaud's **The Army of the French Revolution** (Princeton, 1988) reveal how the army served as the "school for the republic." Mass conscription assembled an army of amateurs innocent of the mercenary courtesies and professional restraints that had governed "civilized" warfare during the 18th century. Goethe, observing the battle of Valmy in September, 1792, and the French soldiery made fanatical by ideology, commented that a new era in history was beginning. It would take another century to perfect and name this new kind of armed struggle: total war.

Even if the French Revolution had left no legacy, even if there were no heated disputes about its meanings, the story of the French Revolution—beyond the imagination of any dramatist to invent—would still fascinate. Not even Balzac could have come up with a plot in which well-meaning players intent on liberty and reform set in motion an inexorable process that leads to tyranny and their own deaths. For sheer dramatic narrative, J. M. Thompson is unmatched in relating **The French Revolution** (Oxford, 1945).

In a more recent account **Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution** (Knopf, 1989), Harvard historian Simon Schama recreates the complex sweep of the Revolution. Schama claims he has an objective more interesting than judging the Revolution—witnessing it. But buried within Schama's nearly one thousand-page chronicle, there is an argument consisting of several theses: Destabilizing modernization in fact *preceded* the Revolution; a potentially "good" Revolution was ruined by its violence; the "sovereignty of the people" and individual liberty do not go hand in hand. All of these points reflect the thinking of the contemporary French historian, François Furet.

And mention of Furet brings us to the present bicentennial year. For now, after 200 years, a clear victor in the Revolutionary battles can be declared: It is Furet himself. *The Economist* recently crowned Furet the "new monarch of French studies of the Revolution," and the critic George Steiner described him as "the impresario of 1789–1989."

Furet's analysis, developed in such books as **The French Revolution** (with Denis Richet, Macmillan, 1970) and **Interpreting the French Revolution** (Cambridge, 1977), rests on its crucial distinction "between the Revolution as a historical process, a set of causes and effects, and the Revolution as a mode of historical change, a specific dynamic."

In effect, Furet says, that revolutionary dynamic "invented" a new kind of political discourse, a new political sensibility. The achievement of the Revolution was "the institution of a new social experience . . . the formation of the modern sensibility and of the modern democratic spirit."

Furet's emphasis on this quiet revolution within the violent Revolution uncovers a dimension of history actually concealed by the actions of the revolutionaries, and it has influenced almost every historian working in the field today. Like Tocqueville, Furet stresses the long revolution within the short revolution. Moreover, by declaring that the long revolution has finally realized its goals—that "the Revolution is over"—Furet has written a history that appeals to today's prosperous Western democracies. As the *New York Times* commented, "His is a history for a happy bicentennial."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Titles in this bibliography were suggested by Donald Sutherland of the University of Maryland and R. Emmet Kennedy of The George Washington University.

AMERICA'S FIRST COCAINE EPIDEMIC

Only a decade ago, many prominent Americans tolerated and even touted the use of cocaine. From Capitol Hill to Wall Street, the young and moneyed set made the drug its favorite "leisure pharmaceutical." Some talked of decriminalizing the "harmless" white powder. But that changed after cocaine overdoses killed several celebrities—including Hollywood's John Belushi in 1982 and college basketball star Len Bias in 1986. Last year, the drug claimed 1,582 lives in the United States and was a factor in countless crimes. Crack, a cheap form of cocaine, is now considered a scourge of the nation's ghettos; teenage dealers wage murderous turf battles within blocks of the Capitol dome. Lawmakers clamor for a war on drugs but despair of finding a way to win it. All this has a familiar ring to it, says Yale's David Musto. Here, he recalls what happened a century ago, when America entered its first cocaine craze.

by David F. Musto

"I have tested [the] effect of coca," wrote a youthful Sigmund Freud in his famed essay "On Coca" (1884), "which wards off hunger, sleep, and fatigue and steels one to intellectual effort, some dozen times on myself." Like other doctors who had tested the drug, he found that the euphoria it induced was not followed by depression or any other unpleasant aftereffects. Furthermore, wrote Freud, "a first dose or even repeated doses of coca produce no compulsive desire to use the stimulant further."

With obvious wonder, Freud described the remarkable experiments of 78-year-old Sir Robert Christison, a world-famous toxicologist at the University of Edinburgh: "During the third experiment he chewed two drams of coca leaves and was able to complete [a 15-mile] walk without the exhaustion experienced on the earlier occasions; when he arrived home, despite the fact that he had been nine hours without food or drink, he experienced no hunger or thirst, and woke the next morning without feeling at all tired."

Freud's "song of praise to this magical substance," as he described it, was only one of many that were sung by various medical authorities before the turn of the century. Indeed, Freud had become interested in

Advertisements idealized coca's past. During the 16th century, conquistadores *learned of coca from the Incas. The drug's use by Spaniards was promptly outlawed, its effects condemned by Church and king as a demoniacal illusion.*

coca because American physicians, the drug's earliest and heartiest enthusiasts, had "discovered" that it could reduce the cravings of opiate addicts and alcoholics. Freud's interest was not academic. He was seeking a cure for the addiction of his colleague, Ernst von Fleischl-Marxow. "At present," Freud observed in 1884, "there seems to be some promise of widespread recognition and use of coca preparations in North America, while in Europe doctors scarcely know them by name."

In America, where the cocaine fad would reach greater heights than in Europe, the ability to cure opiate addictions was regarded as only one of cocaine's marvelous powers. While morphine and other torpor-inducing opiates were beginning to seem positively un-American, cocaine seemed to increase alertness and efficiency, much-prized qualities in the industrializing nation. In 1880, Dr. W.H. Bentley, writing in Detroit's *Therapeutic Gazette*, hailed coca as "the desideratum . . . in health and disease." The *Gazette*'s editors, quoting another medical journal, cheerily endorsed this view: "'One feels like trying coca, with or without the opium-habit. A harmless remedy for the blues is imperial.' And so say we."

Encouraged by the nation's leading medical authorities, and with no laws restricting the sale, consumption, or advertising of cocaine (or any other drugs), entrepreneurs quickly made cocaine an elixir for the masses. Lasting from around 1885 to the 1920s, America's first great cocaine epidemic went through three phases: the introduction during the 1880s, as cocaine rapidly gained acceptance; a middle period, when its use spread and its ill effects came to light; and a final, repressive stage after the turn of the century, when cocaine became the most feared of all illicit drugs.

North Americans, to be sure, were not the first inhabitants of this hemisphere to discover or extol the powers of the "magical leaf." For centuries before (and after) the arrival of the Europeans, the Indians of the Andes had chewed coca leaves to gain relief from hunger and fatigue. The drug spread beyond South America only after 1860, when an Austrian chemist named Albert Niemann learned how to isolate the active ingredient, cocaine. When Freud published his first praise of the elixir, pure cocaine, along with the milder coca, was already available to Americans in drug and grocery stores, saloons, and from mail-order patent-medicine vendors. By 1885, the major U.S. manufacturer, Parke, Davis & Co., of Detroit and New York, was selling cocaine and coca in 15 forms, including coca-leaf cigarettes and cheroots, cocaine inhalant, a Coca Cordial, cocaine crystals, and cocaine in solution for hypodermic injection.

Parke, Davis reported that it had repeatedly stepped up production during 1885 in order to satisfy the public's growing appe-

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tite. A Parke, Davis advertisement informed doctors of the drug's uses:

> An enumeration of the diseases in which coca and cocaine have been found of service would include a category of almost all the maladies that flesh is heir to.... Allowing for the exaggeration of enthusiasm, it remains the fact that already cocaine claims a place in medicine and surgery equal to that of opium and quinine, and coca has been held to be better adapted for use as a popular restorative and stimulant than either tea or coffee.

The American craving for cocaine was not satisfied by domestic producers alone. From Paris came a variety of popular cocaine concoctions manufactured by Angelo Mariani. "Vin Mariani," a mixture of wine and coca, arrived on the drugstore shelf with a raft of celebrity endorsements, including those of Pope Leo XIII, Thomas Edison, Sarah Bernhardt, Emile Zola, Henrik Ibsen, and the Prince of Wales. "Since a single bottle of Mariani's extraordinary coca wine guarantees a lifetime of a hundred years," exclaimed novelist Jules Verne, "I shall be obliged to live until the year 2700." Mariani boasted that Ulysses S. Grant took another of his products, "Thé Mariani," once a day during his last illness in 1885, allowing the ex-president to complete his famous *Memoirs*.

For consumers on a budget, the new wonder drug was available in less exalted forms. Coca-Cola, for example, contained a minute amount* of cocaine—enough to provide a noticeable lift, if not a "high." The "real thing" began life as a coca wine in 1885. In deference, ironically, to the widespread temperance sentiment of the day, the company replaced the alcohol content of the drink with soda water and flavorings, which allowed it to market Coke as a healthful "soft drink"—a "brain tonic" to relieve headaches and cure "all nervous affections." With the successful marketing of Coca-Cola and similar refreshers, the neighborhood drugstore soda fountain of late-19th-century America came to serve as the poor man's Saratoga Springs. There, the weary citizen could choose from among dozens of soda pop pick-me-ups, including Cola Coke, Rocco Cola, Koca Nola, Nerv Ola, Wise Ola, and one with the simple and direct name, Dope.

Cocaine also was offered as an asthma remedy and an antidote for toothache pain. (Other patent medicines contained opiates, such as morphine and heroin.) Dr. Nathan Tucker's Asthma Specific, a popular catarrh powder, or snuff, considered to be an excellent cure for hay fever and asthma, contained as much as half a gram of pure cocaine per package. Thanks to its remarkable ability to shrink the nasal mucous membranes and drain the sinuses, cocaine became the official remedy of the American Hay Fever Association.

In the six states and innumerable counties that were "dry" during the mid 1890s, workingmen found snuffs, soft drinks, and other cocaine products a cheap substitute for hard liquor. In states where teetotalers had not prevailed, bartenders often put a pinch of cocaine in a shot of whiskey to add punch to the drink. Peddlers sold it door to door. And some employers in the construction and mining industries found practical uses for the drug, reportedly distributing it to their workers to keep them going at a high pitch.

As much a part of everyday life as aspirin and decongestants are today, cocaine remedies were widely advertised during the 1880s and '90s.

How much cocaine did Americans consume? Judging from its wide legal availability, and given its seductive appeal, it is safe to assume that they were using substantial amounts by the turn of the century. The limited import statistics for the leaf and manufactured cocaine suggest that use peaked shortly after 1900, just as co-

*Coca Cola's cocaine content was .0025 percent in 1900, and may have been greater during the 1880s.

CONDEMNED TO REPETITION

By the 1970s, America's early experience with cocaine was largely forgotten, and some medical authorities praised the drug. One advocate was Dr. Peter Bourne, who was President Jimmy Carter's drug policy adviser until forced to resign by charges that he had written illegal prescriptions and used cocaine. In 1974, he wrote:

Cocaine . . . is probably the most benign of illicit drugs currently in widespread use. At least as strong a case could be made for legalizing it as for legalizing marijuana. Short acting—about 15 minutes—not physically addicting, and acutely pleasurable, cocaine has found increasing favor at all socioeconomic levels in the last year . . . .

One must ask what possible justification there can be for the obsession which [U.S.] Drug Enforcement Administration officials have with it, and what criteria they use to determine the priority they give the interdiction of a drug if it is not the degree of harm which it causes the user?

caine was being transformed in the public mind from a tonic into a terror.* Legal imports of coca leaves during that period averaged about 1.5 million pounds annually and the amount of cocaine averaged 200,000 ounces. (Today, the United States has roughly three times the population it did in 1900 but consumes more than 10 times as much cocaine—perhaps 2.5 million ounces annually.)

At first, there were few reports of chronic cocaine abuse. Confronted with one example in 1887, Dr. William A. Hammond, former Surgeon General of the Army, and one of the most prominent cocaine advocates of the era, dismissed it as a "case of preference, and not a case of irresistible habit." However, by 1890 the *Medical Record* cited some 400 cases of habit mostly among people being treated, as Freud and others had recommended, for addiction to morphine and other opiates.

In fact, Freud himself watched his friend Ernst von Fleischl-Marxow disintegrate into a state of "cocainist" delirium before he died in 1891. Freud claimed that he had not intended for von Fleischl-Marxow to inject the drug, and he withdrew his support for its use as a treatment for morphine addiction. But he never publicly renounced other uses of the drug.

By the turn of the century, cocaine was becoming more and more suspect. A thorough investigation by a committee of the Connecticut State Medical Society in 1896 concluded that cocaine cures for hay fever and other ailments had been a major cause of drug dependency, and "the danger of addiction outweighs the little efficacy attributed to the remedy." It recommended that cocaine be made available only to physicians, for use as a local anesthetic. Scattered newspaper reports—"ANOTHER PHYSICIAN A VICTIM TO THE BANEFUL DRUG"—books such as Annie Meyers' *Eight Years in Cocaine Hell* (1902), word of mouth, and articles in *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Collier's*, and other popular magazines brought more bad news. The debilitating effects of Sherlock Holmes's cocaine habit were familiar enough to earn a place in an 1899 Broadway play bearing the name of the brilliant British detective.

Once the miracle drug of upper-class professionals, cocaine came to be considered a curse of both the American demimonde and pathetic middle-class victims of patent medicines. The "Report of Committee on the Acquirement of Drug Habits" in the *American Journal of Pharmacy* (1903) declared that most users were "bohemians, gamblers, high- and low-class prostitutes, night porters, bell boys, burglars, racketeers, pimps, and casual laborers." That year, reflecting the public's growing suspicion of cocaine, the Coca-Cola company replaced the stimulant with a milder, more acceptable one, caffeine—the first, one might say, of the "new formula" Cokes.

A 1909 *New York Times* report on "The Growing Menace of the Use of Cocaine"—published even as use was declining—noted that the drug was used at lower-class

*It is also difficult to determine how many Americans were addicted to cocaine. Because they can live with their addictions for 20 or 30 years, opium addicts (of whom there were perhaps 250,000 around the turn of the century) are a relatively stable population, and thus easier to count. Cocaine addicts, on the other hand, do not live long if they do not quit, so their ranks are constantly changing.

"sniff parties," destroying "its victims more swiftly and surely than opium." In the *Century Magazine*, Charles B. Towns, a national anti-drug activist, issued a grave warning: "The most harmful of all habit forming drugs is cocaine. Nothing so quickly deteriorates [sic] its victim or provides so short a cut to the insane asylum."

As early as 1887, the states had begun enacting their own (largely ineffective) laws against cocaine and other drugs. In 1913, New York passed the toughest statute to date, completely outlawing cocaine, except for certain medical uses. By the beginning of World War I, all 48 states had anti-cocaine laws on the books. Fourteen states also inaugurated "drug education" programs in the public schools.

And what role did the federal government play? A small one, at first. According to the Constitutional doctrines of the day, Washington had virtually no power to police the drug trade directly. The federal Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 merely required labelling of any cocaine content in over-the-counter remedies. But official Washington was jolted by the effects of the cocaine "epidemic" in its own backyard, much as it has become alarmed today by hundreds of crack cocaine-related killings in the Federal District. For years, the District of Columbia's chief of police, Major Sylvester, had been warning Congress (which then governed the city directly) of cocaine's horrifying effects. "The cocaine habit is by far the greatest menace to society, because the victims are generally vicious. The use of this drug superinduces

A NEW COCAINE UNDERCLASS?

After the anti-cocaine reaction of the early 20th century, only a few Americans continued to use the drug. Today, as journalist Michael Massing recently warned in the New York Review of Books *(March 30, 1989), a different "two-tier" system may be emerging, with a large, permanent "underclass" of crack cocaine users.*

Contrary to the popular notion that narcotics are used throughout American society, drug use seems to be developing along well-defined class lines. On the one hand, the consumption of cocaine by the middle class has been steadily falling. Once considered glamorous and safe, cocaine is now widely viewed as a menace. The newsweeklies, movies, TV commercials, [and] books . . . all send the same message: Cocaine can kill. Educated Americans are responding. Recently, for instance, the Gordon B. Black Corporation of Rochester, New York, in a survey of 1,461 college students, found only 6 percent acknowledged "occasional" use of cocaine in 1988—down from 11 percent in 1987. Those who said they had friends who used cocaine socially dropped from 36 percent to 31 percent. Citing such surveys, the *Washington Post* concluded that "use of cocaine and marijuana among many segments of the population, particularly middle-class professionals and college students, has declined sharply."

In the inner cities, the story is very different. There the use of drugs—especially crack—is soaring. Three years ago, crack was sold only in large cities like Los Angeles and New York; today, it's available in places like Kansas City, Denver, and Dallas—everywhere, in fact, with a large minority population. Cocaine, once popular in Hollywood and on Wall Street, is fast becoming the narcotic of the ghetto. Mark Gold, founder of the nation's first cocaine "Hotline" six years ago, told the *Washington Post* that, when the service was introduced, most callers were whites with college degrees and high salaries; now, more than half are unemployed and only 16 percent college educated . . . . As drug use comes to be associated more and more with minorities, public support for treatment could dry up, giving way to renewed demands for more police, more jails, and harsher sentences—none of which . . . has much promise of reducing the demand for drugs.

jealousy and prodisposes [sic] to commit criminal acts," he declared. In 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt's Homes Commission presented the testimony of Sylvester and other officials to an alarmed Congress, which promptly restricted legal drug sales in the nation's capital.

At the same time, the drug problem took on an international dimension. Roosevelt's State Department, under Elihu Root, had assumed the lead in attempting to regulate the free-wheeling international opium trade. Root's motives were mixed. By siding with the Chinese against Britain and other European powers that were reaping large profits in the Chinese opium market, Root hoped to gain trade concessions from the Chinese. Moreover, Root hoped, like some officials in Washington today, that he could solve America's drug problem by stamping out the cultivation of opium poppies and coca bushes abroad. But a nation that led such an international moral crusade, Root realized, would have to have exemplary anti-drug laws of its own.

In 1910, President William Howard Taft presented a State Department report on drugs to Congress. Cocaine officially became Public Enemy No. 1:

> The illicit sale of [cocaine]... and the habitual use of it temporarily raises the power of a criminal to a point where in resisting arrest there is no hesitation to murder. It is more appalling in its effects than any other habit-forming drug used in the United States.

The report also stirred racist fears, adding that "it has been authoritatively stated that cocaine is often the direct incentive to the crime of rape by negroes of the South, and other sections of the country." (Likewise, opium was considered to be a special vice of the nation's Chinatowns.) Terrifying rumors told of criminals who gained superhuman strength, cunning, and efficiency under the influence of cocaine. Convinced that black "cocaine fiends" could withstand normal .32 caliber bullets, some police departments in the South reportedly switched to .38 caliber revolvers.

By December 1914, when Congress passed the Harrison Act, tightly regulating the distribution and sale of drugs, the use of cocaine and other drugs was considered so completely beyond the pale that the law itself seemed routine. The *New York Times* did not even note the passage of the Harrison Act until two weeks after the fact. The vote was overshadowed by a popular crusade against a more controversial target, Demon Rum, a crusade which brought thousands of temperance demonstrators to Washington that December. From the gallery of the House of Representatives, temperance advocates hung a Prohibition petition bearing six million signatures.

But the public's adamant anti-cocaine sentiment, which had reduced the drug's appeal after the turn of the century and resulted in legal restrictions, now facilitated operation of the laws. Unlike Prohibition, which was not backed by a public consensus, the Harrison Act—which Congress made more restrictive over the years—was largely successful.

What happened to cocaine? Of course, some Americans continued to acquire and use it, but their numbers eventually shrank. Peer pressure and the threat of punishment combined to drive cocaine underground. Only occasional—and often negative—references to it appeared in movies and popular songs during the 1920s and 1930s. Cole Porter announced, "I get no kick from cocaine" in his 1934 musical, *Anything Goes*, and an impish Charlie Chaplin, in the movie *Modern Times* (1936), gained such superhuman strength from sniffing "nose powder" that he was able to break out of jail.

By the time I was in medical school, during the late 1950s, cocaine was described to medical students as a drug that used to be a problem in the United States. It was news to us.

The people who had lived through the nation's first cocaine epidemic and knew that the euphoria induced by the drug was a dangerous delusion had grown old and passed from the scene. Cocaine's notorious reputation died with them. By the 1960s, America was ready for another fling with this most seductive and dangerous drug.

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The Trouble with the West—Two Views

Fretting about the health of the *civitas* has long been a characteristic of the West, or at least of its more thoughtful denizens. It may even be the reason for our survival. We worry, therefore we endure.

Our time, though one of relative peace and prosperity, is no exception. Today, indeed, a growing sense of too much "ease in Zion" is the greatest single cause of anxiety—and not only among the professional worrier caste, the intellectuals. The success of Allan Bloom's best-selling jeremiad, *The Closing of the American Mind*, suggests that concern about the collective destiny is widespread.

One word that is often invoked to describe our current predicament—a word that has caused more than its share of head-scratching—is postmodernism. First appearing around 25 years ago, mostly in reference to art and architecture, it has since been put to wider use. Not only are we said to work in postmodern buildings with "ironic" architectural flourishes or to read postmodern fiction by Latin American "magical realists," we also view postmodern television shows (David Letterman for the late-night crowd), eat postmodern food ("gourmet" macaroni-and-cheese served on microwaveable Fiestaware), sport postmodern clothes, and even think postmodern thoughts.

For all that, few of us know what the term really means, while others suspect, along with a *Spy* magazine writer, that it has "evolved into a sort of buzzword that people tack onto sentences when they're trying to sound more educated than they fear they really are." Sociologist Todd Gitlin here argues that the concept touches on something more important than the fads and fashions of our time. It also goes to the heart of our ethical commitments and our social and political behavior. During the past two decades, Gitlin says, people in the advanced industrial world have enjoyed a peculiar luxury: They have been able to play with the surfaces of their cultural heritage while paying little serious attention to its underlying values.

Pursuing a very different tack, novelist and philosopher Walker Percy argues that the problem dogging our age is far more radical than the latest turn of the *Zeitgeist*. He sees a basic flaw in the foundations of our scientific world-view, traceable to its earliest formulations in the 16th and 17th centuries. The result is an incoherence within the sciences, particularly the social and human sciences, which in turn subtly inform our public policies as well as our arts and letters.

This incoherence stems, says Percy, from a fatal misunderstanding of man and his unique endowment—language. Much is at stake in correcting this misapprehension, Percy believes: Man will either survive as free subject and maker of his world, or decline into an object of impersonal forces and technocratic schemes.


Max Headroom

THE POSTMODERN PREDICAMENT

by Todd Gitlin

Something must be at stake in the edgy debates circulating around and about something called postmodernism. What, then? Commentators pro, con, serious, fey, academic, and accessible seem to agree that something postmodern has happened, even if we are all—or virtually all—Mr. Jones who doesn't know what it is. (At times the critical world seems to divide between those who speak with assurance about what it is and those who are struggling to keep up.)

The volume and pitch of the commentary and controversy seem to imply that something about this postmodern something *matters*. In the pages of art journals, popular and obscure, abundant passion flows on about passionlessness. It would be cute but glib and shortsighted to dismiss the talk as so much time-serving or space-filling. There is *anxiety* at work, and at play, here. I think it is reasonable, or at least interesting, to assume that the anxiety that surfaces in the course of the discussion—and I confess I share in it—is called for. A certain anxiety is entirely commensurate with what is at stake.

"Postmodernism" usually refers to a certain constellation of styles and tones in cultural works: pastiche; blankness; a sense of exhaustion; a mixture of levels, forms, styles; a relish for copies and repetition; a knowingness that dissolves commitment into irony; acute self-consciousness about the formal, constructed nature of the work; pleasure in the play of surfaces; a rejection of history. It is Michael Graves's Portland Building and Philip Johnson and John Burgee's AT&T, Rauschenberg's silkscreens and Warhol's

Brillo boxes; it is shopping malls, mirror glass façades, Robert Venturi, William Burroughs, Donald Barthelme, Monty Python, Don DeLillo, *Star Wars*, Spalding Gray, David Byrne, Twyla Tharp, the Flying Karamazov Brothers, George Coates, Frederick Barthelme, Laurie Anderson, the Hyatt Regency, the *Centre Pompidou*, *The White Hotel*, *Less Than Zero*, Foucault, and Derrida; it is bricolage fashion, and remote-control-equipped viewers "zapping" around the television dial.

To join the conversation I am also going to use the term to refer to art located somewhere in this constellation. But I am also going to argue that what is at stake in the debate—and thus the root of the general anxiety—goes beyond art: It extends to the question of what sort of disposition toward the contemporary world is going to prevail throughout Western culture. The entire elusive phenomenon which has been categorized as postmodernism is best understood not just as a style but as a general orientation, as what English critic Raymond Williams calls a "structure of feeling," as a way of apprehending and experiencing the world and our place, or placelessness, in it.

Not for the first time, debates over cultural politics intersect with larger intellectual and political currents, prefiguring or tracing conflicts that have emerged, or ought to emerge, in the sphere of politics strictly understood. When the *Partisan Review* embraced modernism in the 1930s, for example, they were taking a position on more than style: They were taking a position on reason, the State, the (ir)rationality of history; finally, they were driving a revisionary wedge into left-wing politics in the large. American versions of modernism that emerged after World War II, both as artistic practice and critical exegesis, can also be understood as a way to inhabit a drastically changed political realm.

I am going to take the position that the discussion of postmodernism is, *among other things*, a deflected and displaced discussion of the contours of political thought—in the largest sense—during the 1970s and 1980s. The aesthetics of postmodernism are situated, historical. The question is, what is postmodernism's relation to this historical moment, to its political possibilities and torments?

I want to broach some intersecting questions: What do we mean by postmodernism, both as a style and a "structure of feeling"? Why has it come to pass? What is so troubling about postmodernism? Finally, postmodern is pre-what? What is the relation between postmodern aesthetics and a possible politics?

What is postmodernism? A sortie at definition is necessary. Things must be made to look crystalline for a moment, before complications set in. Here, then, is one person's grid, hopelessly crude, in the manner of first approximations for distinguishing among premodernism (realism), modernism, and postmodernism. These are ideal types, mind you, not adequate descriptions. And they are not necessarily ideal types of the work "itself"; rather, of the work as it is understood and judged by some consensus (albeit shifting) of artists, critics, and audiences.

The premodernist work, whether a painting by Leonardo da Vinci or a novel by Balzac, aspires to a unity of vision. It cherishes continuity, speaking with a single narrative voice or addressing a single visual center. It honors sequence and causality in time or space. Through the consecutive, the linear, it claims to represent a reality which is something else, though to render it more acutely than happens in ordinary experience. It may contain a critique of the established order, in the name of the obstructed ambitions of individuals; or it may uphold individuals as the embodiments of society at its best. In either event, individuals matter. The work observes, highlights, renders judgments, and exudes passions in their names. Standing apart from reality, the premodernist work

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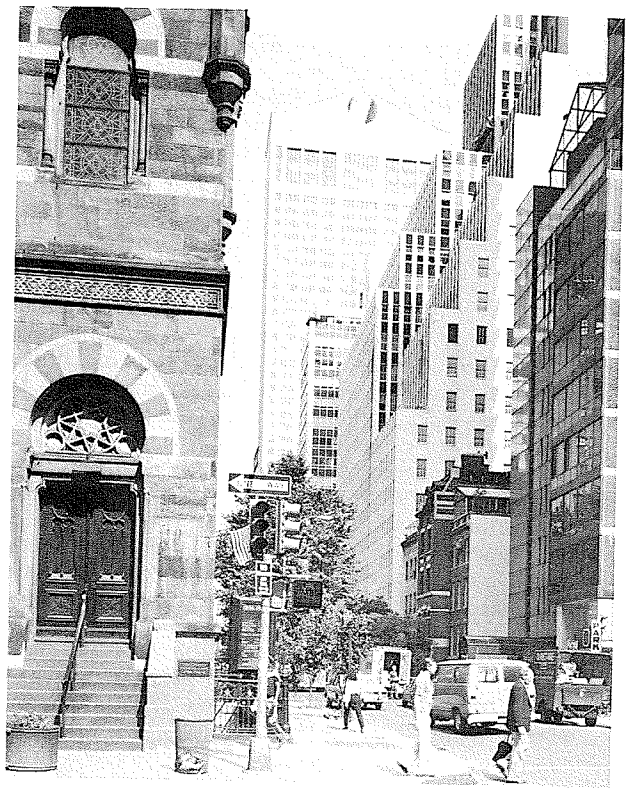
aspires to an order of beauty which, in a sense, judges reality; lyrical forms, heightened speech, rhythm and rhyme, Renaissance perspective and compositional "laws" are deployed in the interest of beauty. Finally, the work may borrow stories or tunes from popular materials, but it holds itself (and is held by its audience) above its origins; high culture holds the line against the popular.

The modernist work—T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land*, Joyce's *Ulysses*, or Picasso's *Guernica* to take three examples—still aspires to unity, but this unity, if that is what it is, has been (is still being?) constructed, assembled from fragments, or shocks, or juxtapositions of difference. It shifts abruptly among a multiplicity of voices, perspectives, materials. Continuity is disrupted, and with enthusiasm: It is as if the work were punctuated with exclamation marks. The orders of conventional reality—inside versus outside, subject versus object, self versus other—are called into question. So are the hitherto self-enclosed orders of art: poetry versus prose, painting versus sculpture, representation versus reality. There is often a critique of the established order; the work is apocalyptic, fused with a longing for some long-gone organic whole sometimes identified with a fascist present or future. The subject is not so much wholeheartedly opposed as estranged. Instead of passion, or alongside it, there is ambivalence toward the prevailing authorities. The work composes beauty out of discord. Aiming to bring into sharp relief the line between art and life, modernism appropriates selected shards of popular culture, quotes from them.



AT&T headquarters in New York City. Architects John Burgee and Philip Johnson abandoned "form-is-function" modernism for decorative postmodern flourishes.

In the postmodernist sensibility, the search for unity has apparently been abandoned altogether. Instead, we have textuality, a cultivation of surfaces endlessly referring to, ricocheting from, reverberating onto other surfaces. The work calls attention to its arbitrariness, constructedness; it interrupts itself. Instead of a single center, there is pastiche, cultural recombination. Anything can be juxtaposed to anything else. Everything takes place in the present, "here," that is, nowhere in particular. Not only has the master voice dissolved, but any sense of loss is rendered deadpan. The work labors under no illusions: We are all deliberately playing, pretending here—get the point? There is a premium on copies; everything has been done. Shock, now routine, is greeted with the glazed stare of the total ironist. The implied subject is fragmented, unstable, even decomposed; it is finally nothing more than a crosshatch of discourses. Where there was passion, or ambivalence, there is now a collapse of feeling, a blankness. Beauty, deprived of its power of criticism in an age of packaging, has been reduced to the decoration of reality, and so is crossed off the postmodernist agenda. Genres are spliced; so are cultural gradations. Dance can be built on Beach Boys songs (Twyla Tharp, "Deuce Coup"); cir-

THE LESSONS OF LAS VEGAS

Almost two decades ago, Robert Venturi and some fellow architects decided to take a close look at the American commercial "strip." They liked what they saw. Their book, Learning from Las Vegas (1972), *endures as a classic statement of the postmodern aesthetic:*

The commercial strip, the Las Vegas Strip in particular—the example par excellence—challenges the architect to take a positive, non-chip-on-the-shoulder view. Architects are out of the habit of looking nonjudgmentally at the environment, because orthodox Modern architecture is progressive, if not revolutionary, utopian, and puristic; it is dissatisfied with *existing* conditions. Modern architecture has been anything but permissive: Architects have preferred to exchange the existing environment rather than enhance what is there.

For the architect or the urban designer, comparison of Las Vegas with others of the world's "pleasure zones"—with Marienbad, the Alhambra, Xanadu, and Disneyland, for instance—suggest that essential to the imagery of pleasure-zone architecture are lightness, the quality of being an oasis in perhaps a hostile context, heightened symbolism, and the ability to engulf the visitor in a new role—for three days he may imagine himself a centurion at Caesar's Palace, a ranger at the Frontier, or a jet-set playboy at the Riviera rather than a salesman from Des Moines, Iowa, or an architect from Haddonfield, New Jersey.

However, there are didactic images more important than the images of recreation for us to take home to New Jersey and Iowa: one is the Avis with the Venus; another, Jack Benny under a classical pediment with Shell Oil beside him, or the gasoline station beside the multimillion-dollar casino. These show the vitality that may be achieved by an architecture of inclusion or, by contrast, the deadness that results from too great a preoccupation with tastefulness and total design. The Strip shows the value of symbolism and allusion in an architecture of vast space and speed and proves that people, even architects, have fun with architecture that reminds them of something else, perhaps the harems or the Wild West in Las Vegas, perhaps of the nation's New England forbearers in New Jersey. Allusion and comment, on the past or present or on our great commonplaces or old clichés, and inclusion of the everyday in the environment, sacred and profane—these are what are lacking in present-day Modern architecture. We can learn about them from Las Vegas as have other artists from their own profane and stylistic sources.

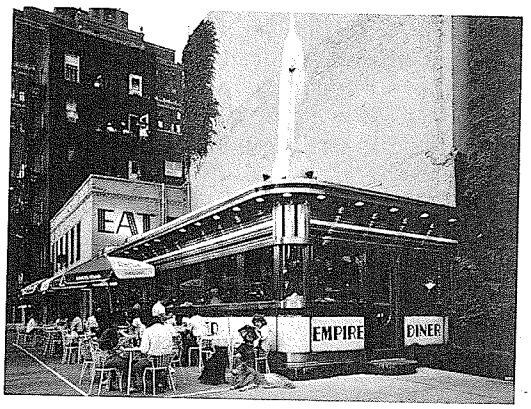
From *Learning from Las Vegas,* by Robert Venturi et al. (MIT).

cus can include cabaret jokes (Circus Oz); avant-garde music can include radio gospel (David Byrne and Brian Eno, *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*). "High culture" doesn't so much quote from popular culture as blur into it.

All master styles aim to remake the history that precedes them, just as T. S. Eliot said individual talents reorder tradition. In one sense, then, postmodernism remakes the relation between premodernism and modernism: In the light of postmodern disdain for representational conventions, the continuity between the preceding stages comes to seem more striking than the chasm dividing them. Yet it is worth noticing that "postmodernist"—in the spirit of its recombinant enterprise—is a compound term. It is as if the very term had trouble establishing the originality of the concept. If the phenomenon were more clearly demarcated from its predecessor, it might have been able to stand, semantically, on its own feet. Instead, *post*modernism defines the present cultural moment as a sequel, as what it is not. Postmodernism is known by the company it succeeds. It differs from modernism by nothing more than a prefix. It shadows modernism.

So what's new? It has been argued, with considerable force, that the lineaments of postmodernism are already present in one or another version of modernism; that postmodernism is simply the current incarnation, or phase, in a still unfolding modernism. Literary historian Roger Shattuck, for example, has recently made the point that Cubism, Futurism, and artistic spiritualists like Kandinsky "shared one compositional principle: the juxtaposition of states of mind, of 'different times and places, of different points of view.'" Collage, montage, these are of the essence of modernism high and low. Then what is so special about (1) Philip Johnson and John Burgee's AT&T building, with its Chippendale pediment on high and quasi-classical columns below; (2) the Australian Circus Oz, which combines jugglers commenting on their juggling and cracking political jokes with (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"; (3) the student who walks into my office dressed in green jersey, orange skirt, and black tights?

Put it this way: Modernism tore up unity and postmodernism has been enjoying the shreds. Surely nothing is without precedent; surely modernism had to set asunder what postmodernism is mixing in and about. Modernism's multiplication of perspectives led to postmodernism's utter dispersion of voices; modernist collage made possible postmodernist genre-splicing. The point is not only juxtaposition but its attitude. Postmodern juxtaposition is distinct: There is a deliberate self-consciousness, a skating on the edge dividing irony from dismay or endorsement, which make up a distinct cultural mood. Picasso, Boccioni, Tatlin, Pound, Joyce, Woolf in their various ways thundered and hungered. Their work was radiant with passion for a new world/work. Today's postmodernists are blasé; they've seen it all. They are bemused (though not necessarily by bemusement). The quality of deliberateness and the sense of exhaustion in the postmodern are what set it apart.



*Postmodern food in a postmodern setting: At New York's retro-chic Empire Diner, one reviewer notes, patrons "*ooh *and* aah *over piggy platters laden with turkey croquettes and pigs-in-blankets and the brownies."*

It might be objected that we are talking about nothing more than a fad. We read in a "Design Notebook" column in *The New*

York Times of March 12, 1987, that "Post-Modernism Appears to Retreat." Apparently *Progressive Architecture* is no longer giving its awards to pastiches of columns, capitals, and cornices; the writer suggests that the popularization of the premium architectural style of the last ten years signals its uniformity, mediocrity, and impending end. Actually, postmodernism, as a stylistic avant-garde movement in architecture had probably already reached a plateau (but does this mean it ended?) at the moment when photographs of Michael Graves's buildings were featured in *The New York Times Magazine* (1982). But what is interesting about postmodernism goes beyond the fashion in architecture—for the recombinatory thrust, the blankness, the self-regarding irony, the play of surfaces, the self-referentiality and self-bemusement which characterize postmodernism are still very much with us. What is interesting is not a single set of architectural tropes but postmodern as what Raymond Williams calls a "structure of feeling"—an interlocking cultural complex, or what he calls "a pattern of impulses, restraints, tones"—that forecasts the common future as it colors the common experience of a society just at or beneath the threshold of awareness. In this flickering half-light, postmodernism is significant because its amalgam of spirits has penetrated architecture, fiction, painting, poetry, urban planning, performance, music, television, and many other domains. It is one wing, at least, of the *Zeitgeist*.

Why has postmodernism happened, why here, and why now? We can distinguish more or less four approaches to an answer. These are not at all necessarily incompatible. To the contrary: Several forces are converging to produce the postmodernist moment.

The first is the bleak Marxist account sketched with flair in a series of essays by Fredric Jameson. The postmodernist spirit, with its superseding of the problem of authenticity, belongs to, is coupled to, corresponds to, expresses—the relation is not altogether clear—the culture of multinational capitalism, in which capital, that infinitely transferable abstraction, has abolished particularity as such along with the coherent self in whom history, depth, and subjectivity unite. Authentic use value has been overcome by the universality of exchange value. The characteristic machine of this period is the computer, which enthrones (or fetishizes) the fragment, the "bit," and in the process places a premium on process and reproduction which is aped in postmodernist art. Surfaces meet surfaces in these postmodern forms because a new human nature—a human second nature—has formed to feel at home in a homeless world political economy. Postmodernists ransack history for shards because there is no "here" here; because historical continuity is shattered by the permanent revolution that is capitalism. Uprooted juxtaposition is how people live: not only displaced peasants cast into the megalopolis, where decontextualized images proliferate, but also TV viewers confronted with the *interruptus* of American television as well as financial honchos shifting bits of information and blips of capital around the world at will and high

UTOPIA ACHIEVED—OR, IS AMERICA WHAT "PoMo" IS ALL ABOUT?

French sociologist Jean Baudrillard, in his brilliant, quirky book, America (1988), *suggests why the United States may be not only the locus but the meaning of postmodernism:*

America ducks the question of origins; it cultivates no origin or mythical authenticity; it has no past and no founding truth.... But this is of no importance—America has no identity problem. In the future, power will belong to those peoples with no origins and no authenticity who know how to exploit that situation to the full.

The U.S. is utopia achieved.

We should not judge their crisis as we would judge our own, the crisis of the old European countries. Ours is a crisis of historical ideals facing up to the impossibility of their realization. Theirs is the crisis of achieved utopia, confronted with the problem of its duration and permanence. The Americans are not wrong in their idyllic conviction that they are at the center of the world, the supreme power, the absolute model for everyone. And this conviction is not so much founded on natural resources,

technologies, and arms, as on the miraculous premise of a utopia made reality, of a society which, with a directness we might judge unbearable, is built on the idea that it is the realization of everything the others have dreamt of—justice, plenty, rule of law, wealth, freedom: it knows this, it believes in it, and in the end, the others have come to believe it too.

In the present crisis of values, everyone ends up turning towards the culture which dared to forge right ahead and, by a theatrical masterstroke, turn those values into reality, towards that society which, thanks to the geographical and mental break effected by emigration, allowed itself to imagine it could create an ideal world from nothing. We should also not forget the fantasy consecration of this process in the cinema. Whatever happens, and whatever one thinks of the arrogance of the dollar or the multinationals, it is this culture which, the world over, fascinates those very people who suffers most at its hands, and it does so through the deep, insane conviction that it has made all their dreams come true.

From *America*, by Jean Baudrillard (Verso/Routledge, Chapman & Hall).

speed. Art expresses this abstract unity and vast, weightless indifference through its blank repetitions (think of Warhol or Philip Glass), its exhausted anti-romance, its I've-seen-it-all, striving at best for a kind of all-embracing surface which radiates from the world temple of the postmodern, the glorious *Centre Pompidou* in Paris.

A second stab at explanation calls attention to our political rather than our strictly economic moment. In this light, the crucial location of the postmodern is *after the '60s*. The postmodern is an aftermath, or a waiting game, because that is what we are living in: a prolonged cultural moment that is oddly weightless, shadowed by incomplete revolts, haunted by absences—a Counterreformation beating against an unfinished, indeed barely begun, Reformation. From this point of view, postmodernism rejects historical continuity and takes up residence somewhere beyond it because history *was* ruptured: by the Bomb-fueled vision of a possible material end of history, by Vietnam, by drugs, by youth revolts, by women's and gay rights movements—in general, by the erosion of that false and devastating universality embodied in the rule of the pyramidal trinity of Father, Science, and State. It was faith in a rule of progress under the sway of that trinity that had underlain our assumptions that the world displays linear order, historical sequence, and moral clarities. But cultural contradiction burst open the premises of the old cultural complex. The cultural upwellings and wildness of the '60s kicked out the props of a teetering moral structure, but the new house has not yet been built. The culture has not yet found a language for articulating the new understandings we are trying, haltingly, to live with.

Postmodernism dispenses with moorings, then, because old certitudes have actually crumbled. It is straining to make the most of seriality, endless recirculation and repetition in the collective image warehouse, because so much of reality *is* serial. As Donald Barthelme's fiction knows, we live in a forest of images mass-produced and endlessly, alluringly empty. Individuality has become a parody of itself: another world for a fashion choice, a lifestyle compound, a talk-show self-advertisement logo. It might even be argued that postmodernism plays in and with surfaces because that is what it must do to carry on with its evasions: because there are large cultural terrors that broke into common consciousness during the 1960s and there is no clear way to live out their implications in a conservative, contracting period.

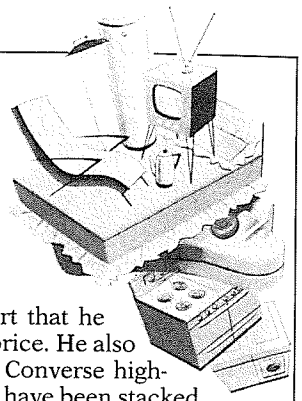
From this point of view, postmodern-

ism is blank because it wants to have its commodification and eat it, too. That is, it knows that the culture industry will tailor virtually any cultural goods for the sake of sales; it also wants to display its knowingness, thereby demonstrating how superior it is to the trash market. Choose one: The resulting ironic spiral either mocks the game by playing it or plays it by mocking it. A knowing blankness results; how to decode it is a difficult matter. Take, for instance, the "Joe Isuzu" commercials of 1987, in which the spokesman, a transparently slick version of the archetypal TV huckster, grossly lies about what the car will do, how much it costs, and so on, while the subtitles tell us he's lying, and by how much. The company takes for granted a culture of lies, then aims to ingratiate itself by mocking the conventions of the hard sell.

Man-Child in Toyland. TV's Pee-wee Herman, with friend Globey, epitomizes "PoMo" camp.

Consider the early episodes of *Max Headroom* during the spring of 1987, which in nine weeks sped from a blunt critique of television itself to a mishmash of adorability. "20 Minutes into the Future"—so the pilot film shows us—the computer-generated Max fights the tyranny of the ratings-crazed Network 23, whose decidedly sinister (shot from below with wide-angle lens) boardroom tycoons will stop at no crime in their pursuit of profits. (*Cherchez la japonaise*: The venal Zik-Zak corporation which brings on the ratings panic is conveniently Japanese.) Is Max a revolutionary guerrilla or a sales gimmick? In the British prototype, he throws in with a revolution against Network 23; in the American version, the self-proclaimed revolutionaries are thuggish terrorists, as despicable as the Network bosses. In any event, Max in his early American weeks reaches out of the fictional frame to yawn in the face of ABC's impending commercials. As the weeks pass, however, Max loses his computerized bite and becomes regressively cuter. The same Max is deployed to promote Coca-Cola over Pepsi, as if Coke were both subversive and mandatory (the "wave" to be "caught")—to an audience encouraged to laugh at the distinction and still, as consumers, act on it. Commerce incorporates popular cynicism and political unease while flattering the audience that it has now, at least, seen through all the sham: Cynicism, Inc. Andy Warhol would have grasped the point in a second, or fifteen.

A third approach to explaining postmodernism is a refinement of the second: an argument not about history in general but about a specific generation and class. Postmodernism appears as an outlook for (though not necessarily *by*) Yuppies—urban, professional products of the late baby boom, born during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Theirs is an experience of aftermath, privatization, weightlessness: They can remember political commitment but were not animated by it—more, they suspect it; it leads to trouble. They cannot remember a time before television, suburbs, shopping malls. They are accustomed, therefore, to rapid cuts, discontinuities, breaches of attention, culture to be indulged and disdained at the same time. They grew up taking drugs, taking them for granted, but do not associate them with spirituality or the hunger for transcendence. Knowing indifference is



THE POSTMODERN COUPLE

A slick, gossipy chronicle of New York City trends and personalities (and itself something of a postmodern artifact), Spy *magazine recently featured an article by Paul Rudnick and Kurt Andersen called "The Irony Epidemic." It included what may become the definitive portrait of the postmodern couple:*

Meet Bob and Betty. Bob is wearing a hibiscusy Hawaiian shirt that he purchased for approximately six times the garment's original 1952 price. He also carries his lunch in a tackle box and wears a Gumby wristwatch, Converse high-tops and baggy khakis from Banana Republic; at the store, the pants have been stacked in an artfully ruined Indiana Jones-style jeep. Bob describes his looks as "Harry Truman mixed with early Jerry Mathers." Bob assumes that you know that Mathers played the title role on *Leave it to Beaver.*

Betty wears Capri pants, ballet flats and a man's oversized white shirt, along with a multizippered black-leather motorcycle jacket imprinted with Cyrillic letters. She's "Audrey Hepburn by way of Patty Duke as James Dean's girlfriend waiting on the drag strip." Betty refers to herself as Bob's "old lady." Bob calls himself "Dad." When Bob and Betty describe themselves in these ways, they raise the middle and forefingers of both hands, momentarily forming twitching bunny ears—*air quotes*, the quintessential contemporary gesture that says, *We're not serious.*

Betty and Bob have a child, a two-year-old whom they call "Kitten." This child is probably too young to catch the reference to *Father Knows Best*, even though she sits with her parents when they watch *Nick at Nite*, the cable TV service devoted almost entirely to the quasi-ironic recapitulation of shows from the early 1960s. The invitation to Betty and Bob's wedding were printed with sketches of jitterbugging couples; for their honeymoon, they rented a station wagon and drove south, visiting Graceland, Cypress Gardens and the Texas School Book Depository. Betty and Bob buy Fiestaware and Bakelite jewelry and beaded "Injun" belts, as well as souvenirs from the 1964 World's Fair and "atomic" furniture from the fifties—"real Jetsons stuff." Bob has taught the family mutt, Spot, to do the twist. Bob dreams that his animal will one day appear on the "Stupid Pet Tricks" segment of *Late Night with David Letterman.* Bob works in advertising, "like Darrin on *Bewitched.*" Betty is a corporate attorney—"a lawyer from hell," she says. Bob and Betty are fictional, but Bob and Betty are everywhere.

their "structure of feeling"—thus a taste for cultural bricolage. They are, though, disabused of authority. The association of passion and politics rubs them the wrong way. Their idea of government is shadowed by Vietnam and Watergate. Their television runs through *Saturday Night Live* and *MTV*. Their mores lean toward the libertarian and, at least until the AIDS terror, the libertine. They like the idea of the free market as long as it promises them an endless accumulation of crafted goods, as suggested by the (half-joking?) bumper sticker. "THE ONE WITH THE MOST TOYS WINS."

The idea of public life—whether party participation or military intervention—fills them with weariness; the adventures that matter to them are the adventures of private life. The characters of *The Big Chill* spoke to them: The "Sixties" stand for a cornucopia of sex and drugs; they can easily gather for a weekend in The "Eighties" without bringing up the subject of Ronald Reagan and Reaganism. But they are not in any conventional sense "right-wing": They float beyond belief. The important thing is that their assemblage of "values" corresponds to their class biographies.

A fourth approach starts from the fact that postmodernism is specifically, though not exclusively, *American.* Literary critic Andreas Huyssen makes an interesting argument which carries us part way but needs to be extended. Postmodernism couldn't have developed in Germany, be-

cause postwar Germans were too busy trying to reappropriate a suppressed modernism. Where it developed in France at all, it did so without antagonism to or rupture from modernism. But in America, the artistic avant-garde, in order to break from Cold War orthodoxy and corporate-sponsored smugness, had to revolt against the officially enshrined modernism of the postwar period; had to smash the Modern Art idol.

I would add the obvious: that postmodernism is born in the U.S.A. because juxtaposition is one of the things we do best. It is one of the defining currents of American culture, especially with Emancipation and the rise of immigration in the latter part of the 19th century. (The other principal current is the opposite: assimilation into standard American styles and myths.) Juxtaposition is the Strip, the shopping mall, the Galleria, Las Vegas; it is the marketplace jamboree, the divinely grotesque disorder, amazing diversity striving for reconciliation, the ethereal and ungrounded radiance of signs, the shimmer of the evanescent, the good times beat of the tall tale meant to be simultaneously disbelieved and appreciated; it is vulgarized pluralism; it is the cultural logic of laissez-faire but perhaps, the suspicion arises, even more—of an elbows-out, noisy, jostling, bottom-up version of something that can pass as democracy. We are, central myths and homogenizations and oligopolies notwithstanding, an immigrant culture, less melting pot than grab bag, perennially replenished by aliens and their singular points of view.

As long ago as 1916, Randolph Bourne wrote that "there is no distinctively American culture. It is apparently our lot rather to be a federation of cultures." Hollywood and the radio and TV networks flattened the culture, but there is still life in Bourne's vision. The postmodernist, from this point of view, is hitching high art to the raucous, disrespectful quality that accompanies American popular culture from its beginnings. And indeed, the essential contribution of postmodernist art is that it obliterates the line—or the brow—separating the high from the low.

The postmodernist arts, then, express a spirit that comports well with American culture in the 1980s—and with American politics. The standard ideological configurations of "liberal" and "conservative" belief are decomposing, although the decomposition is masked by the fact that the old political language is still in force. The patriotic words are mouthed while the performers signal, in the manner of *Moonlighting* (and Reagan at his self-deprecating best), that they don't really mean them (quite). There is laissez-faire in economics, as long as you can find an apartment you can afford and as long as you have not thought too long about near-collisions between passenger planes. In the film *Stranger Than Paradise* and David Letterman as well as in the Republican Party, there is a love for the common people and their kitsch tastes that is indistinguishable from contempt. In politics as in the arts, distrust runs rampant while beneath the surface, as David Byrne and Brian Eno have put it, "America is waiting for a message of some sort or another."

Postmodernism is an art of erosion. Make the most of stagnation, it says, and give up gracefully. That is perhaps its defining break from modernism, which was, whatever its subversive practices, a series of declarations of faith—Suprematism's future, Joyce's present, Eliot's unsurpassable past. What is not clear is whether postmodernism, living off borrowed materials, has the resources for continuing self-renewal. A car without a generator can run off its battery only so long. Postmodernism seems doomed to be an intermission. But historical time is treacherous to assess. Intermissions can last a very long time, and who is counting?

THE DIVIDED CREATURE

by Walker Percy

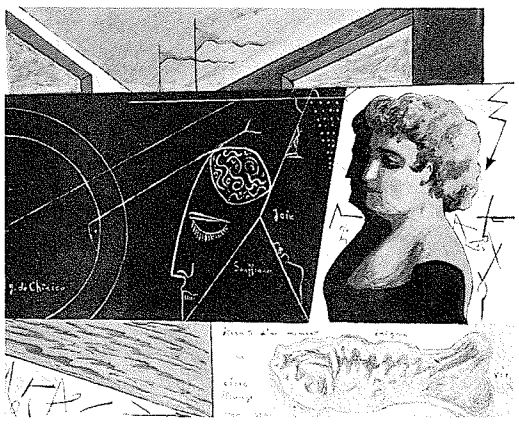
I would like to begin with two large but I hope digestible propositions.

The first is that our view of the world, which we get consciously or unconsciously from modern science, is radically incoherent.

A corollary of this proposition is that modern science is itself radically incoherent not when it seeks to understand things and subhuman organisms and the cosmos itself but when it seeks to understand man, not man's physiology or neurology or his blood stream, but man *qua* man, man when he is peculiarly human. In short, the science of man is incoherent.

The second proposition is that the source of the incoherence lies within science itself, as it is practiced in the world today, and that the solution of the difficulty is not to be found in something extra-scientific, such as New-Age religion, but within science itself. When I say science, I mean science in the root sense of the word, as the discovery and knowledge of something which can be demonstrated and verified within a community.

What I am raising here is not the standard humanistic objection to science, that it is too impersonal, detached, abstracted, and that accordingly it does not meet human needs, does not take into account such human experiences as emotions, art, faith, and so on. Scientists are used to and understandably unimpressed by such challenges. No, my purpose is rather to challenge science, as it is currently practiced by some scientists, in the name of science.



Surely there is nothing wrong with a humanist, even a novelist, taking a look at his colleagues across the fence in the sciences and saying to them in the friendliest way: "Look, fellows, it's none of my business, but hasn't something gone awry over there that you might want to fix?"

We novelists would surely be grateful if scientists demonstrated that the reason novels are increasingly incoherent these days is because novelists are suffering from a rare encephalitis, and even offered to cure them.

My proposal to scientists is far more modest. That is to say, I am not setting up either as physician or as the small boy noticing the naked emperor. What I am doing is more like whispering to a friend at a party that he'd do well to fix his fly.

For it can be shown, I think, that in certain areas, science, as it is currently practiced, fails on its own terms, not in ruling out traditional humanistic concerns as "unscientific" or "metaphysical" or "nonfactual," but in certain areas fails rather in the confusion and incoherence of its own theories and models. This occurs, I think it can be shown, in the present-day sciences of man.

The puzzling thing is that the incoherence is both known and unknown, as familiar on the one hand as a

member of one's own family and as little remarked. It is like a long-standing family embarrassment, like Uncle Louie who, it is true, is a little strange but has been that way so long that one has finally grown used to him.

The embarrassment occurs, as I say, when the sciences, so spectacularly successful in addressing the rest of the cosmos, address man himself. I am speaking of such sciences as psychology, psychiatry, linguistics, anthropology, and sociology.

Something odd happens. It is not merely, as the excuse sometimes runs, that the subject matter, man, is complex and difficult. So is the cosmos. But in the case of the cosmos there is a presumption that the areas of ignorance are being steadily eroded by the advance of science. In the case of the sciences of man, however, the incoherence is chronic and seems to be intractable.

Take a familiar example, psychology, Psych 101, the college survey course. Here's what one studies or at least hears about, and I mention only those items most familiar to sophomores: neurons, signals, synapses, transmitter substance, central nervous system, brain, mind, personality, self, consciousness, and, later perhaps, ego, superego, archetypes.

What is remarkable to a Martian visitor or a college freshman who doesn't know any better is that there seem to be two sorts of things, very dissimilar things, named in the list. The words early in the list refer to things and events which can be seen or measured, such as neurons, which are cells one can see through a microscope. The words that come later, such as self, ego, consciousness, cannot be seen as things or measured as energy exchanges. They can only be described by some such word as mental or mind.

Here again, I'm not telling you anything you don't already know, and here again you may ask: "So what?"

For is it not a commonplace, and in fact the very nature of the beast, that in psychology we deal with "mental" and "physical" entities, with mind and matter, and I will not quarrel with however you wish to define matter, as stuff or things or electrons and protons in motion?

But in fact, in speaking of the "mental" and the "physical," of the psyche and the brain, and with however much hope and sophistication we wish to phrase it, are we not admitting that we are still hung up on the horns of the ancient dualism of Descartes, however much we wish to believe we had gotten past it? Descartes, if you recall, divided all reality between the *res cogitans*, the mind, and the *res extensa*, matter. God alone, literally, knew what one had to do with the other.

But in natural science we do not like to admit that we are still split by a 300-year-old dualism. Nor should we.

Might we not in fact reasonably expect that the appropriate scientists, psychologists in this case, tell us what one has to do with the other, or how to get from one to the other, from "matter" to "mind"? If they are not going full steam ahead on bridging this peculiar gap, they must at least have some inkling.

As far as I can tell, they are not and do not. In Psych 101, the problem of the ancient dualism is usually dismissed in a sentence or two, like Reagan dismissing the national debt. Or the solution is not sought but declared found.

Here are some samples:

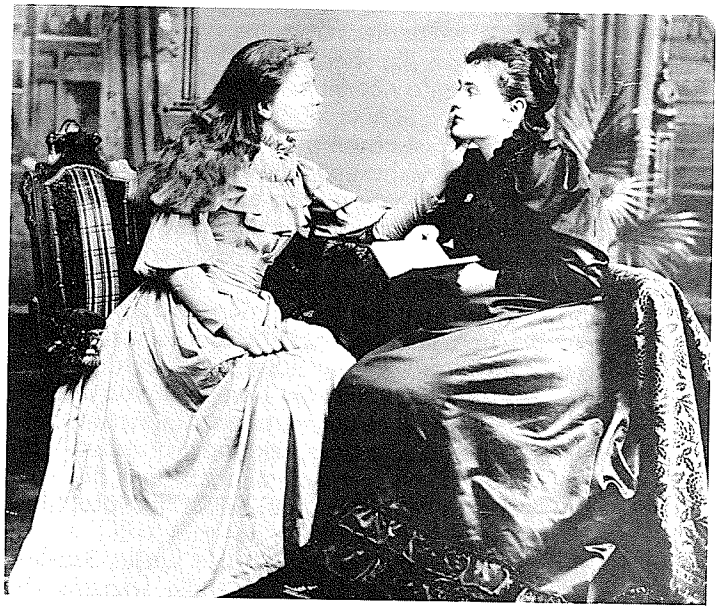
Mind is a property of the organization of neurons, their circuitry and the neurotransmitters between them.

Or: The relation of brain to mind is directly analogous to that of computer to its software.

Or: The only difference between us and the Apple computer is complexity.

But here's the best statement I've come

***Walker Percy**, novelist and philosopher, lives and works in Covington, Louisiana. Born in Birmingham, Alabama, he received a B.S. from the University of North Carolina (1937) and an M.D. from the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University (1941). During a long bout with tuberculosis, Percy turned from medicine to writing. In addition to six novels, the first of which,* The Moviegoer (1961), *won the National Book Award, he has published numerous essays and two books of nonfiction. This essay is adapted from the 18th Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities, delivered on May 3, 1989 in Washington, D.C.*



Helen Keller, c. 1893, "listens" to Anne Sullivan by feeling the vibrations of her teacher's larynx. Keller's discovery of language, Percy writes, "was the beginning of her life as a person."

across of such awkward things as mind and consciousness. It is from a textbook, *Physiology of Behavior*, by Neal R. Carlson. "What can a physiological psychologist say about human self-awareness? We know that it is altered by changes in the structure or chemistry of the brain. We conclude that consciousness is a physiological function, just like behavior."

These statements are something less useful than truisms. To say that mind is a property or function of the organization of the brain is almost the same as saying that Raphael's *Orleans Madonna* is a property of paint and color.

I refer to this gap in scientific knowledge as an incoherence, from the Latin *incohaerere*, a not-sticking-together. This gap is incoherent and intractable, at least from the present posture of natural science. That is to say, no amount of effort by "brain" scientists and "mind" scientists can even narrow the gap.

Can anyone imagine how a psychology of the psyche, like that of Freud or Jung, however advanced, can ever make contact with a Skinnerian psychology of neurons, however modified and elaborated it is, for example, by some such refinement as Gestalt and "cognitive" psychology?

There are similar incoherences in other sciences of man.

Sociology and cultural anthropology have to do with groups and cultures, with people: that is to say, human organisms. But sociology deals with such things as self, roles; anthropology with such things as sorcery, rites. But how do you get from organism to roles and rites?

Linguistics is about the sounds people make. Many organisms make sounds, to attract attention in courtship, to scare off predators, to signal to other creatures the finding of food, to call their young, and so on. So do human organisms. But they, human organisms, also make sounds which form sentences to tell the truth about things, lie, or don't make any sense at all. How did this come to pass?

Even the great scientist Darwin, who connected everything else, had trouble when he came to this peculiar activity.

Here's how Darwin went about it. The mental act, Darwin claimed, is essentially of the same nature in an animal as it is in man. How does he know this? He writes: "When I say to my terrier, in an eager voice (and I have made the trial many times), 'Hi, hi, where is it?' she at once takes it as a sign that something is to be hunted, and generally first looks quickly all around, and then rushes into the nearest thicket, to scent for any game, but finding nothing, she looks up into any neighboring tree for a squirrel. Now do these actions not clearly show that she had in her mind a general idea or concept that some animal is to be discovered and hunted?"

This is a charming account, and it is not necessary to comment on it except to note that later scientists would probably smile and shrug, but some of them might

add: Well, maybe not dogs, but what about dolphins or chimps?

Both Darwin and Freud were great men, maestros of the organism and the psyche, made huge contributions, but nowadays no one would claim that either had bridged the gap. Darwin addressed himself to one side of it in his study of the origin of species. Freud treated a very different though hardly less savage struggle, the warfare between the id and superego. Darwin and Freud were true revolutionaries and were accordingly accused by their enemies of being too radical. When in truth, as it now appears, they were not radical enough. For neither can account for his own activity by his own theory. For how does Darwin account for the "variation" which is his own species and its peculiar behavior, in his case, sitting in his study in Kent and writing the truth as he saw it about evolution? And if Freud's psyche is like ours, a dynamism of contending forces, how did it ever arrive at the truth about psyches, including his own?

Perhaps the oddest thing about these incoherences is the fact that we do not find them odd.

We do not find it odd to jump from the natural science of the biology of creatures to a formal science of the utterances of this particular creature without knowing how we got there.

Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914)

We do not find it odd that there is only one science of chemistry and neurology but at last count over 600 different schools of psychotherapy, and growing. We accept the explanation that, after all, the brain is vastly more complicated than a molecule of sodium chloride or even a nerve cell. That may be true, but it doesn't explain why the physical sciences are converging whereas the psychic "sciences" are diverging—and getting nuttier as they do.

In what follows, I wish to call your attention to the work of an American scientist who, I believe, laid the groundwork for a coherent science of man, and did so a hundred years ago. Most people have never heard of him, but they will.

The man I speak of is Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), scientist, logician (he gave us symbolic logic), philosopher, and founding father of semiotics, the science of signs, a discipline in high fashion these days. He was a difficult, eccentric man. One of his peculiar accomplishments was that he could write down a question which was bothering him with one hand and with the other simultaneously write the answer.

Although I speak here of Charles Peirce's "discovery," it was not altogether original with him, stemming as it did from the realism of the medieval scholastics. By realism he and his predecessors meant that there is a real world and that it is possible to a degree to know it and to talk about it and be understood. Not only are material things and events real. So are the ideas and words with which we use to think and talk about them. As Peirce put it, "there are real things out there whose characters are independent of our opinion of them."

Although this may seem a commonplace to us, just ordinary common sense, this connection among things and words and knowledge has been under attack for 300 years, by Descartes, who split off mind from matter, and by the English nominalists who even now split off words and ideas from things. One made knowledge unexplainable; the other made it impossible. And this is to say nothing of the European materialism and idealism of

Peirce's time, the first of which set out to explain everything by the doctrine of matter in motion, the other by that of subjectivity, such as Hegel's idealism. One put everything in one box, the box of things; the other put everything in the mind box. But neither told how to get from one box to the other.

Fortunately, modern scientists have taken none of these still regnant philosophies seriously—whether nominalism, materialism, or idealism. If they had, there would have been no Newton or Einstein or Darwin. For if the world is not real or could not be known, why bother with it?

Despite inadequate philosophies, science has advanced spectacularly, particularly physics and biology. Yet, as we have seen, they, the scientists, are still trapped in the ancient dualism and still cannot explain what the mind box has to do with the thing box—much to the detriment and confusion of the social sciences.

The great contribution of Charles Peirce, a rigorous scientific realist, was that he preserved the truth, as he saw it, of philosophical realism from Aristotle to the 17th century, salvaged it from the medieval language of the scholastics which is now all but incomprehensible to us, recast it in terms familiar to scientists, to the most simple-minded empiricist, and even to us laymen. It, Peirce's realism, cannot now be escaped or fobbed off as scholastic mumbo-jumbo.

Peirce saw that the one way to get at it, the great modern rift between mind and matter, was the only place where they intersect, language. Language is words and meanings. It is impossible to imagine language without both.

In brief, he said that there are two kinds of natural events in the world. These two kinds of events have different parameters and variables. Trying to pretend there is only one kind of event leads to all the present misery which afflicts the social sciences, and even more important, at least for us laymen, it brings to pass a certain cast of mind, "scientism," which misplaces reality and creates vast mischief and confusion when we try to understand ourselves.

Peirce said it indirectly and I make bold to say it directly, and I repeat the statement because it could not be more revolutionary: *There is not one but two kinds of natural events in the world.* One he called dyadic, the other triadic.

Dyadic events are the familiar subject matter of the physical and biological sciences: A interacting with B; A, B, C, D interacting with each other. Peirce called it "a mutual action between two things." It can apply to molecules interacting with other molecules, a billiard ball hitting another billiard ball, one galaxy colliding with another galaxy, an organism responding to a stimulus. Even an event as complex as Pavlov's conditioned dog salivating at the sound of a bell can be understood as a "complexus of dyads." The sound waves from the bell, the stimulation of the dog's auditory receptors, the electrical impulses in the efferent nerves, the firing of the altered synapses in the brain, the electrical impulses in the efferent nerves to the salivary glands, and so on—the whole process is understandable as a sequence of dyadic events.

Such events indeed are the familiar subject matter of the natural sciences, from physics and chemistry to biology and to Psych 101.

But there is another kind of event, quite as "real," quite as natural a phenomenon, quite as observable, which cannot be so understood, that is, cannot be construed by the dyadic model. It is language. The simplest example I can think of, and it is anything but simple, is the child's early acquisition of language, an 18-month-old suddenly learning that things have names. What happens here is the same sort of thing that happens when a lecturer utters a complex sentence about the poetics of T. S. Eliot.

What happens when the child suddenly grasps that the strange little sound *cat,* an explosion of air between tongue and palate followed by a bleat of the larynx followed by a stop of tongue against teeth, means this cat, not only this cat but all cats? And means it in a very special way: not *look over there for cat, watch out for cat, want cat, go get cat,* but *that is a cat.* Naming is the new event, and of course soon after the appearence of this naming "sentence" appear other primitive sen-

tences: *there cat, cat all gone, where cat?*

As Peirce put it, this event cannot be explained by a dyadic model, however complex. Words like cat he called symbols, from the Greek *symballein*, to throw together. Because the child puts the two together, the word and the thing, a triadic model is required. For even though many of the familiar dyadic events are implicated, the heart of the matter is a throwing together, one entity throwing together two others, in this case cat the creature and cat the sound image.

This event is a piece of behavior, true enough, but any behavioristic reading of it as a sequence of dyads will miss the essence of it.

He, Peirce, was particularly interested in using the dyadic-triadic distinction to understand communication by a discipline which he called semiotics, the science of signs. He distinguished between an index and a symbol. A low barometer is, for a human, a sign, an index, of rain. The word *ball* is for my dog an index to go fetch the ball, but, if I say the word *ball* to you, you will receive it as a symbol, that is, look at me with puzzlement and the suspicion that maybe I've gone over the hill, and perhaps say, "Ball? What about it?"

The difference between the two, variously and confusedly called index and symbol, sign and symbol, signal and sign, was perhaps most dramatically illustrated by Helen Keller's famous account: her first understanding of words spelled in her hand, like cup, door, water, to mean go fetch cup, open door, I want water, and then the memorable moment in the pump house when it dawned on her that the word water spelled in one hand meant the water running over the other. It was nothing less than the beginning of her life as a person.

The triadic event, as Peirce would say, always involves meaning, and meaning of a special sort. The copula "is," spoken or implied, is nothing less than the tiny triadic lever that moves the entire world into the reach of our peculiar species.

This strange capacity seems to be unique in *Homo sapiens*, and even though there is nothing unscientific about assigning a "species-specific" trait to this or that species, if the evidence warrants, many scientists, including Darwin, find this uniqueness offensive. We are all familiar with the heroic attempts in recent years by psychologists and primatologists to teach language to primates other than *Homo sapiens*, particularly chimpanzees, using ASL, the sign language of the deaf. The premise behind such research is that chimps don't speak because their vocal apparatus does not permit speech. The most famous chimp was Washoe, whom Alan and Beatrix Gardner claimed to have taught language, that is, the ability not only to understand and signal "words," the common nouns of language, but also to form these words into sentences.

But we are also familiar with the discrediting of these claims, mainly as a result of the work of Herbert Terrace. Terrace adopted a chimp, which he named Nim Chimpsky, with every expectation of teaching Nim language as one would a human infant. What he learned was that Nim, though undoubtedly as smart as Washoe, was not really using language. What he and Washoe were really doing was responding to small cues by the trainer to do this or that, the appropriate behavior rewarded by a banana or whatever. The trainers were doubtlessly not acting in bad faith. What Washoe and Nim Chimpsky were exhibiting, however, was not the language behavior of the human two-year-old but the classical reinforced response of the behaviorists. As Peirce would say, both Washoe's and Nim's "language" can be understood as a "complexus of dyads."

One can draw a picture with things (matter) and arrows (energy) connecting them setting forth the behavior both of the chimp Washoe and the pre-language human infant with its responses to sights and sounds, its crying for mama and milk.

But one cannot draw such a picture of an 18-month-old human who looks at mama, points to cat, and says *da cat.*

One would naturally suppose that the appropriate scientist, the developmental psychologist, the psycholinguist, whoever, would zero in on this, the transformation of the responding organism into the languaged human.

Unfortunately, such is not the case. What one finds in the scientific literature

"Nim Chimpsky" uses American Sign Language to communicate with his trainers. But is this analogous to human language? Psychologist Herbert Terrace concluded that it is not.

is something like this: a huge amount of information about the infant as organism, its needs and drives, its behavior and physiology. But when it begins to speak, what? What is thought to happen? What one finds are very careful studies of the structure of the earliest utterances and their development, the rules by which an 18-month-old will say *that a my coat* but not *a that my coat.* Rules, grammar, linguistic structure is what we find, the same formal approach which issues later in the splendid disciplines of structural linguistics and even in "deconstruction."

We go from biology (dyadic science) to grammar (triadic science) without anybody seeming to notice anything strange. Such *belle indifference* can only have come to pass either because the scientist has not noticed that he has jumped the chasm or because he has noticed but is at a loss for words.

It is as if we lived in a California house straddling the San Andreas Fault, a crack very narrow but deep, which has however become as familiar as an old shoe. You can get used to anything. We can hop back and forth, feed ourselves and the dyadic dog on one side, or sit on the other, read Joseph Campbell or write a triadic paper and never give it a second thought. Once in a while we might look down into the chasm, become alarmed, and take up a New-Age religion like Gaia.

On one side are the dyadic sciences, from atomic physics to academic psychology, the latter with its behaviorism and the various refinements and elaborations thereof; on the other are the "mental" psychologies with such entities as consciousness, the unconscious, dreams, egos, ids, archetypes and such.

I trust, incidentally, that when I speak of dyadic phenomena as descriptive of "matter" in motion, it will be understood that I am using the word matter to mean whatever you please as long as it is also understood that such phenomena, at least at the biological level, are not challenged by so-called chaos science or the indeterminacy of particle physics, however

vagarious and mystical the behavior of some particles and however chaotic some turbulences. Which is to say: Even though it has been tried, it is surely a silly business to extrapolate from the indeterminacy of subatomic particles to such things as the freedom of the will. At the statistical level, large numbers of atoms behave lawfully. Boyle's law still obtains. If the will is free, it is no thanks to Heisenberg. As for chaos theory, it has been well described not as a repudiation of Newtonian determinism but as its enrichment. Accordingly, like Charles Peirce, I insist on the qualitative and irreducible difference between dyadic and triadic phenomena.

But if scientists, both "physical" scientists and "mental" scientists, can operate comfortably on both sides of the Cartesian split, what happens when the serious scientist is obliged to look straight down at the dysjuncture? That is to say, what is one to make of language, that apparently unique property of man, considered not as a formal structure but as a natural phenomenon? Where did it come from? What to make of it in anatomical, physiological, and evolutionary terms? The chasm must make one dizzy.

Not many psychologists or neuro-anatomists want to look down. Norman Gesschwind is one who has. He points out that there are recently evolved structures in the human brain which have to do with speech and understanding speech, such as the inferior parietal lobule, which receives information from the "primary sensory projection systems," that is, the cerebral cortex which registers seeing and feeling water and hearing the word water. These are described as "association areas." But Charles Peirce would call such associations dyadic events, as he would "information processing systems" such as the computer. A computer, in fact, is the perfect dyadic machine.

What do biologists and anthropologists make of the emergence of language in the evolutionary scheme? The advantages of language in the process of natural selection are obvious. The psychologist Julian Jaynes would go further and say that "the language of men was involved with only one hemisphere in order to leave the other free for the language of gods." Maybe, but setting aside for the moment "the language of gods," what goes on with the language of men? Jaynes doesn't say.

This is what Richard Leakey, the anthropologist, says, describing what happens in a human (not a chimp) when a human uses a word as a symbol, in naming or in a sentence: "Speech is controlled by a certain structure of the brain, located in the outer cerebral cortex. Wernicke's area of the brain pulls out appropriate words from the brain's filing system. The angular gyrus . . . selects the appropriate word."

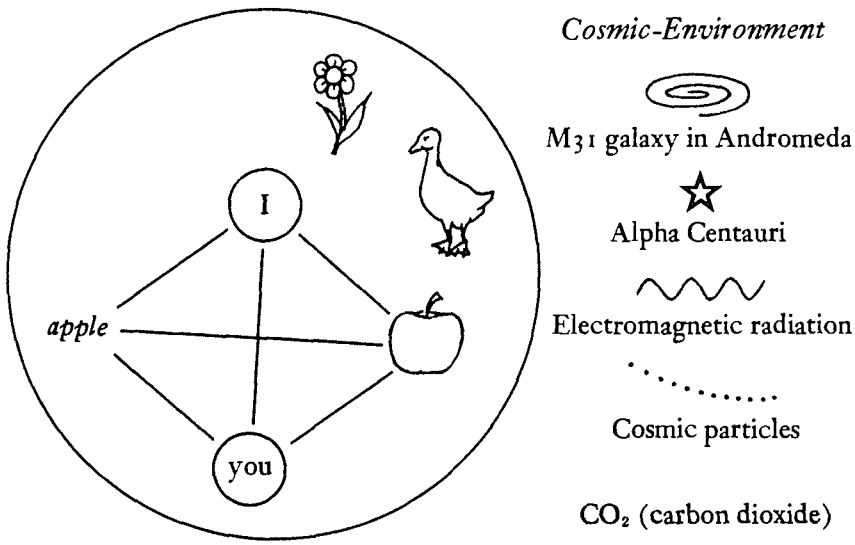
Pulls out? Selects? These are transitive verbs with subjects and objects. The words are the objects. What is the subject? Draw me a picture of Wernicke's area pulling out a word or the angular gyrus selecting a word. Is there any way to understand this, other than supposing a tiny homunculus doing the pulling and selecting?

Then there is what is called speech-act theory of John Austin, John Searle, and others, promising because it studies the actual utterance of sentences. Thus Austin distinguishes between sentences which say something and sentences which do something. The sentence "I married her" is one kind of speech act, an assertion about an event. "I do," uttered during the wedding ceremony, is another kind, part of the performance of the ceremony itself. The classes of speech-act behavior have multiplied amid ongoing debate, but once again the emperor's little boy becomes curious. "Speech acts?" he asks. "What do you mean by acts? You never use the word acts in describing the behavior of other creatures." An act entails an actor, an agent who initiates the act. Draw me a picture of a speech act. Where, what, is this creature, the actor?

But how does Charles Sanders Peirce help us here? Are we any better off with Peirce's thirdness, his triadic theory, than we were with Descartes' *res cogitans* and *res extensa*?

Let me first say that I do not have the competence to speculate on the brain structures which may be implicated in triadic behavior. Nor would I wish to if I had the competence. Such a project is too uncomfortably close to Descartes's search for the seat of the soul, which I believe he lo-

THE WORLD OF THE SELF



THE STRANGE WORLD OF THE TRIADIC CREATURE

Note some odd things about the self's world. One is that it is not the same as the Cosmos-environment. The planet Venus may be a sign in the self's world as the evening star or the morning star, but the galaxy M31 may not be present at all. Another oddity is that the self's world contains things which have no counterpart in the Cosmos, such as centaurs, Big Foot, détente, World War I (which is past), World War III (which may not occur). Yet another odd thing is that the word *apple* which you utter is part of my world but is not a singular thing like an individual apple. It is in fact understandable only insofar as it conforms to a rule for uttering *apples*. But the oddest thing of all is your status in my world. You—Betty, Dick—are like other items in my world—cats, dogs, and apples. But you have a unique property. You are also co-namer, co-discoverer, co-sustainer of my world—whether you are Kafka whom I read or Betty who reads this. Without you—Franz, Betty—I would have no world.

From *Lost in the Cosmos*, by Walker Percy (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1983).

cated in the pineal gland.

No, what is important to note about the triadic event is that it is there for all to see, that in fact it occurs hundreds of times daily—whenever we talk or listen to somebody talking—that its elements are open to inspection to everyone, including natural scientists, and that it cannot be reduced to a complexus of dyadic events. The chattering of an entire population of rhesus monkeys is so reducible, but the single utterance of a two-year-old child who points and says *that a flower* cannot be so understood, even though millions of dyadic events also occur, light waves, excitation of nerve endings, electrical impulses in neurons, muscle contractions and so on.

Admitting that there is such a thing as an irreducible triadic event in language behavior, are there any considerable consequences for our anthropology, that is, for the view of man which comes as second nature to the educated denizen of modern society?

There are indeed. And they, the consequences, are startling indeed.

For once one concedes the reality of

the triadic event, one is brought face to face with the nature of its elements. A child points to a flower and says flower. One element of the event is the flower as perceived by sight and registered by the brain: blue, five-petalled, of a certain shape. Another is the spoken word flower, a gestalt of a peculiar little sequence of sounds of larynx vibrations, escape of air between lips and teeth and so on. But what is the entity at the apex of the triangle, that which links the other two? Peirce, a difficult, often obscure writer, called it by various names, interpretant, interpreter, judger. I have used the term coupler as a minimal designation of that which couples name and thing, subject and predicate, links them by the relation which we mean by the peculiar little word "is." It, the linking entity, was also called by Peirce "mind" and even "soul."

Here is the embarrassment and it cannot be gotten round, so it might as well be said right out: By whatever name one chooses to call it—interpretant, interpreter, coupler, whatever—it, the third element, is not material.

It is as real as a cabbage or a king or a neuron, but it is not material. No material structure of neurons, however complex, and however intimately it may be related to the triadic event, can itself assert anything. If you think it can, please draw me a picture of an assertion.

A material substance cannot name or assert a proposition.

The initiator of a speech act is an act-or, that is, an agent. The agent is not material.

Peirce's insistence on both the reality and nonmateriality of the third element is of critical importance to natural science because its claim to reality is grounded not in this or that theology or metaphysics but in empirical observation and the necessities of scientific logic.

Compare the rigor and clarity of Peirce's semiotic approach to the ancient mind/body problem to current conventional thinking about such matters. We know the sort of answer the psychologist or neurologist gives when we ask him what the mind is: that it is a property of brain circuitry and so on.

We now know, at least an increasing number of people are beginning to know, that a different sort of reality lies at the heart of all uniquely human activity—speaking, listening, understanding, thinking, looking at a work of art—namely, Charles Peirce's triadacity. It cannot be gotten round and must sooner or later be confronted by natural science, for it is indeed a natural phenomenon. Indeed it may well turn out that consciousness itself is not a "thing," an entity, but an act, the triadic act by which we recognize reality through its symbolic vehicle.

But, finally, what can one say about this entity and event, the reality of which Charles Peirce demonstrated 100 years ago and which we ourselves encounter a hundred times a day?

To begin with, what to call it, this entity which *symballeins*, throws together word and thing? As we have seen, Peirce used a number of words: interpreter, interpretent, asserter, mind, "I," ego, even soul. They may or may not be semantically accurate, but for the educated denizen of this age they suffer certain semantic impairments. "Interpretant" is too ambiguous, even for Peirce scholars. "Soul" carries too much furniture from the religious attic. "Ego" has a different malodor, smelling as it does of the old Cartesian split.

Then don't name it, for the present, but talk about it, like Lowell Thomas coming upon a strange creature in his travels, in this case a sure enough beast in the jungle.

There are certain minimal things one can say about it, this coupler, this apex of Peirce's triangle.

For one thing, it is there. It is located in time and space, but not as an organism. It has different parameters and variables.

For another, it is peculiarly and intimately involved with others of its kind so that, unlike the solitary biological organism, it is impossible to imagine its functioning without the other, another. All solitary organisms have instinctive responses, but Helen Keller had to receive the symbol water from Miss Sullivan before she became aware of the water. Peirce's triad is social by its very nature. As he put it, "Every assertion requires a speaker and a listener." The triadic creature is nothing if not social. Indeed he can be understood as a construct of his relations with others.

Here's another trait. It, this strange new creature, not only has an environment, as do all creatures. It has a world. Its world is the totality of that which is named. This is different from its environment. An environment has gaps. There are no gaps in a world. Nectar is part of the environment of a bee, cabbages and kings and Buicks are not. There are no gaps in the world of this new creature, because the gaps are called that, *gaps*, or *the unknown* or *out there*, or *don't know*.

For this creature, moreover, words, symbols and the things symbolized are subject to norms, something new in the world. They can be fresh and grow stale. They can be dull and everyday, then sharp as a diamond in the poet's usage.

It is possible here to do no more than call attention to the intriguing and, I think, quite felicitous way in which the properties of this strange triadic creature as arrived at by a scientist and logician 100 years ago, flow directly into the rather spectacular portrait of man by some well-known 20th-century philosophers who came at the same subject, *Homo symbolificus*, from the wholly different direction of European phenomenology.

I will mention only a couple.

There is Martin Heidegger who uses the word *Dasein* to describe him, the human creature, a being there. The *Dasein*, moreover, inhabits not only an *Umwelt*, an environment, but a *Welt*, a world.

Most important, this *Dasein*, unlike an organism, exists on an ethical axis. It can live "authentically" or "inauthentically." It is capable of *Verstehen*, true understanding, and *Rede*, authentic speech, which can deteriorate into *Neugier*, idle curiosity, and *Gerede*, gossip.

Gabriel Marcel and Martin Buber speak of the human being as radically dependent upon others, as an I-thou which can deteriorate into an I-it. Marcel describes the being of a human as a being-in-a-situation.

Sartre is less optimistic. His human being is a solitary consciousness existing in a dead world of things. As for the "other," Marcel's person, Buber's thou, Peirce's listener, Sartre says only that *L'Enfer, c'est les autres*. Hell is other people.

Finally, the *Dasein*, which has undergone a "fall," a *Verfallen* into an unauthentic existence, can recover itself, live authentically, become a seeker and wayfarer, what Marcel calls *Homo viator*.

The modern psychologist and social scientist cannot, of course, make heads or tails of such existentialist traits as "a falling into unauthenticity" or a sentence of Marcel's such as this: "It may be of my essence to be able to be not what I am." He, the scientist, generally regards such notions as fanciful or novelistic or "existentialist." But perhaps he, the scientist, lacks an appropriate scientific model. At any rate, it is possible that he, the modern scientist of man, will be obliged to take account of these fanciful notions, not by the existentialists but by their cold, hard-headed compatriot, Charles Peirce.

Here is a prophecy. All humanists, even novelists, are entitled to make prophecies. Here is mine. The behavioral scientist of the future will be able to make sense of the following sort of sentence which at present makes no sense to him whatever: There is a difference between the being-in-the-world of the scientist and the being-in-the-world of the layman.

And lastly, with this new anthropology in hand, Peirce's triadic creature with its named world, Heidegger's *Dasein* suffering a *Verfallen*, a fall, Gabriel Marcel's *Homo viator*, man as pilgrim, one might even explore its openness to such traditional Judeo-Christian notions as man falling prey to the worldliness of the world, and man as pilgrim seeking his salvation.

But that's a different story.

CURRENT BOOKS

SCHOLARS' CHOICE

Recent titles selected and reviewed by Fellows and staff of the Wilson Center

Ireland, Whose Ireland?

MODERN IRELAND 1600–1972. *By R. F. Foster. Viking. 688 pp. $35.00*

The history of Ireland, as I imbibed it at the Christian Brothers' School in Newry, was a simple story. For nearly 800 years an otherwise united country, in its essential character Gaelic and Catholic, has been occupied by a foreign invader. A decisive stage in this occupation involved the Plantation of Ulster, a monstrous arrangement in the 17th century by which soldiers of the British Crown were given, instead of payment in money, large tracts of land in the northern counties of Ireland. This land was seized from the Irish, and settled with English and Scots Presbyterian mercenaries and their dependents. As a result, a foreign element had prevented the peace and unity of the island. British domination culminated in the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland (January 1, 1801). In every generation since 1798, a few heroic men had banded together and revolted against the Crown. These insurrections were brutally put down, their leaders executed or transported to Australia. On Easter Monday, 1916, Padraig Pearse and his associates proclaimed the Irish Republic, and fought to achieve it. They were defeated and put to death, but the flame of freedom had been lit and it could not be extinguished. In 1921, a mere five years after Easter Week, the British Government was forced to concede to the Irish people a partial recognition of their claim: independence, in effect, for 26 of the 32 counties of Ireland. Northern Ireland, established by the Government of Ireland Act on December 23, 1920, was secured for the benefit of Unionists, descendants of the Planters.

The logic of this lesson was not enforced, but it was clear enough. Ireland had not yet achieved its freedom and unity, but in the fullness of time the partition of the country into a Protestant North and a Catholic South would be abolished. We would see "a nation once again."

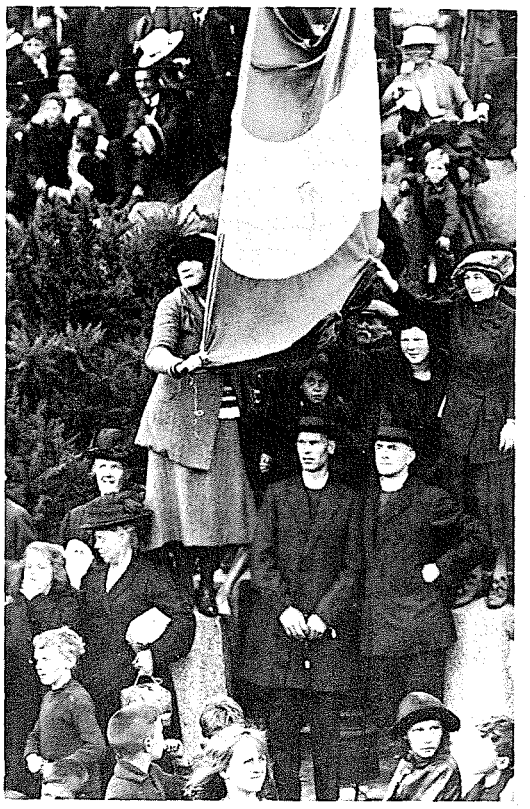
The Christian Brothers did not urge us to prepare ourselves for the glorious day, or to join the Irish Republican Army, an institution that had fallen into decay and no longer represented a genuine Irish aspiration. But we were encouraged to regard the history of Ireland as unfinished business, a story that lacked only its happy ending. It was our duty to maintain a sense of Ireland, learn and speak its language, play its games, practice its ancient customs, and keep the Faith. As the National Program Conference on Primary Education meeting from January 6, 1921, urged, the chief aim of the teaching of Irish history should be "to inculcate national pride and self-respect . . . by showing that the Irish race has fulfilled a great mission in the advancement of civilization"; to ensure that "English authors, as such, should have just the limited place due to English literature among all the European literatures"; and that education should be organized "in order to revive the ancient life of Ireland as a Gaelic state, Gaelic in language, and Gaelic and Christian in its ideals."

R. F. Foster, who quotes that passage from the National Program Conference, is one of those Irish historians who question the "one story and one story only" as I received it at Newry. He refers to "the *soi-disant* 'revisionist' school of Irish historians, who since the 1940s have been dispassionately re-evaluating the assumptions of the 800-years-of-struggle version of Irish history." I assume he includes himself in the school. But *dispassionately?* It would be inaccurate to say that he has no axe to grind. A Protestant, born in Waterford and educated at Trinity College, Dublin, would not walk abroad in the streets

without an axe. But he is temperate in the wielding of it. He looks upon Ireland with rueful affection: a distressful country indeed, but not a bore.

Mostly, Foster thinks that what has been achieved in Ireland by noise and mayhem would have come to pass a year or two later in any case, quietly enough. Like many revisionists, he takes what I may call the *Fine Gael* view of Irish history, by which I mean to distinguish it at least officially from the *Fianna Fâil* view. These are the two main political parties in Ireland, still separated and distinguished only by the fact that their grandfathers took opposite sides in the Civil War of 1922–1923. The *Fianna Fâil* view, at least for oratorical purposes, is that of the "one story and one story only." The *Fine Gael* view is that the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 was satisfactory enough to be going on with; it might lead to better things, even to the unification of Ireland, in time; and that for the time being it might be accepted by all parties.

Modern Ireland begins with Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, challenging the imposition of English power in Ireland, a gesture symbolically rebuked a few months later, in 1601, when Mountjoy, the new Lord Deputy from England, smashed the pre-Christian stone at Tullahogue upon which the O'Neills were inaugurated. Thereafter, the issues and occasions Foster treats are mostly the standard ones: Plantation; Cromwellian Ireland; Restoration Ireland; the Protestant Ascendancy (which excluded Catholics from politics); the effect of the revolutions in America and France; the Famine; Charles Stewart Parnell and the development of Nationalism; the Irish Renaissance; the Easter Rising and its aftermath; Eamon de Valera's Ireland; the emergence of a "modern" Ireland. The story concludes without ending in 1972, the year in which Ireland joined the European Economic Community, Edward Heath's government suspended the Parliament of Northern Ireland and introduced direct rule from Westminster, and the people of Ireland removed, with no fuss or conflict, the clause in the Constitution of 1937 which gave a specially favored position to the Catholic Church.



Dubliners hail Eamon de Valera, 1917.

What distinguishes *Modern Ireland* is the civility of Foster's intelligence. He knows that the matters with which he is dealing are the very causes for which, in Belfast, Derry, and other places in Northern Ireland, people are giving and taking life. When a member of the Provisional I.R.A. shoots and kills a British soldier in Belfast, his reason—and to him, whether he could articulate it or not, his justification—is the history of Ireland as it has been represented to him at school or in stories, songs, the lore of the streets.

Foster wants to understand and then to explain how such violence has come about. He knows, though he cannot hope to overcome, the coercive force of historical images; they are the stuff of myths, which prompt people to act in accordance with them. He wishes to take the heat out of such imagery, but he is patient and

never shrill or peremptory in considering the issues, the events and personalities which the myths at once reveal and hide. Not "dispassionately" it seems to me, but equably. I am sure that Foster is writing on behalf of the values we find in his sentences: justice, lucidity, a sense of the relation between human action and the waste that necessarily darkens it. He writes superbly, not just well. He thinks as clearly as the complexity of the matters allows.

I am not entirely persuaded that he is right and the Christian Brothers in Newry wrong. The very fact that he and his colleagues are willing to see themselves as revisionists, without evident qualm or misgiving, is not reassuring: Revisionism is parasitic upon the myths it plans to subvert. There is no point at which one's irony ends, once it starts. We are all revisionists these days, I recall Foster saying a year or two ago. Perhaps we are. But I am not sure that we should be endlessly gratified by our belated wisdom. Posterity has not yet spoken.

In the meantime, nothing but good—unless the good includes a tincture of complacency—can come from the application of intelligence such as Foster's to the history of Ireland. The present danger in writing about Irish history is that we may try, in Hans Blumenberg's phrase from *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, to give ourselves that past which releases us from the past. It is a temptation which Nietzsche offers in *Use and Abuse of History*: "We seek a past from which we may spring, rather than that past from which we seem to have derived." The problem with the history of Ireland is that many of us now crave to be released from it or by any means to transcend it. Foster's aim is to stay in history and make sense of it. What, starting perhaps afresh in 1972, we do with that sense is another day's work, matter for another story.

—Denis Donoghue '89

The Poet-Oracle of Spanish America

SOR JUANA OR, THE TRAPS OF FAITH.
By Octavio Paz. Translated by Margaret Sayers Peden. Harvard. 547 pp. $29.95

For all our involvements with Latin America, the region—seemingly turbulent and resistant to modernization—offers no coherent image to Americans. The great Latin American novels of the 1960s and '70s, usually in fine translations, convey the spirit of the culture but are to most readers more expressive than explanatory. With Mexico, to be sure, where the biography at hand is set, we had a love affair from 1910 to 1940, during the heroic years of the Revolution: The country beguiled us with its muralists and its charismatic insurgents. By now, though, for most of us, Mexico has again receded into the Latin American miasma, where history seems predetermined yet shapeless, societies oppressed yet unruly, intellectual life stylish yet rhetorical, popular culture vibrant yet declassé.

Of books in English which explain the historical logic and identity of these nations, few avoid the jargon of academia or the formulas of journalism. One vigorous exception is *The Labyrinth of Solitude* (1950; trans. 1961), a free-ranging essay on life and thought in Mexico by one of its leading poets and critics, Octavio Paz. Mentioned only in passing in his book is an intriguing figure, the 17th-century poet-nun Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Now, more than three decades later, Paz returns to this distant but kindred spirit, this time locating her at the center of a book four times the length of *Labyrinth*.

Sor Juana is no mere biography of a nun; even broader than *Labyrinth*, it moves easily among the philosophical, scientific, theological, and literary traditions that illuminate Sor Juana's cast of mind.

Paz's feat is striking: Imagine T. S. Eliot—instead of devoting a few allusive passages to the English metaphysical poets—writing a 500-page study of John Donne's poetry, mind, career, historical antecedents, and present-day significance. But Paz has done even more. He has forsaken his own 20th-century viewpoint and assumed that of Sor Juana, a cloistered female in a misogynous, highly structured society, faced by the same pressures and hypocrisies encountered by the heterodox or gifted person in the convulsive Mexico of today. The result is a life-and-times study, but the times include our own.

Sor Juana was born to unmarried parents in the rural village of San Miguel Nepantla in 1648 and christened Juana Ramírez de Asbaje. She could read and write by the age of six and clipped off locks of hair when she failed to master her grammar. Around age 10 she was sent to Mexico City, where she lived first with relatives, then at the viceregal court. On one occasion she defended herself against 40 of the realm's most learned minds, the viceroy reported, as a royal galleon might have fended off a few canoes. To such a prodigy, the prospects of conventional marriage were depressing, particularly given the limits imposed by her birth and poverty. The alternatives—prostitution or concubinage—were equally bleak. So at 19, just when she captured the respect of court society, she entered the convent of the Discalced Carmelites. Finding the regime too severe, she decided less than two years later to take the veil in the more permissive convent of San Jeronimo.

Convent life may have redirected Sor Juana's sexual urges, but it did not suppress the erotic playfulness of her poetry. Paz speaks of a "neutralization" of sex beneath her religious habit, saying that it served her appropriation of "masculine" learning. Gender, she discovered, was a social not a natural obstacle to learning. Her mythological identifications—whether with the wise, beneficent goddess Isis or with Apollo's arrogant son, Phaeton—all represented knowledge, poetry, and prophecy. Her library became for her a house of language, peopled by beings who were more real and enduring than humans: ideas.

Sor Juana was, above all else, a poet. And Paz proves to be a peerless guide to her verse, showing how she drew from the great Spanish poets of her age even as she found her own voice. Of the Spanish-language poets who wrote in Sor Juana's time, Paz says, "the truth is none of the others could compare with her; they were not peers or rivals, only a chorus."

Sor Juana's poetry in many ways closed an era in the Hispanic world. Hers is the last elegant voice to issue from colonial 17th-century America as it began its decline from baroque grandeur. Yet despite Sor Juana's poetic achievement, its intellectual undergirding was crimped by its distance from the new science and political philosophy of Europe and by her own prudence in matters of orthodoxy. Because her speculative life was limited by the ecclesiastical establishment, she saw the world almost medievally, as emblem and hieroglyph of spiritual truths. In her private life also, as Paz notes, an adventurous soul was checked by the intrigues and jealousies of her 17th-century community and by the inevitable restrictions of a collective routine.

Sor Juana's scientific understanding was passé, but her cultural perceptions were prophetic. Even her dated interests—her obsession with neo-Platonic mysteries and neo-scholastic metaphysics—anticipate a poetic mode of the modern age. In Sor Juana's richest poem, "First Dream," she evokes an isolated soul facing not God but boundless space. Sor Juana's true heirs appear only two centuries or more later: the Valéry of *Le cemetière marin*, the Mallarmé of *Un coup de dés*, and Latin American poets such as Chile's Vicente Huidobro and Mexico's José Gorostiza.

During Sor Juana's lifetime, the 1680s were her years of greatest incandescence and fame. Then came a time of plague, famine, and riots. Being an anomaly, a prominent intellectual woman, she antagonized the prelates, and she lost her patronage at court. No longer could she sustain her creative spirit in solitude. She signed in blood a renunciation of all secular learning, and she surrendered her precious books and musical and scientific instruments, keeping only three prayer books and some hair shirts and scourges. After years of watchful waiting the prelates had won. In 1695, aged 46, Sor Juana died of the plague while attending her sisters.

Beyond her literary significance, Sor Juana still exemplifies the troubled spirit of Latin American culture. She raised her voice in a world blocked from modern paths by the Inquisition, cumbersome bureaucracy, a stratified society, a peripheral location. Modern Latin America often seems equally held in check: Reforms, revolutions, and technocratic programs have not fulfilled the agenda of more than a century and half of independence. The "marvelous realists" of Latin America's literary "boom"—writers such as Gabriel García Márquez, Julio Cortazar, and José Donoso—assert as a generation what Sor Juana affirmed in isolation: that Latin America is a civilization unto itself, that it challenges the rationalist, often predatory, values of the modern world. Paz himself, in *One Earth, Four or Five Worlds*, says that the "great wound of the West" has been the same "separation of history and morality" which Sor Juana experienced; García Márquez, in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, even challenges the efficacy of our notions of linear time. This ironic, transcendental way of seeing the world that characterizes so many Latin American writers has its precedent in Sor Juana, in her limitations and her achievements in spite of them.

Sor Juana has been hailed as the "Tenth Muse," the "Phoenix of America" and "the first feminist of America." To Paz, her deeper significance lies in the insoluble contradiction between herself and her world, a symbol of Mexico's ambivalent modernization during the centuries that have ensued. This biography—splendidly written, richly informed, deeply thoughtful, and skillfully translated—opens a grand new window on the tribulations and meanings of Spanish-American civilization.

—Richard M. Morse, Secretary
Latin American Program, WWICS

What Aristotle Didn't Know

MYTH AND TRAGEDY IN ANCIENT GREECE. *By Jean-Pierre Vernant and Pierre Vidal-Naquet. Translated by Janet Lloyd. Zone Books. 527 pp. $28.95*

MYTH AND SOCIETY IN ANCIENT GREECE. *By Jean-Pierre Vernant. Translated by Janet Lloyd. Zone Books. 279 pp. $22.95*

For at least two decades now, much of the most challenging and controversial work in literary and social criticism has been emanating from France, and its effect on the study of the humanities in the United States and Great Britain has been little less than seismic. The most common

labels for this criticism are "structuralism," "deconstruction," "new historicism," and "semiotics." Like most labels, they are not very helpful. Nor do they catch the spirit of writers as diverse, and diversely brilliant, as Claude Levi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Jean Baudrillard.

Still, if one were to attempt a generalization about these variously imaginative critics, it would not be unfair to say that all of them are radically reassessing the "naturalness" of our Euro-centered, humanist assumptions about mankind, art, and society. Taking their cue from the magisterial anthropology of Lévi-Strauss, these thinkers all explore the ways in which our idea of "the way things are" is in fact a cultural *construct* of our society, no more or no less "rational" than the seemingly (to us) bizarre rituals and myths of remote, primitive tribes.

What makes the two books under review important is that they carry this enterprise, the creative and reverent disassembling of our ideas about "the way things are," to the very origins: to Athens during the fifth century B.C., when many of our Western conceptions about man first took form. For two millennia, fifth-century Athens—the golden age of Socrates and the playwrights Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides—has loomed over the West as an exacting standard of austere and serene nobility.

Now, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Religions at the College de France (assisted by Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Professor of Sociology at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes), makes so bold as to question almost all the accepted judgments and readings of Greek tragedy. Vernant finds that our obstacle to understanding the Greek classics is neither their distance nor their obscurity. Instead, he argues, the barrier "is the fact that they are too close to the mental universe of the West and seem too 'natural' to us." Vernant thus sets himself to the task of "de-familiarizing" those too well-known Greek tragedies.

An observation made early in *Myth and Tragedy* sets the direction of Vernant's iconoclastic work. For at least a thousand years, Greek tragedy has been considered by most scholars as the highest and noblest expression of classical spirituality. Greek tragedy, classicists insist, gave birth to the characteristic Western mode of thinking and even shaped the character of Western philosophy. Not quite so, writes Vernant:

"Tragedy emerged in Greece at the end of the sixth century. Within 100 years the tragic seam had already been exhausted, and when Aristotle in the fourth century set out, in his *Poetics*, to establish the theory of tragedy, he had, so to speak, become a stranger. Tragedy faded away as philosophy experienced its moment of triumph."

Vernant indeed interprets this birth of rationalist philosophy in Plato and Aristotle, with its banishment of the archaic myths that informed tragedy, as a betrayal of the energy that possessed Greek tragedy.

But if the Greek tragedies were not philosophical art, what were they? The Greeks "invented" tragedy, Vernant says, in just the way Neolithic man "invented" the hoe, or early capitalist man "invented" the railroad: The Greek *polis* was ripe for, and needed, that particular invention. Agamemnon and Orestes, Oedipus and Antigone, all those figures without whose names and myths we could scarcely name ourselves, are figures through whose actions on stage the nascent Greek city-state, in a golden moment of self-doubt and self-definition, acted out its ambiguous transition from one age to the next—from a heroic culture to a democratic society. More a social than an artistic phenomenon, the tragedies reconciled the democracy of Athens to its transition from a primitive religious community into a more rationalistic, legalistic *polis*.

This, of course, is not what Aristotle saw when he looked at the tragedies. The "classical" interpretation of tragedy, starting with him, assumed that it was *mimetic*, *exemplary*, and *moral*. Tragedy was *mimetic* in that it was an "imitation of life," meaning human life in human society. It was *exemplary* because it told of the down-

fall of a great, eminent man through his pride (*hubris*), his violation of the ethical rules of human behavior. And tragedy was *moral* because it aimed to instruct the audience, to remind them of the universal force of those ethical rules.

Vernant contradicts Aristotle point by point. Tragedy is *not* mimetic: It employs mythic figures whom the audience *knows* to be mythic and somehow out of place in the Athenian city-state. Tragedy is *not* exemplary: The hero of tragedy, Vernant insists, is not an example but a *problem*, a remnant of the heroic age who does not quite function in the atmosphere of a legalistic democracy. And tragedy is *not* moral: The tragedies did not "solve" or "teach" resolutions to the moral and historical conflicts embedded in them; more daringly, they externalized and acted out in all their ambiguity conflicts such as Oedipus's, where man seems "some kind of incomprehensible, baffling monster, both an agent and one acted upon, guilty and innocent, dominating the whole of nature with his industrious mind yet incapable of controlling himself, lucid and yet blinded by a frenzy sent to him by the gods." This defines tragedy, according to the new *Poetics* of Vernant.

Aristotle is not the only authority to come under fire. For more than a century, much of the most exciting classical scholarship has followed Friedrich Nietzsche's ground-breaking *Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and *Genealogy of Morals* (1887): As the very words "birth" and "genealogy" suggest, Nietzsche's emphasis was on origins and on what Greek tragedy created for Western culture. Vernant flatly states that this emphasis is as misleading as the Aristotelean analysis was.

Vernant replaces the emphasis on origins with a concern for how the tragedies *functioned* to ease tumultuous social and cultural transitions within Greek society. What makes his reinterpretation pertinent, he believes, is that the schisms of fifth-century Athens are culturally related to our own. We, like Aeschylus and unlike Aristotle, inhabit a violent universe torn by conflicts in which old gods are dying and traditional ideas of heroism are being severely tested by different—and desperately needed—novel ideas of community.

In studying Greek tragedy, Vernant finds not a distant father but instead a "cousin" who has helpful words for us. Vernant makes his claim urbanely: "I believe that today we are witnessing a kind of rebirth of this sense of the tragic in life; each of us is aware of the ambiguity of the human condition. Perhaps that is why these Greek gods, who . . . seem to form a kind of language, continue, as we listen to them, to mean something to us."

—Frank D. McConnell '78

NEW TITLES

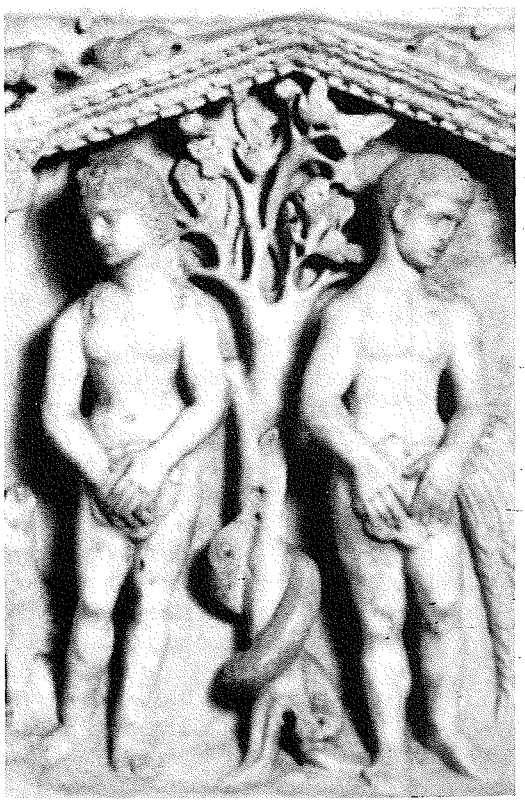
History

EDMUND BURKE: His Life and Opinions. *By Stanley Ayling. St. Martin's. 316 pp. $19.95*

Two centuries after he wrote *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Edmund Burke (1729–97) remains an intellectual force to be reckoned with, distasteful to liberals, an icon to conservatives. The liberal philosopher A. J. Ayer, for example, recently reduced Burke's philosophy to a piece of doggerel: "The rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate, God made them high and lowly, and ordered their estate." Conservatives, however, honor Burke because he opposed radical change in some of the most elegant rhetoric a practicing politician ever wrote; as Burkeans, conservatives rebut John Stuart Mill's depiction of them as the "stupid party." The English biographer Stanley Ayling's approach to Burke's life and thought is fresh and non-partisan. Burke was not the first, or the last, gifted Irishman to make his way in the world of English politics and literature (a journey encumbered by financial disasters and charming but dishonest relatives whose fortunes he was always trying to repair or improve). The real adventure in Burke's life was his struggle with the issues arising from the Old-Order-shattering events of the revolutionary era. Ayling's subtitle underscores the fact that Burke's pessimism, his mistrust of easy answers, and his respect for established institutions and forms were really *opinions*, not political philosophy. Ayling reveals that in the 19th century Burke—championing colonial Americans and Irish Catholics, and suspicious of the Crown's authority—was considered a liberal. Political climates change, however. During this century, conservatives have drawn from *Reflections on the Revolution in France* a political philosophy: skepticism toward the politics of ideas, caution about governmental action, and respect for elites, religion, and property. Yet many conservatives today are abandoning these opinions, and old Burke may outlast another set of champions who have tried to pigeonhole his eloquent complexity.

THE BODY AND SOCIETY: Men, Women, and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity. *By Peter Brown. Columbia. 504 pp. $45*

A pagan Greek who observed the Christian practice of celibacy and continence wondered how this "new teaching, bizarre and disruptive of the human race," had arisen. Princeton historian Brown is similarly perplexed. The question is all the more puzzling because Jesus ad-



vocated sexual marriage, after the model of the first parents, Adam and Eve. But Jesus' ideas of the kingdom of heaven, Brown points out, were linked to the renewal of the kingdom of Israel. Once these links were broken, once the kingdom of heaven became otherworldly, then the reproductive instincts could be—and were—devalued. Brown is too skillful a historian to account for Christian sexual renunciation by any one theory. St. Paul (d. 64? A.D.) abominated sex because spirit and flesh were enemies; Tertullian (c. 155–220 A.D.) advocated chastity for the opposite reason, because body and soul were the same. The case for celibacy was made even for aesthetic reasons: It permitted a contemplative life superior to the raging of the passions. Despite its title, Brown's book is really not about sexuality. He employs the now-alien practice of sexual renunciation to rebuild the mental world of late antiquity for the modern reader. The themes of continence and the virgin life, Brown says, "have come to carry with them icy overtones." Brown's ambition, and the charm of this history, lies in how he makes "the chill shades . . . speak to us again, and perhaps more gently than we had thought they might, in the strange tongue of a long-lost Christianity."

THE PURITAN ORDEAL. *By Andrew Delbanco. Harvard. 306 pp. $30*
WORLDS OF WONDER, DAYS OF JUDGMENT: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England. *By David D. Hall. Knopf. 316 pp. $29.95*

American historians—Perry Miller notable among them—have scanned the Puritan experience for sources of our modern self. Two recent studies open a new window on what could be termed "the other Puritans." The Puritan mentality and religious practices presented by both books hardly fit the traditional image: Here is no monolithic group of gray Calvinists fleeing Old-World persecutions to become devout fanatics in a Massachusetts wilderness. In *Worlds of Wonder*, Boston University historian David Hall shows how "religion was embedded in the fabric of daily life." Cotton Mather and other clergymen might roar their fierce admonitions, but a nearly universal literacy enabled churchgoers to interpret Scripture individually. The result: Orthodoxy and heresy, high and low, canon and popular superstition got so jumbled that no one could sort out the threads. If the 17th-century Puritans attended church regularly, they also eagerly consumed plays, songs, novels, and "filthy Jests."

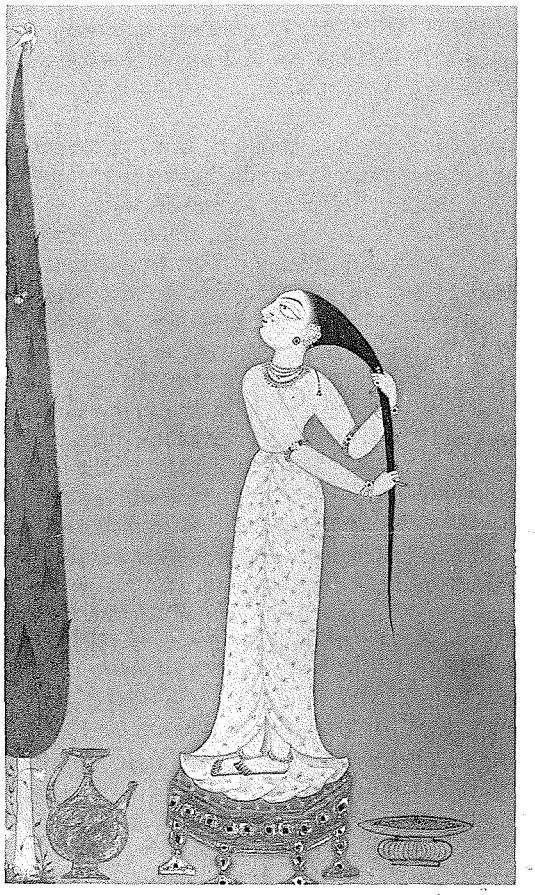
Hall leaves the Puritan mental world so fragmented that he raises a question which, inadvertently, *The Puritan Ordeal* helps answer. To find a unity in the Puritan experience, Andrew Delbanco, professor of literature at Columbia, concentrates on our understanding "not of ideas so much as of feelings." Migrating from England to America, the Puritans underwent a change, Delbanco argues, that was as much psychological as geographical. In England the Puritans had external enemies; sin was conceived of in *internal*, Augustinian terms. But in America, no outside oppressor existed, and the Puritans might have lost their sense of community by forfeiting "their long nurture as an outgroup." Instead, the Puritans satisfied their "appetite for enmity" by projecting sin outward. Satan took on a more prominent role in daily sermons. This shift, says Delbanco, shaped American literature (consider Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*) even as it created a new "etiology of morals" for this country. Together, these two volumes reveal afresh how New England during the 17th century was "a generative time for much that came later in our culture."

Contemporary Affairs

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE NEW DEAL ORDER, 1930–1980. *Edited by Steve Fraser and Gary Gerstle. Princeton. 311 pp. $25*

The tainting of the word "liberal" in the recent U.S. presidential campaign indicates that the political era inaugurated by the New Deal has ended. Or so argue the 10 essays which Steve Fraser, an editor, and Gary Gerstle, a Princeton historian, have gathered here: Collectively, they present the period from 1930 through 1980 as one long continuum in American political life. Even as late as the mid-1960s, the New Deal seemed irreversible, as though it would "go on forever." These essays show, however, that it always rested on shaky foundations. Historians

Alan Brinkley and Nelson Lichtenstein trace the way one key support of the New Deal, labor, changed from "a social democratic insurgency into a mere interest group," which "drained it of its moral preeminence, [and] stripped it of any enduring political power." Meanwhile, the New Deal's commitment to social justice eventually brought race to the center of national politics. The "substitution of race for class as the great, unsolved problem in American life" alienated southern and other poorer white supporters. Yet political scientist Ira Katznelson argues that the basic economic problems which the New Deal set out to solve—for whites as well as blacks—would have required more state controls of capitalist institutions than Roosevelt's successors were ever willing to initiate. In the closing essay, Thomas Edsall of *The Washington Post* decides it is not the Republican party so much as a different kind of political order that has triumphed: "A small, often interlocking network of campaign specialists, fund-raisers, and lobbyists" has ensured that both the Republican and Democratic parties will champion policies that favor the affluent over the poor. "The New Deal order is dead," the editors say. "Yet the problems bedeviling that order from the early 1960s live on."



CONTEMPORARY INDIAN TRADITION.
Edited by Carla M. Borden. Smithsonian. 412 pp. $19.95

Movies like *A Passage to India*, the TV series *The Jewel in the Crown*, and novels such as Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet* have fashioned romantic images, a veritable "Raj nostalgia," for India's past. But what relationship do Indians themselves, under the impact of modernization and Westernization, have with their own history? In the 23 essays collected here, a new generation of India's leading scholars and intellectuals, joined by several Western Indologists, address this question. Looking at contemporary India, they find that the contrasts with Western ways outweigh the similarities. Ela R. Bhatt, founder of the Self-Employed Women's Association, reports that labor laws patterned after the industrialized West ignored the 94 percent of India's working women who are self-employed; she then relates how a textile union in Ahmedabad used Gandhian methods to organize such women. Indian journalists, according to *India Today* editor Aroon Purie, serve not only the population who can read by reporting the news, but also those who are illiterate by advocating on their behalf. Madhav Gadgil, a Bangalore professor of ecological sciences, encourages Indian environmentalists to study the ancient tradition of the "Sacred Grove"—land held in common under religious principles—to learn how to husband India's natural resources. In matters ranging from architecture to religion to urbanization, these essays show a post-colonial India that is reacting against simplistic models of modernization. The history, metaphysics, and geography of India all compel a vision of modernity, says editor Borden, unlike anything the West has known: These essays are attempts, at once learned and fumbling, to adumbrate such a vision.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS: The Military and the Media, 1962–1968. *By William M. Hammond. U.S. Army. 413 pp. $23*

This candid, well-knit official Army chronicle of the military and the media in Vietnam supplies a cautionary tale for policymakers today—a lesson about politics as public relations. Perhaps never before the Vietnam War, suggests author Hammond, had an American military venture depended so much on the cooperation of the media. Unwilling to jeopardize his beloved Great Society social programs, President Lyndon Johnson refused to mobilize the country behind a decisive plan to win in Vietnam. Instead, he hoped that a carefully orchestrated public relations campaign would convince Americans that "U.S. forces could win in the end without a major sacrifice of lives and treasure." Disregarding the advice of his own officers, U.S. Army Chief of Staff General Earle Wheeler decided the military should distort its press releases to help "sell" the war to American voters. When the sheer size of North Vietnam's offensive actions in 1968 disproved the official, optimistic U.S. propaganda, the credibility of the military fell sharply. Increasingly, however, the military tended to blame the press for its credibility problems. But Hammond, an historian at the U.S. Army Center of Military History, cites figures and statistics to prove that it was not news coverage but the rising casualty rate which alienated the American public during the Vietnam War. This is an official history that indicts the officials: Press reports, says Hammond, were more accurate than the administration's statements in portraying the situation in Vietnam.

Arts & Letters

GOLDWYN: A Biography. *By A. Scott Berg. Knopf. 579 pp. $24.95*
AN EMPIRE OF THEIR OWN: How the Jews Invented Hollywood. *By Neal Gabler. Crown. 502 pp. $24.95*

Berg's biography of flinty, independent filmmaker Samuel Goldwyn (1879–1974) has all the ingredients of a movie blockbuster. Eight years in the making, with a cast of the famous, *Goldwyn* is *the* success story: An immigrant rises from poverty to become a tycoon in the most glamorous of industries. Because Goldwyn's career coincided with the creation of the studio system, Berg, author of *Max Perkins: Editor of Genius* (1978), hopes to make his biography of Goldwyn the story of Hollywood itself. But as *Goldwyn* piles up details, it becomes clear that Berg is not telling that larger story. The "Goldwyn touch" had to do with public relations, not film making: Goldwyn only made a handful of good films (*The Best Years of Our Lives, Wuthering Heights, The Little Foxes*), and to them his contribution principally consisted in buying good material and talent.

Film historian Neal Gabler's *An Empire of their Own* finds the social context that Berg's *Goldwyn* lacks. For the founders of all the major Hollywood studies—Louis B. Mayer (Metro), Harry Cohn (Columbia), Carl Laemmle (Universal), Jack and Harry Warner (Warner Bros.), and Adolph Zukor (Paramount)—were all Jews who had emigrated from the ghettos of Eastern Europe. They detested their humble Jewish origins, and their "ferocious, even pathological, embrace of America . . . drove them to deny whatever they had been before settling here." They created in their films a sanitized American Dream—an Andy Hardy America of white clapboard houses, gleaming clean streets, and quaint town squares—which during the Depression had almost as little to do with the new country they hoped to embrace as with the old country they wished to forget. The irony, as Gabler points out, is that the America they invented has become more "real" than the historical America in much of the popular imagination.

THE LETTERS OF HENRY ADAMS, VOLUMES IV–VI, 1892–1918. *Edited by J. C. Levenson, Ernest Samuels, Charles Vandersee, Viola Hopkins Winner, Jayne N. Samuels, and Eleanor Pearre Abbot. Harvard. 2,400 pp. $150*

In 1900, Henry Adams wrote to Elizabeth Cameron, "I am the drollest little, peppery, irritable,

explosive old man of sixty-two that ever was." This figure greatly contrasts with the detached, ironic, and self-deprecating persona he projected in *The Education of Henry Adams* (1907), one of the great autobiographies in Western literature. With his collected letters now fully in print, it becomes clear that Adams (1838–1918) was not merely the failed and embittered descendant of presidents John and John Quincy Adams. The correspondence reveals a charming, eloquent, and prophetic observer of the awakening of a newly industrialized age. Adams's comment from the Paris Exposition of 1900—"To me [the Exposition] has been an education which I have failed to acquire for want of tutors, but it has been an immense amusement . . . ."—was typical. He enjoyed describing himself trapped in the 17th and 18th centuries, but his letters repeatedly show a robust and brilliant mind coming to terms with the 20th century. His encouragement and political advice to his friends Secretary of State John Hay and Teddy Roosevelt testify to his ability and wit. "Great men come and go," Adams wrote, "but I am as permanent as an under-secretary." Many letters bear postmarks from Adams's vast travels, from the Caribbean to Russia, from the Middle East to the South Seas. They brim with insights and perceptions, candid and unrestrained treatises on politics, economics, science, art, and casual chatter. They also constitute an unrivaled commentary upon his age—America's swift and often unsettling transition into the modern world.

AGAINST DECONSTRUCTION. *By John M. Ellis. Princeton. 168 pp. $21.95*

"It's all so very *French*," a commonsensical Englishman might observe. And yet deconstruction, the brain-child of Jacques Derrida and other Parisian *philosophes*, is all the rage on American and even British campuses today. A strange outcome, indeed, for a critical theory that maintains that "all literary interpretation is misinterpretation." Literary texts, deconstructors assert, represent not a meaning but an "infinite play of linguistic signs." And since no one can *interpret* an infinite interplay of literary signs, the deconstructor instead gives a "performance" about the text, a performance he holds to be as creative as the original author's. The critic's challenge is not to construct the "author's meaning" but to deconstruct the text back into its various elements, which he then rebuilds into a text of his own. The deconstructionists' claim to a "new kind of logic that transcends the old" makes their theory unfalsifiable or irrefutable on its own terms, says Ellis, a professor of literature at the University of California. However, Ellis finds the "revolutionary" deconstructionist statements all too accessible to old logic. Most damning, these statements were often better presented in traditional linguistics, theory of knowledge, and literary criticism. Deconstruction is popular, Ellis speculates, because it gives critics "freedom to read texts without constraint"—and so endless rhetorical possibilities for self-dramatization. The price paid for the deconstructor's performance, Ellis fears, is a "readiness to abandon the communal sense of a shared inquiry . . . [the] commitment to argument and dialogue." Ellis's case will hardly convince true-believers, but others will find instructive his deconstruction of deconstructionism.

COLLECTED POEMS. *By Philip Larkin. Edited by Anthony Twaite. Farrar. 330 pp. $22.50*

Philip Larkin (1922–1985), the most popular poet to emerge in England after World War II, in most ways hardly seemed a poet at all. Physically, with his bald head and bespectacled owl eyes, he resembled somebody's bachelor uncle whom nobody notices. Larkin, moreover, refused to play any of the usual roles of the Poet; he presented himself as what he was, a provincial university librarian. Partly because he ignored the "poetry establishment," the establishment often ignored him. Critics trained to admire difficulty and allusiveness found his subjects too commonplace, his meanings too easy and accessible to require their services. Furthermore, his rhyming, metrical lines seemed to betoken an outmoded formalism. In fact, the formality of his verse achieves a paradoxical effect: It makes Larkin's poetic diction (with its funny "dirty words") seem more freshly slangy than everyday speech. A poem about his reading habits, for example, con-

cludes with the barely ironic declaration: "Books are a load of crap." Larkin is often called the poet of the everyday, of the ordinary, because he took the unsatisfactory and the mundane—including that unsatisfactory mundane subject, himself—and then made some of the most quoted lines in recent poetry from them. "Sexual intercourse began/In 1963/ (Which was rather late for me)—/ Between the end of the *Chatterly* ban/ And the Beatles' first LP." ("Annus Mirabilis"). But Larkin's poems are not so much about much daily life itself as they are the creation of a stoic philosophy to deal with everyday sadness and loss. "Deprivation is for me," Larkin said, "what daffodils were for Wordsworth." Indeed, Larkin creates a rare oddity, poems with dreary themes which readers nonetheless turn to for comfort. Offering no religious consolations, his poetry illustrates how, once one's worst doubts about oneself are admitted, mental liveliness still makes life interesting. Reviewing some jazz records, Larkin claimed that art is useless unless it helps us to endure and to enjoy—by which criterion his *Collected Poems* is immensely useful.

Science & Technology

AMERICAN GENESIS: A Century of Technological Enthusiasm 1870–1970. *By Thomas P. Hughes. Viking. 529 pp. $24.95*

A foreigner wishing to discover the true nature of America would learn less by visiting Independence Hall or Civil War battlefields than by touring the steel mills of Pittsburgh or the auto factories in Detroit—living remnants of America's technological revolution. Technology, argues Hughes, a University of Pennsylvania historian, is "mainstream American history, an exploration of the American nation involved in its most characteristic activity." The "century of technological enthusiasm" which he studies (1870–1970) introduced to America everything from the incandescent light to the automobile, from the telephone to the space shuttle. Hughes begins with the classic American heroes: inventors like Thomas Edison and Orville and Wilbur Wright. Those early inventors were removed from the demands of industry—a freedom which let them choose the problems they wished to work on; in the absence of theory, they used a hunt-and-try method. Before the era of specialization, Edison could stay abreast of several fields at once: electricity, chemistry, and mechanical engineering. But by World War I, with the growth of industry and the American economy, there came a new generation of American inventors—"system builders" like Henry Ford and Frederick Taylor who organized manufacturing and labor. (The great car producer was also hailed by Lenin and Stalin, who saw "Fordism" as a way to industrialize a backward nation.) The unchecked optimism of Ford's era came to an end on August 6, 1945, with the detonation of the atomic bomb over Hiroshima. The "bomb" demonstrated the other side of technology—its potential for destruction. "The effort to organize the world for problem solving," Hughes says, has passed from individual inventors to cumbersome, bureaucratic systems. And he worries whether the people and mechanisms for controlling technology have kept pace: "Like the dinosaurs, some technological systems have embedded in them characteristics suited for past environments but not the present." Einstein said it better: "Everything is now changed, except our way of thinking."

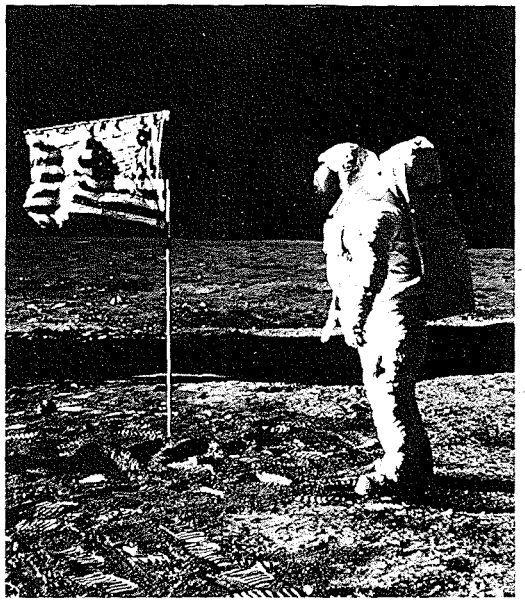
DOCTORS: The Biography of Medicine. *By Sherwin B. Nuland. Knopf. 519 pp. $24.95*

"When I sit at the bedside of a patient, trying to reconstruct the sequence of pathological events within his body," writes Nuland of the Yale School of Medicine, "I am applying a method of reasoning that originated in Greece 2500 years ago." In *Doctors*, Nuland traces the history of that method, from Hippocrates's rejection of supernatural explanations of disease to a contemporary account of a human heart transplant. The history of medicine is no unbroken, linear progression. As Nuland shows, it has always been an oscillation, or tension, between medicine as an objective *science* and medicine as a subjective *art*. Nuland states flatly, "I am one of those who believe that the term 'Medical Science' [is] an oxymoron." The oxymoron was embodied fatefully in Galen (130–201 A.D.), Greek physician to the Emperor of Rome. Galen made the connection between

anatomy and disease and then betrayed his discovery by refusing to dissect the human body: His vainglorious claim to absolute scientific authority, without the necessary experimentation, retarded the development of medicine for 1500 years. The value of Nuland's biographical, narrative approach is that it shows that there is no history of medicine, only history of medicine *and* society. For example, the British surgeon Joseph Lister's discovery in the 1860s of antiseptic operating techniques—which made surgery a saver instead of a taker of lives—was initially opposed by the medical establishment. Doctors resisted it, Nuland says, because it impugned the way they were already practicing surgery. Today's controversies surrounding organ donations, euthanasia, rising insurance and health care costs, and malpractice suits show that the tensions between medicine and society, between medicine as an art and as a science, are very much alive.

APOLLO. *By Charles Murray and Catherine Bly Cox. Simon & Schuster. 512 pp. $24.95*

On April 13, 1970, Apollo 13 was 205,000 miles from Earth when an explosion ruptured the craft's two main oxygen tanks, threatening the three-man crew with slow death. The emergency galvanized thousands of Earth-bound engineers in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), who frantically improvised a way during the next three days to bring the crew safely back to Earth. This, more than the first landing on the moon in 1969, say Manhattan Institute fellow Murray and science writer Cox, epitomized the bold spirit behind President John F. Kennedy's promise in 1961 to put a man on the moon. "It was a spectacularly American response to crisis—unorganized (in a way), with people in a hundred different places across the country racing to do their part." Improbable as it may sound, *Apollo* is a gripping *organizational* history, beginning with NASA's first years as a neglected stepchild of President Dwight D. Eisenhower and focusing on the 11 manned Apollo flights (1968–72). If the astronauts of Tom Wolfe's *The Right Stuff* recalled the mythical American cowboy, *Apollo*'s flight directors and technicians seem more like Casey Stengel's storied Brooklyn Dodgers, an ill-matched assortment of quirky individuals who somehow pull together to accomplish the incredibly unlikely. There is nostalgia here, but a lesson, too. At a time when Americans wonder whether they are too individualistic to manage any kind of enterprise effectively, *Apollo* is a healthy reminder that we have done it before—in a big way.



MEMOIR

Surviving Beirut

Just as Guernica symbolized to an earlier generation the horror of indiscriminate total war, so Beirut, with its kidnappings, car bombs, and artillery barrages, has today come to represent the specter of random political violence. During 14 years of civil strife, Lebanon's warring ideological and religious factions—Maronite Christians, Druse, Sunni and Shiite Muslims—have battled not only one another but Syria, Israel, the PLO, and U.N. peacekeepers. Beirut has been the main battlefield. Yet, many Beirutis have adapted and survived; civilization has not vanished. Here, Thomas L. Friedman, who reported from Beirut for United Press International (1979–81) and the *New York Times* (1982–84), describes how Beirut's battered citizens have coped.

by Thomas L. Friedman

I once watched a man being kidnapped in Beirut. It took only a few seconds.

I was on my way to Beirut International Airport when my taxi became stalled in traffic. Suddenly I saw off to my right four men with pistols tucked into their belts who were dragging another man out his front door. A woman, probably his wife, was standing just inside the shadow of the door, clutching her bathrobe and weeping. The man was struggling and kicking with all his might, a look of sheer terror in his eyes. Somehow the scene reminded me of a group of football players carrying their coach off the field after a victory, but this was no celebration. Just for a second my eyes met those of the hapless victim, right before he was bundled into a waiting car. His eyes did not say "Help me"; all they spoke was fear. He knew I couldn't help him. This was Beirut.

Moments later the traffic jam broke and my taxi moved on to the airport. The Lebanese driver, who had kept his eyes frozen straight ahead the whole time, never said a word about the horror show which had just unfolded. He talked instead about his family, politics, about anything but what had happened alongside us. While he spoke, my mind remained locked on the kidnap victim. Who was he? What had he done? Maybe he was a bad guy and the others good, or was it the other way around?

Beirut was always a city that provoked more questions than answers, both for those who lived there and for those who did not. The most frequent from my readers and friends back home all began with "How?"—How do people cope? How do people survive? How do people go on living in a city where violence has killed or injured 100,000 souls in 14 years of civil strife?

What I always answered was that surviving Beirut required many things, but first and foremost it required a wild imagination. Because in a few seconds on the way to the airport or to the corner grocery store you could find yourself watching

something you not only hadn't seen before in your life but had never even imagined. The visitors who learned to respect the surprises that a place like Beirut could offer did well there; others, like the American Marines or the Israelis, who never really understood the shocks that could greet you around any Beirut street corner, paid heavily.

Amnon Shahak taught me that. Shahak, a brilliant Israeli major general who eventually rose to be Chief of Military Intelligence, commanded the Israeli division that was stationed in the Shouf Mountains, which overlook Beirut from the southeast, during the year following Israel's June 1982 invasion. Shortly before General Shahak assumed his post, the Druse and the Phalangist Christian militias became locked in a bitter, no-holds-barred fight for control of the Shouf—a fight they carried out with hatchets, bazookas, and tanks, uninhibited by the Israeli army surrounding both of them. General Shahak once told me about his first day in command in Lebanon—the day he discovered how much he did not know. Although he was a hard-bitten soldier who had seen many men die and had no doubt put away a few himself, Shahak admitted that he lacked the imagination Beirut and Lebanon required.

A Beirut sniper, affiliation unknown.

"The first night after I arrived," Shahak recalled, "I was in my room in Aley, in the Shouf, which we were using as our command post. At about 9:00 P.M. a group of Druse elders came to our headquarters and demanded to see me. They were very upset. They would not tell me what it was about, they just kept saying, 'Please, please, you must come with us.' They seemed very angry, so I thought I had better go along. When we got to the hospital, there was a crowd of about a hundred Druse men standing in front of the building. They were all shouting and waving their arms. They took me through the crowd to the front, and I found set before me on the steps three orange crates. One had human heads in it, another had torsos, and the other arms and legs. They said these were Druse sheiks whom the Christians had ambushed and then carved up. They looked to me like sheiks because all the heads had black beards.

"I was really shocked," Shahak continued. "I had never seen anything like this in all my years as a soldier. I decided that no matter what time it was, I was going to go down to the Phalangist headquarters in Beirut and get an explanation. So I got in a jeep and went down to Beirut. Fuad Abu Nader, one of the Phalangist commanders, was waiting for me with some of his men. He is a doctor by training. I demanded an explanation. Abu Nader listened and was very calm. When I got done describing ev-

erything, he said to me, 'Oh, I know this trick.' He said that there had been a fight that day between some of his men and some Druse, and that some Druse were killed trying to attack a Phalangist position in the Shouf, and the dead were left in the battlefield. He said the Druse took their dead away and then carved them up to make it look as though the Maronites did it and then brought the chopped-up bodies to Aley to stir up their own people. I just shook my head. I realized at that moment that I was in the middle of a game I did not understand."

After spending nearly five years in Beirut, I eventually developed the imagination the city demanded. I came to think of Beirut as a huge abyss, the darkest corner of human behavior, an urban jungle where not even the law of the jungle applied. Experiencing such an abyss not only left scars but also new *muscles*. Life can no longer deal you many surprises or shocks after you've lived in Beirut. The experience leaves you wearing an emotional bullet-proof vest.

But like everyone else who lived there, I acquired mine the hard way.

It was June 8, 1982. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon had begun 48 hours earlier. Mohammed Kasrawi, the *New York Times* Beirut bureau driver and news assistant since 1953, and I had been down in south Lebanon covering the first exchanges of fire between Israeli and Syrian troops. That evening, when we returned to my apartment house, an ornate, high-ceilinged, six-story colonial building overlooking the Mediterranean, we found Nadia, my maid, looking down on us from the balcony in a state of total panic.

We had visitors.

Standing in the parking lot was an extended Palestinian family—father, mother, grandmother, with babies in everyone's arms and children of assorted ages at everyone's feet. Their eyes, too, were round with fear, like deer caught in headlights. They were carrying bags of canned food and bulging suitcases with tongues of clothing licking out from all sides. What I remember most, though, was that the father was standing amid them all with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher on his shoulder. They looked to me like a weird Beirut version of Grant Wood's *American Gothic*. Like thousands of other Palestinian and Lebanese families, this extended clan had been driven out of the Palestinian refugee camps and neighborhoods on the southern edge of Beirut by merciless Israeli bombing and shelling and were desperately looking for empty apartments closer to the heart of West Beirut, where the fighting had yet to encroach. Other Palestinian refugee families had already broken into three empty apartments in our building, including the absent landlord's elegant penthouse, with its imported Italian marble floors and "Louis de Lebanon" overstuffed furniture. To get into the landlord's flat, the refugees had dynamited the two-inch-thick steel safe door he had installed to prevent precisely such an occurrence. This particular family in the parking lot had tried to get into my apartment but Nadia had temporarily kept them at bay by saying I was a very important foreigner "with connections"—which in Beirut argot always meant connections to people who kill other people.

After Mohammed and I showed up, the family backed off. But this little encounter on the third day of the Israeli invasion led me to think that I would be much safer moving into the Commodore Hotel, where most of the foreign press corps was lodged; my wife, Ann, was finishing up her job in New York and so had not yet arrived in Beirut. Mohammed, ever faithful to me and the *New York Times*, volunteered to put two of his 13 children—his 20-year-old daughter Azizza and seven-year-old daughter Hanan—into the apartment. If any more refugees tried to knock down the door, they would simply explain to them in perfect Palestinian colloquial accents that

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they, too, were refugees and were squatting in the apartment.

The plan worked until Friday evening, June 11. I finished writing my story that day for the *Times* and, as usual, sent it to my editors via the telex at the Reuters news agency in West Beirut. It was time to head back to the Commodore Hotel for the night. The stairwell in the Reuters building was totally dark, because the electricity had been out since the second day of the war, and my colleague Bill Farrell and I were feeling our way down the stairs like two blind men, using the wall to guide us. Just as we rounded the turn onto the last flight of stairs, we were met by a human shadow, panting and breathless from racing up the lobby steps two at a time.

"Tom? Tom, is that you?" The familiar voice of the *Times'* local Palestinian reporter, Ihsan Hijazi, issued from the shadowy figure.

"Yeah, Ihsan," I said nonchalantly. "It's me. It's me."

"Oh, thank God, you're alive," he said, gripping me by the shoulders, his face right up to mine. "Abdul just called. He heard it on the radio. Someone has blown up your house."

"Oh my God," I gasped. "Mohammed's children are in there. He just left to go see them."

We all scrambled down the stairs, tiptoed our way through the lobby packed with refugees living on mattresses and cooking with portable gas burners, and out the front door into Ihsan's old Dodge. Gas pedal to the floor, Ihsan sped through the empty streets to my apartment, which was located in the once-posh Manara (lighthouse) district of West Beirut. As we drove, I kept thinking to myself, This cannot be happening to me. I'm just a reporter. Why my apartment building? Sure, people kill reporters in Beirut, but I've been here only a few weeks.

When Bill, Ihsan, and I arrived at the apartment house, the first thing I saw was a piece of my blue metal window shutters that had been blown by the force of the explosion some 75 feet across the parking lot and was stuck deep into the side of a tree like a thrown hatchet. The apartment building itself had been blown in half. The part still standing was cut open, as though it were a life-size dollhouse, with jagged pieces of concrete dangling from every floor. Stainless-steel pots and pans still hung on the walls of someone's kitchen, unaffected by the blast. The pharmacist's wife who lived upstairs, a striking, tall, Lebanese blonde, was sandwiched with her son in her arms between two walls that had been blown together, forming a grotesque human fossil. Below, her dazed husband staggered around like a zombie looking for their other son. The half of the building that had been brought down by the explosion collapsed into a 30-foot-high smoldering avalanche of concrete, steel reinforcement rods, books, clothing, and bodies that covered all the cars in the parking lot. I noticed my business cards scattered all over the pile. Red Cross volunteers were already picking through the tangled mound with crowbars, looking for survivors, while shouting with bullhorns into every crack to see if anyone was buried alive.

The second thing I saw was Mohammed. He was sitting on the back of a fire engine, weeping into his hands. Bill walked over and cradled Mohammed in his long arms, while he wailed in grief, "I am not a man of war. I never hurt anyone, I never hurt anyone."

In a sobbing voice, Mohammed explained that a few hours earlier his wife, Nazira, had come to the house to visit her two daughters and their only son, Ahmed, then 18, who had stopped by to say hello to his sisters. Ahmed left around 5:00 P.M., and minutes later, as Mohammed was on his way to the building, it was blown apart, with Nazira, Azizza, and Hanan all inside.

The pile of rubble proved to be too heavy for the rescue workers, and we had to wait until the next morning for a crane to arrive and lift the crushed concrete off the dead. On a clear blue Saturday morning Bill, Mohammed, and his surviving children sat under the tree with the piece of shutter stuck into it and waited as the crane went about its grizzly task. First Nazira was uncovered, then Azizza, and finally little dimple-cheeked Hanan. They had obviously been in my office watching television when someone placed the explosive charge in the hallway, apparently

not far from my door. We knew where they had been sitting because Hanan was found with her tiny fingers still gripping my black Texas Instruments digital watch, which she must have been playing with at my desk when the blast brought the walls down on them. The watch was still keeping time.

When they unearthed Hanan's body, Mohammed went to pieces. Only seven years old, she was Mohammed's favorite of his 13 children. She had been born shortly after the Lebanese civil war began in April 1975 and had grown up in the anarchy of the ensuing years. She died never having known a day's peace.

We buried them the next morning in the Palestinian cemetery on the road to Beirut Airport. Their three bodies, covered only with white sheets and already beginning to decompose in the June heat, were laid out under a 130 mm cannon the PLO had hidden in the funeral chapel. A Muslim sheik with a red turban said a few prayers over the corpses in guttural Arabic that was innocent of compassion and empty of all grief. Then one by one, Nazira, Azizza, and little Hanan were gently fitted by Mohammed's sons-in-law into a single grave. They all had to be buried together; there wasn't room in the overflowing cemetery for three separate graves.

Who had done this? A few days later, the neighborhood police said that some of the Palestinian clans who had squatted in our building had apparently gotten into a fight over one of the apartments. Each family was associated with a different PLO faction, the police claimed. The clan that lost, they said, went to their PLO group and got someone to bring in some plastique explosives and blow up the whole building. Moments before they lit the fuse, they warned their own kin, who scrambled out the doors. The rest were not so lucky. In all, 19 people, including refugees, the Dutch banker in the apartment below me, and the beautiful blonde upstairs, whose name I never did know, died a Beirut death, which is the most absurd and scandalous death possible: death for no reason.

One of the worst cases of Beirut death I ever witnessed, besides that in my own apartment house, occurred in August 1982, when Israeli jets bombed an eight-story building in West Beirut that was also packed with several hundred Palestinian refugees. The building fell into itself like a house of cards, burying everyone inside alive. Rumor had it that the PLO maintained a communications center in the basement, but I never found any proof of this. Shortly after I arrived on the scene, a woman who had lived in the building returned home only to find her whole family smothered in the rubble. She immediately tried to fling herself onto the ruins. A dramatic photograph was taken of her being held back by one arm, as she struggled to get free. Her other arm reached out toward her vanished family, while her face was twisted into a portrait of utter anguish. About an hour after that picture was taken, a small car bomb went off half a block away, across from the Ministry of Information, and this woman, who happened to be standing by the car, was killed instantly.

That was Beirut. No one was keeping score. No matter how you lived your life, whether you were decent or indecent, sinner or saint, it was all irrelevant. Men and women there could suffer wrenching tragedies once or twice or even three times, and then suffer some more. The evening Mohammed's family perished in my apartment we ran over to the local police station on nearby Bliss Street to see if, by some miracle, Mohammed's wife and children were among those who might have been taken out of the rubble alive to local hospitals. There was a lone policeman on duty. He was sitting at a bare metal desk watching television.

"Sorry," he said, between glances back and forth at the TV set, "no names." Nobody had bothered to even try to make a list, of either the survivors or the victims. No one was keeping score. Death had no echo in Beirut. No one's life seemed to leave any mark on the city or reverberate in its ear.

Hana Abu Salman, a young psychology researcher whom I got to know at the American University of Beirut, once did a project interviewing her classmates about their deepest anxieties. Among their greatest fears, she found, was this fear of dying in a city without echoes, where you knew

that your tombstone could end up as someone's doorstep before the grass had even grown over your grave.

"In the United States if you die in a car accident, at least your name gets mentioned on television," Hana remarked. "Here they don't even mention your name anymore. They just say, 'Thirty people died.' Well, what 30 people? They don't even bother to give their names. At least say their names. I want to feel that I was something more than a body when I die."

ب

As a news story, Beirut was always more interesting for its psychology than for its politics. People used to ask me if I wasn't terrified living in Beirut. There were moments, of course, but most of the time I was too intrigued observing people's behavior in this real-life Skinner Box to think about being frightened.

In his classic work *Leviathan*, the 17th-century English political philosopher Thomas Hobbes described what he called "the state of nature" that would exist if government and society completely broke down and the law of the jungle reigned. In such a condition, wrote Hobbes, "where every man is enemy to every man . . . there is no place for industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain: and consequently no culture of the earth; no navigation, nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious building; no instruments of moving, and removing, such things as require much force; no knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of time; no arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

I don't know if Beirut is a perfect Hobbesian state of nature, but it is probably the closest thing to it that exists in the world today. If so, Hobbes was right about life in such a world being "nasty, brutish, and short," but he was quite wrong about its being "poor" and "solitary." Indeed, if I learned any lesson from living in Beirut it is that when authority breaks down and a society collapses into a state of nature, men will do anything to avoid being poor or solitary.

This instinctive desire to bring order and comfort to one's life amid chaos is precisely what gave Beirut its distinctive and bizarre flavor—a flavor best captured for me in a single sentence uttered by a Lebanese socialite who had invited an American friend of mine for dinner on Christmas Eve. The elegant holiday banquet was held at her apartment near the Green Line, a swath of gutted and burned-out buildings that formed the no-man's-land between predominantly Muslim West Beirut and Christian East Beirut. On this particular Christmas Eve in 1983, despite the holiday, rival Christian and Muslim militiamen were trading artillery salvos and machine-gun fire into the early evening, rocking the whole neighborhood. The hostess put off serving dinner, hoping things would settle down, but she could see that her friends were getting hungry, not to mention nervous. Finally, in an overture you won't find in Emily Post's book of etiquette, she turned to her guests and asked, "Would you like to eat now or wait for the cease-fire?"

Outsiders looking at Beirut only through newspaper photographs and 60-second television news clips might have thought life in the city was one massacre after another, from sunrise to sunset. It wasn't. In fact, the explosions of violence, while often indiscriminate, were usually sporadic and unsustained—sometimes a few hours, maybe a few days, rarely more than a week. The minute a cease-fire took effect in one neighborhood, the storekeepers cranked up their steel shutters and life immediately returned to the streets, as people scrambled to restore whatever semblance of normality they could—even if they knew it would last only an hour or a day. Beirutis always lived in this peculiar half-light between security and insecurity, war and truce, in which there were always enough periods of quiet to go about one's day but never enough to feel confident that it wouldn't be one's last.

Beirut was the par-5 first hole at the Beirut Golf and Country Club, where Ann and I were members in good standing. The golfers at the Beirut Club didn't call their first hole a "dangerous par-5" for nothing. Several members were hit by bullets while

in mid-backswing because the fairway ran perpendicular to a PLO firing range. The Beirut Country Club was the only golf course I ever played where I was relieved when my ball went into a sand bunker; it was the safest place on the course.

Beirut was also the announcement tacked to the bulletin board at the golf course during the summer of '82 which read: "Due to the circumstances, the club championship will be postponed."

Beirut was the slick advertisement in between the hairdresser ads and the wedding announcements of a popular English-language Beirut weekly, *Monday Morning*, offering shatter-resistant window coating "to protect yourself and the people around you from the danger of flying glass." The ad went on to warn: "Anytime, anyplace, an explosion can happen."

Beirut was the bridge in East Beirut with a sign at its foot which read: NO TANKS ALLOWED.

Beirut was Goodies Supermarket—the gourmet food store that offered a cornucopia of foodstuffs ranging from quail eggs to *foie gras* flown in daily from Paris. Amine Halwany, Goodies' unflappable and ever-upbeat owner, used to tell me that his was the ideal business for a city like Beirut, because he had products to offer people under any and all conditions.

"In times of crisis," explained Amine, "everyone wants bread, water, and canned food—things that are easy to prepare and won't need much refrigeration. People go back to a very primitive style of cooking. They also buy a lot of sweets and nuts during the troubles—nervous food they can pop in their mouths while sitting at home. But as soon as things calm down for a few days, the high-class customers are back buying caviar and smoked salmon."

Actually, Beirut's wealthiest flocked to Goodies to buy all their food. A pack of Mercedes-Benzes could always be found parked outside. Legend has it that one day a disheveled young man entered Goodies, walked up to the cash register with a rifle, and demanded all the money. Within seconds three different women drew pistols out of their Gucci handbags, pumped several rounds into the thief, and then continued pushing their shopping carts down the bountiful aisles.

Beirut was the Summerland Hotel, built along the coast just west of the airport, and opened in 1979 as the first resort hotel designed for people who wanted to vacation inside a civil-war zone—in style. The Summerland's innovations included the installation of two 12,000-gallon fuel tanks to feed its two generators and satisfy all the hotel's energy needs for more than a month, should the city's electricity be entirely cut off—which it often was. The hotel also had a separate 3,400-gallon gasoline tank for its own fleet of taxis and employee cars, thus ensuring that both the staff and the hotel guests could move around the city oblivious to the regular gasoline shortages. The Summerland had an underground garage that doubled as a bomb shelter, its own artesian wells and water purification system, its own fire department, and a maintenance shop that could rebuild or repair anything in the hotel. Instead of installing only the four large refrigerators that a 151-room hotel would normally require, the Summerland installed 18 freezers, so that veal, beef, and

Beirut in better days (shown here about 1975) was a tourist mecca and the commercial crossroads of Europe and the Middle East.

smoked salmon could be flown in from Paris and stored for an entire summer season, when the hotel's pool and restaurant were packed with Beirut's finest. Most important, the Summerland's owners organized their own militia, which conducted the hotel's "diplomatic relations" with the various other militias and gangs around West Beirut and protected the grounds.

When I asked Khaled Saab, the Summerland's cherubic general manager, about his well-armed team of bellhops, he demurred, "I wouldn't call [them] a militia, but let's just say if 10 or 15 armed men came here and wanted to cause trouble, we could handle them."

Because "the circumstances" in Beirut kept foreign tourists away, the Summerland sold all the cabanas around its pool to Lebanese families and turned itself into an all-around amusement center, catering exclusively to locals. To this day, it remains open as a one-stop, totally secure fantasy village where for enough money any Lebanese can buy himself out of Beirut's nightmare for a few hours or days. The fantasy begins from the moment you pull off Beirut's pockmarked streets and cruise up to the Summerland's front door, where you are greeted by a doorman dressed in tails—with a revolver hidden in his back pocket.

Khaled Saab once described his regular clientele for me. "We had Lebanese tourists, foreign businessmen, politicians, and even a few hashish growers, arms merchants, pirates, and gamblers. While they were under our roof they all behaved like perfect gentlemen. We even had Gloria Gaynor come sing in 1980. She sang, 'I Will Survive.' It was really fantastic."

Indeed, the worse things got in Lebanon, the more the Lebanese seemed to refuse to accept a life of poverty. After the Israeli army invaded Lebanon and finally consolidated its grip over the southern half of the country, the first ship to arrive at the Lebanese port of Sidon when the Israelis allowed it to be reopened was loaded with videocassette recorders. Sidon was partially destroyed, people were desperately in need of cement, housing materials, and other staples, but what came steaming into the port first were VCRs from Japan—machines which enable people to enter a dream world and escape from reality. First things first.

Even when Beirut was at its most chaotic, the Lebanese figured out a way to profit from the vagaries of their own anarchy. They did this by speculating on their currency, the Lebanese pound. There were no exchange controls in Beirut, so Lebanese would constantly be converting their pounds into dollars or dollars back into pounds, trying to anticipate rises and falls in the two currencies. If, for instance, you converted your dollars to Lebanese pounds right before a prolonged period of quiet, you could take advantage of the Lebanese currency rising in value thanks to the economic stability; if you converted your pounds back into dollars a few hours before a car bomb exploded, you could make a windfall as the dollar soared and the Lebanese currency fell in anticipation of dislocations.

Today, the most frequently asked question in Beirut after a car bomb is not "Who did it?" or "How many people were killed?" It is, "What did it do to the dollar rate?" Why do people even bother learning to cope with such an environment?

To be sure, thousands of Beirutis haven't bothered; they've simply moved abroad. But many more have stayed. For some, Beirut is simply home and they cannot imagine living anywhere else, no matter how much the quality of life in the city deteriorates. Others are captives of their assets. The homes or businesses they have spent lifetimes building are anchored in Beirut, and they simply cannot afford to start over somewhere else. Better, they say, to be rich and terrorized in Beirut than safe and poor in Paris. Still others cannot obtain visas to take up residence in other countries because the quotas for Lebanese have already been filled. So they learn to adapt because they don't have any other choice.

I used to play golf in Beirut with a rosy-cheeked Englishman named George Beaver. George was a salesman for International Harvester in the Middle East and had lived in Beirut since the 1950s, because, as he would say, "of the absence of taxes, the availability of household help, and the low cost of whiskey." When it

came time for George to retire, he chose to remain in Beirut. Although he was 89 years old when I got to know him in 1979, he had played golf, usually by himself, almost every day since the Lebanese civil war began. He always walked the course with just three clubs in hand: a driver, a five-iron, and a putter. Sometimes he played the course backward; other days he played only the holes he liked, occasionally having to leave one out because the green was covered with shrapnel. Only the most intense bombardments in the summer of '82 kept him off the links. When I asked him why he kept playing, George just shrugged his shoulders and pronounced the motto of every Beirut survivor: "I know I am crazy to do it, but I would be even crazier if I didn't."

George, who died a natural death a few years ago, understood the secret of coping with the violence of Beirut—that it required something more complicated than just hiding in a basement shelter. It required a thousand little changes in one's daily habits and a thousand little mental games to avoid being overwhelmed by everything happening around you.

The most popular means of coping I saw in Beirut was simply learning to play mind games—games that eased one's anxiety even if they didn't protect one from actual danger. For instance, Diala Ezzedine, a college student and Red Cross volunteer whom I met when she helped dig out the rubble of my own apartment, once told me that to calm herself during the worst bouts of violence she would make probability calculations in her head and try to convince herself that someone was actually keeping score.

"I [would] say to myself, 'There are 4 million people in Lebanon and so many in my family; what are the odds of anyone in my family getting killed?'" Diala explained, with great earnestness. "I had a cousin who died recently. I was very sorry he died. But—and this may be a terrible thing to say—I also felt a kind of relief. Like, okay, that's all for our family now, we have made our contribution to the odds. It always reminds me of the joke about the man who carries a bomb with him whenever he goes on an airplane because the odds against there being two bombs on one plane are much higher."

In an attempt to make their anxiety more controllable, the Lebanese would simply invent explanations for the unnatural phenomena happening around them; they would impose an order on the chaos. Their explanations for why someone was killed or why a certain battle broke out were usually the most implausible, wild-eyed conspiracy theories one could imagine. These conspiracies, as the Lebanese painted them, featured, variously, the Israelis, the Syrians, the Americans, the Soviets, or Henry Kissinger—anyone but the Lebanese—in the most elaborate plot to disrupt Lebanon's naturally tranquil state.

In 1983, Ann and I attended a dinner party at the home of Malcolm Kerr, then president of the American University of Beirut. During the course of the dinner conversation that evening someone mentioned the unusual hailstorms that had pelted Beirut for the two previous nights. Everyone gave his own meteorological explanations for the inclement weather before Malcolm asked his Lebanese guests with tongue in cheek: "Do you think the Syrians did it?"

Sadly, Kerr, a charming, intelligent man, was himself assassinated a few months after that dinner—and though his killers were never caught, every Lebanese had a perfectly rational explanation for why the Christians, the Shiites, the Israelis, the Syrians, or the Palestinians had done him in.

Similar "rational" explanations were also employed to explain why the other guy got killed and you didn't. I rarely heard any Beiruti admit that the violence around him was totally capricious and that the only thing that kept him alive was callous fate—which was the truth. Instead, I would hear people say about a neighbor who got killed by an errant shell, "Well, you know, he lived on the wrong side of the street. It is much more exposed over there than on our side." Or they would say, "Well, you know, he lived next to a PLO neighborhood," or, "He shouldn't have gone out driving 15 minutes after the cease-fire started; he should have waited 20 minutes—everyone knows that." In order to continue functioning, Beirutis al-

ways had to find some way to differentiate themselves from the victim and to insist that there was a logical explanation for why each person died, which, if noted, would save them from a similar fate. Without such rationalizations no one would have left his home.

Maybe the most popular Beirut mind game of all was learning how to view one's environment selectively. Richard Day, an incisive and sensitive American-trained psychologist who taught at the American University during the early 1980s, once studied the coping mechanisms of his students and discovered that those who survived the Israeli invasion of Beirut in the best physical and mental health were those who learned how to block out what was going on around them that was not under their own control and to focus instead only on their immediate environment and the things that they could control. This prevented them from suffering from "system overload." Day explained what he meant by viewing one's environment selectively: "I am on my way to play tennis, and an Israeli F-15 suddenly flies overhead. Can I do anything about it? No. Is he coming to bomb me? I don't think so. So I continue on and play tennis."

I learned to be quite good at this myself. Late one afternoon in the summer of 1982, I was typing a story at the Reuters bureau when the crackle of machine-gun fire erupted in the park across the street. Another American reporter in the bureau, who had just arrived in Beirut, ran to the window to see what all the commotion was. He became transfixed at the sight of a Lebanese militiaman firing a machine gun at someone off in the distance. Eventually this reporter peeled himself away from the window, rushed over to me, and said excitedly, "Did you see that? Did you see that guy? He was holding a gun like this right in his gut and shooting someone."

I just looked up from my typewriter at this fellow and said, "Was he shooting at you? No. Was he shooting at me? No. So leave me alone, would you?"

Viewing Beirut selectively didn't mean being suicidal and simply walking obliviously through a firefight, but it did mean learning to isolate dangers in your mind and to take calculated risks in order to continue to be able to live a reasonably full life. Often you would be driving down a street and suddenly see all the cars in front of you screech to a halt and hurriedly turn around and go the other way; sometimes they would not even bother to turn around but would just go backward at 50 miles an hour. You would ask a pedestrian what was going on and someone would shout, "Snipers" or "Car bomb." In any other city people would probably go home, hide in their houses, and lock all the windows. In Beirut, they just drove two blocks out of their way and went around the trouble, as though the disturbance were nothing more lethal than the highway department doing roadwork.

My associate Ihsan Hijazi once told me, "When the civil war first started, if I heard there was fighting in the Bekaa Valley—50 miles away—I would get the kids from school and bring them home. That was 14 years ago. Today, if I hear fighting down the street, I ignore it. If I hear it outside my building, I move away from the windows into a safer room. I only start to worry now if the fighting is outside my own door—literally on my doorstep. Otherwise, it doesn't exist for me. I just ignore it, and turn up the volume on my television."

ب

Beirutis talk about violence the way other people talk about the weather. When they ask, "How is it outside?" they are not referring to the chance of precipitation but, rather, to the security climate in the streets. Lebanese radio stations compete with each other for market share by trying to be the fastest and most accurate at warning drivers which roads are safe and which are not, the way local American radio stations do with traffic reports. You could literally hear a bulletin over Beirut radio saying: "The main crossing point between East and West Beirut was closed at 5:00 P.M. due to a gunfight between two taxi drivers. Drivers are urged to use alternative routes." Every Beirut driver knows the radio lexicon: a road described as *amina* is totally secured by army or police; a road described as *salika* is free of snipers or kidnappers, but not policed; *hatherah* means the road is passable, but with a roughly 30

percent chance of kidnapping or sniping; and finally, *ghair amina* means the road is unsafe at any speed.

Part of learning how to view one's environment selectively is learning to make oneself numb to some of the more grotesque scenes that are part of the texture of life in Beirut. Terry Prothro, an American University psychologist, used to say that in Beirut, at least, the ability to repress things was not necessarily pathological. It could actually be quite healthy and useful for survival.

I know it was for me. I covered more than a dozen car bombings in Beirut, and after a while I simply trained myself to stop seeing the gruesome aspects. I stopped noticing the stunned pedestrians with blood trickling down their cheeks who happened to be standing on the street when the lethal Mercedes—the car of choice among Beirut car bombers—suddenly turned into a ball of flame. I stopped seeing the smoldering charred carcasses of the other automobiles engulfed in the blast or the chaos of the rescue workers as they scurried around on tiptoe among the shards of glass and twisted car parts to pry out the dead and wounded.

Instead, after a while, I found myself focusing entirely on the incongruities: the juicy pieces of roast chicken that were blown all over the street from an adjacent restaurant but somehow still looked good enough to eat, or the smell of liquor from a shelf full of broken Johnnie Walker bottles. And eventually, after seeing enough car bombs, I started focusing on the leaves. When a car packed with 100 sticks of dynamite explodes on a crowded street, the force of the blast knocks all the leaves off the trees and the road is left buried beneath them, like an autumn lawn. My friends in the Lebanese Red Cross still tell the story of the man they found at a car bombing near the Ministry of Information whose chest had been blown open. They knew he was still alive because, through the blood that filled his mouth, little air bubbles kept surfacing. The thing that they remembered most, though, was that two leaves had come to rest gently on his face—one over each eye.

Not everyone can be so emotionally well-defended in every situation, and in such moments of vulnerability Beirut really starts to take its mental toll. When your blinders come loose or you start thinking about the dangers around you that you cannot control, even the most insignificant daily routine can become filled with dread. I knew a longtime resident of Beirut, Lina Mikdadi, a Lebanese writer and the mother of two, who was hardened to virtually every danger the city had to offer—except car bombs.

"Snipers and shelling never bothered me," she would say. "But booby-trapped cars—that is what really scares me. If I am in a traffic jam, I get hysterical. I put my hand on the horn and I don't take it off until I get out. The children start screaming in the back seat because they don't understand why I am honking. I am afraid to tell them. I just want to get away from being trapped between all those cars."

Some Beirutis have become too adept at viewing their environment selectively and tuned the world out altogether. This is dangerous because it dulls a person's normal protective instincts as much as any drug. (Valium, though, is sold over the counter in Beirut, and the Lebanese are believed to be among the highest per capita users of the sedative in the world.)

When I was working in Beirut for UPI and had to stay late many evenings at the office, I would often walk home alone at 11:00 P.M. I liked the eight-block hike for the exercise. One night I dragged my wife, Ann, home from a movie at that hour. As we were walking down a sidewalk holding hands, a man jumped out of a first-floor window and landed right in front of us, like a cat. He was carrying a sack of something in one hand and a silver revolver in the other. We looked at him. He looked at us. We were all too dumbstruck to speak, so he just scampered away. Beirut was so dangerous that even criminals didn't care to be on the streets after dark. When I think back now on my habit of walking home late at night, I can't believe I actually did it.

Somehow, it always reminds me of a story Terry Prothro told me when I asked him how much longer he could go on adjusting to the perversity of everyday life in Beirut. He answered, "There is a test we

used to do in class to see how easily living things can adapt. You put a frog in a pail of water and gradually turn up the heat. The frog just keeps adjusting to the new temperature, until it finally boils to death, because it is so used to adjusting that it doesn't think to jump out of the pail. I feel like that frog."

In coping with the violence of their city, Beirutis also seemed to disprove Hobbes's prediction that life in the "state of nature" would be "solitary." At those moments during the Israeli siege of West Beirut or in the depths of the Lebanese civil war, when Beirut society seemed to have disintegrated and when all formal law and order virtually disappeared, the first instinct of most Beirutis was not to go it alone, to rape their neighbor's wife, or take the opportunity to rob the corner grocery store. Of course there were many incidents of thieving, bank robbing, and kidnapping for ransom, but they were not nearly as widespread as might have been expected under the free-for-all conditions that prevailed; stories of people being mugged on the streets or held up in their homes were relatively rare.

Rather, the behavior of Beirutis suggested that man's natural state is that of a social animal who will do everything he can to seek out and create community and structures when the larger government or society disappears. Beirut was divided into a mosaic of neighborhoods, each tied together by interlocking bonds of family, friendship, and religion. When Beirut's larger, macro-society and government splintered, people's first instinct was to draw together into micro-societies based on neighborhood, apartment house, religious or family loyalties. These micro-societies provided some of the services, structure, and comfort normally offered by the government. They also helped to keep people alive, upright, and honest, sometimes even in spite of themselves.

Elizabeth Zaroubi, a young Christian woman who lived in West Beirut, said that during the summer of 1982 she discovered her family and neighbors as never before. "I live in the same building as my parents," she explained. "Before the war I used to see them for maybe five minutes a day. But during the fighting we would sit together for hours, prepare meals together, play cards, and chat with all the neighbors. If someone found strawberries or bread or cucumbers during the Israeli siege, he would buy enough for all the neighbors and everyone would come together. Before, we used to pass the neighbors on the street, but now we know all kinds of details about each other's private lives and children, and we ask about them. I discovered that I know the relatives of one of my neighbors. We have a common point now that we didn't have before. When you go through an experience with someone like that, you can't ignore them. You can't say anymore that you don't care about them."

Life amid the ruins: A Druse family in their apartment.

Myrna Mugrditchian was a delightfully articulate Armenian dental student whom I first met when she came to my apartment as a Red Cross volunteer to help in the rescue effort. After that, we used to see each other regularly at post-car-bomb scenes, and eventually we became friends. I once asked her how she could have volunteered for such depressing work. She told me it really was not out of altruism but in order to keep busy and maintain a

purpose to her life. "I had a choice," explained Myrna. "I could sit home all day quarreling with my family and going crazy, or I could get out on the street. The only way to get out was to be either a helper or a fighter. I chose to be a helper."

In this quixotic struggle against chaos, many Beirutis actually discovered good things about themselves—and others—that they never could have learned except in a crucible like Beirut.

Dr. Antranik Manoukian, the manager of Lebanon's only mental-health clinic, told a symposium held in Beirut after the summer of 1982 that his patients who were caught in the middle of some of the worst Israeli shelling and bombing actually got better mentally and required less medication and treatment during the fighting than when it was over. This was largely because the patients focused all their limited mental faculties on trying to survive the chaos and so actually became healthier. That could be said of most Lebanese to some degree or another, which is why the real mental-health crisis for Lebanon will come when the civil war ends and peace and quiet returns. Only then, when people let down their guard and take stock of all they have lost, will they truly become crazy. Until then, many Lebanese won't simply survive, they may even thrive.

Anthony Asseily, the director of the J. Henry Schroder & Sons merchant bank branch in Beirut, said that after the start of the Israeli invasion in the summer of 1982 he closed his office and relocated to London, leaving behind 32-year-old Munzer Najm—whose job had previously been to fetch coffee for the bank's employees and guests. Munzer's only instructions were to watch over the place as best he could. As far as Asseily knew, Munzer, the coffee boy, spoke only Arabic.

One day, during the height of the Israeli siege of West Beirut, Asseily was sitting in his office in London when suddenly his telex came alive. "It was Beirut on the line," he recalled. "My first reaction was to ask how the situation was. The answer came back: 'Not so good.' Then I said, 'Wait a minute, who is this on the line?' The answer came back: 'Munzer.' At first, I couldn't believe it. I thought maybe someone had a gun to his head and was telling him what to type. We had a [telex] conversation and eventually I found out that while he was sitting around the bank all that time with nothing to do, he had learned some English and taught himself how to operate the telex." Asseily remarked later that Munzer the coffee boy could just as easily have stolen the bank's telex and sold it on the street to the highest bidder as learned how to use it. There was no one to stop him: no police, no prisons, and no courts. But he didn't.

The real problem with the Lebanese today is that they have gotten too good at this adapting game—so good that their cure and their disease have become one and the same. The Lebanese individual traditionally derived his social identity and psychological support from his primordial affiliations—family, neighborhood, or religious community—but rarely from the nation as a whole. He was always a Druse, a Maronite, or a Sunni before he was a Lebanese. And he was always a member of the Arslan or Jumblat Druse clans before he was a Druse, or a member of the Gemayel or Franjieh Maronite clans before he was a Maronite. The civil war and the Israeli invasion only reinforced this trend, dividing Lebanese into tighter-knit micro-families, or village and religious communities, but pulling them farther apart as a nation.

But the very family, village, and religious bonds that provided the glue holding Beirutis together in micro-societies and which helped see them through hard times when the national government disappeared also helped to prevent a strong national government and national identity from ever fully emerging or lasting. When the city's water system failed, Beirutis dug their own wells; when the city's electricity went dead, they bought their own generators to power their homes; when the police disappeared, they affiliated themselves with private militias for protection. The Lebanese sociologist Samir Khalaf summed up the situation: "The formation and deformation of Lebanon, so to speak, are rooted in the same forces."

I don't mean to suggest in any way that these ad hoc family, neighborhood, or religious communal associations can adequately replace the Lebanese society that

collapsed or that Beirutis find them preferable to a properly functioning government. They aren't really a cure for Lebanon's ills; they are just a palliative—Ace bandages on a body politic stricken with cancer. They make life in the Beirut jungle not quite so solitary, nasty, brutish, and short as might be expected—although the life is still plenty frightening.

Beirut taught me how thin the veneer of civilization is, how easily the ties that bind can unravel, how quickly a society that was known for generations as the Switzerland of the Middle East can break apart into a world of strangers—lessons I will never forget. I have never looked at the world the same since I left Beirut. It was like catching a glimpse of the underside of a rock or the mess of wires and chips that are hidden inside a computer.

Steven Spielberg once made a movie called *Poltergeist*, which was about a lovely suburban house that, unbeknownst to its inhabitants, had been built above a cemetery. The family who owns the house discovers what lurks beneath only when some of the dead spirits, angry at the fact that a house has been built on their graves, start rising up and haunting the place. Eventually the family hires an expert demonologist to purge their home of these angry spirits, and she determines that a closet in an upstairs bedroom is the gateway through which the demons are entering and exiting. In the climactic scene, the expert, a tiny woman with her hair in a bun, delicately opens the closet door and out rushes this wild, screaming, fire-breathing monster, the embodiment of uncontrolled rage and violence, which bowls over everyone one in its path.

Ever since I left Lebanon I have felt, no matter where I am, that I am living inside that house, never knowing when a door might fly open and suddenly I will again be facing the roiling abyss I confronted in Beirut. I go to baseball games or to the theater, and I look around at all the people seated so nicely and wonder to myself how easily all of this could turn into a Beirut. It has been my own private nightmare, but also a source of inner fortitude.

I realized that my first week in Jerusalem. When Ann and I finally moved from Beirut to Jerusalem in June 1984, we found ourselves going to a movie on our first Saturday night in the Israeli capital. Not knowing our way around the city, we hired a taxi to take us from the Sheraton Hotel to the Edison Theater. It was only a short ride, but the Israeli taxi driver tried to cheat us by not turning on his meter and then asking an exorbitant fare.

We told him we would give him only a fourth of what he asked for, and when he refused this offer and started screaming at us, we just put the money on the seat and walked away. The driver, his face flushed with anger, threw open his door, got out of the car, and began bellowing that he would do everything from beating us up to calling the police.

Ann and I looked at him and then looked at each other, and we both started to laugh. "Do you know where we have come from?" I shouted at the driver in English, pointing a finger to my chest. "Do you know where we have been living? We've been living in Beirut, in goddamn Beirut. Do you know what that means?"

We walked into the theater chuckling to ourselves, leaving him standing in the street spewing curses at us in Hebrew and Arabic. There was nothing that he could threaten us with that we hadn't already lived through.

We had been to Beirut.

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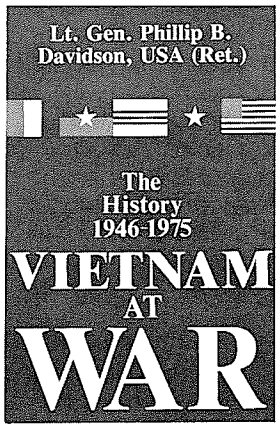

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Chemistry Lessons

A person spends almost his entire adult life quietly practicing the profession, chemistry, for which he was trained, and finally he dies in the same house where he was born. What life could sound more tranquil? Yet when that life is interrupted, as Primo Levi's was, by the 20th century's ultimate horror, then such tranquility can only be superficial, a mockingly deceptive appearance. In 1943, fighting Fascists and Nazis as a Jewish-Italian partisan, Primo Levi was captured and deported to the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz. Prisoner 174517 (with the number tattooed on his arm), Levi would have gone the way of most other camp prisoners had it not been for his specific training as a chemist, which the Nazis found useful. Although he remained, as he said, "a chemist by conviction" after Auschwitz, he had also acquired "an absolute need to write." Levi's memoirs and his novel of daily life in the death camps are considered the triumph of lucid intelligence over modern barbarism, and they made him internationally famous. Yet he continued his career as a chemist, working in a Turin paint factory for almost 30 years. His understanding of chemistry not only saved his life but made him, he believed, the kind of writer he was. In his autobiography, *The Periodic Table*, he organized each chapter of his experience around the character of a particular chemical element. The shy and unassuming chemist Levi—whom Philip Roth called "a magically endearing man, the most delicately forceful enchanter I've ever known"—here shows how the language of chemistry is a human language, and that chemistry, too, can be a humanistic pursuit.

by Primo Levi

I

Although their trade is more recent than that of theologians, vintners, or fishermen, chemists too, since their origins, have felt the need to equip themselves with a specialized language of their own. Nevertheless, unlike all other trade languages, that of chemists has had to adapt itself to rendering a service which I believe is unique in the panorama of the numerous specialized jargons: It must be able to indicate with precision, and if possible describe, more than a million distinct objects, because that is the number (and it grows every year) of the chemical compounds found in nature or constructed by synthesis.

Now, chemistry was not born all of a piece like Minerva, but laboriously, through the patient but blind trials and errors of three generations of chemists who spoke different languages and often communicated with each other only by letter. Therefore the chemistry of the past century was gradually consolidated through a terrible confusion of tongues, whose vestiges still survive in the chemistry of today. Let us leave aside inorganic chemistry, whose problems are relatively simpler and deserve a separate discussion. In organic chemistry, that is, in the chemistry of carbon compounds, at least three different modes of expression flow together.

The most ancient is also the most lithe and picturesque; it consists in giving each newly discovered compound a fanciful name which harks back to the natural product from which it was isolated for the first time: Names like carotene, lignin, aspargine, abietic acid express fairly well for us neo-Latins the origin of the substance but say nothing about its constitution. A little more obscure is adrenaline, which was so named because it was isolated from subrenal capsules (*ad renes*, that is, renal, close to the kidneys).

Also, benzine derives its name (in Italian and German) from a natural product, but through a strange and tangled chemico-linguistic history. At the beginning there is benzoin, a scented resin which for at least two thousand years was imported from Thailand and Sumatra and which at one time was used not only for perfumes but also for therapy: I do not know on what grounds, perhaps only because of the dangerous reasoning according to which substances that have a pleasant smell are "good for you." The trade in this resin and many other spices was in the hands of Arab merchants and navigators. Since the penchant for advertising and, with it, the protection of commercial secrets are as old as trading itself, Arabs sold the product under a pretty but deliberately misleading Arab name: They called it *luban jawi*, which means "Java incense," although benzoin was not a real incense and although it did not come from Java at all.

In Italy and France the first syllable was mistaken for an article and has fallen off. What remained of the name, that is, *banjawi*, was pronounced and written in various ways until it became established as *benzoe*, *beaujoin*, *benjoin*, and *benzoin*. More centuries passed, until in 1833 a German chemist was the first to think of subjecting benzoin to dry distillation, heating it at a high temperature in the absence of water. It was believed at that time, more or less consciously, that this treatment served to separate the volatile, noble, "essential" part of a substance (not for nothing is gasoline still called "essence" in French) from the inert residue which remained at the bottom of the retort. In short, it was believed that a soul was being separated from a body. In fact, in many languages the word "spirit" designates the soul as well as alcohol and other liquids which evaporate easily. Thus the German chemist obtained the "soul," the "essence" of benzoin and called it *benzine*.

A second chemical language, less fanciful but more expressive, is the one composed of the so-called raw formulas. To say that common sugar is $C_{12}H_{22}O_{11}$ or the old pyramidion, dear to country practitioners, is $C_{13}H_{17}ON_3$ gives us no indication of their origin nor the uses of the two substances, but represents their inventory. It is, precisely, a raw, incomplete language: It tells us that to build a molecule of pyramidion, 13 atoms of carbon are needed, 17 of hydrogen, one of oxygen, three of nitrogen, but it tells us nothing about the order or the structure in which

those atoms are linked together. In short, it works as if a typographer extracted from his type font the letters, *e, a, c, r,* and claimed he had in this way expressed the word *care.* The reader who is not initiated or assisted by the context could also "read" *race, acre,* or who knows what other anagram. It is a summary way of writing which has the sole value (precisely typographical) of fitting neatly into the printed line.

The third language has all the above advantages, and only one disadvantage; this last being the fact that its "words" do not fit the usual printed line. It tries (or expects) to give us a portrait, an image of the minuscule molecular edifice. It has renounced a good part of the symbolism which is characteristic of all languages, and has regressed to pictography. It is as if, instead of the word *acre,* the image of the acre were printed or drawn. The system reminds us of the scholar in the country of the Balnibarbi, about whom Swift speaks in *Gulliver's Travels*: According to him, one must reason without speaking, and he suggests keeping on hand, in place of words, "such things as were necessary to express the particular business they are to discourse on," that is, a ring if the talk is about rings, a cow if cows are being talked about, and so on. In this way, the scholar argued, "it would serve as a universal language to be understood in all civilized nations." There is no doubt that the objective, in fact objectified, language of the Balnibarbi and the structural formulas of chemists approach perfection from the point of view of understandability and internationality, but both involve the inconvenience of bulk, as the unhappy compositors of organic chemistry textbooks know only too well.

Naturally, despite its claims to portraiture, and unlike Balnibarbi, the language of structural formulas, by the very fact of being a true language, has remained partially symbolic: Its portraits are not life-size, but in a "scale" (that is, in a huge enlargement) of about one to a hundred million; furthermore in place of the atoms' shape, these "portraits" contain their graphic symbol, that is, their abbreviation.

Finally, the represented object generally has a thickness, a three-dimensional structure, whereas the portrait is, of course, flat because the page on which it is printed is flat. And yet, despite these limitations, if these conventional models are compared with the "true," almost photographic portraits which have been obtainable by subtle techniques for a few decades, their resemblance is striking. The molecules, the little drawings derived from reasoning and experimentation, are indeed very similar to the particles of matter which the ancient atomists had intuited when seeing motes of dust dancing in a beam of sunlight.

II

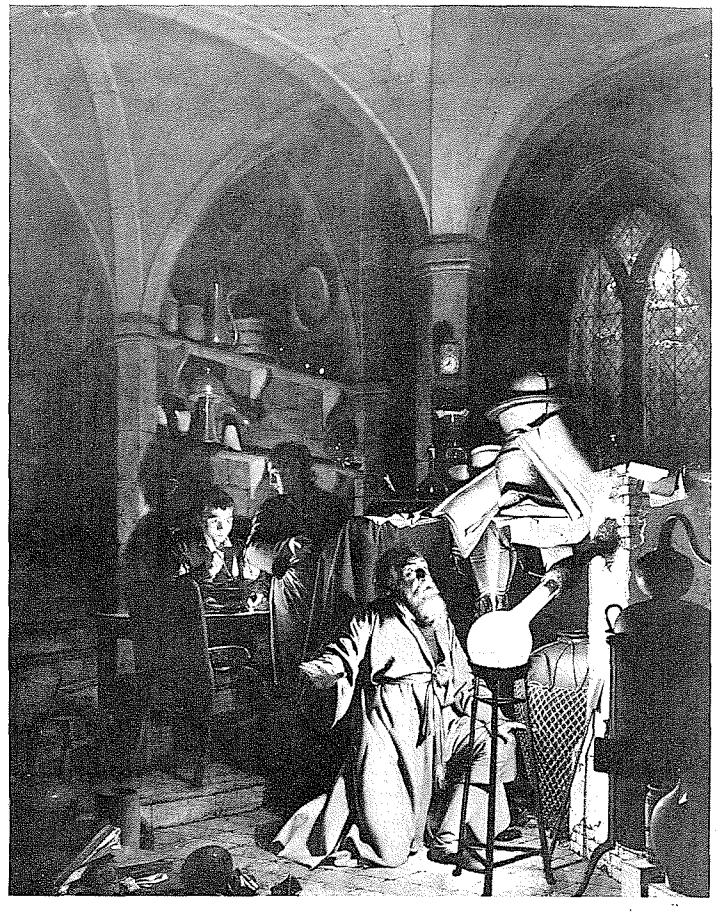
When I was a working chemist I suffered from heat, frost, and fear, and I would never have thought that, after leaving my old trade, I could feel any nostalgia for it. But it happens, during empty moments, when the human apparatus spins in neutral, like an idling motor. It happens, thanks to the singular filtering power of the mind, which lets happy memories survive and slowly stifles the others. I have recently seen again an old fellow prisoner and we had the usual conversations of veterans. Our wives noticed and pointed out to us that in two hours of conversation we had not brought up even a single painful memory, but only the rare moments of remission or the bizarre episodes.

I have before me the table of chemical elements, the "periodic system," and I am filled with nostalgia, as if I were looking at old school photographs, the boys with their little ties and the girls in their modest black smocks: "One by one I recognize

Primo Levi, *a chemist and noted Holocaust writer, was born in Turin, Italy on July 31, 1919. He studied chemistry at the University of Turin and received a degree in 1941. Among his books are* Survival in Auschwitz *(1947),* The Reawakening *(1963),* The Drowned and the Saved *(1986), and various works of fiction. Levi died in Turin on April 11, 1987, under circumstances which suggested suicide. This essay is taken from* Other People's Trades *copyright © 1989 by Summit Books.*

you all . . . ." The struggles, defeats, and victories that have tied me to certain elements I have already recounted elsewhere, as I also told of their characters, virtues, vices, and oddities. But now my trade is a different one. It is the trade of words, chosen, weighed, fitted into a pattern with patience and caution. Thus for me also the elements tend to become words, and instead of the thing, its name and the why of its name interests me acutely. The panorama is different but just as varied as that of the things themselves.

Everyone knows that "proper" elements, those existing in nature, both on earth and in the stars, are 92, from hydrogen to uranium (actually the latter during the last decades has lost a bit of its good repute). Well, their names, passed in review, constitute a picturesque mosaic which extends in time from far-off prehistory until the present day, and in which appear perhaps all the Western languages and civilizations: our mysterious Indo-European fathers, ancient Egypt, the Greek of the Greeks, the Greek of the Hellenists, the Arab of the alchemists, the nationalistic prides of the past century, right down to the suspect internationalism of this postwar period.



Joseph Wright of Derby's painting (c. late 1700s) of an alchemist. Modern chemistry diverged from alchemy during the 18th century.

We begin with the best known and least exotic elements, nitrogen and sodium. Their international symbols, that is, the single letter or the group of two letters which abbreviate their conventional and original name are respectively N and Na, the initials of the Latin terms *nitrogenium* and *natrium*. And here come to light the vestiges of ancient misunderstanding. *Nitrogenium* means "born from nitro," and *natrium* means "substance of *natro*": Now, originally, in the language of ancient Egypt *nitro* and *natro* were the same thing.

In the complicated script of that language, vowels were considered superfluous, perhaps because carving stone is more strenuous than using a ball-point pen, and cutting down on vowels saved the stonecutters work. The consonants *ntr* generically indicated either the saline efflorescence found on old walls (which in Italian is still called *salnitro*, and in other languages, more expressively, *saltpeter*, that is salt of stone) or the "salt-like" substance that the Egyptians extracted from quarries and used for mummification. This last is mainly composed of soda or sodium carbonate, while saltpeter is composed of nitrogen, oxygen, and potassium.

Both, in brief, were "nonsalt salt," sub-

A CHEMISTRY EXAMINATION

When Primo Levi was sent to Auschwitz in 1943, he realized he was not that rare, sturdy person who, with luck, survives conditions in a concentration camp. The Nazis needed chemists, however, and at Auschwitz they began interrogating the few Häftlinge *(prisoners) who had chemistry backgrounds. So came up Levi's one slim chance for survival: a chemistry examination for mortal stakes.*

With these empty faces of ours, with these sheared craniums, with these shameful clothes, [we have] to take a chemistry examination. And obviously it will be in German; and we will have to go in front of some blond Aryan doctor, hoping that we do not have to blow our noses, because perhaps he will not know that we do not have handkerchiefs, and it will certainly not be possible to explain it to him. And we will have our old comrade hunger with us, and we will hardly be able to stand still on our feet, and he will certainly smell our odor, to which we are by now accustomed, but which persecuted us during the first days, the odor of turnips and cabbages, raw, cooked, and digested.

Down came Alex [our Kapo] into the magnesium chloride yard and called us seven out to go and face the examination. We go like seven awkward chicks behind the hen, following Alex up the steps of the *Polimerisations-Büro*. We are in the lobby; there is a brass-plate on the door with the three famous names. Alex knocks respectfully, takes off his beret and enters. We can hear a quiet voice; Alex comes out again. *"Rube, jetzt. Warten,"* wait (in silence).

The door opens . . . . This time it really is my turn . . . .

Pannwitz is tall, thin, blond; he has eyes, hair, and nose as all Germans ought to have them, and sits formidably behind a complicated writing-table. I, *Häftling* 174517, stand in his office, which is a real office, shining, clean, and ordered, and I feel that I would leave a dirty stain on whatever I touched.

When he finished writing, he raised his eyes and looked at me.

From that day I have thought about *Doktor* Pannwitz many times and in many ways. I have asked myself how he really functioned as a man; how he filled his time . . . . Above all when I was once more a free man, I wanted to meet him again, not from a spirit of revenge, but merely from a personal curiosity about the human soul.

Because that look was not one between two men; and if I had known how completely to explain the nature of that look, which came as if across the glass window of an aquarium between two beings who live in different worlds, I would also have explained the essence of the great insanity of the Third Reich.

One felt in that moment, in an immediate manner, what we all thought and said of the Germans. The brain which governed those blue eyes and those manicured hands said: "This something in front of me belongs to a species which it is obviously opportune to suppress. In this particular case, one has to first make sure that it does not contain some utilizable element." And in my head, like seeds in an empty pumpkin: "Blue eyes and fair hair are essentially wicked. No communication possible. I am a specialist in mine chemistry. I am a specialist in organic syntheses. I am a specialist . . . "

And the interrogation began, while in the corner that third zoological specimen, Alex, yawned and chewed noisily.

"Wo sind Sie geboren?" [Where were you

stances with a saline appearance soluble in water, colorless, but with a taste different from that of common salt. Glassmakers soon realized that in the manufacture of glass one could be replaced by the other without a great difference in the end product, which for us is quite understandable: At the temperature of the glassmakers' crucible both salts decompose, the acid part leaves, and in the fused mass only the oxide of the metal remains. The Greeks and later the Latins, transliterating the Egyptian writing, introduced vowels in accordance with largely arbitrary criteria, and only then did the variant *nitro* begin to indicate specifically saltpeter, the father of nitrogen, and *natro* to indicate soda, the mother of sodium.

In running through a list of names of minerals, one is confronted by an orgy of

born?] He addresses me as *Sie*, the polite form of address: *Doktor* Ingenieur Pannwitz has no sense of humor. Curse him, he is not making the slightest effort to speak a slightly more comprehensible German.

I took my degree at Turin in 1941, summa cum laude—and while I say it I have the definite sensation of not being believed, of not even believing it myself; it is enough to look at my dirty hands covered with sores, my convict's trousers encrusted with mud. Yet I am he, the B.Sc. of Turin; in fact, at this particular moment it is impossible to doubt my identity with him, as my reservoir of knowledge of organic chemistry, even after so long an inertia, responds at request with unexpected docility. And even more, this sense of lucid elation, this excitement which I feel warm in my veins, I recognize it, it is the fever of examinations, *my* fever of *my* examinations, that spontaneous mobilization of all my logical faculties and all my knowledge, which my friends at university so envied me.

The examination is going well. As I gradually realize it, I seem to grow in stature. He is asking me now on what subject I wrote my degree thesis. I have to make a violent effort to recall that sequence of memories. so deeply buried away: It is as if I were trying to remember the events of a previous incarnation.

Something protects me. My poor old "Measurements of dielectrical constants" are of particular interest to this blond Aryan who lives so safely: He asks me if I know English, he shows me Gatterman's book, and even this is absurd and impossible, that down here, on the other side of the barbed wire, a Gatterman should exist, exactly similar to the one I studied in Italy in my fourth year, at home.

Now it is over. The excitement which sustained me for the whole of the test suddenly gives way and, dull and flat, I stare at the fair skin of his hand writing down my fate on the white page in incomprehensible symbols.

"Los, ab!" Alex enters the scene again, I am once more under his jurisdiction. He salutes Pannwitz, clicking his heels, and in return receives a faint nod of the eyelids. For a moment I grope around for a suitable formula of leave-taking: but in vain. I know how to say to eat, to work, to steal, to die in German; I also know how to say sulphuric acid, atmospheric pressure, and short-wave generator, but I do not know how to address a person of importance.

Here we are again on the steps. Alex flies down the stairs. He has leather shoes because he is not a Jew; he is as light on his feet as the devils of Malabolge. At the bottom he turns and looks at me sourly as I walk down hesitantly and noisily in my two enormous unpaired wooden shoes, clinging on to the rail like an old man.

It seems to have gone well, but I would be crazy to rely on it. I already know the *Lager* well enough to realize that one should never anticipate, especially optimistically. What is certain is that I have spent a day without working, so that tonight I will have a little less hunger, and this is a concrete advantage, not to be taken away.

To re-enter Bude, one has to cross a space cluttered up with piles of cross-beams and metal frames. The steel cable of a crane cuts across the road, and Alex catches hold of it to climb over: *Donnerwetter*, he looks at his hand black with thick grease. In the meanwhile I have joined him. Without hatred and without sneering, Alex wipes his hand on my shoulder, both the palm and the back of the hand, to clean it; he would be amazed, the poor brute Alex, if someone told him that today, on the basis of this action, I judge him and Pannwitz and the innumerable others like him, big and small, in Auschwitz and everywhere.

personalities. It would seem that no mineralogist was ever resigned to ending his career without linking his name to a mineral, adding to it the ending *-ite* as a laurel wreath: garnierite, senarmontite, and thousands of others.

Chemists have always been more discreet; in my review I have found only two names of elements that their discoverers decided to dedicate to themselves, and they are gadolinium (discovered by the Finn Gadolin) and gallium. This last has a curious history. It was isolated in 1875 by the Frenchman Lecocq de Boisbaudran; *cocq* (today written *coq*) means "cock," (*Gallus* in Latin) and Lecocq baptized his element *gallium*. A few years later, in the same mineral examined by the Frenchman, the German chemist Winkler discovered a new element. Those were years of

great tension between Germany and France; the German assumed gallium to be a nationalistic homage to Gaul and baptized his element *germanium* in order to even the score.

Besides these two, only a few personal names have been given to the newest, unstable elements, those which are heavier than uranium and have been obtained by man in minimal quantities in nuclear reactors and in the enormous particle accelerators—elements dedicated respectively to Mendeleev, Einstein, Madame Curie, Alfred Nobel, and Enrico Fermi.

More than a third of the elements have received names that refer to their most striking properties, arrived at by more or less tortuous linguistic itineraries. So it is for chlorine, iodine, chromium, from Greek words which respectively mean "green," "purple," and "color," referring to the color of their salts or vapors (or, in other cases, to the color of the spectral emission lines). Thus barium is "the heavy," phosphorus is "the luminous," bromine and osmium are, in different degrees, "the stinkers." (But what chemist worthy of the name could confuse these two most unpleasant odors?)

Still in this spirit, which I would call descriptive, and which attests to modesty and good sense, hydrogen and oxygen were named, respectively, "generated by water" and "by acids. But since the baptism was performed (or confirmed) by the Frenchman Lavoisier, the German chemists did not consider it valid and imitated it with two approximate translations: *Wasserstoff* and *Sauerstoff*, that is, respectively, "the substance of water" and "of acids," and the Russians did the same, coining the couple *vodorod* and *kisslorod*.

Only three of the elements that have received "descriptive" names bear witness to a leap of the imagination: dysprosium ("the impervious"), lanthanum ("the hidden"), and tantalum. In this last denomination, the discoverer (Ekeberg, 1802: a Swede, a neutral, and therefore the name chosen by him was not subjected to changes) referred to Tantalus, the mythical sinner described in *The Odyssey*; he is immersed in water up to the neck, but undergoes the agonies of thirst, because every time he bends to drink, the water recedes, uncovering arid ground. The same ordeal had been suffered by him, the pioneering chemist, in the hopes and disappointments through which he had finally succeeded in discovering his element.

Besides the already mentioned germanium, about 20 elements have received names that more or less clearly commemorate the country or city in which they were discovered: For example, lutetium from the ancient name of Paris and scandium from Scandinavia.

I have deliberately left aside the history of the veteran elements, known to everyone, characterized and exploited by the most ancient civilizations thousands of years before the first chemist was born: iron, gold, silver, copper, sulfur, and several others. It is a complicated and fascinating story, worth being told elsewhere.

III

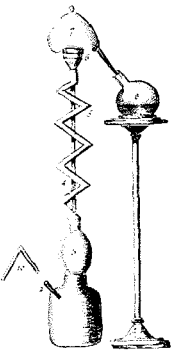
The bond between a man and his profession is similar to that which ties him to his country; it is just as complex, often ambivalent, and in general it is understood completely only when broken: by exile or emigration in the case of one's country, by retirement in the case of a trade or profession. I left the trade of chemist several years ago, but only now feel the necessary detachment to see it in its entirety and understand how much it pervades me and how much I owe it.

I do not refer to the fact that during my imprisonment in Auschwitz it saved my life, nor to the reasonable livelihood I got from it for 30 years, nor to the pension to which it entitled me. Instead I would like to describe other benefits that I think I have obtained from it, and which are all related to the new trade I have gone on to, that is, the trade of writing. A need for qualification immediately arises: Writing is not really a trade, or at least in my opinion it should not be one. It is a creative activity and therefore it balks at schedules and deadlines, commitments to customers and bosses. Nevertheless, writing is a way of "producing," indeed a process of transformation. The writer transforms his experi-

ences into a form that is accessible and attractive to the "customer" who will be the reader. The experiences (in the broad sense: life experiences) are therefore raw material. The writer who lacks them works in a void; he thinks he's writing but his pages are empty. Now, the things I have seen, experienced, and done during my preceding incarnation are today for me, as writer, a precious source of raw materials, of events to narrate, and not only events: also of those fundamental emotions which are one's way of measuring oneself against matter (an impartial, imperturbable, but extremely harsh judge: if one makes a mistake, one is pitilessly punished) and thus of winning and losing. This last is a painful but salutary experience without which one does not become adult and responsible. I believe that every colleague of mine in chemistry can confirm this: More is learned from one's errors than from one's successes. For example, to formulate an explanatory hypothesis, believe in it, grow fond of it, check it (oh, the temptation of falsifying data, of giving them a small flick of the thumb!), and in the end discover that it is mistaken—this is a cycle that in the chemist's trade is encountered only too often "in a pure state," but can easily be recognized in numerous other human itineraries. He who goes through it honestly issues from it matured.

There are other benefits, other gifts, that the chemist offers the writer. The habit of penetrating matter, of wanting to know its composition and structure, foreseeing its properties and behavior, leads to an insight, a mental habit of concreteness and concision, the constant desire not to stop at the surface of things. Chemistry is the art of separating, weighing, and distinguishing: These are three useful exercises also for the person who sets out to describe events or give body to his own imagination. Moreover, there is an immense patrimony of metaphors that the writer can take from the chemistry of today and yesterday, which those who have not frequented the laboratory and factory know only approximately. The layman too knows what to filter, crystallize, and distill means, but he knows it only at second hand. He does not know "the passion infused by them," he does not know the emotions that are tied to these gestures, has not perceived the symbolic shadow they cast. Also, just on the plane of comparisons the militant chemist finds himself in possession of unsuspected wealth: "black as . . . ," "bitter as . . . ."; viscous, tenacious, heavy, fetid, fluid, volatile, inert, flammable: These are all qualities the chemist knows well, and for each of them he knows how to choose a substance which contains it to a prominent and exemplary degree. I, an ex-chemist, by now atrophied and ill-equipped if I were to go back to a laboratory, am almost ashamed when in my writing I derive profit from this repertory: I feel I am enjoying an illicit advantage vis-à-vis my new writer colleagues who do not have a militancy like mine behind them.

For all these reasons, when a reader expresses amazement at the fact that I, a chemist, have chosen the road of the writer, I feel authorized to answer that I write precisely because I am a chemist: My old trade has been largely transfused into my new one.



Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop

T. S. Eliot's *Waste Land*, James Joyce declared, "ends [the] idea of poetry for ladies." Joyce's condescending swipe was his way of saying that the days of polite, sentimental versifying were over. In place of "women's" poesy, he believed, the literary artists of the 20th century would produce a new kind of poetry, objective, difficult, even esoteric. And the makers of "modern" verse—Pound, Yeats, and Eliot, among others—would constitute a kind of priesthood, almost exclusively male. But if few women were invited into the Temple of Modern Poetry, and fewer yet to the altar, there were striking exceptions. Two in America were Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop. By dint of their friendship and their solitary labors, these two gifted women demonstrated that they could, as Ezra Pound enjoined, "make it new." Here, Susan Schultz describes their successful partnership in art.

by Susan Schultz

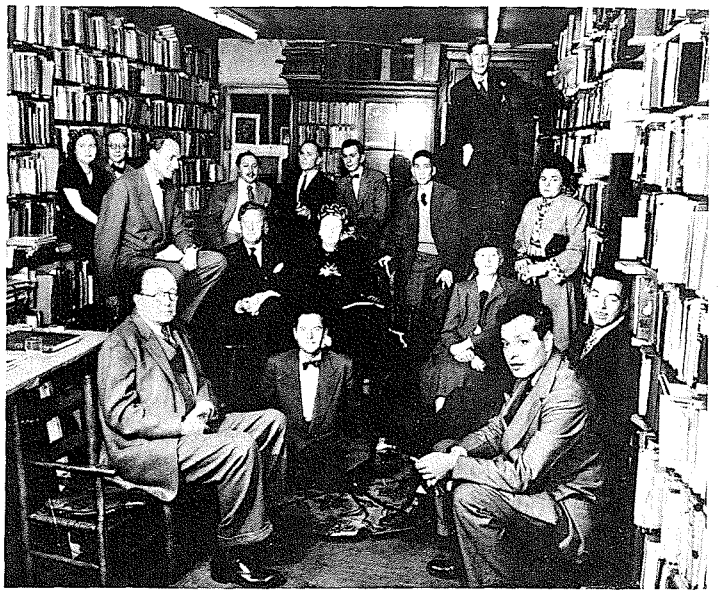
Literary friendships are often unwieldy things, awkwardly glued together by admiration, mutual sense of purpose—and a healthy dose of professional paranoia. Emerson, as Whitman put it, brought the younger man from a simmer to a boil, only to recoil from the "barbaric yawp" that found its voice in *Leaves of Grass*. Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth, Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot, Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop—the partners in these literary couplings played sorcerer and apprentice to one another, straining to balance self-creation with companionship, the demands of influence with those of originality.

In the spring of 1934, Marianne Moore was 47 years old and, if William Carlos Williams is to be believed, the "saint" of American poets, a respected scion of modernism, possessed of a refreshing disrespect for her own medium. "I, too, dislike it," she had written in "Poetry," meaning that she could not stomach any art which was not "genuine" or "useful." Between 1926 and 1929 she had served as editor of *The Dial*, writing no verse of her own but shaping the literary taste of the 1920s. She was, in 1935, all ready to publish her *Selected Poems*.

In that same spring, Elizabeth Bishop was a senior at Vassar College. The Vassar librarian, Fanny Borden (niece of the axe murderer), had known Marianne Moore

for many years, and occasionally arranged for her to meet promising Vassar students. Most of these meetings had gone awry, but that between Bishop and Moore would not. They met on a bench in front of the New York Public Library and, as Bishop wrote in her memoir of Moore, "It seems to me that Marianne talked to me steadily for the next 35 years."

During those years Moore's reputation was to climb steadily, even as the quality of her work diminished somewhat. And Bishop, whose first book was not published until 1945, was to become what fellow poet John Ashbery termed "a writer's writer's writer." Their names were to be linked, at times inextricably, almost as if their work were a single project, a single way of seeing the world that was inscribed in two bodies of work.



Poets and other writers assemble at the Gotham Book Mart in New York, in 1948, to honor Dame Edith Sitwell (seated on sofa at center). Marianne Moore (seated right), with Elizabeth Bishop at her shoulder, was by then a respected elder in a crowd that included, among others, W. H. Auden and Randall Jarrell.

There are, to be sure, similarities of perception recorded in the two women's writing. Both were possessed of a "famous eye," unafraid to linger on surfaces. Both were obsessed with craft, as well as with the vision behind it. And both played out, in their own ways, a tension between what Professor Helen Vendler calls "domesticity and the otherworldly." This is to say that they both render the familiar strange, and the exotic as something with immediate, and human, significance.

Just as interesting, however, are the differences between the two women's poetry, and their lives—for they played out this fundamental tension in very different ways. John Ashbery has justly remarked upon their separate temperaments: "Miss Moore's synthesizing, collector's approach is far from Miss Bishop's linear, exploring one." Perhaps this quotation reveals as much about Ashbery's preferences as it does about Moore and Bishop—certainly Moore does explore, and Bishop does synthesize—but it points a way past a frequent critical blind spot, one that wishes them put under a single rubric.

Their similarities and differences bear delineating for several reasons. First, their similarities lead us to a question at once natural and problematic. That is, what role, if any, did their status as "women poets" play in their careers, and in the poems that they wrote? How well did they fit into the high priesthood of modernist, and even confessional, poets, those who thought of poetry as almost a substitute for religion? In other words, did they write a poetry appreciably different from that of their friends and contemporaries—W. B. Yeats and Ezra Pound, in Moore's case; Robert Lowell in Bishop's? And second, do their differences shed any light on the much bruited "anxiety of influence" (a term, and a theory, coined by the prominent critic, Harold Bloom) which poets feel toward their "precursors," those who write before them?

Marianne Moore, like Elizabeth Bishop, may have been wounded into poetry: Moore's father, and Bishop's mother,

succumbed to mental illness when their children were young. Moore's father, an inventor, suffered a nervous breakdown after his idea for a smokeless furnace failed. He left the family, never to return, at about the time his daughter was born. She was born November 15, 1887, in Kirkwood, Missouri, and lived there with her mother, her brother, and her grandfather until he died. They moved to Pennsylvania in 1894. The family was Presbyterian, and Moore's brother, Warner, was to become a chaplain in the Navy. She lived with her mother for the rest of her life, except for the years she attended Bryn Mawr College, 1905–09. After graduating from college she attended secretarial school, which led to a teaching job at the U.S. Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Her students there included the famous athlete, Jim Thorpe; characteristically she insisted on calling him "James." In 1916 Marianne and her mother moved to New Jersey to keep house with Warner, and from there they moved to Greenwich Village (because the battleship Warner served on was stationed at the Brooklyn Navy Yard). Her last change of address occurred in 1929, when she and her mother moved to Brooklyn. Her mother died in 1947, Moore in 1972, both of them at the age of 85.

Marianne Moore's life was, to some extent, that of a 20th-century Emily Dickinson, marked by asceticism and a certain reclusiveness, and yet also public, the disciplined life of a literary editor. She was eccentric, as if to compensate for her quotidian existence—although in an essay on Dickinson, published in 1933, she dismissed all talk of personal idiosyncrasies. The piece is penned with some surcharge of emotion: "One resents the cavil that makes idiosyncrasy out of individuality... and though to converse athwart a door [as Dickinson did] is not usual, it seems more un-useful to discuss such a preference than it would be to analyze the beam of light that brings personality, even in death, out of seclusion."

Yet Moore reveled in her own eccentricities, even cultivated them. She wore a tricorn hat and a black cape, and sometimes took pictures of herself in subway photo booths to make certain that her image was right. When Moore signed on with *The Dial*, she made sure that she would have time set aside for tango lessons. One of her later jobs took advantage of her penchant for verbal and visual style. After she had become what the English poet Charles Tomlinson has called "a national pet," Ford Motor Company hired her in 1955 to come up with names for a new car. She obliged, generating hundreds of names—of the "utopian Turtletop" variety—but Ford found none of them suitable.

Mrs. Moore was a strong taskmaster to her daughter and her daughter's friends. She was also a prude, or what Bishop called more kindly, "overfastidious"; she and her daughter once reprimanded Bishop for using the word "privy" (referred to in Moore's letter as "watercloset") in the poem "Roosters." Also suspect was the word "spit," which Bishop wrote into a short story. And Mrs. Moore occasionally put what she thought were indecent books—including Mary McCarthy's *Company She Keeps*—to the torch. She also exercised her talents as a censor on the human scale. When Elizabeth Bishop asked why one well-known writer was never to be seen at Moore's home, she was told, "He contradicted Mother." Her moralizing strain was to come increasingly to the fore in her daughter's work. One stanza of "What Are Years?" (1944) has made more than one reader twinge under the verbal equivalent of a ruler applied to the hand—"So he who strongly feels,/behaves."

Marianne Moore, as her friend the literary theorist Kenneth Burke wrote, "tried so hard to be ordinary that she became even more extraordinary." Her poetry behaves, but mainly on the formal surface; it says ordinary things perhaps, but always in extraordinary ways. She invented her own stanzaic forms, creating stanzas in which

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each line had a precise number of syllables. She often used hidden rhymes, burying the old ore of poetic form in her variations. Even her free-verse poems she wrote first in such disciplined stanzas.

Her ostensible subjects include the sea, a glacier, New York, a steam-roller, and always animals. Moore saw, as Blake advised, not with but through the eye. Beneath her pen the sea becomes "a grave," the glacier is "an octopus of ice," and the steam roller represents an attempt to make "impersonal judgment in aesthetic/ matters."

In other words, the ordinary *is* extraordinary, and its genuineness lends it power. Moore—a great fan of the Brooklyn Dodgers and, after they moved to the West Coast, the New York Yankees—never tired "of a speedy ball from the catcher finding the glove of the pitcher, when half the time he isn't even looking at it." That is, she never tired of something most of us never notice, something extrinsic to the game itself, and yet still somehow fundamental to it. "Writing is exciting," she wrote in 1966, "and baseball is like writing."

She did not, however, consider either activity to be merely play. When the Yankees invited her one year to throw out their first pitch, she decided that she had to throw it from the pitcher's mound, and appeared at the Yankee offices one winter day, in the snow, to ask if she could practice. The excitement she found in writing was also hard-earned—she worked hours, for example, to perfect the simplest of thank-you notes. And she carried a clipboard with attached poems-in-progress around the apartment with her as she did housework.

The poet, she wrote in a passage of "Poetry" that she was later to cut away (her own poetry often seemed foremost among her dislikes), must present "imaginary gardens with real toads in them," not excluding real "business documents and/schoolbooks" among the raw materials of her art. But in "When I Buy Pictures," she admits to liking "quite the opposite" to the ordinary: "the old thing, the medieval decorated hat-box,/in which there are hounds with waists diminishing like the waist of the hour-glass." Moore is deliberately disingenuous. Her hat-box is at once ordinary and extraordinary. She reminds us that Keats's Grecian urn likely had a practical purpose.

In poetry, as she writes in another poem, "the past is the present." The past (of the hatbox, or of the Hebrew language that she revered) comes forward in art. But as the ordinary is rendered extraordinary, it loses presence, acquires a distance that permits the poet to succeed where the steam roller fails—in judgment and appreciation. The poet must not get too close to her subject, lest like the steamroller she destroy it.

The lines about restraint, in "What Are Years?," speak volumes, both about Moore and—strangely enough—about her relationship to modernism, as well as about her affinities with Bishop. Bishop remarked in an interview that, "I don't think [she] ever believed in talking about the emotions much." Moore's poetry—like Bishop's—is singularly reticent. It depends on occasion even less than Bishop's poetry, most often sublimating the poet's experience, as well as her emotion, in a language of abstract thought, or surfaces.

In a short poem called "Silence," Moore writes that her father (actually, someone else's, since she never knew her own) praised self-reliance to her, comparing "superior people" to cats that take their prey to privacy, and concluding, "The deepest feeling always shows itself in silence;/not in silence, but restraint." There is much to note here: the poet's invented father; the understated current of violence in his sage words about cats and mice; his painful detachment.

More interesting, however, is the relation between the poet's silence and modernist tradition. One of the best short-form polemics on modernism is T. S. Eliot's essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," published in 1919. In that essay he puts forward what he terms an "impersonal theory of poetry." "Poetry," he writes, "is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality." His belated proviso to this harsh edict links him to the haughty father of "Silence": "But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what

Long a fan of the Brooklyn Dodgers, Marianne Moore transferred her loyalty to the Yankees when the "Bums" moved West. Here, the poet tosses out the first ball at the Yankee's 1968 opener.

it means to want to escape from those things."

What Eliot proposed in the place of a direct presentation of emotion was its indirect representation: emotion expressed not by way of immediate, but of mediated, experience. The poet is most effective, he argues, when he places himself within a tradition of other poets, when his words merge with the overtones of the dead. Or he simply takes the words of his predecessors and places them in his own poem. Thus Eliot takes from Spenser and Dante and Shakespeare and Goldsmith and Verlaine (among others) in making his poem, *The Waste Land.* Ezra Pound was more radical yet: he proposed that the modern poet adopt the "persona" of an older poet, and speak through him as through a mask. His sources were more obscure than Eliot's, less within the European Renaissance tradition.

Where Eliot steals, Moore cites, with all the machinery of quotation marks. To look at a page of Marianne Moore's poetry is often to see a flurry of such material, mediated but hardly dominated by the poet's commentary. The poet is, above all, an arranger of other writers' words, a democratic collector of voices, although, like Whitman, she is a democrat who wields final authority over her material. (The oftimes blunt Walt Whitman was no hero, however. When Bishop once spoke his name to her friend, Moore snapped, "Elizabeth, don't speak to me about that man!")

Yet Moore's quotations come from a different storehouse than those of Eliot. If Eliot had been a collector, he might have frequented Sotheby's; Moore would have preferred garage sales and flea markets, for she made a tradition of seemingly random, and unliterary, quotations. From her college days on she kept a commonplace book of the quotations that caught her eye as she read. In order to have the quotations at hand, she made an index at the back of the notebook. Her taste was always catholic. When she wrote to Ezra Pound in 1921, she brushed off classics as "common property." Her interests, she notes implicitly, are uncommon: "I have been interested most, in the last two years, in technical books such as Gilman's *Museum Ideals of Purpose and Method*.... Harold Raynes' book on dogs, *The Earthenware Collector* by G. Woolliscroft Rhead. McGraw's and Matthewson's books on baseball and Tilden's book on tennis."

Sometimes in her verse the poet gets the final word; at other times, a quotation concludes the poem. Take "An Octopus," an extended exercise in describing a glacier (it is "an octopus of ice"). The poem ends in quotation, as the poet—through her verbal mask—takes a final look at it:

> the glassy octopus symmetrically pointed,
> its claw cut by the avalanche
> "with a sound like the crack of a rifle,
> in a curtain of powdered snow launched
> like a waterfall."

The glacier, notably, is "like Henry James 'damned by the public for decorum,'" to which the poet appends, "not decorum, but restraint." The iceberg is, then,

impersonal—like the poet.

These voices come not from the Western tradition but from Moore's commonplace book. Moore's notes to the poem tell us that "with a sound like the crack of a rifle" comes from W. D. Wilcox's *Rockies of Canada*, published in 1903. The last line may come from the poem's main source, *The National Parks Portfolio*, published in 1922. Other sources for the poem range from the *Illustrated London News* of August 11, 1923, to John Ruskin, to something "overheard at the circus."

We see the problem. This is the impersonal poet's impersonal poet, one who cares not if her source comes of high culture or low, prose or poetry. Her poem more resembles Pound's work than Eliot's, and yet its very persona is ice, a voice not recognizably of any tradition. Eliot himself said as much, when he wrote that Moore was a poet of "no immediate derivations." To know the source of the quotation is not to clue us in on what the poet means—is she taking the Park Service at its word? Is she using their guidebook ironically? The answer to both questions is probably no. What is most interesting about the poem, after one gets over the initial hurdle of the quotation marks, is that it sounds of one piece. The voice throughout is best called that of Marianne Moore—something that cannot be said of *The Waste Land* and T. S. Eliot.

Is this the distinctive voice of a woman? Some critics, over the years, have heard it as one. Their high praise for her work is often a double-edged sword: awe, and the opposing blade of condescension. One of these is Roy Harvey Pearce, in his famous survey, *The Continuity of American Poetry* (1961). He notes that Moore does not comment on her materials. "We cannot but remark the poet's polite and lady-like presence . . . . She tries neither to convince nor celebrate." Elsewhere he refers to her "quite feminine realism."

More subtle was R. P. Blackmur who, while he admired Moore's work, thought it a trifle unambitious: "the astonishing fact [is] that none of Miss Moore's poems attempts to be major poetry." He attacks her idiosyncrasies as incapable of communicating "major themes." More recent critics, notably Helen Vendler, Bonnie Costello, and John Slatin, have taken Moore to be the very ambitious poet of major poems that she was.

Her reticence, rather, is consistent with the tradition of modernism in which she took part. If anything, her almost immaculate control of her materials seems a reaction against the charge of "femininity" in writing.

There were important differences between her and her fellow modernists, however. And these differences are likely due to her unique position as a woman among many men. She differed from them in making art out of the raw materials of ordinary life: newspapers, magazines, National Park guides. She took the modernists' method, but refused their tradition, or what is today often referred to as the canon. Like Ireland, in her poem "Sojourn in the Whale" (1917), she felt "compelled by hags to spin/gold thread from straw," but made of such a spinning her particular strength. In that, she was very like James Joyce. But in other important ways she was not. James Joyce tried to rewrite nothing less than *The Odyssey* in his famous book, *Ulysses*, published in 1922, the same year that Eliot's *Waste Land* appeared.

There was much hubris in the modernists' systematizing; however playful (as Joyce's work most certainly is), it was less like baseball than like an elaborate chess-game. If Eliot's heroes were Dante and Donne, hers were (among others) Pee Wee Reese and Roy Campanella. She was less a high priestess of the imagination than its general practitioner—and in that she resembles William Carlos Williams, who also stayed at home and insisted that the imagination must be rooted in place rather than in metaphysics. But even Williams, whose talents lay primarily in the brief lyric poem, felt the need to earn his spurs by writing an epic. That Moore did not distinguishes her work in the best sense; she knew and accepted personal and poetic limits, and made a virtue of what Pearce condescended to call her "quite feminine realism."

She also shared with Williams a love of, and respect for, common people. Bishop said in an interview that John Dewey and Marianne Moore "are the only people I

have ever known who would talk to everyone, on all social levels, without the slightest change in their manner of speaking.... [T]hey have the kind of instinctive respect for other people which we all wish we could have but can only aspire to." The woman who went to ball games with a janitor and his wife, and who played tennis with a young black man who yelled "Okay!" instead of "Serve!," did have certain affinities with the democratic bard, Walt Whitman. Whitman, too, one suspects, would have liked the Brooklyn Dodgers.

Nowhere in real life is the art of realism so evident as in friendship. And nowhere is it so put to the test as in friendships between artists, especially when one is a headstrong editor and the other an ambitious young writer. I refer, of course, to Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop, whose friendship merits its own telling.

Moore, who stayed at home, was not so obsessed with the idea of home as was Bishop, who for so many years had none. Bishop conceived of home as a place of confinement and of freedom. In 1938 Bishop published a short story entitled "In Prison." The narrator, a Kafkaesque soul with a Puritan's heart, knows that "Freedom is knowledge of necessity," and "can hardly wait for the day of [his] imprisonment." Among the narrator's desires is to read "one very dull book... the duller the better." This desire for a prison/home resurfaces in Bishop's last book, *Geography III*, published in 1976. In "The End or March," the speaker wants to walk on the beach until she reaches her "proto-dream-house" where she will "read boring books,/old, long, long books." This narrator has softened a bit, adding to her desires "a grog à l'américaine." But "home" remains a place of confinement, albeit beside the ocean.

Surely it is interesting, then, that when Bishop settled in Brazil, where she lived between 1951 and 1967 with her friend Lota de Macedo Soares, she named their home Casa Mariana, "after Marianne Moore and also because it is on the road to a town called Mariana." For their friendship, too, was one of imprisonment and freedom, comfort and restraint.

One visitor to Bishop's house noted that it sat next to a waterfall and that the windows looked onto bamboo; that the room was full of old quarterlies, photographs of Baudelaire, Moore, and Robert Lowell; and that two old cats shared a space with her typewriter. But when asked if the location inspired her to write, she answered: "I suppose any writer prefers a hotel room completely shut away from distractions." Or a kind of prison.

The agreeable clutter of Bishop's domicile resembled what she had noted in the Moore household. In "Efforts of Affection" she describes it this way: "The small living room and dining room were crowded with furniture that had obviously come from an older, larger home, and there were many pictures on the walls, a mixture of the old and the new, family possessions and presents from friends (these generally depicted birds or animals)."

After their initial meeting on the bench in front of the New York Public Library (in 1934, the year that Bishop's mother died), the ordinarily shy college student invited the older poet to go with her to the circus. The invitation was a propitious one, since Moore went to the circus every year, for pleasure and, no doubt, to do research on her favorite subjects. On this occasion, Moore pressed Bishop into service to help her collect a replacement elephant hair for a bracelet that her brother had given her. Bishop diverted the older elephants with stale bread, while Moore furtively snipped hairs off the head of a baby elephant with an old pair of nail scissors.

Moore also helped to launch Bishop's career—although it is safe to assume that it would have risen of its own strength. Early in their friendship (from 1934 on), she gave Bishop's name to interested publishers, pressed Bishop to send her poems to journals, and even offered to submit the poems herself (an offer that was declined). At the same time, she made copious suggestions for revision, and gave large doses of encouragement. In 1936, when Bishop was unsure of her ability as a poet and considered a career in medicine, Moore gently advised her against it. In later years she recommended the younger poet for honors and fellowships, often offering her

the highest of praise. Recommending her for the Houghton Mifflin Poetry Prize Fellowship in 1945, she wrote: "Were writing offered by her to be rejected, it would imply—for me—that imagination is without value." Bishop got the prize, and her first book, *North & South*, was published. The imagination won this battle, at least.

By 1938 what Bishop had called Moore's "protective apron" (image of domesticity and home) had begun to smother a bit. She pulled away, and sent manuscripts directly to publishers rather than clearing them first with Moore. But the real break between apprentice and master came over Bishop's poem, "Roosters," a bitter invective directed at male aggressiveness (the most acid poem in her oeuvre). Moore intervened, alluding to the "heroisms of abstinence." Revealing her own, perhaps, she strangely advised Bishop to change the title to "The Cock." Bishop's response was an angry one: "May I keep your poem?" she asks, "It is very interesting, what you have done." There was acid in the words "your poem."

Bishop was not alone in suffering under Moore's diligence; as editor of *The Dial* she cut Hart Crane's "Wine Menagerie" by two-thirds, rewrote some of the remaining lines, and then changed the title to "Again." Kenneth Burke noted that she had taken all the wine out of the menagerie. (That she left in the menagerie shows to what extent it became a Marianne Moore poem.)

Shortly after their exchange over "Roosters," Bishop wrote a poem entitled "Invitation to Miss Marianne Moore," which bids Moore "come flying" over the Brooklyn Bridge. Although it has superficial affinities to Moore's work in tone and texture, it is based rather on a poem by Pablo Neruda, as if to emphasize its otherness from Moore and her tradition. There are moments of disapprobation toward "Miss Moore": "Bearing a musical inaudible abacus,/a slight censorious frown." But the poem is a friendly one.

The invitation was, as Bishop wrote in a letter, to attend an exhibit of Paul Klee's work in New York. The invitation sounds almost an apologetic note: We cannot be, in effect, literary collaborators, but we can "sit down and weep; we can go shopping." And from this point on, until Moore died in 1972, their friendship remained more personal than literary. After 1940 Moore expressed her revisionist sentiments to Bishop with a polite hesitancy. She made some suggestions about "Large Bad Picture" in 1943, only to add: "But I have no confidence—truly none—in my present 'ideas'." Confidence Moore always had; this proviso probably expresses more tact than self-doubt.

But their friendship never weakened. One letter from Moore in 1946 testifies to its strength: "You have done so much for me, Elizabeth, I feel a sense of defeat in your not knowing this better." Bishop wrote from Brazil in 1959 to offer another invitation: "It would be a lovely week to have you as a visitor." And in 1970 she enclosed a handpainted drawing of a doorframe from her house with a letter: a sign reading "Casa Mariana" was nailed to

Elizabeth Bishop in Brazil, 1954. Living there from 1951 to 1967, she named her home Casa Mariana, "after Marianne Moore and also because it is on the road to a town called Mariana."

the frame.

Their literary friendship was perhaps typical, marked both by affection and by strong judgments that sometimes caused hard feelings. But it is hard to see where Bishop fell prey to anxieties about her major "influence." She shared Moore's belief in art's constraints, its incapacity radically to change life—they agreed with Auden when he wrote that "poetry makes nothing happen." But the substance of that belief, its working out in the poems, was so different that it seems wrong to say that Bishop depended on Moore for her models, her subjects. Bishop's poems, as John Ashbery noted, are more linear than Moore's. Despite their reticence they allow more psychology and more autobiography to intrude. They are more conversational than Moore's, which seem to belong first to the printed page.

Yet what we do take from both poets' work is a limited faith in art's restorative powers, a sense that, even if it cannot contain "visions," it can sustain us. This sense of limitation increases rather than decreases when we arrive at Elizabeth Bishop's work. Where Moore thought poetry ought to be "useful," Bishop advocated the "perfectly useless concentration" we find there. And where Moore was above all a moralist, Bishop almost never provides her reader with a lesson or a punch-line. The work, she seems to say, is the reader's to complete.

Like Moore, however, Bishop practiced hard at being ordinary, but seldom converted her friends to the idea that she was. Poet James Merrill told the story of how she had rented her house for a summer to the poet Charles Olson, but had to pay the bills herself because he complained that "a Poet mustn't be asked to do prosaic things like pay bills." Noting that Bishop took no unfair advantage of "the Poet" in her rendering of the anecdote, Merrill turned his attention to her: "[This was] another of her own instinctive, modest, life-long impersonations of an ordinary woman, someone who during the day did errands, went to the beach, would perhaps that evening jot a phrase or two inside the nightclub matchbook before returning to the dance floor."

Even this short passage serves to emphasize the differences between the two women. Moore was, above all, a mental traveler: She lived almost all her life in New York City, and praises its "accessibility to experience." Bishop, on the other hand, was peripatetic, physically as well as mentally a wanderer. Restlessness, and her record of it, became her vocation. The chronology of her life is written in the delighted syllables of a Rand McNally atlas: all parts of Europe, North Africa, Key West, Mexico, Brazil, Boston, and dozens of points between them. The titles of three of her four books headline the travels: *North & South*, *Questions of Travel*, and *Geography III*.

Like Marianne Moore, who set aside time for baseball and the tango, Bishop had plenty of room in her character for playfulness. Merrill writes of "later glimpses of her playing was it poker? with Neruda in a Mexican hotel, or pingpong with Octavio Paz in Cambridge . . . ." Bishop thought it a great compliment that Ernest Hemingway liked her poem, "The Fish," and once described herself as "a lady Hemingway." However confounding this self-description may seem, there is some justice in it—like Hemingway she loved to travel and fish, and was fascinated by Key West and points farther south. A lesbian—once rashly pronounced "the most important lesbian poet since Sappho," by Harold Bloom—Bishop even had an affair with one of Ernest's four wives, Pauline. The symmetry was complete.

Bishop's sense of drift had its origins in her childhood. She was born in 1911 in Massachusetts, but spent a good part of her early childhood in Nova Scotia. Her father's was a prominent Boston family, and her mother's a Baptist family from Nova Scotia. From the beginning, then, her sense of herself must have been divided, and it seems natural that geography became one of her consuming interests. After her father's death and her mother's institutionalization for mental illness, she was shuttled from one set of grandparents to the other and then back. An autobiographical short story, "In the Village," sets her mother's anguished scream against the redemptive clang of the village blacksmith's hammer. The strain of loss and dis-

placement aggravated her asthma and allergies, which forced her to stay out of school for long periods and to study at home. Only many years later, when she had settled in Brazil, was she able or willing to write the poems about her childhood found in her third book, *Questions of Travel*: "Manners," "Sestina," and "First Death in Nova Scotia." These and several of the pieces in her collected prose testify to the restraint that balances her own deepest feeling with modesty and a remarkable lack of self-pity.

The manner in which a poet reads his or her work out loud tells us something about the work. Wallace Stevens intoned like a lapsed clergyman; T. S. Eliot sounded like the converted Englishman he was and read dramatically, relishing the lower-class voices in *The Waste Land*. Both read in a grand—if impersonal—style. Not so Bishop. She stood before her audiences and read her poems in dull monotones, as if they were stories from the newspaper—as if they had very little to do with her. She very much refused to play the poet; and it was easy to imagine that she was ordinary.

Moore had made art one of her primary subjects. If we wish to find her opinion of poetry, we turn to the poem of that title. But if we turn with the same idea in mind to Bishop's "Poem," from her last book, we may at first be baffled—for the subject of the poem is a small painting, "About the size of an old-style dollar bill." (It joins her early poems, "Large Bad Picture" and "The Monument," as a meditation on mortal art.) But as we proceed, we find in it a "theory" of art that owes much to Moore: an unsystematic appreciation of art's modest power to explain our average moments and, conversely, to lend them a limited joy.

What the poet discovers gently, and without the violence of a Joycean epiphany, in "Poem," is that the painting shows the Nova Scotia she knew as a child, that the painter was her great-uncle. She realizes that her vision of the place matches his, and that both are likely lost. But she corrects herself at that lofty word, "vision" (a word that no Joyce or Eliot would so much as blink at):

> Our visions coincided—"visions" is
> too serious a word—our looks, two
> looks:
> art "copying from life" and life itself,
> life and the memory of it so compressed
> they've turned into each other. Which is
> which?

Many of Bishop's poems are quiet revelations of what is "feminine" in the world. She opens her last book with the remarkable poem, "In the Waiting Room." In it, six-year-old Bishop realizes that she is not only an individual but also *"one of them."* She is like her aunt whose scream she hears in the dentist's office (a displacement of her mother's scream, perhaps), and like the women with "those awful hanging breasts" whose picture she sees in a copy of the *National Geographic*.

In an earlier poem, "At the Fishhouses," Bishop sees the ocean as "what we imagine knowlege to be," "drawn from the cold hard mouth/of the world, from . . . rocky breasts," an historical—and impersonal—feminine. In "Filling Station" she notices, amid the grease and dirt, an embroidered doily, emblem of hard-won beauty, likely placed there by an (absent) woman.

Art, then, is not a glorified image of life, but also passes away, like an old painting and like "the yet-to-be-dismantled elms" of the last line of "Poem." The poet gains some consolation from it, but the gains are small, looks and not visions:

> dim, but how live, how touching in detail
> —the little that we get for free,
> the little of our earthy trust. Not much.

Bishop, like Frost, is concerned with "what to make of a diminished thing," how to find meaning, and meaning's consolations, without a system. Like her "unbeliever," from her first book, *North & South*, she does not trust appearances, nor does she trust that there is anything behind them. The message in "Poem," insofar as there is one, is grim, but its exposition softens rather than exacerbates the impact.

Bishop's poetry explores the way in which art and life cannot be divorced: Their interrelation is what touches them both with meaning. This is what Bishop meant in 1936 when she thanked Moore

for commenting on her post-cards: "I'm afraid I won't really have made this trip at all until I have lured you into commenting on every bit of pictorial evidence I can produce." Moore's best answer to these kind words came in 1964, when she declared that her friend's travels provided an "OPTICAL HOLIDAY for me, hearing about it all."

One detects in Bishop's work a refusal to participate in—to correspond with—the literary vogue of her own time, or at least the one that dominated the 1950s and 1960s. That vogue was "confessional" poetry, whose most famous exponent was Robert Lowell, her friend and author of *Life Studies* and other stark, personal testaments. That book includes the poem "Skunk Hour," inspired by Lowell's reading of a Bishop poem "The Armadillo." According to Lowell's biographer, Ian Hamilton, Lowell was in love with Bishop. Her homosexuality, however, precluded anything but the strong friendship they shared for many years. However much Bishop cherished Lowell, she thought that "the tendency [in confessional poetry] is to overdo the morbidity. You just wish they'd keep some of these things to themselves."

This places Bishop oddly before and after her time. She is even more restrained than the high modernists in her understatement, and more successful than William Carlos Williams and his fellow Imagists in weaving her images into a quiet story line.

Part of Bishop's strength, which she inherits from Moore even as she intensifies it, is her avoidance of system. She disliked dogma and was not drawn to "modern religiosity," which seemed to her "to lead to a tone of moral superiority." Much of the two poets' reticence, as poets, amounts to a pulling away from any demand made on a reader to read their poems a certain way. (As Moore's quotient of moralizing increased over the years, the quality of her poetry declined.)

Even if this non-dogmatic quality is not due to their being both women and poets, then another kind of reticence possibly was. That is the reticence of not writing more. As Bishop told one interviewer: "I wish I had written a great deal more. Sometimes I think if I had been born a man I probably would have written more. Dared more, or been able to spend more time at it."

This is the reticence of the invisible woman in "Filling Station," creating beauty and loving us all, but remaining behind the scenes. Or of the child in "The Waiting Room," who keeps to herself many decades, experiencing "the sensation of falling off/the round, turning world/into cold, blue-black space," as she discovers that she is a person, and will be a woman, like the others.

After Bishop's Brazilian friend of 15 years, Lota de Macedo Soares, died in 1967—a suicide—and after her *Complete Poems* (with their misleading title) were published in 1969 to adoring reviews and the National Book Award, she returned to the United States. Between 1970 and 1973 she alternated between a teaching position at Harvard and seasons in Brazil; after 1974 she settled permanently in Boston. Her last book, *Geography III*, was published in 1976. Bishop's death in 1979 was untimely; surely she had many more poems to write. Had she composed her own epitaph, it doubtless would have been a modest one. Perhaps it would have echoed the simple and eloquent sentences that she devoted to a primitivist painter she admired, Gregorio Valdes of Key West:

> There are some people whom we envy not because they are rich or handsome or successful, although they may be any or all of these, but because everything they are and do seems to be all of a piece, so that even if they wanted to they could not be or do otherwise.

COMMENTARY

We welcome timely letters from readers, especially those who wish to amplify or correct information published in the Quarterly *and/or react to the views expressed in our essays. The writer's telephone number and address should be included. For reasons of space, letters are usually edited for publication. Some letters are received in response to the editors' requests for comment.*

Gorbachev's Popular Support

An important question raised by S. Frederick Starr and Robert Rand ["Reform in Russia," *WQ*, Spring '89] is the extent of popular support for the policy of reform that Gorbachev is pursuing. Both state that the lack of tangible results, particularly in the availability of food and other consumer goods, threatens to turn public opinion against reform.

This may turn out to be the case in the long run if economic reforms continue to be half-measures that are only partially implemented—there has been no decision to dismantle or even significantly reduce the powers of the State Planning Agency, for example. The newly sanctioned cooperative movement has been hamstrung by a number of recent government regulations that show a basic mistrust of private entrepreneurs and prices based on supply and demand. Ministries whose interests would suffer from competition with coops, such as the Ministry of Health Care, have so far succeeded in placing limits on the activities of cooperatives. Local government and party officials in many parts of the country have taken steps that make life difficult for cooperatives. So far the impact of reform on the economy has been minimal.

However, what the spring elections for the new Congress of People's Deputies show is that the continuing, possibly even worsening, economic problems seem to have galvanized public support for more radical reform.

The urban population in cities as diverse as Leningrad and Perm by large margins rejected the candidacies of local leaders who they feel have obstructed political and economic change. (Most Muscovites, by the way, would place Lev Zaikov in this category, particularly after the vicious campaign conducted by the Moscow party organization against his popular predecessor, Boris Yeltsin.) In a few cases local party and state leaders were rejected even when they ran unopposed.

To this point, elections have not resulted in the ouster of local officials, but the future elections to lower-level soviets will offer Soviet voters just such an opportunity. The new local soviets will be headed by local party leaders, but if these leaders are defeated as candidates to the soviet it is clear that they will not be allowed to hold either post.

It is this process of political reform that, even while subject to a number of restrictions and qualifications, offers an opportunity for the institutionalization of reformist policies that was rarely attempted and never realized in previous efforts. Ultimately, the goal is to create a new political system centered on the soviets as the most important policy-making bodies, and to make the soviets responsive to public opinion.

This is not to say that the process will go smoothly. First, it is not at all clear what role the party will play in this new system. Nor is it clear how the newly emerging Popular Fronts—which in many cases are led by progressive members of the party—will fare. (In addition to the first such organizations in the Baltic, approximately 40 groups have been created in the Russian republic, including an active organization in Moscow.) Second, different parts of the country have shown widely varying support for radical change among leaders and led.

The formidable task facing Gorbachev is to create a new political order that will permit more profound economic changes. The strategy he has chosen is to mobilize public opinion (through *glasnost*) in support of both goals. In the foreseeable future the main danger for Gorbachev's policies arises not from public disenchantment but from the party and state bureaucracy most directly threatened by his program.

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The Weight of History

S. Frederick Starr is quite right, of course, in stressing the "peculiar pattern" of reform movements in Russian/Soviet history and its significance for an understanding of the Gorbachev period. Evidence from the Soviet Interview Project, which conducted systematic conversations with thousands of recent emigrants from the USSR to the United States also supports Starr's hypothesis that what we are witnessing today in the USSR is not merely "another brief cycle of top-down reform." Gorbachev is instead unlocking pent up forces, generated over the last several decades, by gradual underlying generational, educational, and socio-economic changes. Even so, one should not overlook the influence of external, global changes. Most societies

evidence pulses of reform followed by periods of stasis or reaction, and changes in one society tend to spill over to others, especially in the modern world.

Robert Rand asserts in his conclusion what would better be regarded as a hopeful hypothesis about the process of reform in the USSR today: that the success of *glasnost* may serve to offset the disappointing results of perestroika to date. This is the crucial question: Will Soviet citizens, or at least a majority of them, regard the expanding political and civil rights afforded by *glasnost* as sufficiently beneficial in and of themselves to make tolerable the continued slow growth and poor performance of the economy? Or will they use their new rights merely to throw the rascals out? If Fred Starr's analysis is correct, then it won't really matter if they do. The replacement government would ultimately have to bend to the weight of historical and global forces.

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More Tax Reform

In their excellent articles on taxation ["The Politics of Taxation," *WQ*, Spring '89] Carolyn Webber and W. Elliott Brownlee mention the recent U.S. tax reform but understate its significance.

The Tax Reform Act of 1986 was a milestone in tax history. It reversed the long history of income tax erosion in this country and made significant strides toward comprehensive income taxation. Despite the large reduction in the top individual rate, the broadening of the tax base and the increase in the corporate tax rate actually *increased* the progressivity of the tax system. Horizontal equity was also served by the elimination of numerous unnecessary deductions and exclusions. Most tax shelters are no longer profitable and investment is now motivated largely by economic rather than tax considerations.

The U.S. economy has done well since the enactment of the 1986 tax reform. The low tax rates in the United States are the envy of the entire world and other countries are rushing to follow suit. President Bush's proposal to reduce the capital gains tax would undermine much of this progress. The proposed cut would once again encourage the conversion of ordinary income into capital gains and inevitably restore the economic distortions generated by the old law. Tax avoidance would again take its place as the national pastime.

Rather than undermine the 1986 tax reform, we should build on it to raise the revenues needed to

eliminate the federal deficit. The best way would be to continue to broaden the base of the income taxes by eliminating tax favors that remain in the law. Some examples are the exemption of capital gains transferred at gift or death, numerous fringe benefits that are not taxable to employees, excessive tax benefits of home owners, and the exclusion of all Medicare benefits and part of social security benefits from the tax base.

As a practical matter, it's clear that income and excise tax reform will not provide enough revenue to balance the federal budget. The additional revenue could be obtained by increasing the income tax rates, both corporate and individual. Even a modest increase in these rates, say, a flat 3 percentage points across the board, would raise $100 billion in fiscal year 1994. Such an increase would keep the top rates at very low levels by international standards. We certainly don't need a regressive sales tax or value-added tax, which some have suggested, to raise the needed revenue.

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The Rise and Fall of Taxes

Serious economists and economic historiographers cannot at this point ignore the implications of the Laffer Curve, i.e. the application of the axiomatic law of diminishing returns to tax policy. The concept of taxes rising while tax rates fall, or vice versa, makes it more difficult to interpret economic history, but this refinement will be a challenge to our young historians. I have no doubt that world history books in the 21st century will be different from those that have served thus far. The "sweeping revision of economic thought" initiated by John Maynard Keynes, as Ms. Webber correctly states, will be revised once again.

The variables are even more difficult to juggle in recasting, say, the rise and fall of Rome, or the rise and fall of the British Empire. Consider that if tax rates on labor are zero, and confiscatory on capital, there is no production, and if tax rates are zero on capital, and confiscatory on labor, there is no production. No historian, none, has carried that thought in examining the ebb and flow of political economies. We can learn nothing from a historian who reports that President Coolidge, say, cut "taxes on the rich." Did he cut rates, or revenues? Did he cut rates or revenues from the mature rich, or the young, entrepreneurial rich?

Currently, we are debating the capital-gains tax. Will a cut to 15 percent from 32 percent increase national wealth or decrease it? Will the rich pay a higher percentage of total taxes or lower? Will the *Fortune* 500 companies grow more slowly than new enterprises, and as a result pay smaller tax revenues to the common pool? This is what I mean by refinement. If we can't examine the present in this complex framework, how useful is it to examine the past in the crude analytical framework that has been traditional among historians?

Today's historians, for example, credit Mussolini's political success with his industrial-planning policies, which we call fascism. I credit the supply-side tax and monetary policies of his finance minister, Alberto de Stefani. Historians credit Adolf Hitler's Third Reich economic success with his "Keynesian" public works and rearmament spending policies. Nonsense, I say. It was the supply-side tax and tariff policies of his finance minister, Hjalmar Schacht.

The *Wilson Quarterly*'s historical reconnaissance strains to examine history in the demand-model that has been a keystone of modern thinking on the nature of political economy. It would be more useful if it broke those bonds and looked at the world anew in light of President Reagan's supply-side revolution.

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Paving Over History

Part of Washington, D.C.'s identity problem ["The Other Washington," *WQ*, New Year's '89] is homegrown, I believe. There are historians, myself included, who have observed and written about acts of the locally elected government which perpetuate and strengthen muddled perceptions of hometown Washington, D.C.

For example, Rhodes Tavern stood for 185 years one block from the White House. As Washington's first town hall, this National Register of Historic Places landmark, cited in local history texts used in the D.C. public schools, was the site of citizens meetings in 1801 protesting "taxation and rule by a legislature [Congress] in which we have no representation." Events associated with Rhodes Tavern effectively refuted the prevailing view of many commentators that agitation for voting rights by those residing in the nation's capital has occurred only since the 1960s when African-Americans became a majority in Washington, D.C.

Yet, despite an initiative vote of citizens to preserve this singular landmark of "the other Washington," the locally elected government sided in 1984 with developers, including the Equitable Life Assurance Society, headquartered in New York

City, to demolish Rhodes Tavern.

In another blow to local identity and the history of "the other Washington," Mayor Marion S. Barry sanctioned, without explanation, the removal of a statue of native-born civil-rights leader, Governor Alexander R. "Boss" Shepherd, from its site of 70 years in front of D.C.'s equivalent of a statehouse, "The District Building." The statue has stood for ten years now on the grounds of D.C.'s sewage treatment plant, out of general public view.

Such acts are contrary to the wise advice of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Martin Luther King, Jr., who warned, "A people must know their history before they can know their destiny."

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Questioning the Official Story

The article "Washington and Havana" [*WQ*, Winter '88] makes interesting reading for the public at large; but I feel compelled to point out that it is plagued with inaccuracies and misconceptions, of which I am going to comment on just two.

The second sentence of the fourth paragraph, p. 64, states: "at his trial, sentenced to 15 years in prison, [Fidel Castro] concluded a two-hour oration with the vow 'history will absolve me.'" But that is not true.

Dr. José F. Valls, in an article (in Spanish) titled "La Historia me Absolverá"—La Mentira del Siglo ("History Will Absolve Me"—The Lie of the Century), flatly denies that such inspired oration ever took place. And Dr. Valls ought to know, because he was the attorney appointed by the National Bar Association of Cuba to see that Castro got a fair trial; and when Castro was given the opportunity to defend himself he opted to remain silent.

Nothing was heard about such oration after the trial, nor while Castro was in prison, or while he was in Mexico preparing his invasion, and not even while he was holed up in the mountains. Then, after the triumph, the quotation was in all the newspapers and on radio and TV, and it was made a dogma of Castroism.

Ironically, if you check your history books you will find that the last sentences of Castro's now-famous "History Will Absolve Me" oration follow almost word for word the speech of Adolf Hitler at the end of his trial for the infamous Beer Hall Putsch.

Second, under the heading "Watching the *Barbudos*" you state in part: "The State Department quickly recognized Havana's new government—nominally headed by a proviso president, Judge Manuel Urrutia Lleó. (He happened to be the only judge to vote for Castro's acquittal at the Moncada trial.)" The statement in parenthesis is wrong.

Judge Urrutia was not a member of the tribunal for the Moncada trial which started on October 16, 1953. He was, in fact, a member of the tribunal that tried the members of the Granma expedition, which took place much later, in 1957. He voted for their acquittal based on the fact that, pursuant to Article 40 of the Constitution then in force, they had the right to resist in order to defend their civil rights. But at this trial Castro was not a defendant; by then he was already holed up in the mountains.

Nevertheless, as a favor for his vote, Castro appointed Judge Urrutia Provisional President. But he lasted only a few months in that post, and fearing for his life, he and his family took refuge in the Argentinian Embassy.

Bernardo A. Figueredo
Gonic, N.H.

Correction

The date of a photograph of H. L. Mencken was given incorrectly in the caption as 1947 ["Ambivalent Victorian: H. L. Mencken," *WQ*, Spring '89]. The picture was actually taken in July 1955, just six months before Mencken's death.

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A lifetime of emotions wrapped up in one word:

Cancer

Let's keep our heads. It is tremendously important that everyone know what cancer is. And what it is not. Cancer is not one disease. Some cancers may be prevented by good health habits. Some are easy to control; others may be severe or life-threatening. Different cancers are subject to different treatments. Most important of all, it is imperative to know that cancer need NOT be fatal.

Here is the latest news about cancer:
One of the leading scientific journals, *Nature,* recently said, "1983 may be the year in which carcinogenesis is finally understood."

Some of the best informed scientists in the world say that we may see substantial control and cure of cancers before this century is over. By the year 2000, the incidence of total cancers should be markedly decreased by prevention and cure. This is believed because of the rapid advances in the past several years, and what we can surely anticipate in the years just ahead.

The attack on the problem of cancer is vast, here and the world over. Scientists in universities, pharmaceutical organizations and government health agencies are coordinating activities that are supported by huge budgets and by an immense technology. A tremendous body of experience has been amassed for many different cancers.

Too much fear can be dangerous.
Early diagnosis is essential to arrest and to overcome many cancers. But early diagnosis is often hindered by fear. And fear is worse when one does not know the facts. Here are simple all-important facts: Cancer is NOT the commonest cause of death. Many cancers are curable.

Too often fear delays treatment. The best way to overcome fear is to get all the facts. More often than not, your fear that you have cancer will prove to be wrong. But ir is still absolutely essential that you get a medical examination and that your doctor (not you, nor your family, nor your friends) make a diagnosis.

Fear that someone in your family has cancer should also be promptly addressed. Here again, seek the advice of your physician. There are also many qualified professionals and special organizations that provide information on cancer in virtually every major community in the United States. Remember, knowledge is the best cure for UNFOUNDED fears.

Hope is the key to the future.
Hope is what the latest facts and figures on cancer are all about.
Hope resides in early diagnosis.
Hope resides in early treatment.
Hope resides in current research.

We now know that cancer can be diagnosed and treated with an array of new technology and knowledge. You are not alone in preventing or treating cancer. You need and have a support system. We call it...

Partners in Healthcare:

You are the most important partner.
Only you can take the first step. And at the first warning sign—a lump, unusual bleeding from any part of the body, a sore that does not heal, an obvious change in a wart or mole, a nagging cough or hoarseness, a change in bowel habits—DO NOT WAIT. CONSULT YOUR PHYSICIAN AT ONCE.

Your doctor interprets the warning signs, orders your tests and makes the diagnosis.
The chances are that your physician will find something other than cancer. But it is essential that, whatever tests are needed, they be done quickly for an early diagnosis.

All those who discover, develop and distribute medicines complete the partnership.
Pharmaceutical companies in the past few years have developed many good drugs for cancers. We at Pfizer are fulfilling our role as one of your partners in healthcare by mobilizing our doctors, chemists, technicians, a huge range of facilities and modern instrumentation to do our share in the search for the cause and the ultimate cure of cancer and other diseases.

For a copy of the pamphlet The Hopeful Side of Cancer, *write to the American Cancer Society, G.P.O. Box 1400, Dept. 2012, New York, N Y 10116.*

For reprints of this Healthcare Series, please write: Pfizer Pharmaceuticals, Post Office Box 3852, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163.

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