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FREE

Hello Dali

Gunilla Feigenbaum

Picture this: The guests arrive disguised as their latest dream. At the door, they exchange their invitation cards for a link of sausage. The waiters wear dinner jackets, horn-rimmed glasses, and paste tiaras. The barmen are all in white coats and neckties made of hair. A bathtub looks like it's sliding down a staircase and a dead cow wearing a white wedding veil sits at the far end of the room. The host is dressed as a corpse and the hostess sports a hat adorned with a lobster and a doll that looks like a dead baby.

This actually happened. The place was New York, the time was February 18th, 1935, and the party, named "Bal Oneirique," was given by Salvador Dali and his wife Gala. It's described in *The Persistence of Memory* (Random House, \$35), a new biography of Dali by Meredith Etherington-Smith, who is pictured on the dust jacket as a pleasantly plump woman of a certain age, with immense hair, posing amidst Roman artifacts. She looks unnaturally joyful—in fact, everything about her is a little exaggerated. I think Dali would have liked her—he appreciated exaggerations. His own were boundless, from his moustache to his megalomania.

But this is not a review of *The Persistence of Memory*. Thirty years ago, I enjoyed—if that's the word—an acquaintance with Dali for a few months and the book serves as a springboard for my own recollections. I'm not sure that my Dali and Etherington-Smith's Dali are the same person. The facts mostly agree, but the interpretations differ. She describes a painfully shy, genius painter snatched by the monstrously evil Gala and turned into a money-making machine to satisfy her lavish tastes. The Dali I knew didn't strike me as quite so hapless; but then, I was twenty years old and, however much I would have begged to differ at the time, not a great reader of character. Furthermore, Dali wasn't really knowable. He didn't converse—he performed. He loved to tell anecdotes about himself, but happily changed the stories to suit his audience. For example: he once told me, in the context of praising Gala (which he often did) how, when he and Gala had moved into their first apartment, instead of furnishing it for her with tables and chairs, he had left the apartment empty except for his first baby tooth, hanging by a string from the ceiling. Gala, he said, had been delighted.

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Illustration: Jack Sherman

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Dana Luciano on *Stone Butch Blues* and
Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold

New From Random House

Josephine

The Hungry Heart

JEAN-CLAUDE BAKER AND CHRIS CHASE

In this rich and evocative biography, spiced with never-before-revealed facts and anecdotes, Josephine Baker comes to life again. Through the monumental efforts of a man who has devoted a good part of his life to her memory, we see, at last, the complex woman who was one of our century's most captivating celebrities—the one who broke all the rules.

CLOTH, \$27.50



The Man from Japan

CLIVE JAMES

Mastering the colloquial nuances of a foreign tongue while preparing himself for a distinguished career as a cultural ambassador is not easy for Suzuki, a young Japanese intellectual, especially when his sexual exploits with a highly neurotic punk-rock singer and a highly aerobicized yuppie stockbroker lead to nightclub brawls and the tabloid headline JAP RAMBO GOES BANANAS.

CLOTH, \$20



The Fermata

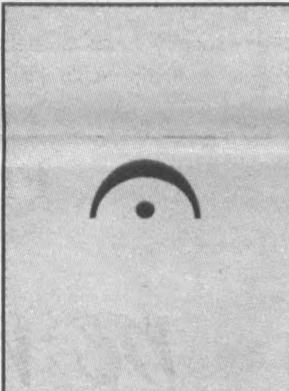
NICHOLSON BAKER

Arno Strine likes to stop time and take women's clothes off.

He is hard at work on his autobiography, *The Fermata*.

It proves in the telling to be a very provocative, funny, and altogether morally confused piece of work.

CLOTH, \$21

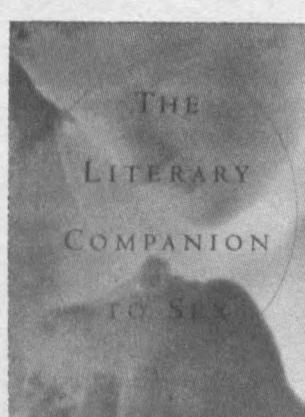


The Literary Companion to Sex

FIONA PITT-KETHLEY

A rollicking and learned tour through erotic literature, a perfect bedside book of frustratingly good reading. Chosen for their realism, humor, and originality, the selections of prose and poetry—beginning in Sodom and ending up on a crowded bus—are a rainbow coalition of sexual practice and predilection: no fetish or preference (only cliché) is discriminated against.

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Glen Baxter Returns to Normal

GLEN BAXTER

Even now, as the hideous, misshapen hulk hired by the author to ensure sales of his book lumbers toward you, lower lip quivering, you, gentle reader, need not feel any obligation to purchase this delightful and rashly underpriced volume without qualm, for what is a mere \$10.00 to a person of intelligence, charm, consummate wit, good taste, and the ability to walk proudly in this glorious democratic society free from the appalling pressures of rampant commercialism?

PAPER, \$10.00



Tex spent many long hours contemplating the Camembert

Dali

continued from page 1

Etherington-Smith tells a different version of the same anecdote: Gala and Dali had a fight about the house they were building in Port Lligat and Dali stormed out. He went to the beach where he observed some Gypsy women nursing their babies. This so inflamed his passions that he masturbated and then, full of remorse, hit himself in the mouth so hard he knocked out a tooth. Deciding that this was a good omen for the new house, Dali saved the tooth and told Gala he'd hang it by a string from the ceiling.

I don't know which story is true—maybe neither—nor does it really matter. Dali and Gala invented new myths daily and the audience listened—not for veracity but for the inventiveness, the entertainment value, the art of it. Dali believed all he touched was transformed into art by his genius, and he used all possible media indiscriminately: painting, sculpture, found objects, jewelry, fashion, ballet, theater, parties, film, writing, his appearance, his dreams, his house, his life, his love, his wife.

Before I encountered Dali I'd spent a year and a half in Spain. The first hotel room I stayed in when I arrived in 1961 had a hair crucifix and bullet holes from the civil war in the wall. Catalonia was poor and cheap to live in, and the Catalans were proud, private, and tolerant of foreigners. I rented a farmhouse on the island of Formentera for a few dollars a month and made a living writing occasional articles for Swedish publications. The money went a long way. In 1963, when I met Dali, Spain was displaying the first signs of what was to be a decade of cultural upheaval, brought on by an invasion of American kids and drugs. There was the first trickle of college drop-outs from exotic places like San Francisco, Des Moines, and Chicago, showing up in ethnic vests they had bought in Turkey, smoking occasional joints purchased in Morocco, camping out on the beaches, and annoying the local population by trampling the fields and cutting down trees to make campfires. The Guardia Civil had gotten testy—you risked arrest for all sorts of small infractions that until then no one had bothered with, as Spain, in the grip of Franco, had reserved its police force for political dissidents. We Europeans were resentful. The Mediterranean countries had been a wonderful playground for what we considered a bohemian—not hippie—life style. Our heroes were Gurdjieff and French New Wave film makers. We read Dostoyevsky, Camus, and Sartre and thought about death a lot. We didn't do drugs; we got drunk on local brews which we expected to pay for. Until then, we had enjoyed a cordial relationship with our Spanish hosts.

Dali's beloved Cadaques was frequented by rich French tourists, most of whom rented or owned houses. It was so small that it wasn't marked on most maps, nor was the road that took you there—a narrow, dangerously winding road over steep, darkly desolate mountains. You felt as though you were going nowhere when you'd turn a curve and suddenly you could see the Mediterranean glittering in the sharp Spanish sun and the blue and white houses of Cadaques like drunken sailors in parade dress tumbling down the mountainside to the harbor.

Maybe it hasn't changed—it still isn't marked in atlases. The Cadaques coastline is rocky and harsh—there are no long, sandy beaches to entice resort developers and there isn't enough flat ground to build an airstrip. Its beauty is dramatic and forbidding. The rocks have been depicted again and again in Dali's paintings. He spent his summers there as a child and later he made his home in Port Lligat, a

tiny fishing village a few kilometers from the town.

I wish Etherington-Smith's biography had been my Proustian madeleine, but instead of getting a mystical rush of recollections of the time with Dali, I've had to labor at reconstructing the events as accurately as possible. There are all kinds of annoying holes—what did we eat? I often had lunches and dinners there—the only dish I can remember is the shrimps I had the first time I was invited. It might be because the only food I liked at that age were white asparagus dipped in soupy Spanish mayonnaise. In fact, all my memories are filtered through the appallingly limited consciousness of a wildly romantic and vain young woman of twenty.

I was invited to Cadaques by some friends who owned a house there. I was told that Dali lived in the area but I don't believe I ever saw him in town until the day he saw me. I was crossing the central square and he was coming toward me. He was wearing a clown costume made of blue and silver sequins, with a moon on one sleeve and a star on the other. He carried a jewel-encrusted walking stick and in each nostril he had a small white narcissus. He stopped dramatically in front of me, spread his arms like shimmering blue wings, and exclaimed in an appalling mixture of French, English, and Catalan: "Les yeux! Les yeux—marvelous! Fantastique! Eez bootiful, zee yeux! Eez ojos de angel!" He asked me to come for dinner in his house that evening.

I was stunned and (naturally) flattered and of course I accepted.

After fretting for the rest of the day about what to wear, I took a taxi to Port Lligat at the appointed time. (All you had to tell a cab driver was "La casa del Dali"). I had expected a big dinner party but instead there were only Dali, Gala and a young man named Bill. We all sat in a row along the same side of a very large table in a room that opened up into a courtyard. You could see the stars in the black sky. I recall the dinner as an act of tightrope walking. Gala was elegantly chilly; I read her silence as disapproval and tried my best to placate her by being as proper and conventionally polite as I could. (This was certainly an almost bizarre misreading of Gala who was no less eccentric than Dali.) I thought she was the adoring, protective, and jealous wife of the great artist and I wanted to subtly communicate to her that whatever had prompted him to invite me, she didn't have to worry about it. I'm sure the real reason she hardly spoke to me was that she found me completely uninteresting. I wanted to enthrall Dali by matching his imagination, and since he seemed to think I had some magic quality, revealed to him in my eyes, I didn't want to disappoint him. Bill, I thought, who was my age and strikingly handsome with black hair, velvet eyes, and olive skin, was the right candidate for romance.

It was an impossible task to accomplish all these different goals in one sitting. Gala ignored me, Dali carried on a monologue, and Bill, to my astonishment, ate the scampi with his hands, and put his bare feet on the table. I was used to observing the customs of whatever country I was in, and was terrified of either making a faux-pas by laboriously peeling my shrimp with knife and fork or by adopting Bill's appalling table manners (for all I knew, this might be the last time he ate there). The way we were seated I couldn't see how Gala was eating without leaning over Dali who was of no help at all because he kept talking about the symbolism and construction of crustaceans, picking up the shrimps to show their eyes, their legs, etc. I solved the dilemma by not eating at all. Bill finished every scrap on

see Dali, page 20

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The Age of Canonical Reproduction

CULTURAL CAPITAL: THE PROBLEM OF LITERARY CANON FORMATION
John Guillory
Chicago Univ. Press, 392 pages, \$36

Jody Greene

It is a peculiar irony of John Guillory's new book on literary canon formation that its dust-jacket should so starkly fail to represent the book's resolutely antagonistic relation to the academic "culture wars" of the past decade, even as that misrepresentation will help to sell the book to the massed ranks on both sides of this bloodless war's discursive trenches.

The jacket, trimmed in a fiery orange, depicts the august and pillared exterior of what is clearly one of the nation's elite institutions of higher education. Engraved in the stoney institutional facade are the names of "Western Civ.'s" Classical superheroes: "Aristotle, Demosthenes, Cicero, Vergil..." Suspended above these lofty signifiers, another set of names dangles from a third-floor balcony: "Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, Bronte, Dickinson, Woolf..."

It is a testament to the successful project of reforming academic syllabi in recent years that many of those who read the book will not only have no trouble identifying the newer additions to the architecture of the university, but will have read their works.

On the surface, Guillory's book promises (as its subtitle suggests) to engage "the problem of literary canon formation" through a rehearsal of the vigorous and now-familiar debates about syllabi and core curricula, canonicity and authority, literature and cultural heritage, which have galvanized humanities faculties within the university and which have in addition occupied considerable space in the mainstream media.

While this debate has had recognizable ramifications for primary and secondary education, the most visible and public battles over the canon have concerned universities, at least in part because primary and secondary schools have lately been forced to devote their attention to whether students can read, rather than what they read. This is not in any way to detract from the importance of battles such as those surrounding the multicultural curriculum in New York's public schools, but simply to register the fact that the specific invocation of "The Canon" ("Big C," as we have learned to say) has so far been confined almost exclusively to the somewhat rarefied realms of the nation's great universities.

The importance of distinguishing the university canon debates from debates about multiculturalism more generally, constitutes one of the first and most critical insights of John Guillory's *Cultural Capital*. Yet it must be acknowledged at the outset that Guillory effects such a distinction not in order to banish

the lower levels of the educational system from the purview of his analysis, but rather to demonstrate why the debate over the "Canonical and Non-canonical" (as his first chapter is titled) by its very nature fails to address the needs and shortcomings of the educational system as a whole. For Guillory, the time has come for "a reassessment of the debate, and particularly of the theoretical assumptions upon which the practice of canonical revision has been based." He initiates such a reassessment in order to demonstrate that this revisionary practice, even if it enables real change at the level of the university syllabus or the individual classroom, will have limited transforming power at the lower levels of the educational system. Moreover—and this will undoubtedly constitute one of the most resisted implications of Guillory's thesis—such revision will equally fail to affect the way in which universities perpetuate class-based privilege in the US—the way, that is, in which they reproduce "cultural capital."

Derived from the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, the term "cultural capital" refers to those social and cultural attributes which allow an individual to obtain or sustain a particular class advantage without immediate reference to the possession of economic capital or material wealth. Readers will recognize that access to cultural capital is never independent of access to material forms of social privilege; yet the concept of cultural capital, for Guillory as for Bourdieu, offers a way to obviate reliance on a strictly economic understanding of the way in which class distinctions operate and are reproduced.

According to Guillory, the investigation of the reproduction of class over time must begin with an analysis of the educational system and "The Canon":

I propose that the problem of what is called canon formation is best understood as a problem in the constitution and distribution of cultural capital, or more specifically, a problem of access to the means of literary production and consumption. The "means" in question are provided by the school, which regulates and thus distributes cultural capital *unequally*. The largest context for analyzing the school as an institution is therefore the *reproduction* of the social order, with all of its various inequities.

Like the liberal reformers of the canon to whom his book in large part addresses itself, Guillory is concerned with the way in which the nation's educational institutions create and perpetuate social "inequities." For Guillory, however, the strategy for undoing these inequities cannot lie in altering the content of the canon while leaving its *form* intact. Put



ily concede that there must be *some* relation between the representation of minorities in positions of power and the representation of minorities in the canon," Guillory writes, "but what is that relation?" Claiming that the nature of this "relation" remains profoundly unclear, Guillory charges those of us committed to institutional and social change to transfer our attention from the question of representation within the canon (what I have called the canon's content) to the canonical form itself, and to its social and political ramifications.

Guillory asserts that by taking as its primary objective the project of diversifying the canon, the Left has played directly into the hands of the classical humanists by adopting the Right's agenda. That agenda consists of identifying and institutionalizing a list of works which constitute a common culture that will be passed on to future generations in the form of a "legacy," former Secretary of Education, William Bennett's favored term. (Multi)culturally literate, the privileged owners of this legacy will leave their elite institutions differently educated *but similarly credentialed* when compared with the university graduates of the past, and like them entitled to all of the benefits, material and symbolic, which it is the business of elite institutions to safeguard and to mete out.

Without abandoning the critical project of including new knowledges and forgotten histories in the university curriculum, Guillory calls on his colleagues to recognize that the process of institutional legitimization of these new bodies of knowledge *reproduces canons* even as it claims to call the notion of canonicity into question. In a long chapter titled "Literature after Theory," Guillory convincingly argues that the theory debates of the past thirty years—debates which once threatened to tear

see *Canon*, page 19

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Gunilla Feigenbaum, Chris Furst, Nick Gillespie,
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February 13



Poets Jody Gladding and David Hinton

will read from their new books. Gladding is the winner of the 1992 Yale Series of Younger Poets competition for her volume of poetry entitled *Stone Crop*. David Hinton will read from his new volume of translations entitled *The Selected Poems of T'ao Ch'ien*. Gladding and Hinton are both Cornell MFA graduates: they now live in East Calais, Vermont.

February 27



Contributors to the 1993-94 Ithaca Women's Anthology

will read prose and poetry related to the Anthology's theme of "women's work." In these selections, the writers are seeking answers to such questions as: How do we feel about the work we do? Do we choose our work or does it choose us? How does our work affect the image we have of ourselves?

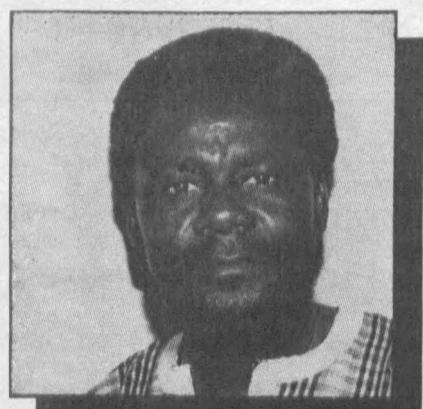
March 6



Dan Schwarz,

Professor of English at Cornell, will speak about his new book *Narrative and Representation in the Poetry of Wallace Stevens*. In his book, Schwarz shows that Stevens' poetry needs to be understood in terms of a number of major contexts: the American tradition of Emerson and Whitman, the Romantic movement, and the modernist tradition.

March 13



Professor Tukumbi Lumumba-Kasongo

will give a talk entitled "Why Should Africa Be Politically Redefined?" drawn from his new book *Political Remapping of Africa: A Transnational Ideology and Redefinition of Africa in World Politics*. Lumumba-Kasongo is Associate Professor of Political Science at Wells College and a visiting scholar in the Department of City and Regional Planning and Government at Cornell.

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Liberating Analogies

ENDS OF EMPIRE: WOMEN AND IDEOLOGY IN EARLY EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE
Laura Brown
Cornell University Press
paperback, 204 pages, \$11.95.

Susan Choi

Should I the Queen of Love refuse,
Because she rose from stinking Ooze?
Jonathan Swift, "The Lady's Dressing Room"

Does literary criticism have any pragmatic political purpose? This is a difficult question for literary academics to answer. Knee-jerk responses, marking a rift between critical methodologies that often resembles a gap between scholarly generations, not only fail to provide definitive answers, but cast doubt on the relevance of the question itself. Can criticism of the literature of the past make any difference in the real world—not the "real" world or the Real World—of the present? And if it can, in what ways?

Ends of Empire, Laura Brown's examination of the role of the female figure in 18th-century English literature, is self-consciously politicized literary criticism, unapologetic in its polemical posture. Brown defines her literary critical strategy by two imperatives: the demystification of oppressive ideologies, and the recovery of oppositional strategies, or sites of ideological resistance, in the literature of the past. The gap between politicized criticism and political pragmatism—also the gap between revision of 18th-century criticism and liberation in our own—might be bridged, Brown suggests, by identifying analogues between contemporary structures of oppression and those of the 18th century, as manifested in that century's literature.

Brown takes as her analytical ground the ascendent force, in late 17th- and early 18th-century England, of mercantile capitalism and its concomitants: imperialist expansion, and the trade in slaves. Within this context, she examines the representation of women in a broad range of writings: prose works of Aphra Behn and Daniel Defoe, the popular "she-tragedies" of Nicholas Rowe and Thomas Otway, and the aesthetic theories and misogynist poetry of Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift. Brown argues that during this period the female figure serves as an emblem of commodification and consumerism, thereby masking imperial violence. At the same time the female gender is made to stand for difference, becoming implicated with the colonized or enslaved racial other, and thus with domestic threats to the social order arising from English imperialist expansion.

Readers familiar with the broad application of Marxist, feminist, psychoanalytic, historicist, post-colonialist, and post-structuralist methodologies in literary studies may be surprised by Brown's claim that *Ends of Empire* is a work of radical revisionist criticism. But within the field of 18th-century literary studies, Brown intends her revision to be both historiographical and disciplinary. In a previous essay, "Reviewing Critical Practices" (in *The New Eighteenth Century*, Routledge, 1991) Brown argues against the traditional scholarly representation of the 18th century as a time of "political stability...and cultural coherence." According to Brown, the period is characterized by contestation and contradiction, the inevitable by-products of a vigorous and wide-ranging effort toward ideological consolidation in which literature plays an indispensable role. This reconceptualization of the 18th century, which acknowledges its political, social, and cul-

tural incoherencies and instabilities, requires a corresponding renovation in the critical assumptions and methodologies of 18th-century studies. Thus, *Ends of Empire* urgently calls into question the assumptions and practices of what Brown sees as one of the most theoretically and politically recalcitrant academic disciplines of the present day.

But Brown's academic revisionism does not by itself support her additional claim for the pragmatic political utility of her study. This she attempts to do by locating what she calls sites of resistance or opposition in 18th-century literature, points of leverage which might expose and thereby subvert the justificatory ideology of mercantile capitalism. For example, by rereading Swift's excremental Queen of Love in terms of his anti-imperialist sentiments (articulated in the Irish tracts, and satirically in *Gulliver's Travels*), Brown reinterprets Swift's notorious misogyny as an enabling element of Swift's critique of empire. The coincidence of misogyny with anti-imperialism presents a quandary for political correctness, but nevertheless serves as the means of access to a literary anti-imperialism which, according to Brown, marks "the point of departure of a liberationist politics."

What are the specific aims of a liberationist politics, and how will *Ends of Empire* contribute to the realization of those aims? Early in her introduction, Brown outlines her intention to provide political literary criticism with "an explicit agenda":

Feminists might find insights into the multiple forces that maintain female subordination today in these descriptions of the complex role of the female figure in the eighteenth century. Activists working for cultural diversity might be able to find modern connections among seemingly disparate positions through analogies to the mutually dependent situations of women, slaves, blacks, colonizers, and colonized defined in these readings. More generally, a radical intelligentsia might be able to use an account of imperialist ideology in this period to analyze modern crises, or to delegitimize some of the dominant institutions of modern society.

But Brown's liberationist project remains confined to imprecise analogies between modes of ideological oppression and resistance in the past and the present. The methodological problem buried within the deceptively simple suggestion of locating "modern connections...through analogies" remains unresolved. Framing the radical politics of her criticism in terms of a presumed homology between the political conditions of the past and those of the present, Brown comes perilously close to the fallacy she attributes to the scholarly practitioners of apolitical formalism: "[The] definition of literature as something universally acknowledged and transhistorical [...] represents an identification with the elite culture of the eighteenth century."

Yet Brown's imperative that criticism can and must have pragmatic political uses provides ground for qualified praise of her work. Although the relevance of literary criticism to a liberationist project, and the precise aims and strategies of such a project, remain unclear, the point of departure Brown has established for further work cannot be underestimated. *Ends of Empire* does not mean to close the books on the 18th century, but rather to provide a means for reopening analysis. The suggestion addressed to the reader of *The New Eighteenth Century* pertains equally well to the reader of this volume: regard it "not as the last word on the subject, but as one of the first."

Susan Choi is a graduate student in English at Cornell University.

Memories of a Road Warrior

THE SAME RIVER TWICE

Chris Offutt

Simon & Schuster, 188 pp., \$18

Robert Rebein

Just before the Christmas break, I met a professor of contemporary American literature in Samuel Clemens Hall on the University at Buffalo campus. It was eleven A.M. on a Wednesday, and Leslie Fiedler's cigar smoke hung thick in the halls.

"What are you reading?" the professor asked.

"This new guy named Chris Offutt."

"Never heard of him."

"He's a kind of regionalist."

"Like Kate Chopin."

"More like William Faulkner filtered through Tom McGuane."

"Ah," the professor said, "everyone is a regionalist these days."

He had a point, of course. The pen-and-ink portrait of John Barth that hangs between Fiedler's and Robert Creeley's in the Oscar Silverman Reading Room lists to one side, crooked on its nail. No one bothers to straighten it. The professor's new book will feature the likes of Louise Erdrich and William Least Heat-Moon.

Where regionalism used to be about roots, pure and simple, it is now about material. McGuane has said that the biggest gift Jack Kerouac ever gave contemporary American writing was the idea that your "region" was wherever you wanted it to be. Material was mobile, no longer merely an accident of birth. A writer like Cormac McCarthy, whose *All The Pretty Horses* won the National Book Award last year, could take on all of South Texas and Northern Mexico, despite his having been born in Rhode Island and raised in Knoxville, Tennessee. Jane Smiley grew up in St. Louis and attended Vassar, but the remarkable *A Thousand Acres*, set in Iowa, is the most profound rural novel we've had in well over a decade.

Chris Offutt was born in the Appalachian region of eastern Kentucky in 1958. At twenty, he lit out for the city, Joe Buck-like, to become an actor on the New York stage. He washed a lot of dishes, scribbled a lot in his journal, and for the better part of the 1980s drifted across the American landscape like a tumbleweed before a tornado, turning up finally, in the early 1990s, at the Iowa Writers Workshop. By this time he had acquired a wife who encouraged him, a few workmanlike short stories, and about a thousand pages of journal scratchings. He was ripe for the return to regional consciousness then sweeping the workshop scene.

The Same River Twice, Offutt's account of his life on the road and his struggles to become a writer, is the latest in a line of excellent Western memoirs that includes Ivan Doig's *This House Of Sky*, Least Heat-Moon's *Blue Highways*, and Norman MacLean's *A River Runs Through It*. Like these books, *The Same River Twice* traces the curious process by which one becomes a writer about place: How one must first break free of place, becoming a sort of prodigal son, a person made alien to his home territory through the experience of books and cosmopolitan values; how one steadily comes to devalue this education, longing for a lost childhood rooted in the land; and how one finally rediscovers place, rebuilds oneself from the ground up, through the now-paradoxical process of reading, memory, and the act of writing.

This is Offutt's second book, but his first as a master of the form he is writing in. *Kentucky Straight*, the short story collection published in 1992 as a Vintage Contemporaries Original, was rightly received not as a masterwork but as an "extraordinary debut." These are stories clearly brought out of the workshop experience. Lyrical and tough, almost minimalist in tendency, they are also old-time experiments in the concrete rendering of personal illumination: *I am stuck here... This is what it means to become a man... I have never really loved my wife... I have been poor all my life and didn't even know it until now...* The best of the stories, such as "Horseweed" or "Nine-Ball," feature an uneducated male protagonist, hopelessly caught between the

cultural isolation of his "home hill" and his own fearful longing for all that looms "out there" in the alien, wide world.

A good example of this kind of story is "Out of the Woods," Offutt's big-magazine debut, which appeared in the December issue of *Esquire*. Newlywed Gerald Marshall, a young man who has never ventured beyond the county line, is

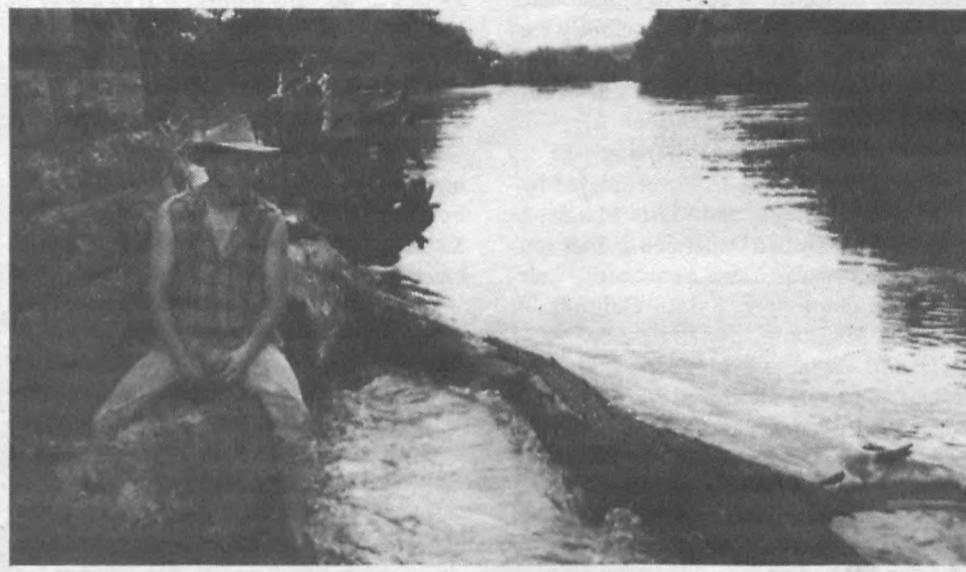


Photo: Sandy Dyas

asked by his wife's strong-knit kin to fetch an errant brother, Ory, who abandoned Kentucky ten years before and has now landed gunshot in a Nebraska hospital. Gerald drives nonstop across four states, arriving too late. Ory is already dead, shot down by an adolescent girlfriend sporting a fright wig and a nose ring. After visiting the girl in jail—and finding himself oddly attracted to her—Gerald sells Ory's Chevelle to the county sheriff and carries the dead brother home in the back of a pickup filled with black Illinois dirt, buzzards circling ominously overhead. By successfully completing the errand, Gerald gains full admittance to his wife's clan, but his return to Kentucky also ushers in a less pleasant change.

He got out of the truck and waited. Everything was the same—the house, the trees, the people. He recognized the leaves and the outline of the branches against the sky. He knew where the shadows would go. The smell of the woods was familiar. It would be this way forever. Abruptly, as if doused by water, he knew why Ory had left.

In its way, the story is a slick retelling of Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. Offutt had prefaced *Kentucky Straight* with a map of his fictional world, obviously derived from Faulkner's famous map of Yoknapatawpha County, thus linking himself with both Faulkner and another country great, Thomas Hardy. Yet Faulkner and Hardy aside, the story also signals an important shift from showing rural characters only in their home territory to taking them out into the world at large. *The Same River Twice* follows a similar plan; only this time, Offutt himself plays the role of Huckleberry Finn.

The book is divided into two alternating sections, cutting back and forth between 1) a present moment in which the author contemplates his wife Rita's pregnancy, and 2) a series of flashbacks in which he remembers his bachelor days on the road. In the Rita sections, Offutt wanders the floodplain woods outside his Iowa City home, pondering all of the changes sure to come with fatherhood. He will have to put aside his former self, become responsible, hold down a steady job for the first time in his life. In the road sections, Offutt escapes from all this, remembering what it was like to take to open highway, a prodigal American son in search of some personal Eldorado.

On first reading, it is the road sections and the diversity of Offutt's experience that carry us through the book. "You can't step into the same river twice," Heraclitus said. For his money, Offutt seems intent on stepping into all rivers at least once. In the space of ten or twelve years, he works as a dishwasher in New York, a numbers runner in Minneapolis, a slaughterhouse worker in Omaha, a painter in West Texas, a circus performer in the deep South, a waiter in Boston, a tour guide in the Florida Everglades. He meets truck drivers, bikers, immigrants, evangelicals, would-be artists, survivalists, homosexuals, and, more and more, other lost souls like himself.

New York City is "filthy and loud but similar to the hills: packed with illiterate men, unattainable women, and the threat of injury." California is "the end of a pier crowded by fishermen with tangled lines, all hoping for a big one." The Old West of yore is not only tamed but "corralled for slaughter." Against these ruins, Offutt shores himself with his fragmentary journal and the

journal buttoned inside my shirt. The pack and everything in it could be abandoned.

Like most journals, Offutt's operates as both a sanctuary and a crutch. It is a safe, private space, never demanding the revision required by an outside audience. "I never reread an entry," he writes. "They represented the past, and my journal was proof that I existed in the present. As an event unfolded around me, I was already anticipating how I would write about it later." In the utter privacy of his journal, Offutt is never the drifter he appears to be; rather, he is Christopher Columbus searching for a New World, Daniel Boone paving a way for the words to come, Ponce de Leon discovering too late that he has wasted his youth. Yet through all his travels, Offutt is tortured by his inability to become what he would truly like to be—a real writer. Instead, he must joke with himself that, like Wittgenstein, he is proving that "the truly sacred [is] ineffable, that the unsaid [is] more important than the said."

Each time he sits down to write, his mind is like a tornado, ceaselessly turning circles in the air. He can never conquer the blank page. After a few days of this, he is once again ready to hit the highway, retreat to the solace of his journal. But with time, even this loses its appeal. On a lonely stretch of road in the Florida Everglades, "bug-chewed" and "delirious from the heat," he silently fesses up to the truth about his situation.

Nine miles east lay the ocean, an eternity of light-years away. The rest of the continent spread above me like a fan. I realized that I had no idea what I was up to, in fact never had. Twelve years after leaving Kentucky, I was still roving the twentieth century, ineluctably alone and no better at it, merely accustomed to the circumstance. The West was fenced, Everest climbed, and Africa plumbed. Even Tibet had white men moving through it like a plague.

see *Memories*, page 17

SUNY Press

BUILDING A PROFESSION Autobiographical Perspectives on the History of Comparative Literature in the United States

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TOKEN PROFESSIONALS AND MASTER CRITICS A Critique of Orthodoxy In Literary Studies

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Tous les Matins du Monde

Out-of-Synch Saints and Sinners

Charlotte Greenspan

"Music is so naturally united with us that we cannot be free from it even if we so desired," said the philosopher Boethius in the 6th century. Some individuals, of course, have managed to be less free of music than others. A number of films have appeared recently dealing with the interweaving of music into such individuals' lives. Three of these films, "The Piano," "Un Coeur en Hiver," and "L'Accompagnatrice," are about fictional characters, while "What's Love Got to Do with It" and "Tous les Matins du Monde" are biographical films. Not surprisingly, the real-life accounts do not necessarily have a greater feeling of palpable truth than the fictional ones.

Biographical films of musicians have been a staple of the film industry, in Hollywood and in Europe, for as long as films have had sound. The 1940s and '50s were peak decades for Hollywood biographies of composers and performers, at least with regard to quantity. Nowadays musical biographies are produced less frequently, but they seem to aim higher. For example, "Amadeus" (1984) received Academy Awards as well as three other award nominations. The most recent contribution to this genre, "Tous les Matins," has achieved considerable financial and critical success in France, winning seven Césars (the French Oscar) and four other nominations. The film is seductively attractive and laden with high-art trappings, but at the same time it can be somewhat pretentious, and careless.

Typically, a biographical film hitches its wagon to the star of a well-known figure; Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Johann Strauss, Schumann, Chopin, Liszt, Tchaikovsky, and Mahler have all been grist for the "bio-pic" mill. "Tous les Matins" chooses a pair of composers lower on the public recognition scale, but high on the scale of picturesqueness. Marin Marais (1656-1728) was a composer and virtuoso performer on the bass viol who spent most of his career at the court of Louis XIV. Like Johann Sebastian Bach a generation later, Marais was impressively prolific both in terms of music and progeny. He composed four operas and more than 500 compositions for bass viol, and he fathered 19 children. Sainte-Colombe, about whom we know relatively little, was likewise a composer and bass viol player, and was one of Marin Marais's teachers.

The film is based on the eponymous novel by Pascal Quignard, to which the director, Alain Corneau, added a prologue and an epilogue, which made the story Marais's recollection. Corneau may have taken "Amadeus," where Mozart's story is told by Salieri, as a model for this. The reminiscence device, it should be noted, is not used for the sake of greater narrative freedom. Once the story is set in motion it proceeds chronologically, with gaps of course, from 1660 to 1689. Nor does the device seem intended to give us some ironic detachment. This film would have made sense—and been far wittier—as the tale of a talented dolt who rose to fame and fortune but never gained the slightest bit of emotional insight along the way. But given the epiphanic epilogue, in which the spirit of Saint-Colombe appears to console Marais, whom we see steeped in melancholy at the opening of the film, it would seem that the film intends us to take Marais (and itself) seriously throughout. More's the pity.

In any case, the recollection device seems to free the director from any obligation to objectivity. That is, the film is not to be taken as a scholarly study but rather as a kind of meditation or fantasy upon a pair of linked lives. To be sure, biographical films have always played by a set of rules closer to

the historical novel than to the biography. Just what obligations screenwriters and directors have to historical accuracy in a film using the names of people who had a real, historical existence is open to debate. But they should at least take responsibility for the fantasy they come up with, apparently not a high priority for the makers of "Tous les Matins."

The film offers us a contrasting pair of male characters, Sainte-Colombe, played by Jean-Pierre Marielle, and Marin Marais, a role shared by Gerard Depardieu and his son Guillaume Depardieu, and a contrasting pair of female characters, Sainte-Colombe's daughters Madeleine, played by Anne Brochet, and Toinette, played by Carole Richert. They are all viol players, and the three younger people have all been taught by

sive of the desire to remain within." Change the gender and the instrument and the same remark applies perfectly to Sainte-Colombe.

By contrast, for Marin Marais music is a means of upward mobility. It is a way of breaking away from his father's bootmaking business, the noises and the smells of which are aesthetically repugnant to him. And music serves Marais's ambitions well. Through the course of the film we see him in ever more splendid and flamboyant wigs and costumes—in contrast to Sainte-Colombe's unvarying black-and-white reformist garb.

When the 17-year-old Marais comes to Sainte-Colombe (just after his voice has broken and he can no longer serve in the choir) he is already an accomplished performer and composer. Predictably, the older man is

Savall, plays the solo viol pieces. But for one of the basic philosophical premises of the film to work—that music can, in some mysterious way, reveal the content of the performer's inner being—the listener/viewer must disregard the evidence presented to his ears. This is more suspension of disbelief, more blind faith, than I am willing to concede to the film.

Another significant disparity in the film is between what you hear and what you see. In a film about a musician, at some point you need to show the actor pretending to mastery of an instrument which in fact he may not be able to play. (Guillaume Depardieu is a trained musician and comes through the ordeal of appearing to play viol better than Jean-Pierre Marielle, Anne Brochet, or Carole Richert.) In films about pianists there are ways to work around this problem. You can shoot hands on the keyboard that belong to someone other than the actor. Or you can show the actor seated at the piano with his hands out of sight. String instruments, however, give the actor less to hide behind.

"Tous les Matins" is full of scenes in which there is no correspondence between the movement of the fingers and bow that we see and the sounds that we hear. This is either carelessness or, at best, the miscalculation that the film's use of ghost and dream scenes to transcend naturalistic representation would somehow obviate the problem. "The Piano," in which Holly Hunter actually produces the musical sounds we hear, and "Un Coeur en Hiver," in which Emmanuelle Béart does not, both do a better job of persuading us that the actress we see is the person through whom the music we hear actually passes.

Any film, biographical or fictional, in which a musician is the central character, must make a decision about what to show an audience during long expanses of music, particularly instrumental music. Sometimes a director is inspired to create a collage of sights and sounds. If the music in the film is performed for an audience, the camera can pan across the concert audience, giving viewers of the film some clues regarding the appropriate response to the music—rapt attention, deep satisfaction, bewilderment, whatever. During much of "Tous les Matins," Sainte-Colombe plays only for himself, but Corneau makes a virtue of necessity. He likes to bring the camera in for long, tight closeups of the performers' faces, with the seeming implication that if we stare long enough and listen hard enough we will penetrate beneath the sensory surface to some greater level of meaning. The film's musical director, Jordi Savall, stated in an interview last year that "the important thing about the filming is that the sound track was already recorded, and so they acted with the music as it was played back; they were thinking that they were playing the music. In the faces, the emotion is always right, so whether the fingers are exact or no is not so important." Not important to whom? (Will Crutchfield muses: "is this an insider's problem? Do surgeons and police chiefs wince at all the hospital and precinct scenes in thrillers?") Most musicians would agree, furthermore, that there is no simple correspondence between what a player "feels" and what he looks like when he plays. Surely, the important thing for a performer is not what he feels when he plays, but what he can make the audience feel as they listen. Here again, the more you know about music the more irritating the film is. Whether one should blame the naïveté or the cynicism of the filmmakers is hard to decide.

Toward the end of the film Marais is tormented by the thought of a great trove of compositions Sainte-Colombe has never published and which will go to the grave with him. Night after night he sits outside of

see Saints and Sinners, page 13



Drawing: Joanna Sheldon

Sainte-Colombe. But music plays very different roles in their four lives.

For Sainte-Colombe, music is a path to his inner self and to a richer spiritual world. It is a source of consolation. Sainte-Colombe is grieving over the death of his wife, who sometimes appears to him with all the forcefulness of reality. Sainte-Colombe's involvement with his instrument is obsessional. In a hut built away from the main house he plays and composes, Marais tells us, fifteen hours a day. He has withdrawn from the world into his music. In a recent *NY Times* article, Will Crutchfield described the female protagonist of "The Piano" in this way: "She speaks through her instrument—but it is to herself that she speaks. The piano is an alternative to communication, expres-

sionless. She is not communicating with anyone else, but with herself. She is not expressing anything to anyone else, but expressing something to herself."

At this point we come to a serious disparity between what "Tous les Matins" presents to us and what it seems to want us to believe. We are meant to believe in Sainte-Colombe's musical and spiritual perspicacity. (At no point in the film do Marais or Madeleine or Toinette doubt Sainte-Colombe's musical superiority.) But, in fact, we in the audience cannot hear any real difference between the music Marais plays and the music Sainte-Colombe plays. This may be because one and the same player, Jordi

Dinosaur Meat

Rachel Weber

REAL SECURITY: CONVERTING THE DEFENSE ECONOMY AND BUILDING PEACE
Kevin Cassidy and Greg Bischak, Ed.
SUNY Press, 310 pages, \$18.95.

I

When old enemies die, we find new wars to wage. Once defense spending was predicated upon strategic necessity and a moral imperative to win the Cold War. Now "global economic competitiveness" dominates the discourse of military production. The enemy is no longer the Soviet Union but Japan, Germany, and the newly industrialized countries, which enjoy higher rates of savings and investment, higher research and development spending, and a higher quality of basic education. As one former defense worker lamented, "These countries don't play by the rules of the game."

The shift from a military economy to a competitive civilian economy has altered popular notions of "security." Schoolchildren no longer practice air-raid drills in preparation for the Red Invasion, but diverse sectors of the economy wrestle with terminal insecurities about their jobs, homes, health benefits, banks, and quality of life. It is clear that national goals have not been redefined to fulfill these more basic security needs.

The compilation of articles in *Real Security* examines alternatives to our current militarized economy. The ten contributors—environmentalists, community organizers, economists, and policy analysts—envision democratic conversion planning as the means of redirecting resources to meet the more fundamental concerns of our society. Their essays "raise questions about the costs that military production imposes not only on our productive capacities, and social and economic infrastructures, but also on the political system and the very culture itself."

In Greg Bischak's piece, "Obstacles to Real Security," he illustrates how defense spending has served as a *de facto* industrial policy, instituted to spawn and nurture targeted sectors and firms. Such a policy—what he calls "military Keynesianism"—envisioned military spending as the optimal way to regulate business cycles. While presidents insisted that the government's role was not to pick winners and losers, the Pentagon was quietly disbursing hundreds of billions of dollars to a handful of corporate conglomerates. General Dynamics, McDonnell Douglas, Martin Marietta, and Lockheed received the bulk of these moneys for weapons-related R & D and through direct procurement. Reviewing the list of the top 25 military contractors over the past 40 years, one notices a striking continuity in the cast of actors. Such a stable structure promoted a political cohesiveness—"iron triangles"—among the large defense contractors, the Pentagon, and Capitol Hill.

The military-industrial policy benefited specific industries—primarily aerospace, communications, and electronics. Not surprisingly, the injection of federal funds

helped to fashion these industries into economic giants, able to sustain positive trade balances through the 1970s and '80s. Aerospace, for example, registered nearly \$37 billion in exports in 1990, contributing \$26 billion to the US trade balance. In addition, Department of Defense procurement, research, and investment led to many successful commercial spinoffs in these industries such as jet aircraft, integrated circuits, computers, and advanced composite materials.

The Carter-Reagan build-up which began in the late 1970s took military Keynesianism to new extremes, with financing primarily by foreign debt and indirectly by cuts in

As Michael Renner of the Worldwatch Institute points out, the costs of destroying these sophisticated instruments of war have been borne by the environment. Weapons testing has created severe environmental and human degradation, and the cleanup of contamination from nuclear weapons alone is likely to cost upwards of \$300 billion.

While defense dollars targeted high-tech industries, commercial manufacturing was allowed to languish. Although skilled blue-collar workers are well represented in defense manufacturing, the share of these occupations in the defense work force is declining steadily as budgets are cut and products become more high-tech. In addition,

Former Congressman William Moreland aptly summarized the situation, comparing the Lockheed bailout in the 1970s to "an 80-ton dinosaur who comes to your door and says, 'If you don't feed me, I will die.' And what are you going to do with 80 tons of dead, stinking dinosaur meat in your yard?"

social programs. The government's covert economic development mission became more evident as defense firms experiencing major losses attempted to extort additional assistance from the public coffers. Former Congressman William Moreland aptly summarized the situation, comparing the Lockheed bailout in the 1970s to "an 80-ton dinosaur who comes to your door and says, 'If you don't feed me, I will die.' And what are you going to do with 80 tons of dead, stinking dinosaur meat in your yard?"

An industrial policy that relies on military expenditures, rather than fulfilling domestic needs, is deficient in many respects. As Joel Yudken points out in his piece entitled "Economic Development, Technology, and Defense Conversion: A National Policy Perspective," defense-based industries lack the kind of internal competitive structure which industries producing for commercial markets possess. Defense contractors respond to a single client—the Pentagon—whose concerns lie in the performance qualities of production rather than costs or marketing. The \$300-billion market in which defense contractors currently operate is very different from that of other industries where sales are made on an open commercial market. In addition, the inability to exploit and transfer technical knowledge and innovation generated by the huge federal outlay for defense is one of the greatest disappointments of military investment.

Blatant disregard for costs caught up with defense firms in the 1980s during the scandals involving \$5,000 toilet seats and \$4,000 screwdrivers. Following these debacles, the Pentagon instituted even more stringent reporting and auditing requirements, adding to the existing morass of bureaucracy. Nonetheless, the obsession with performance and specialized components, processes, and materials encouraged the rapid obsolescence of new technologies.

troubling implications for the health of regional economies. Agglomerations of defense firms have sprouted in entirely new or revitalized centers such as Silicon Valley; Huntsville, Alabama; Southeastern Connecticut; and Orange County, California. Federal, state, and local policies created these spaces, recruiting labor from other regions and providing the capital for facilities and equipment. The competition for federal contracts is fierce, and the bidding wars pit states and regions against each other.

Political and strategic factors played a key role in the formation of the country's military geography. Sunbelt politicians—Johnson, Nixon, and Reagan and their congressional cronies—influenced contract awards, orchestrating the move away from the urban, democratic political and manufacturing centers. The constituents of the new military-industrial complex tend to be young, white, male, and Republican, and most prospered during the build-up.

The end of the Cold War signaled a legitimation crisis for military Keynesianism. Americans questioned the persistence of institutions whose mission depended on the existence of a recently decapitated enemy when the civilian economy was in such crisis. When the armed services and contractors initiated a series of devastating layoffs, they were seen as the unfortunate by-product of the war's end. The US Congress Office of Technology Assessment estimates that between 1991 and 1995, an additional 1.4 million defense jobs will be lost, 55 percent of them civilian.

II

The layoffs and the appropriation of market share by foreign competitors present the US with a complex challenge to more efficiently redirect federal resources. Washington, DC, is currently abuzz with talk of "converting the defense economy" and "converting the military mindset." The term "conversion" has suddenly become

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AN ETHICS OF SEXUAL DIFFERENCE LUCE IRIGARAY

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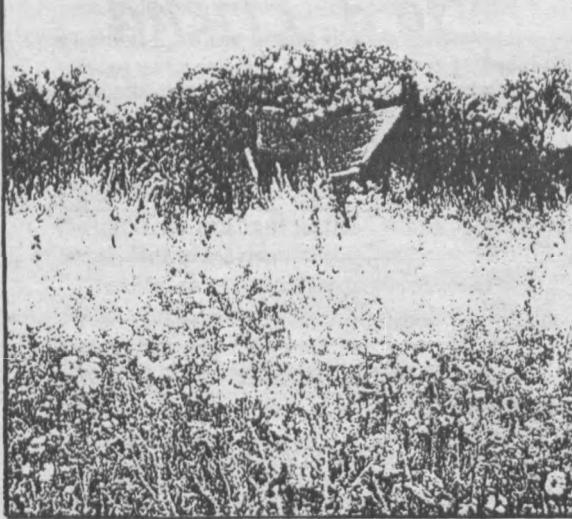
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Chippewa Book of Numbers

LOVE MEDICINE

Louise Erdrich
Revised edition
Henry Holt, 367 pages, \$22.50

THE BINGO PALACE

Louise Erdrich
HarperCollins, 274 pages, \$23

Mark Shechner

According to Louise Erdrich, getting her first novel, *Love Medicine*, published was a matter of subterfuge and luck. In 1983, when she sent out drafts of it to publishers, she was discouraged, especially by letters declaring things like, "People don't want to read about Indians." According to one story, her husband, Michael Dorris, "dummied up some stationery, passed himself off as a savvy literary agent and got Holt, Rinehart and Winston to buy *Love Medicine* for a \$5,000 advance. Fueled by word of mouth in small bookstores, Erdrich's richly evocative novel of Native American life won the National Book Critics Circle Award and sold more than 400,000 copies" (*Chicago Sun-Times*, January 9, 1994).

What was apparent to readers and reviewers in 1984, as it hadn't been to publishers, was that a major talent had entered the ranks of American fiction writers. *Love Medicine* was distinguished by its author's wit, intelligence, yarn-spinning gusto and invention, and a poised and supple English that was striking in a 29-year-old. At its best, when not overheated or "poetic," Erdrich's voice seemed to combine the classical transparency of Hemingway with the elegance of Fitzgerald.

ald, though it was more garrulous than the former, more earthy than the latter. Moreover, there were avid readers aplenty for *Love Medicine*'s depiction of the demoralized remnant of the Chippewa people who, decimated by disease and dispossession, were extemporeizing lives for themselves and groping for swatches and shards of grace amid conditions that seemed to preclude the possibility. Now, ten years and four novels later (counting a pot-boiler, *The Crown of Columbus*, 1992, co-authored with Michael Dorris), Erdrich is anything but a surprise, having won for herself a seat at the head table of American letters.

Comparisons are invidious, but to my ear Erdrich writes a more vivid and abundant prose than last year's Nobel Prize winner, Toni Morrison. Sentence by sentence her writing yields more pleasures than Morrison's, being spicier in its metaphors and more thickly veined with comedy. Erdrich is also more lucid; one seldom loses one's bearings in Erdrich as one sometimes does in Morrison. But then again, great sentences aren't everything, and nothing Erdrich has written packs the wallop of Morrison's more terrifying moments, like Sethe in the novel *Beloved* slitting the throat of her daughter rather than have her hauled off into slavery. There is death aplenty in Erdrich, but no gore. Indeed, if Erdrich has a weak spot it would be the decorum that renders death theatrical and sex and love as occasions for comedy rather than passion. Strange as it may sound, her stories could profit from a tad more cruelty as well as some coarsening of language. Her vernacular being the standard American writer's middle voice, Erdrich never says "shit." She doesn't have to go full-bore Barry Hannah on us, but since it is a cruel history she is dealing with,

she might levitate above it a little less gingerly.

Still, what a remarkable achievement, with *The Bingo Palace* filling out a North Dakota tetralogy that includes *Love Medicine* (1984, rev. 1993), *The Beet Queen* (1986), and *Tracks* (1988). This tetralogy bears comparison to John Updike's Rabbit tetralogy and Philip Roth's Zuckerman novels, and for my money Erdrich is more readable than Updike and more broadly panoramic than Roth. Again, comparisons are unjust, and it is more to the point that we can even talk about Erdrich in such company after just ten years. She's the upstart, the rookie, the phenom on the all-star team, and she's earned her spot in the lineup.

Erdrich's subject is the life of the Chippewa on the reservation, where they can not revive the old ways: hunting and trapping, regulating their lives to the moods and cycles of earth and sky, practicing an animistic faith, living a consecrated life of ritual and homage. Nor can they become completely Americanized. *Love Medicine* is a group photo of Native Americans in suspended animation, detached from the past and lacking a horizon to draw them forward. The hope of hitching the star of Native-American destiny to that of Anglo America is constantly exposed as folly, as contacts with the world beyond the reservation usually end in disappointment, if not tragic defeat. June Morrissey Kashpaw marches to her death in a blizzard, after consorting with a white man in his truck. Henry Lamartine, Jr. returns from the Vietnam War devastated, and when he walks to his death in a river, his last words are the strangely placid "my boots are filling." Gerry Nanapush is imprisoned for a barroom fight with a cowboy and winds up, after a series of escapes, headed for Canada. It is said, that he is modeled on Leonard Peltier, whose imprisonment after a shootout at the Pine Ridge Sioux reservation in 1975 has been a cause célèbre among Indian activists. The reservation is strewn with derelicts: June's cousin-husband Gordie, an alcoholic who punctuates his binges with acts of desperate violence; her son King, a drinker, a boaster, a wife beater, and in the end a police snitch; Henry Lamartine, Sr., who puts his truck in the path of a freight train because of his wife's infidelities.

Dispossessed of land, spiritually handicapped by an imposed Catholicism that blunts their traditional mysticism and animism, forgetful of their own traditions, ravaged by alcohol, and burdened by despair, Erdrich's Chippewa, especially the women, nevertheless snatch moments of dignity from the routines of their daily lives. *Love Medicine* is a bit of a feminist tract which centers the strength of the community in the women. At the heart of the book are three women: June Kashpaw, who, by dying, becomes a

spiritual force in the lives of all the others; Marie Lazarre, who seduces Nector Kashpaw, bears his children (Zelda, Aurelia, Gordie) and takes in the abandoned children of others, and Lulu Nanapush, who has had children by men from all over the reservation and regards that fact with neither shame nor pride but simply as an expression of what she is. Marie and Lulu in particular are the cement that holds the community together, spiritually, by embodying its strengths, and biologically, by bearing and raising its children.

However, four men bear special meaning as symbolizing agents of, if you like, the spirits of Chippewa past, Chippewa present, and Chippewa future. The living embodiment of the past, who seldom makes an appearance, is Eli Kashpaw, a man of the forest who has turned his back on all the trappings of civilization and seldom visits the settled portions of the reservation. He is said to have forest cunning and earth wisdom and to be "the last man on the reservation who could snare himself a deer." Chippewa present may be found in Eli's brother Nector, who submitted to a standard American education in preparation for a life in community service and politics. He has been chief of the tribal council and been to Washington. In part, that is the result of his wife Marie's ambitions for him, not to say for herself, having been admonished at the convent by Sister Leopolda, "You have two choices. One, you can marry a no-good Indian, bear his brats, die like a dog. Or two, you can give yourself to God." She gives herself to Nector Kashpaw and devotes a life to making a home for him and a *mensch* of him. Nector gets partway there, only to fall victim to his fondness for the bottle and his weakness for his high-school sweetheart, Lulu Nanapush, with whom he makes savage "whoopie," as he calls it, in his declining years. To women and drink and, it seems, modern life, Nector loses his faculties early, and by the time of the great stories in the middle of the book, his mind has "gone wavy and wild." As his grandson Lipska Morrissey puts it, "His thoughts swam between us, hidden under rocks, disappearing for weeks, and I was fishing for them, dangling my own words like baits and lures."

The spirits of Chippewa future are Gerry Nanapush and Lipska Morrissey. Nanapush, convicted of assault after kicking a cowboy in the balls, devotes his remaining time to escaping from prison, returning to the reservation, and being sent back, each time to a more efficient lockup that still fails to hold him. A cross between Leonard Peltier and the Native American folk figure of the Trickster, he is at once a tragic symbol of white man's justice and a figure of transcendent cunning: both reality and myth. There is a certain jauntiness

see Book of Numbers, page 17

Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold

THE HISTORY OF A LESBIAN COMMUNITY

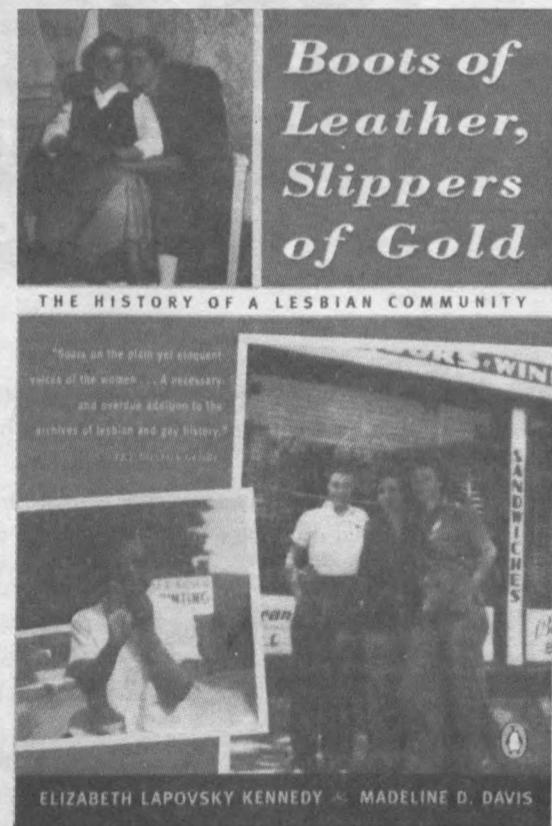
ELIZABETH LAPOVSKY KENNEDY & MADELINE D. DAVIS



Based on thirteen years of research and drawing upon the oral histories of forty-five women, the authors explore butch-femme roles, coming out, women who passed as men, motherhood, aging, racism, and the courage and pride of the working-class lesbians of Buffalo who, by confronting incredible oppression and violence, helped to pave the way for the gay and lesbian movements of the '70s and '80s.

"Opens up the heart and mind.... Breaks new ground in women's history of desire as a lived force in a community under siege."

—Joan Nestle, co-founder of the Lesbian Herstory Archives and editor of THE PERSISTENT DESIRE: A FEMME-BUTCH READER



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THE VINELAND PAPERS: CRITICAL TAKES ON PYNCHON'S NOVEL
Geoffrey Green, Donald J. Greiner, and Larry McCaffery, Eds.
Dalkey Archive, 191 pages, \$14.95.

Unfortunately, skimming the pages of *The Vineland Papers: Critical Takes on Pynchon's Novel* is a bit like channel-surfing cable TV only to find "Beavis and Butt-head" on every station, showing random video bites out of context and responding with an analytical "Huh huh. Huh huh huh huh." Even the title is confused: is this a collection of important documents? or is it a film? The puns, like the cover photo of the Kent State confrontation, are too easy; and this book of critical outtakes more closely resembles what would happen if you substituted literary critics for the blind sages who try to describe an elephant.

That said, it's worth noting that the book, like "Beavis and Butt-head," is not as bad as it first appears, and is varied (though not rich) in its approaches to the Pynchon Industry's Prodigal Novel. A few critics, Joseph Slade among them, pursue the new wrinkles of the Faust myth and the Quest theme prevalent throughout Pynchon's work; Susan Strehlo's piece on doubles in *Vineland* is reminiscent of an essay on *Moby Dick* on the same subject; Stacey Olster and Molly Hite's essays are among the more successfully meticulous, but only if your interest already lies within their precise sights (film and feminist theory).

David Porush and Joseph Tabbi try to place Pynchon's concerns within the generational politics of the '60s; but *Vineland* seems to me to have less to do with the '60s and more to do with the flattened field of American historical vision, of which the '60s is only one more ambivalent frame. And for all the contributors who noted the Gates clan's debt to Emersonian thinking, not one takes notice of the corruption of Emerson's "transparent eyeball" into all things televisual, including the inscrutable Tube itself. It's this lack of elemental connection between Pynchon's writing and the topics for discussion in *The Vineland Papers*, along with a few throwaways like Andrew Gordan's "Smoking Dope with Thomas Pynchon," that leads to the conclusion that the best road to *Vineland* is still through the novel itself. Those interested in taking snapshots along the way, of course, might enjoy this diversion.

—Jeff Schwaner

Having Reservations

THE LONE RANGER AND TONTO FISTFIGHT IN HEAVEN
Sherman Alexie
Atlantic Monthly Press, 223 pages, \$21

Nick Gillespie

Fiction written by and about American Indians has been in vogue for the past few years. The best of this writing—arguably done by Leslie Marmon Silko and Louise Erdrich, different as they may be—exposes readers to new worlds of experience in new ways. This is to say that it meets the test for good literature, that it is interesting in terms of content and form. Several of the stories in *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*, by Spokane Coeur d'Alene Indian Sherman Alexie, meet this test as well.

Better known as a poet (he has three books of poems to his credit), Alexie has created some memorable images and situations in his first collection of short stories. Although *Lone Ranger* has more than its share of weak moments, it nonetheless is the promising debut of a distinctive voice. Alexie's first novel is due out later this year, and it will be interesting to see if he is

Book Ends

A FROLIC OF HIS OWN
William Gaddis
Poseidon Press, 586 pages, \$25.00

Had it not been for the recent earthquake, I might now be able to recount some choice testimony garnered from William Gaddis' reading at the Lannan Foundation in Los Angeles. But this is not the case. The quake demonstrated that the uncontrollable lies beneath our feet, that our firm foundations hide deep faults. For a time on that first day, our attempts to impose order on the world seemed ridiculous in the face of the destruction. Before television networks returned to the predictable rhythms of disaster coverage, before the hawkers of "I survived the Big One" t-shirts could get to their silkscreens, before the fatalists could say that quakes were simply the price of living in paradise, we caught a glimpse of chaos. Instead of chancing another collapsed freeway, I stayed put and read Gaddis' book.

Gaddis has an unerring ear for the ways we interpose layers of babble between ourselves and the world. His characters attempt to paper over the chaos of their lives with wrats, decrees, opinions, depositions, and lawsuits: law is the axis upon which this satire rotates. As the opening paragraph states: "Justice? — You get justice in the next world, in this world you have the law." Abandon all hope that the law is a precise tool of logic and language used to disentangle knotty problems; here the problems become knottier.

The action presents a series of lawsuits nesting inside one another like Russian dolls. Oscar Crease, a disenchanted history professor at a community college, sues after his own car runs over him when he tries to hotwire it. He is also suing a movie company for stealing his play based on family history and turning it into a blood-soaked box office hit called *The Blood in the Red White and Blue*. Oscar's old father, Judge Crease, hands down an opinion in a case where a dog can't be extricated from a public sculpture; he finds in favor of the sculptor despite the howls of angry dog-lovers. And the Episcopal Church sues Pepsi-Cola for infringing on its name.

For all its dour and pessimistic view of contemporary America, the novel expresses its outrage with unrelenting comic energy. This satire is Swiftian in its savage indignation. Gaddis has an ability that few other novelists have: he allows his characters to convict themselves out of their own mouths. This is a novel of voices — nearly all of it is dialogue that runs at a breakneck

pace. It is a challenge to attune yourself to Gaddis' world of shysters and ambulance chasers, but what a challenge.

One last thought: A few years ago in *Harper's*, Tom Wolfe admonished American writers to return to the social novel. This is not the kind of book that Wolfe had in mind, because Gaddis, instead of making a book that has the markings of "soon-to-be-a-major-motion-picture" written all over it, has created a work of art. But it is a book we need.

—Chris Furst

PADDY CLARKE HA HA HA
Roddy Doyle
Viking, 282 pages, \$20.95

Roddy Doyle's Booker Prize-winning novel reaches for more serious ground than his previous work (*The Commitments*, *The Van*) and much of that reaching is done by a scrappy ten-year-old named Patrick (Paddy) Clark, who, along with his younger brother Sinbad (baptized Francis) and his friends from the working-class neighborhood of Barrytown, wreak havoc with a preadolescent precision that can only be defeated by the inevitable act of growing up. They play in construction sites and beat each other up; they steal sawdust from the butcher's doorstep for a guinea pig's bedding, and bang sticks against an old woman's gate:

We were coming down our road. Kevin stopped at a gate and bashed it with his stick. It was Missis Quigley's gate; she was always looking out the window but she never did anything.

—Quigley!

—Quigley!

—Quigley Quigley Quigley!

The language throughout the novel is, to use Paddy's favorite word, "brilliant." And though what splinters the boys' fellowship is inevitable and predictable—Paddy's parents' disintegrating marriage, new schoolmates who divide the boys' loyalties—Paddy's determination to meet these changes head-on, to maintain a childlike omnipotence while well aware of his lack of power relative to the forces around him, is bracing stuff. For those of us who have found Doyle's books funny but facile, *Paddy Clarke* is a revelation, a sobering, but rewarding surprise.

—J.S.



DIAMOND'S COMPASS

P.H. Liotta
Algonquin Books, 262 pages, \$18.95

The "Diamond" of the title is a young Air Force Academy cadet who, in the pre-Ayatollah Iran of 1978, must live in the shadow of his father, a military advisor to the Shah whose name is already a legend among the young man's fellow students at Colorado Springs. The "compass" is that sense of direction that, as a pilot, Diamond knows is relative at best, unattainable in most cases. Diamond's search for his own bearings will rely on what pilots call "dead reckoning"—"your best guess at where you are from where you came." He visits his parents in Tehran in the summer of 1978, ostensibly to announce to his father his intentions to give up on a military career, and ends up grappling with an ever bigger legend, the mighty Damavand, the essential wellspring of much Iranian myth and religion. An unexpectedly atypical coming-of-age story that reconfigures a seemingly traditional ascent and descent into a complicated and layered meditation on gravity and growth, *Diamond's Compass* is more like a critique of the tools of perception than a father-son or war-is-hell novel. These typical tools of plot or conflict lose importance as the air gets thinner, or as we hit the speed of sound at 120,000 feet.

Peter Liotta, whose first (verse) draft of this novel won the Robert Chasen Prize at Cornell for a long poem, has the experience to evoke the mixed exuberance and sobriety that flight imparts, and unlike his Pulitzer-nominated memoir *Learning to Fly* and his collection of poems *Rules of Engagement*, he's found a form in *Diamond's Compass* that radiates the difficulty of the subject matter without the protective cover of evasive or apologetic language; readers willing to expose themselves to its sometimes harsh elements will leave this book as if from a physical experience: a bit confused, a bit dishevelled, maybe even a bit sore, but with a new recognition of the success or failure of their own necessary dead reckonings.

—J.S.

Illustrations: Mary Hood

sleep on the couch while my father sat in his chair and watched the television.

"It was Doc's trumpet that made you dance," my father told me.

"No, it was grand mal seizures punctuated by moments of extreme perception," my mother told him.

She wanted to believe I could see the future....

In exchanges such as this one, Alexie subtly, wryly builds tension and texture. The parents' argument is over different visions of the world, of how one can and should relate to it. The television, "always loud, always too loud," insinuates itself into the story, both as an impediment to and a facilitator of conversation. There's a lot going on in moments like this one, the best of it on a subtextual level.

Just as Alexie's stylistic restraint adds depth, the reservation setting lends a great deal of pathos to the stories. The Indians there survive, but manage little more than a day-to-day existence. For the most part, the deprivations and degradations of reservation life go uncommented upon; they are immutable facts of the landscape, like mountains or trees. The reader immediately experiences this in the collection's open-

ing story, "In Every Little Hurricane":

On Christmas Eve when he was five, Victor's father wept because he didn't have any money for gifts. Oh, there was a tree trimmed with ornaments, a few bulbs from the Trading Post, one string of lights, and photographs of the family with holes punched through the top, threaded with dental floss, and hung from tiny branches. But there were no gifts. Not one.

In such a world, "Survival = Anger x Imagination. Imagination is the only weapon on the reservation." This imagination—the ability to create new, viable narratives—is finally what *Lone Ranger* is about. The characters are attempting to make sense of a world that has shut them out, ignored them, or attempted to destroy them altogether. They are disconnected from the past, excluded from the present, and, as a result, unsure about their future. As one character put it, "I had to find out what it meant to be Indian. This is the central question asked, if not quite answered, in *Lone Ranger*. "There ain't no self help manuals for that . . . one."

While the traditional Indian ways linger on

see *Reservations*, page 19

Hand, Head, and Heart: Elbert

Michael Serino

Photographs
by Janice Levy

They turn up every once in awhile in used book stores—beautifully designed books with soft leather covers, handmade paper, and hand-painted illuminated letters inside. The one I'm holding has a cover of green suede with a brown leather nameplate stitched on the front: "Little Journeys to the Homes of Great Painters." The author is Elbert Hubbard; the publisher is the Roycroft Press of East Aurora, New York. Hubbard, his books, and the Roycroft Shops in which they were produced form one of those quirky little chapters in the history of the progressive era that so often seem to have found their loci in upstate New York, with its health spas, cranky religious movements, and utopian experiments in the integration of work and ideas into a meaningful life.

Elbert Hubbard—writer, lecturer, philosopher, businessman, advertising innovator, social reformer, tireless self-promoter, and Roycroft founder—was in many ways an extraordinary figure in the history of American culture, yet in many others a highly representative one. He was born in Bloomington, Illinois, on June 19, 1856, the third of six children of a country doctor. He grew into adolescence, says Albert Lane, his first biographer, to be "tall, unattractive, with the well-established reputation of being none too good," although that description was almost certainly obtained from Hubbard himself. But, whatever else he was, he was energetic and eager to make his way in the world. He always had his eye on the main chance, and when it appeared in 1872 in the form of an opportunity to enter a growing soap-manufacturing firm, he seized it eagerly. The young Hubbard took to the midwestern roads, charming customers and selling plenty of soap. In his free time, the nonsmoking, nondrinking salesman began a lifelong process of self-education, tackling the likes of Emerson, Carlyle, Dickens, and George Eliot. He prospered along with the company, moving to Buffalo when the partners split and becoming a junior partner in the reorganized firm. He also established a reputation as a smooth talker and ladies' man along the way. In 1881, he married Bertha Crawford of Normal, Illinois, and three years later moved from Buffalo to East Aurora. He fathered three sons, invested in trotting horses, and settled into a pattern of comfortable living.

Yet Hubbard was not entirely comfortable with his living or his life, and began wondering if he were not meant for something more than making money. Then, in 1889, he met an East Aurora High School teacher named Alice Moore, who "caused me, at thirty-three years of age, to be born again." Alice, a New Woman, as feminists were then called, inspired Hubbard to reach for more. He began writing, struggling to find his literary voice through fiction. His first effort resulted in a pseudonymous novel entitled *The Man: A Story of Today* (1891), the main character of which has been described by one critic, not unfairly, as "a housebroken Walt Whitman." Hubbard soon sold his interest in the soap company to pursue his new interests full time. An attempt to establish intellectual credentials by entering Harvard as an English major in 1893 ended in failure, but Hubbard persisted in his writing, publishing *One Day: A Tale of the Prairie* (1893), *Forbes of Harvard* (1894), and *No Enemy (but Himself)* (1894) over the next two years. At that point the second seminal event of Hubbard's life took place: during

a trip to England he met William Morris at Hammersmith.

Hubbard returned to the United States with a sense of mission; he had found his cultural niche. ("Blessed is that man who has found his work," he would later write.) The inspiration of Morris was essential: "William Morris was the strongest all-round man the century has produced," Hubbard wrote, in an unrestrained style that would become characteristic.

He was an Artist and a Poet in the broadest and best sense of these much-bandied terms. William Morris could do more things, and do them well, than any other man of either ancient or modern times whom we can name.... Better than all, he was an enthusiastic lover of his race: his heart throbbed for humanity, and believing that society could be reformed only from below, he cast his lot with the toilers.... Shall we not call him Master?

In 1894 Hubbard set himself the task of becoming the American William Morris.

The year had been a busy one in other respects as well: Hubbard's wife Bertha gave birth to a daughter, Katherine, and Alice Moore gave birth to a daughter, Miriam. ("Blessed is that man who has found his work.") Hubbard and Alice kept their relationship to themselves for the time being. She left young Miriam with relatives and accepted a teaching position in Denver. The relationship continued long-distance over the next 10 years until Hubbard obtained a divorce from Bertha and married Alice, with all the air of scandal appropriate to the early part of the century. But by that time Hubbard had completed his transformation from a soap-company executive with a dilettante's interest in writing into the "Master of Roycroft."

In 1895, Hubbard launched the two literary efforts that would bring him to prominence: the "Little Journeys" series and the *Philistine* magazine. The Little Journeys were brief biographical essays on famous writers, artists, political figures, and, eventually, businessmen. Hubbard began with George Eliot in January 1895 and published a Little Journey a month for the next 15 years. The essays combined history, biography, anecdote, and often ponderous musings, usually inspired by a visit to the home of his subject. Through the Little



Journeys Hubbard hoped to spark the general reader's interest in the lives and works of the great, make culture accessible, and make the arts an integral part of everyday life in the modern world. His efforts were rewarded with an enormous popular audience on one hand and the scorn of intellectual specialists on the other, the latter accusing him of dilettantism, superficiality—and philistinism.

But these charges left him undaunted; indeed, he embraced the latter term. "The Smug and Snugly Ensconced denizens of Union Square called me a Philistine," he would write, "and I said, 'Yes, I am one if a Philistine is something different from you.'" And so, in November 1895, 2,500 copies of the first issue of Hubbard's magazine bearing that name rolled off the presses. The magazine was part essay, part diatribe, part advertising, and almost all Hubbard. It came in on a wave of "little magazines" in the 1890s and lasted until 1915—far longer than most of its competitors. Its circulation peaked at around

150,000, a figure matched by the circulation of the Little Journeys, and between the two of them Hubbard's name became a household word.

What kind of things did Hubbard write about in the *Philistine*? Over the magazine's 20-year run he covered just about everything from household life to international politics, from high art to big business. All his writing embodied a set of values centered on the idea that a meaningful life consisted of creative, satisfying work. The pages of the *Philistine* were peppered with mottoes:

Failure is only for those who think failure.

To have a full stomach and a fixed income are no small things...however, one may set his ambition higher.

The great man is not so great as folks think, and the dull man not so stupid as he seems. The difference in our estimate of men lies in the fact that one man is able to get his goods into the show-window, and the other is not aware that he has either show-window or goods.

Men do not lack strength: they lack the will to concentrate and act.

Many of Hubbard's mottoes would later be printed on cards and sold by the hundreds.

His most influential essay was undoubtedly "A Message to Garcia," which first appeared in the March 1899 issue of the *Philistine* and was subsequently reprinted in pamphlet form and sold in enormous quantities. Its subject was one of Hubbard's favorites—the importance of conscientious work. Its pretext was an anecdote about the Spanish-American War. At a point early in the hostilities, Hubbard relates, President McKinley needed to send a message to the leader of the Cuban insurgents. The mission was entrusted to a man named Rowan, who unhesitatingly journeyed to Cuba, disappeared into the jungle for three weeks, and emerged having accomplished his mission: the message to Garcia was delivered. Hubbard contrasted Rowan with the typical worker.

No man who has endeavored to carry out an enterprise where many hands were needed, but has been well-nigh appalled at times by the imbecility of the average man—the inability or unwillingness to concentrate on a thing and do it.

Slipshod assistance, foolish inattention,



An original Roycroft cabinet.

Hubbard and the Roycroft Movement

dowdy indifference, and half-hearted work seem the rule; and no man succeeds, unless by hook or crook or threat he forces or bribes other men to assist him; or mayhap, God in His goodness performs a miracle, and sends him an Angel of Light for an assistant.

You, reader, put this matter to a test: You are sitting now in your office—six clerks are within call. Summon any one and make this request: "Please look in the encyclopedia and make a brief memorandum for me concerning the life of Correggio."

Will the clerk quietly say, "Yes, sir," and go do the task? On your life he will not. He will look at you out of a fishy eye and ask one or more of the following questions:

Who was he?
Where is the encyclopedia?
Was I hired for that?
Don't you mean Bismarck?
What's the matter with Charlie doing it?
Is he dead?
Is there any hurry?
Sha'n't I bring you the book and let you look it up for yourself?
What do you want to know for?

And I will lay you ten to one that after you have answered the questions and explained how to find the information, and why you want it, the clerk will go off and get one of the other clerks to help him try to find Garcia—and then come back and tell you there is no such man.

He called for workers capable of independent action, of quietly accepting an assignment and carrying it out, of devoting themselves to their tasks out of pride and satisfaction in doing a good job. "Civilization is one long, anxious search for just such individuals," he wrote. "Anything such a man asks shall be granted."

To the independent artist or craftsman this might sound very appealing; to the factory or office worker it might sound like "Shut up and get back to work!" To many business leaders "A Message to Garcia" sounded just the right note. The New York Central Railroad alone purchased and distributed more than a million copies to its workers over the years.

Meanwhile, back in East Aurora, Hubbard had been putting his gospel of work into practice. He purchased a printing press and binding equipment in 1895 and began producing books the following year. The type was hand-set and the paper handmade, but—despite Hubbard's emphasis on handcraft in his advertising—the presses and bindery were fully mechanized. Thus began the Roycroft Shops. Buildings were constructed—workshops, a library, a chapel. Hubbard hired area men and women, training them in printing, binding, and illuminating. A copper shop and furniture shop were soon added, and art and music studios were set up. By the turn of the century Roycroft was producing hammered copper, wrought-iron andirons, tooled leather goods, stained-glass lamps and windows, and mission-style furniture rivaling that of the now better-known Gustav Stickley. Working conditions at Roycroft were ahead of their times in many ways: Hubbard provided dormitories for workers, exercise breaks, and creative recreational activities; he proselytized for health food and chiropractic treatment; he was, in short, a pioneer of a holistic approach to life and work that is a constantly resurfacing trend in American thought. The Roycroft way of life became well known, and visitors flocked from all over the world to see it in action. Hubbard opened the Roycroft Inn to accommodate them.

But while Hubbard may have been an "enlightened" thinker in the Morris tradition, he was no socialist. The Roycroft Shops were a business, Hubbard was the boss, and the workers were paid weekly

wages. As the message of "A Message to Garcia" makes clear, Hubbard was no enemy of capitalism or big business. And as his business interests expanded, his support relationship with the business world—the world, after all, in which he had made his fortune—continued. The pages of the *Philistine* and a second Hubbard magazine, the *Fra* (Hubbard had come to style himself "Fra Elbertus"), were filled with

During the 1970s, an effort began to mount a Roycroft renaissance. The Roycroft Inn was acquired by Buffalo's Turgeon family, and interior designer Kitty Turgeon began devoting herself to the place with a vengeance, obtaining as much period furniture as possible and attempting to recreate the feeling of the original inn. She bought the Roycroft Gift Shop (the former copper shop) in 1976 and began

exterior and plans to reopen the inn once funding is obtained to restore the interior, according to Turgeon. She hopes to see the inn reopen before too long.

During the seven years the inn has been closed, the Roycroft renaissance has been, if not on hold, certainly moving at a slower pace. Yet Turgeon and Rust point with pride to their accomplishments over the past two decades: the 14-building campus has been declared a national historic landmark; the Roycrofters at Large and a Turgeon/Rust organization, the Foundation for the Study of the Arts and Crafts Movement at Roycroft, have furthered interest in Hubbard and his work; the gift shop does a respectable sale in Roycroft items and receives regular orders for reproductions of Roycroft furniture. The current fashionability of mission oak can only increase interest in what is happening in East Aurora.

The only craft work being produced at Roycroft these days is pottery—ironically, since pottery was not a major Hubbard endeavor. Janice McDuffie has been operating the Roycroft Pottery for the past 18 years in what had been the furniture shop. She has developed a line of high-fire pottery intended to capture both the beauty and the functionality of the Roycroft spirit. Among the most striking pieces are vases done in matte green—a color McDuffie developed through extensive trial and error to evoke the original Roycroft period—enhanced with carved and applied figures. Is that motif recognized as a signature Roycroft style? "It will be," says McDuffie.

Next year marks the centennial of the founding of the Roycroft Shops, and two major exhibitions, one at Rochester's Memorial Art Gallery and the other at Buffalo's Burchfield Art Center, are planned to commemorate it. Between the growing interest in the Arts and Crafts movement and the ongoing efforts of those carrying on the Roycroft tradition, there may yet be a Roycroft renaissance after all. And there may still be much we can learn from the "Master of Roycroft."

Michael Serino is writing a comic novel set in a small college in upstate New York. **Janice Levy** teaches photography at Ithaca College.



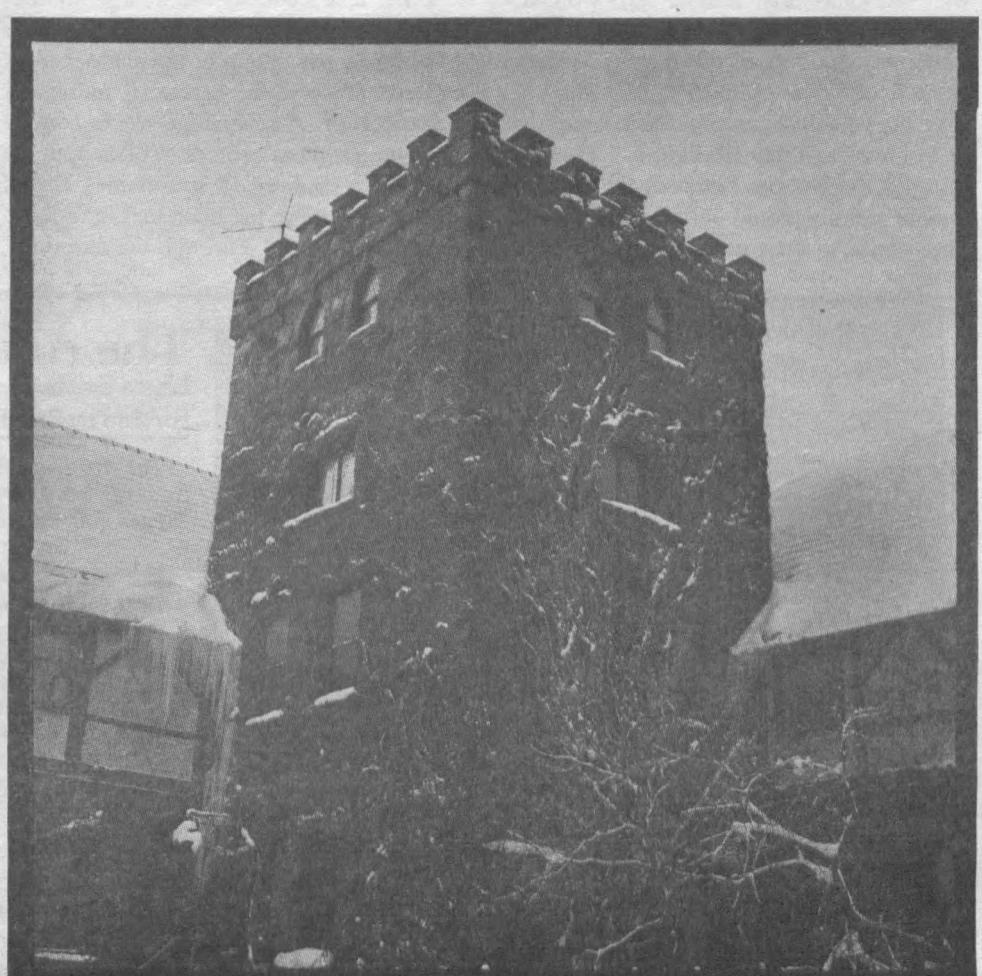
Roycroft potter Janice McDuffie

advertising from major manufacturers. Corporations ordered thousands of reprints of Hubbard articles. Often accused by critics of being nothing more than a cultural stooge of business interests, Hubbard stood firm (most of the time, at least), maintaining that capitalism provided the most satisfying form of life when organized along proper lines.

He was his own public relations man, pushing his ideas on lecture tours throughout the country, hobnobbing with the rich and powerful, and rising to celebrity status. He cut a flamboyant image, with his long hair and flowing cravat, his flannel shirts and baggy pants: a combination of Oscar Wilde and William Morris, with a Stetson hat on top. At the height of his fame he commanded huge audiences for substantial fees. By the outbreak of World War I he was known throughout the world as America's foremost proponent of the Arts and Crafts philosophy.

In the spring of 1915, he and Alice decided to sail for Europe to see something of wartime conditions there for themselves. The boat they chose to travel on was the *Lusitania*. When it went down off the coast of Ireland, the victim of a German U-boat, Elbert and Alice Hubbard went down with it.

What remains of Hubbard's efforts? As might be expected, much of the energy driving the movement came from the man himself. The Roycroft Shops continued operating until 1938, primarily as a commercial printing press and producer of copper goods. The *Philistine* ceased publication after Hubbard's death, the *Fra* a few years later. They were succeeded by *Roycroft* and the *Roycrofter*, but these lesser efforts petered out during the Depression. The Roycroft Campus, as the facilities are collectively known, remains for the most part intact, although the chapel is now the Aurora Town Hall and the main shop now houses the Erie County Extension.



The Roycroft Shop, now the Erie County Extension.
Hubbard's office was in the tower

Buffalo's Working-Class Lesbians

BOOTS OF LEATHER, SLIPPERS OF GOLD: THE HISTORY OF A LESBIAN COMMUNITY
Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis.
Routledge, 434 pages, \$29.95

STONE BUTCH BLUES.
Leslie Feinberg
Firebrand Books, 301 pages, \$10.95

Dana Luciano

Until recently, most histories of 20th-century lesbian life either excluded butch-femme role-playing or downplayed its importance. According to the lesbian liberation movement of the 1970s, butch and femme lesbians were merely imitating heterosexual norms, reproducing the man-woman, aggressive-passive roles that feminism sought to undo. Yet recent work in lesbian and gay studies suggests that butch-femme role-playing is not an imitation, but a subversion of dominant heterosexual society. Femme and butch sexual stylization denaturalizes gender, suggesting that femininity and masculinity are not biological attributes, but carefully produced effects. Rather than reinforcing "normative" heterosexuality, butch and femme roles provide a starting-point for inquiry into the social construction of gender and sexuality.

Last year saw the publication of two books documenting different aspects of butch-femme life in 1950s and '60s Buffalo: Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Madeline D. Davis' *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community* and Leslie Feinberg's novel *Stone Butch Blues*. Both works analyze the social formation of lesbian bar life in upstate New York before the women's and gay liberation movements, pointing out the nascent feminist and political tendencies in an arena that was previously considered purely "recreational."

Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold: The History of a Lesbian Community is the outcome of a fourteen-year oral history project conducted in Buffalo. The authors interviewed forty-five people, most of them active members of the Buffalo lesbian/gay bar scene between the 1930s and early 1960s. All of the women interviewed (the authors call them "narrators") were working-class; middle-class women, the authors note, rarely went to gay bars at the time. The bulk of this history focuses on an exploration of butch-femme identity from the late 1940s through the beginnings of feminist and gay liberation. Though initially the authors believed that butch-femme identity would only be of marginal importance to their project, as they gathered

more information they came to realize both the centrality of butch-femme identity and the inadequacy of modern understandings of it, so that their work became an effort "to understand butch-fem culture from an insider's perspective."

The book's dust jacket features a colorized Kodak snapshot of a butch-femme couple dated March 1956. The couple perches on an armchair, the butch in chinos and a button-down shirt, the femme in a long skirt, soft blouse, and vest. But the cozy, domestic, memories-of-bygone-days effect is spoiled by the garish colorization; the butch's chinos are done in green, the femme's skirt is lavender, with her lipstick done to match, and the wallpaper background is, well, *puce*. Having just sat through umpteen neo-color holiday screenings of "It's a Wonderful Life," I found it off-putting; I half-expected the butch to lean out of the frame and murmur, "Do ya know me, Bert?"

But then, the photo reminds us that we tend to look at history through a colorized frame, unable to recognize the past unless it bears the markings of the present. This makes the type of oral history project that is performed by *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold* all the more complex. As Davis and Kennedy note, "...when a narrator talks about butch-fem sexuality in the 1940s, we must bear in mind that her view and her practice of butch-fem sexuality was likely to have been modified in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, and that this might color her memories." In the chapter on lesbian identity, the authors point out that while some of the narrators believe they were born gay and always understood themselves as "different," others had no conscious feelings of gayness during their youth, and only later, after they had started sleeping with women, did they begin to review their lives and interpret previously unremarked events as "signs" that they might have been gay all along. Their recollections are shaped by a desire to make the past meet the present, a need to explain how they got here from there. *Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold* itself does much the same thing; the authors' "desire to understand how working-class communities were forerunners of gay liberation" necessarily projects the story back from its endpoint. But then, how else do stories get told?

Davis and Kennedy use a large number of extended quotes, a strategy which, they explain in the preface, they adopted in order to preserve the narrators' individual personalities. The strategy works so well that the narrators' voices overshadow the authors'; indeed, I sometimes found myself skimming the main text in order to get to the quotes. Through the narrators'

recollections, the authors document the development of a lesbian public culture that shifted from a weekend scene in the '30s and '40s, when the women generally, out of economic necessity, lived with parents or even husbands and treated the bars as a refuge from their closeted daily lives, to the establishment of a full-fledged lesbian social sphere in the '50s, as women began to take advantage of postwar work opportunities that allowed them to live independently and more or less openly. While lesbians in the McCarthyite '50s were by no means free from social persecution, many of the Buffalo narrators began to push the boundaries of heterosexism; butch women wore their "mannish" clothes all the time, and lesbians began to forge social networks that were still centered in, but no longer limited to, the bars. This new trend is the key to the authors' assertion that the post-Stonewall gay and lesbian liberation movement owes more to midcentury lesbian/gay bar culture than it does to the progressive '60s movements that were previously thought to have generated it. While the bar scene itself was never overtly political—indeed, the first Buffalo chapter of the Mattachine Society, a midcentury precursor to modern gay-rights organizations, was not formed until the mid-'60s, during a period in which all of the bars catering to gay clientele had been closed down—bar lesbians, Kennedy and Davis argue, developed the community ties, assertiveness, and confrontational strategies that later served the gay liberation movement so well.

Kennedy and Davis explore the components of butch and femme identity at length, considering public image, sexuality, relationship formation, and the development of modern lesbian identity. As repression increased during the fifties, they argue, butch and femme roles rigidified; butches, especially, who constituted the lesbian community's visible "front lines" during the 1950s, were frowned on for failing to defend themselves when harassed or for "rolling over" for their femme lovers in bed. "Proper" butch and femme behavior was passed down from scene "veterans" to newcomers; younger butches used older ones as role models,

and were often adopted into a kind of father-son relationship. Femmes seem to have been a bit more isolated, according to the authors; but then, the book is weak on femme identity, since the authors couldn't find many self-identified femmes who would participate in their project. (The book is also somewhat weak on black lesbian identity, for the same reason, though the authors have managed to draw a fairly clear picture of the interactions between black, white, and Native American women in the bar scene.) The authors argue that the inclusion of all women who have sexual relations with women under the category "lesbian" is a fairly recent historical occurrence, so that the use of the word "lesbian" throughout their history is another example of the "colorization" of history. In the forties and early fifties, they argue, the term "lesbian" encompassed only butch women, in whose identity feelings of masculinity played a large part. "Masculinity," they point out, is merely cultural code for "independence," and as society began to offer more opportunities for women's self-sufficiency, lesbians' "masculine" self-understanding began to decline, and the model for lesbian identity was based on homoerotic attraction.

Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold is an exhaustive—and sometimes exhausting—exploration of lesbian public culture in the decades before the Stonewall rebellion. While some of the chapters are too long—the narrators' tendency to summarize the extended quotes, especially in some of the later chapters, can become tiresome—their conclusions are well-argued and concisely stated. Kennedy and Davis draw on recent lesbian/gay history and theory, as well as their extensive oral-history research, in order to build a narrative that places lesbians "at the center" of their own history.



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Leslie Feinberg's autobiographical novel *Stone Butch Blues* rubs up against the boundaries of gender, exploring the limits of identity construction. Jess Goldberg, Feinberg's protagonist, epitomizes the American literary ideal of the self-made man—except that Jess was born female. "I didn't want to be different," she protests at the beginning of her history. "No one offered a name for what was wrong with me...I only came to recognize its melody through this constant refrain: 'Is that a boy or a girl?'" Born to working-class Jewish parents, Jess spends much of her early childhood with a Native American family.

And so I grew in two worlds, immersed in the music of two languages. One world was

Saints and Sinners

continued from page 6

Wheaties and Milton Berle. The other was fry bread and sage. One was cold, but it was mine; the other was warm, but it wasn't.

The two-world motif marks Jess's entire life. Her family moves to Buffalo just in time for her to start school surrounded by the noise of air-raid drills, "Captain Midnight," and the McCarthy hearings. She is taunted both for being Jewish and for her tomboyishness, but still refuses to wear poodle skirts and pumps like her sister Rachel. When her father insists on dressing her like Annie Oakley and not Roy Rogers "because you're a girl," she is mystified.

In her eleventh year, Jess begins to cross-dress, borrowing her father's best blue suit and styling herself a baby-butcher, until her parents have her committed to a psychiatric ward. After her release, she decides to play it "straight" for a time; she even agrees to attend a charm school whose motto is, *Every girl who enters leaves a lady*. "I was the exception," she reflects. Like that archetypal self-made man Benjamin Franklin, the teenaged Jess gets a job at a print shop. She starts to treat her body like an erratum that she needs to recast, buzz-cutting her hair, binding her breasts, and donning men's clothing. Aided by a woman at work, Jess discovers lesbian bar culture, leaves home, and is adopted by an older butch-femme couple, who parent her as her own family never could.

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Stone Butch Blues carefully documents Jess' coming of age in the Buffalo bar scene, as she obtains the B-girl prerequisites: a gang of butch friends, a motorcycle, and eventually a high-femme girlfriend. The novel depicts a bar community forged in rituals of celebration, but also of suffering: waiting at the unemployment office, fighting discrimination on factory assembly lines and loading docks, bailing one another out of jail. The era in which Jess came out—the early 1960s—was one in which, according to Lapovsky and Davis, gay bars in Buffalo were systematically persecuted under then-governor Nelson Rockefeller's anti-vice campaign, and were frequently raided and closed down. Feinberg's novel gives eloquent testimony to the price butch lesbians and drag queens paid for being gender rebels, the endless progression of police violence, street harassment, bashings, and bar busts.

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Stone Butch Blues is far from flawless. The novel's politics often seem programmatic, as Jess is successively awakened to black power, feminism, union politics, gay rights (the question of her conversion to communism is left as a tease—perhaps Feinberg is planning a sequel?). The prose is sometimes tedious, sometimes tortuous, with metaphors clunky enough to stub your toe on in the dark, such as a stuffed toy rabbit of indeterminate gender. But Jess's story is well worth a read. Leslie Feinberg's work is motivated by her own experience as a gender "outlaw," and behind each page stands her demand that you understand her story, mixed with an almost palpable sense of disbelief that she is telling it at all. "There were times, surrounded by bashers," she writes in the acknowledgments, "when I thought I would not live long enough to explain my own life... History take note: I did not stand alone!"

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Boots of Leather, Slippers of Gold and *Stone Butch Blues* join a recent flowering of work, including that of Joan Nestle and Sue-Ellen Case, that tries to understand rather than stigmatize butch-femme roles. The authors of both books hope that their attempts to revise our understanding of the past will have positive effects on queer attempts to reconstruct the present, believing, as Jonathan Ned Katz writes in the introduction to his 1976 work *Gay American History*, that "knowledge of Gay history helps restore a people to its past, to itself; it extends the range of human possibility, suggests new ways of living, new ways of loving." Yet neither of these books allows the reader to merely romanticize the butch-femme past, as it has become trendy to do in some lesbian circles. If each of them "colorizes" history, that color is not rose. As Jess Goldberg reminds us, "They're only good old days cause I don't have to live in them anymore."

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In the early seventies, as the butch/femme bar scene dwindles, Jess and her femme lover Theresa discover that they have no place in the new lesbian liberation movement. Unemployed and almost out of hope, Jess decides to "pass" as a man. She begins taking male hormones, and, in a scene reminiscent of back-alley abortion narratives, has her breasts removed by a quack doctor. But Jess soon discovers that the price of feeling "comfortable in her body" is the loss of the community that has kept her afloat.

Dana Luciano is a writer who lives in Ithaca.

through. But very quickly I discovered that passing didn't just mean slipping below the surface, it meant being buried alive. I was still me on the inside, trapped in there with all my wounds and fears. But I was no longer me on the outside.

Though she successfully "passes" for more than a decade, Jess never leaves behind the feeling that she moves in two worlds, not fully belonging to either. As Ruth, a male-to-female transsexual whom Jess meets after she moves to New York City, tells her, "It's not going to be night or day, Jess. It's always going to be that moment of infinite possibility that connects them."

Identity in *Stone Butch Blues* is not given, but performed, in rituals of grooming and dressing and behaving. Jess repeatedly strengthens her sense of self by straightening her tie; characters refer to themselves not as "lesbian" or "gay," but as butch or femme (the latter encompassing both lipstick lesbians and drag queens), emphasizing their roles rather than their desires. The femme woman is not seen as more "natural," but is just as much a construct as the butch: "I put on lipstick and high heels and walk down the street arm in arm with you, Jess," yells Theresa when Jess asks whether she would be happier with a man. "Don't try to take who I am away from me." The novel revels in the fluidity of identity categories, insisting that there is more than one way to fuck your gender, parading heterosexual butch girls, "passing" women, butches who love butches, and Jess' affair with a male-to-female transsexual past the reader's eyes for proof.

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Dana Luciano is a writer who lives in Ithaca.

presenting her with a specially-made viol, small enough for her to play? Are Corneau or Quignard telling us that Toinette's connection to the viol is in fact trivial and inconsequential? Or have they simply lost interest in her?

The film does not lose track of Madeleine. After Sainte-Colombe refuses to teach Marais any more and expels him from their home, Madeleine practically forces herself upon Marais, offering both her body and the knowledge of viol playing she has gained from her father. In time Marais, having learned all he can from Madeleine or having grown tired of her, callously rejects her. "Life to be sweet must be cruel," Marais says to Madeleine, perhaps showing off the wisdom of the courtiers he now associates with, just as previously he had tried to acquire Sainte-Colombe's ability for making cryptic remarks about music. Madeleine delivers a stillborn son and gradually wastes away. In the end, consumed by anger and grief, she hangs herself using the ribbons from a pair of shoes Marais gave her as a present.

What is it that Corneau, following Quignard's novella, is trying to say when he shows us that music, which sustained Sainte-Colombe through more than a decade of bereavement, has no power to comfort Madeleine? Perhaps he is simply saying that people react differently to misfortunes in their lives. Perhaps he is saying that three centuries ago life offered women fewer possibilities than it does today. If he is saying, even inadvertently, that, although men and women can learn to play an instrument, a woman's involvement with music is less sustaining and more superficial than a man's, I think he should be called to task for this.

According to Will Crutchfield, "Un Coeur en Hiven" and "L'Accompagnatrice" suggest that "the place musicians find in or around the profession is as much a manifestation of their postures in life, of their expressive natures, as of their talents." In "Tous les Matins," lamentably, posture in life and gender are simplistically equated. If you are a man, what you do with your musical talent has a great deal to do with your expressive nature; if you are a woman, your expressive nature is irrelevant.

"Tous les Matins" is a 1993 film looking at 17th-century musicians, but its women most resemble film heroines of the 1930's—decorative, undemanding, drawing meaning from life only in their relationship to men.

The film does offer an audience acquaintance with a musical repertoire it might not have otherwise known, but despite its pretensions of exploring great issues of art and life, "Tous les Matins" remains distinctly superficial.

Charlotte Greenspan is a writer who lives in Ithaca.



Drawing: Joanna Sheldon

him, are meant to remain in a state of combined reverence and confusion with respect to Sainte-Colombe's pronouncements about music, silence, and God. When the two sit down to play during their last meeting, Marais appears to be imbued with perfect knowledge of the music he has never seen or heard—he does not even need to read the notes. Though this transition from the prosaic world in which music must be learned to the world in which music is second nature is done as smoothly as possible, Corneau relies too heavily on a convention from earlier musical films, in which the protagonists burst into spontaneous song or dance.

We have not said much yet about Sainte-Colombe's two daughters. The younger, Toinette, is spirited and feisty; the older, Madeleine, is docile and obedient but she "capsizes like a boat" when she is rebuked. Sainte-Colombe has taught them well; their public performances together have achieved enough renown for court musicians to travel from Versailles to hear them.

But music leads the two sisters nowhere at all. The younger sister marries the son of a viol maker, has five children, and at the end of the film looks as well fed and well dressed as Marais. Her own musical abilities seem to have become irrelevant. In some ways Toinette resembles her mother, the late lamented wife of Sainte-Colombe. We are not told if the mother had any musical gifts. Her salient characteristics are that she is beautiful and tries to be attentive to the needs of Sainte-Colombe—even beyond the grave.

What then is the psychological or dramatic sense of the sequence of scenes in which little Toinette is shown to be jealous of her older sister because Madeleine is big enough to play viol, and thereby make some connection with her father, while Toinette sits around ignored; or later when she is shown to be passionately grateful to her father for

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Valerie Grosvenor Myer

Scarlett I found unreadable. *Mrs. de Winter* as serialized on radio was, although abridged, long-winded. If sequels to pop classics like *Gone with the Wind* and *Rebecca* are so lifeless, what can we expect when the original is a masterpiece? Properly speaking, these follow-ups are not sequels, but pastiche. I use the word not in its cant sense of "kitsch," but to mean an artifact in the style of another creator. A novelist's job is properly to respond to the tensions or "warring discourses" of her own times, interpreting in the light of past experience, and creating as by-product documents of social history. The writer ideally plants new trees instead of battening like fungi on dead ones. By what standards then can we judge these secondary growths? Consistency, probability, avoidance of gross anachronism, and of course entertainment value.

Two extensions of Jane Austen's best-loved book appear simultaneously. *Pemberley* offers plenty of plot, but plenty of improbability too. It is not quite three years after the start of *Pride and Prejudice*, but Lydia has been married four years already and has four children under four. Unbelievably, all six Wickhams are invited to Pemberley for Christmas, despite Georgiana's embarrassment. Lady Lucas rejoices at Charlotte's pregnancy as though it were her first, and there is no sign of the "young olive branch" expected at the end of *Pride and Prejudice*. We may just be convinced when Elizabeth shows herself vindictive toward Mrs. Hurst and insults Lady Catherine, and even when Jane Bingley shows a spiteful side, but it is hard to believe Mrs. Bennet, now widowed and living on Darcy's charity, when she tells us that Mr. Bennet was "working most assiduously" on the annulment of the entail at the time of his death. Indolent, evasive Mr. Bennet? Mrs. Darcy, despite organizing music lessons for the gifted children of estate workers (a likely story!) feels overwhelmed at Pemberley as the second Mrs. de Winter does at Manderley; Elizabeth runs away from home after a plausible misunderstanding caused by her husband's continued habit of proud reserve, and considers teaching as a livelihood, like Jane Eyre, but is rescued in time to escape the schoolroom.

There is a half-hearted attempt at Regency diction, though Mrs. Bennet describes adventurers as "crooks" and Lady Catherine tells Elizabeth "you must mend your marriage"; elsewhere we read that Mr. and Mrs. Darcy suffer from "lack of communication"; All Derbyshire knew of the progressive measures the new Mrs. Darcy was putting in place." The author's prose shows a tin ear, with erratic use of prepositions throughout: Jane Bingley is "sorry of" rather than "for." Idiom is confused: the Pemberly ball was a "boring custom previously run by his aunt Catherine." Sacraments are administered, not, as the author writes, "pronounced." Lady Catherine, admittedly the widow of Sir Lewis de Bourgh, is often, but not always, called "Lady de Bourgh," though surely her own title would have taken precedence? A young man of twenty is referred to throughout as Master (not Mr.) Roper. Georgiana calls her brother by his surname, so does his sister-in-law Jane, and so does Elizabeth, to a third person. The author muddles Uncle and Aunt Gardiner with Uncle and Aunt Phillips (here spelt wrongly).

As Jane Austen herself put it, "an artist cannot do anything slovenly." Julia Barrett is the pseudonym of two Americans, Julia Braun Kessler and Gabrielle Donnelly. Their wittily titled *Presumption* is an act of homage, agreeably stylish and amusing. An elegant blend of invention and imitation, it has a coherence that *Pemberley* lacks. The cadences of the original are smoothly reproduced, with echoes from all the novels, in language, character, and situation. There is strong plot development, involving new characters, which I shan't reveal. Elizabeth and Darcy remain staunchly in love, despite a fresh embarrassment within the Bennet family, based on an actual scandal in Jane Austen's own. Mary is still a pedant (both authors write good lines for her and, presumably influenced by the Olivier film, give her spectacles). Kitty is still a featherhead and Lady Catherine plays the role of interfering in-law whose disapproval never dies. She despises the Bennet family for dining at five (a nice touch). The characterization is well sustained:

Having thus established beyond question the quality of the frames around Sir Geoffrey's paintings, Her Ladyship fell into silent exultation upon the superiority of her own artistic discrimination.

James Leigh-Cooper (like Sir Geoffrey, a new character) cannot understand why anybody should waste money on a Stubbs portrait of her horse. We smile. Mr. Collins writes another appalling letter of condolence (this is the best parody in the book), though his wife rather startlingly confides the miseries of her marriage to Georgiana Darcy, a complete stranger. Georgiana's mother is called "Susan," though she was Lady Anne Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*. And how could Wickham and Lydia afford their own carriage? There are other trifling confusions: a baronet is not an "aristocrat"; Sir William Lucas has been knighted, not "ennobled"; we learn from *Mansfield Park* that "cruel custom prohibited" naval officers wearing uniform "except on duty"; people would not have spoken of "consequential birth" or "good taste": the substantives bespeak their own consequence. "Lieutenant" is not used in the vocabulary in this country, and "good breeding" referred to behavior, not rank. Rangoon is not in India. But will these details hinder the enjoyment of the general reader? I think not. *Presumption* made me laugh. *Pemberley* didn't. And what's Jane Austen without laughter?

Valerie Grosvenor Myer is a professor at Cambridge University and the author of *Jane Austen and Culture Shocks: A Novel*.

Austen, I Presume?

Amy Zalman

"Dear Miss Manners," one might write in 1813, a year notable both for the publication of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and for Napoleon's last efforts to resist counterattacks against his empire from Russian, German and Prussian armies, "What should one wear to the transformation of a continent from aristocracy to meritocracy? Which fork should be used for the delicate course between political systems?"

"Dear Confused," the beleaguered emperor might answer, "never mind the fork; you'll be licking your fingers when you see what I've made." One imagines Napoleon laying out the map of Europe as one might set a dinner table; while using the same ingredients that conquerors had always used, he revolutionized not so much the table as the kitchen itself. Through the centralization of government tasks, and administrative and legal reforms, Napoleon altered Europe's feudal feast, at which a few had always dined by right of tradition, and prepared the precursor to the banquet of the modern nation state, which everyone has the right to attend, and at which each ideally receives his just desserts.

Austen's answer, implied in the tale of Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*, complements Napoleon's. One hears her also scolding Confused to forget about the proper fork, but rather to use whatever utensil is at hand with grace, and of course, to remember to share, should there not be enough to go around.

If Romantic in spirit, Austen's insistence that we judge others by their behavior rather than by their breeding is still not exactly the 19th-century equivalent of advocating anarchy or free love. Writing in the final moment of a highly evolved feudal society, in which war

and rape as methods by which to accumulate wealth and power have been discarded (at least in polite society) in favor of their more decorous counterparts—rhetorical might and marriage—Austen never disputes the fact that there must be wealth and power, and thus class distinctions and order, if civilization is to prevail. Indeed, almost two centuries later, verbal adroitness and conjugal ties as ways of being powerful are still with us: however much they lack in substance, we insist that presidential candidates hold debates, and Miss Maples has, after all, finally snagged Mr. Trump.

Rather, in her novels, Austen modifies the acknowledged fact to suggest that power must be achieved honorably, and be held by those who deserve it. And what makes Austen revolutionary for her time is her acknowledgment that being happy is also a way of being powerful, and that personal contentment may thus be considered a right of which all are deserving.

In the years since the publication of *Pride and Prejudice*, literary institutions have undergone as profound a revolution as society. Having left behind a feudal notion of language—that its arrangement represents natural or divine hierarchies—we are left with an idea of language that very much corresponds to our current idea of ourselves: it expresses subjective perception far more often than it expresses truth. As echoes of cannon fire just across a short channel, it is difficult for the present-day reader not to hear the battle raging between the lines of most contemporary novels over whether we will ever formulate anew some consensus about how best to address and love others, and still be understood ourselves.

It is against this contemporary backdrop that *Presumption: An Entertainment*, a sequel to *Pride and Prejudice* by Gabrielle Donnelly and Julia Braun Kessler (under the pseudonym, Julia Barrett), has been published.

Presumption does its best to be heard, not so much above as beyond the fray, by following carefully in the footsteps of Austen. In both style and concern, Barrett's novel makes the effort to be the definitive story of what happens next to the Bennets and the Darcys.

Barrett's Entertainment opens by flipping the focus of the "truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife" that drives the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*, by positing the truth of its reverse: "any young lady of means must incline, indeed yearn, to improve her situation by seeking a husband."

The young lady in question is Georgiana Darcy, Fitzwilliam Darcy's headstrong younger sister, "beautiful, accomplished, and, moreover, an heiress to a considerable fortune." Having blown her first romance in *Pride and Prejudice*, Georgiana now considers herself to be in the "singular position of contesting this complacent assurance" by refusing to seek a husband. Unsurprisingly, the novel turns on the loss of Georgiana's original presumption; like a proto-Cosmo Girl, she learns that it is not the commonplace at fault, but rather her ignorance of that other universally acknowledged truth: a good man is hard to find. All else is as it was the first time. Elizabeth, now the mistress of Pemberley, Darcy's estate, remains the cheery emotional anchor of all who encounter her; Jane, her older sister, persists in being her thoughtful self; and the three youngest Bennet sisters, Mary, Kitty, and Lydia, retain their various character defects through most of the tale—intellectual pretentiousness, frivolousness, and sheer insipidness, respectively. At the end, only Mary still holds her single status, perhaps as a symbol of the most intractable failing of a woman on the marriage market.

The men, too, line up according to type, like a row of flowers in a well-plotted garden. Darcy, having learned his lesson the first time around, has never looked back, and now lives a life of solid, if emotionally inarticulate, virtue. Devoted to his wife, and a dutiful student of her awareness of What Is Really Important, he eagerly uses his influence to keep the Bennet family name a respectable one. Mr. Gardiner is here too, and so is the spineless Collins; the clergyman of Lady Catherine de Bourgh's estate. Even Wickham shows his face from time to time, though only to remind the others how much they learned previously about the true nature of bad character.

Two hitherto unseen males also make their way into *Presumption*. There is James Leigh-Cooper, the young architect restoring Pemberley, who has risen to prominence, like Napoleon, by intelligence and talent, and without the benefit of a good name. He is balanced by the dashing Captain Heywood, recently returned from a stint in the Mediterranean. Cooper likes to quote Pope; Heywood shows a penchant for the verse of Byron. I leave it to the reader to figure out which man ends up the hero, which the villain.

Throughout, *Presumption* relies sincerely and utterly on Austen's cadenced form of dramatic irony, luring its readers on by gently revealing the mistakes of character, their own

and others', that those in a class- and propriety-bound society are almost required to perpetuate. What *Presumption* does not do is appeal to the irony of its own publication, here, in the country that practically invented the notion (if not the practice) of the classless society, and now, when the possibility of consensus regarding propriety and form—whether of novels or communities—seems to have been shot to hell forever. Beyond the reflexive wit of the title (for the real presumption, of course, is that such a project has been attempted at all), the success of *Presumption* relies almost completely on how good a time it gives, in an Austen sort of way. By such a standard, *Presumption* succeeds. It has Austen's effervescent dialogue and pithy ways of stating (now archaic) social truths, and the connection between it and *Pride and Prejudice* is seamless; the reader is never jarred by a misrendering of a character from the original, or a disruption of its atmosphere.

Indeed, one of the blurbs on the back of the book's jacket goes so far as to say that *Presumption* "may lead some to the unsurpassable Jane." While the spirit that informs such a hope is admirable, the probability of that occurrence seems unlikely. Not because *Presumption* isn't readable on its own; but who, one wonders, would begin reading at all, if they were not already acquainted with the unsurpassable one herself? The pleasure of *Presumption* seems pointless if it isn't already grounded in a familiarity with *Pride and Prejudice*.

Only the ghost of *Pride and Prejudice*, haunting the chapters of *Presumption*, keeps the outmoded social views of the marriage-obsessed characters not just tolerable, but charming. In that sense, for all that the right-thinking characters decry mere fashion, *Presumption* itself stands on the wrong side of the battle line drawn by Austen between mere fashion and true virtue. The interchange

see Austen, page 18



Illustration: Milly Acharya

Dinosaur Meat

continued from page 7

inescapable, but its meaning remains elusive at best. The notion of conversion which undergirds this discussion is best put by Joel Yudken as "the planned transformation of excess military production to civilian purposes." Conversion is not just a technological fix involving retooling operations or developing new product lines; it is a transformation of economic and political relations between the federal government, private capital, and communities.

Part Two of *Real Security* approaches conversion tactically and seeks to answer the question: "what are specific measures necessary to allocate resources at the industrial and local level so as to prevent or minimize the economic disruption from major military reductions?" The contributors in this section discuss the benefits of contingency planning, offering theoretical suggestions that will enable military-dependent firms to make the transition to commercial production. Bischak and Yudken first set out, however, to dispel popular myths about conversion circulated by the Pentagon and by the CEOs of the defense dinosaurs—namely, that normal economic growth will absorb the shock of cuts, that job training will solve the problems of dislocated workers, that community assistance ineffective, and that conversion just does not work.

They proceed to give brief examples from post-World War II and the contemporary period to prove that conversion planning has been successful at national, industry, and firm levels. Although they cite everything from the National Resource Planning Board of the 1940s to Boeing's jet passenger aircraft success, the authors devote a mere four pages to this important subject. How convincing a strategy is company conversion if so few successful examples can be cited? Should we change our ideas about what a "conversion success" is? Much more attention to this very important matter is necessary.

More lucid is the article by Catherine Hill, Sabina Dietrich, and Ann Markusen, which establishes four types of conversion—company, local economic base, workers and facility conversion. Each type of conversion requires the cooperation of private and public sectors because, left to their own, market forces will not ensure the efficient transfer of labor and capital to civilian production. For example, the authors cite the case of Raytheon as an incidence of a company conversion backfiring because of lack of government incentive. Raytheon was able to diversify its operations by acquiring appliance manufacturers, oil exploration firms, and a publishing house, but these acquisitions resulted in few crossovers from military to civilian production and thus failed to prevent thousands of layoffs.

The three authors envision successful

conversion planning as joint efforts initiated by workers, communities, peace activists, and local government. They examine six short case studies that provide insight into the obstacles faced by such community-led movements. Most attempts failed on the surface because of opposition from management, but each of these six campaigns produced significant by-products: educating the citizenry and broadening the focus of conversion efforts from the point of production to state and local levels. The authors make the important point that many of the groups lobbying for conversion are those with specialized agendas. For example, while disarmament advocates and community groups generally embrace progressive ideals, their ties to labor have been tenuous and almost indifferent.

Maggie Bierwirth, the senior legislative assistant to Representative Sam Gejdenson of Connecticut, provides a peek at some of the behind-the-scene maneuvers regarding conversion on Capitol Hill. Some of the earliest and most radical initiatives originated in the office of the late Congressman Ted Weiss (D-NY), including a 1.25% tax on defense contracts to provide full benefits and 80–90% of original salaries to dislocated defense workers during their retraining period. His bill also required that site-specific conversion plans be drafted by alternate-use committees comprising representatives of labor and management. The Weiss bill faced opposition from all fronts, and few of his proposals actually made it into the skeletal Defense Authorization Bill of 1990, which merely allocated additional funding to the existing Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and Economic Development Authority (EDA) programs.

Implementation of these scant conversion measures was even more difficult. Congressional blundering and lack of cooperation from the Commerce and Defense Departments delayed the transfer of funds to the respective programs. The EDA waited for a year and a half while its funding was held hostage by bureaucratic obstructions. In the end, these programs were woefully inadequate to address the nation's needs. Bierwirth recognizes just how limited large-scale policy changes can be, given the system of constituency politics, which encourages favoritism and the use of stalling tactics. However, she places the bulk of the blame on the previous administration headed by a chief executive who tried to avoid this unpopular topic and who was reluctant to institute any new programs.

Michael Closson, executive director of the Center for Economic Conversion in California, examines local strategies to combat the military dependence of communities. He states that two forms of economic conversion are necessary: the shift from a military to a civilian economy, and the transformation of the overall economy "nationally and

globally—into patterns that are equitable and sustainable over the long term." Although Closson details numerous examples of the first form of conversion such as military base reuse, plant conversion, and community diversification, his prescriptions for a new economic order are less clear.

Like many anthologies, *Real Security* is plagued by gaps and redundancies. The most glaring absence is a discussion of market formation and related demand-side concerns. After all, why would a defense contractor convert to commercial production if there is no assured market for the new product or service? Hill, Dietrich, and Markusen briefly mention that alternative products will

...require a government-induced market either directly or through regulation. Prospects for orders for mass transit vehicles, multi-family housing, pollution-control equipment or new solid-waste disposal technologies, for instance, would encourage some firms to make the costly transition from military production to commercial work.

Despite *Real Security*'s progressive agenda and preoccupation with a few big questions, rarely do the contributors dig deeply enough. They do not scratch below neoclassical and Keynesian paradigms of economic development to address the structural flaws of American capitalism which tend to inhibit conversion. The subject of conversion should be thought of as an opportunity to think deeply about capital markets and about the implicit social contracts among firms, the federal government, and the communities which defense spending has created.

In a brief, parenthetical remark, Michael Closson hints at what I feel is one root of the problem: "(The fact that Frisby Airborne Systems is a privately owned company and does not have publicly traded stock greatly contributed to its conversion success)." Firms see their stock prices rise in response to such cost-cutting measures as lay-offs. What regions, workers and public officials call "defense-downsizing," management consultants and firms call "right-sizing." Those companies that have grown fat feeding from the public trough will continue to liquidate their assets, shed workers and return profits to shareholders. We should be asking the question: how can the federal government make private capital more accountable to workers and communities?

Many of the contributors to this book believe that the answer lies in increased federal and state investment in private capital. For example, Michael Closson speaks favorably of public sector support for converting firms, though he omits any critical discussion of the criteria for distributing these funds.

In the past, such programs have favored large prime contractors. With tax credits, loan guarantees, and the direct investment

of public moneys, states like Connecticut continue to offer incentives to defense industry dinosaurs hostile to diversification, like Pratt & Whitney and General Dynamics. Although they have the good intention of avoiding mass layoffs, such programs succeed only in postponing them. The public sector should orient its funding to consortiums of companies, to communities, or to "critical" industrial sectors. Otherwise federal state and local governments will continue to sacrifice tax dollars to large firms whose stake in the public interest is often questionable.

By contrast, the nations we regard as economic "enemies" have adopted to their competitive advantage more flexible development strategies. In many northern European countries, for example, manufacturing networks of small- and medium-sized firms which share technical knowledge and cooperate on training programs, purchasing and marketing foster inter-company coordination. Business associations in these countries have close relations with banks that lend to those in need. In this country, banks refuse loans when they are notified of defense contract cancellations or when firms enter risky market ventures.

However, banks alone cannot be blamed for their reluctance to lend to conversion-oriented firms. On a macro level, the present economic environment does not encourage conversion unless immediate rewards are anticipated. Failing to learn from the mergers and acquisitions frenzy of the 1980s, American investors continue to pursue short-term financial goals rather than long-term investment in facilities, equipment and the labor force. Stockholders and other investors focus on quarterly reports and short-term share prices, which are regarded as the only reliable indicators of a company's performance. This short-term emphasis may be due to the fact that capital costs, even though low by US standards, are high in comparison to Japan and the Western European nations.

Some argue that conversion is simply part and parcel of a larger strategy of de-industrialization—through corporate mergers, plant closings, and the scrapping of basic industry. Problems faced by defense industries trying to shift to commercial production strongly parallel those faced by all US companies. However, rather than dismissing conversion as a subset of broader problems, policy makers should follow the example of the contributors to *Real Security* and utilize the unique circumstances of defense dislocation to address broader problems regarding capital markets, corporate policies, and government intervention. This volume, with its balance of idealism with insider political savvy, is a welcome addition to the conversion literature.

Rachel Weber is a graduate student in City and Regional Planning at Cornell University.

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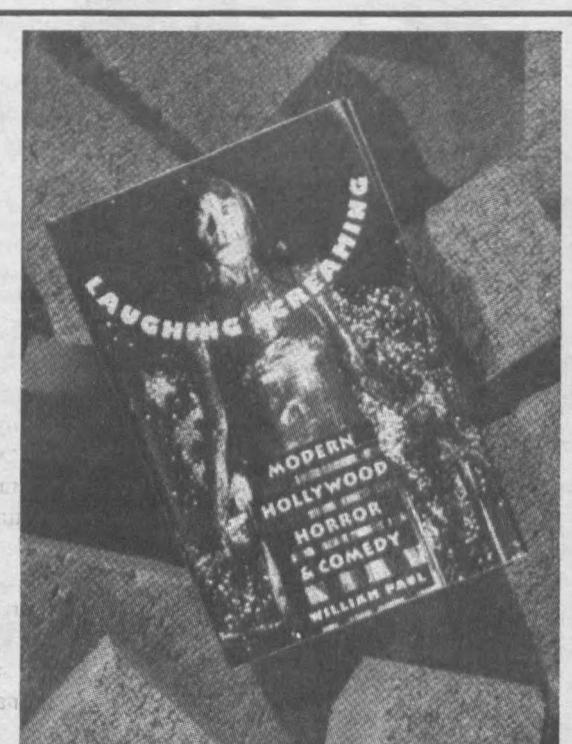
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Memories

continued from page 5

Thumbing was a pathetic substitute for adventure. As a young man, I'd found this means of travel ideal, but now I was thirty, beyond the excuse of youth. For the first time in my life, I felt aged.

In the end, it is just this continual postponement of the real, the true act of writing, that puts an end to Offutt's wandering. He has been calling himself a high-stakes gambler while playing for mere matchsticks. By the time he meets his future wife, he is more than ready for someone to call his bluff.

The Rita sections of *The Same River Twice* beckon the reader to the place where Offutt will finally make his stand. He is still writing in the journal form, but the stakes now are immeasurably higher. Where he had once wandered the American highway, romanticizing the disconnectedness of it all, he must now cover the ground outside his own back door, confronting his masculine fear of pregnancy, the awful risk his wife is taking in carrying his child and further connecting him to a world he does not fully understand. Each day, he leaves the house at dawn. The woods are the same as they have always been, yet somehow all is changed. The ancient, gutted maple he sits in for a winter shelter becomes Rita's womb; the abandoned freezer bags of small game he finds along a trail remind him of stillborn and aborted fetuses; a woodpile recalls the awful fragility of books and all human plans. Everywhere he looks, he has begun to see pregnancy.

This morning's walk ends at a channel that links the river to several ponds. The ice is covered with fox prints in frozen blood, and the oily feathers of a duck. During last year's high water, I steered my boat up the channel at night and enjoyed the purity of being lost in darkness, surrounded by the calling of owl and frog. Fish also wander into this waterway. Its mouth becomes blocked by brush, and when the water recedes, the fish are trapped in the ponds that slowly dry to mud...

Today the mud is hard as clay beneath the snow and ice. I'll be a father by the time water returns to the channel. The baby is long past its fish stage. Eyes initially occur on the side of its head before slowly moving forward. We are the descendants of a Devonian fish, but our arrival on land was due to a failure in water, not to innate superior skills...

The curled leaves of a burr oak rasp one another in the wind. The sun is a white glow in the sky. While walking out, I see a bald eagle tuck its wings and drop from the sky like a meteor. At the last second it opens its wings to brake. The talons swing forward and back, shattering the placid surface of water, and the eagle climbs into the air clutching a fish. The vision so discombobulates me that I momentarily forget to breathe. The soaring bird becomes a speck that disappears in the glare of full sunrise.

Decades of DDT have weakened the eggshells of eagles until a female can kill her young merely by warming the eggs. I am stricken by a sudden fear that Rita will fall out of bed and crush the fetus. I hurry home, reminding myself that the placenta is stronger and more complex than a spacesuit. It girdles the baby as the earth once protected all of humanity.

These thoughts scare Chris Offutt, as they would any man, but they also bring him closer to his wife and his own father, with whom he has long quarreled. Contemplating the birth of his first child, Offutt begins to realize that he has always misread the myth of Oedipus. "Drinking mother's milk does not beget a thirst for father's blood," he writes. "The tragedy belongs to Laius, the father. Oedipus didn't fulfill his own destiny, he lived up to his father's terror."

The final pages of *The Same River Twice*, in which Offutt recounts the birth of his son, are among the most moving I have read in any memoir. In a sense, we are witnessing both birth and rebirth. It has taken Chris Offutt a long while to travel the distance between son and father, but he has completed the journey at last. The road out has become a way in.

Robert Rebein teaches in the English Department at SUNY Buffalo.

Book of Numbers

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to Erdrich's writing about him in *Love Medicine*, though in the later book, *The Bingo Palace*, the horror of his predicament and Erdrich's anger come through more sharply.

As for Lipsha Morrissey, son of Gerry Nanapush and June Morrissey, an ancestry unknown to him throughout *Love Medicine*, he is the inheritor, by a bloodline that runs back to the Pillagers—shamans and medicine folk—of a healing power, a "touch." He doesn't comprehend it any more than he comprehends his birthright, and he is not always in control of it. Thus, when he seeks to cure his sex-besotted Grandfather Nector of his obsession with Lulu and bring about the old man's reconciliation with his wife Marie by means of a "love medicine" of packaged turkey hearts spritzed with holy water, he manages only (with a hand from Marie) to choke his grandfather to death. The touch, without knowledge, is a whimsical gift at best, and it is to Lipsha's moral education that the stories in *The Bingo Palace* are devoted.

All this could have made for bleak reading, were Erdrich not so adroit a writer with a relish for outrageous comedy bordering upon absurd theater, who can sound more like Beckett or Pinter than like *Black Elk Speaks*. What are we to make of Lipsha's serving up those fatal turkey hearts or of a startling scene in the story "Crown of Thorns," in which a drunken Gordie Kashpaw, drinking heavily after June's death, strikes a deer with his car, loads the stunned creature into his back seat, then beats it to death with a tire iron when it stirs awake, thinking all the while that he is killing his wife? So marinated is everything in irony that we can't know. As so often in *Love Medicine*, comedy and horror are so intimately fused that we can't pry them apart.

I suspect that is one reason why Erdrich chose to reissue *Love Medicine* nine years later, with four completely new stories—"The Island," "Resurrection," "The Tomahawk Factory," and "Lyman's Luck"—a substantial coda to an earlier story, "The Beads," and minor changes everywhere: to shore up the polemic and to sidestep any charge that her writing was more performative than political.

That was the perception of Robert Towers who, in reviewing *Love Medicine* in the *New York Review of Books* when it was initially published, suggested that "the author's intentions are more lyrical or rhapsodic than polemical." Such things are in the air about Erdrich's writing, so that there is little wonder that the argument is more direct now. Thus we find the character Lyman Lamartine, brother of Vietnam victim Henry Lamartine, Jr., lamenting, in "Lyman's Luck,"

"They gave you worthless land to start with and then they chopped it out from under your feet. They took your kids away and stuffed the English language in their mouth. They sent your brother to hell, they shipped him back fried. They sold you booze and then told you not to drink." In "The Tomahawk Factory," a story about Lyman's attempt to become a capitalist and cash in on the tourist demand for Indian gewgaws by manufacturing trinkets, Lyman's mother, Lulu, elsewhere a symbol of sexual abandon and capricious procreation, joins up in her old age with AIM, the radical American Indian Movement of which Leonard Peltier had been a member. She goes from being Mother Earth to Chippewa Mother Bloor.

The other contribution made by the new stories, aside from what merits they may have on their own, is to graft branches onto the tangled genealogy that marks the entire tetralogy and bedevils readers, and to add to what one of my students, Elizabeth Reid, refers to as the "web of consciousness" that links every character to every other and implicates the destiny of one in the destinies of all. (A recent reviewer of *The Bingo Palace* was moved to protest, "Does Erdrich have a genealogical chart pinned up over her writing desk so she can keep these matters straight?" The ancestral snarl, which Erdrich makes no effort to unsnarl for us, makes a genealogical tree look

more like sagebrush, and it is in thickening this piece of *Love Medicine*'s texture that the new stories provide a segue into *The Bingo Palace*.

As Lipsha Morrissey says of Lyman Lamartine in *The Bingo Palace*: "His real father was my stepfather. His mother is my grandmother. His half brother is my father." And that is as clear as it ever gets. (Lyman, in turn, says to Lipsha, "Your mother is my grandmother, you're my half uncle and half brother and my boss . . . So I am going to ask a favor of you.") Genealogy being destiny, *The Bingo Palace* sets up two younger members of the tribe as the symbols of its fate: the bureaucrat/entrepreneur Lyman Lamartine, who "saw the future, and it was based on greed and luck," and the mystic/dreamer/buffoon, Lipsha Morrissey, who hopscotches through life on a spirit-and-love quest, which sometimes aligns him with Lyman and sometimes sends him off on eccentric tangents. He is the modern anti-hero, more shlemiel than brave, who, indeed, like the classic shlemiel of Jewish folklore, is also something of a sainted fool.

If *Love Medicine* is a story cycle that gives us tableaux vivants from some forty years of clan history, *The Bingo Palace* is a fugue, a double helix of two lives that twine about each other like serpents, separating and recombining, uniting commerce with dream, greed with prophecy, land development with spiritual awakening. The narrative voice, for the most part, belongs to Lipsha, biological son of Gerry Nanapush and June Morrissey but raised by Zelda Kashpaw Johnson, who found him half drowned in a gunnysack where he had been placed by his mother. As a youth he had the touch, which he squandered by charging for it; as a young man he has visions, mystical insights, a tendency to mouth off to the wrong people, and an unstable mixture of horrible misfortune and gambler's luck.

Lipsha is mad for Shawnee Ray Toose, an Indian dancer who is currently living with Zelda Kashpaw, who is helping her raise her son Redford. Alas for Lipsha, also in love with Shawnee Ray is Lyman Lamartine, the reservation's most successful businessman, "a dark-minded schemer, a bitter and yet shaman-pleasant entrepreneur who skipped money from behind the ears of Uncle Sam," and Zelda is pushing Shawnee in the direction of Lyman.

Lipsha's and Lyman's destinies are united too by a common vision of bingo as the future of the tribe. At one point, Lipsha receives a mystical visitation of his mother, June, who materializes in his room to slip him winning bingo cards, which he parlays into steady earnings at the parlor and a single great coup: the winning of a spiffy new van. Lipsha hasn't long to enjoy it, however, after mouthing off to a gas station attendant and being mugged by the attendant and his friends, who haul Lipsha off to be tattooed and then total the van.

One scarcely knows what to make of the jaunty alloy of mysticism and slapstick that runs through this book, in which Lipsha gets winning combinations from a ghost, seeks wisdom in everything from sweat lodges to vision quests to Gideon Bibles, asks his great-grandmother Fleur Pillager for a love medicine to win Shawnee Ray, and in one scene is sprayed by a skunk that is also a herald from the spirit world and grants him a vision of the bingo palace while instructing him: "This ain't real estate." (A line like that sounds like pure Malamud to me.) Here is moral awakening of a sort, served up to Lipsha by a spirit world that is laughing up its sleeve, and the whole book is like this, suspended somewhere between manifesto and musical.

The spot that Lyman has marked out for bingo development is sacred ground along the lake, which is currently owned by Lipsha's great grandmother Fleur. "Where Fleur's cabin stands, a parking lot will be rolled out of asphalt. Over Pillager grave markers, sawed by wind and softened, black-

jack tables. Where the trees that shelter brown birds rise, bright banks of slot machines." The issue is left unresolved, but Lipsha at least concedes that what the skunk says is right: "Our reservation is not real estate, luck fades when sold. Attraction has no staying power, no weight, no heart." Amen.

The destiny of Native American life is drawn in darker colors when Gerry Nanapush effects yet another escape from custody, this time inadvertently, as the plane carrying him from one prison to another crashes, killing everyone but himself. Again, the situation is dire, while the *deus ex machina* is right out of central casting. Prison has been a bitter experience to Gerry and now he is wanted "by the entire combined police force of North America." Yet the scenario is Hollywood. Lipsha, called to aid his father escape, is given yet another vision of life as necessity, rather than dream, next to which bingo palaces are suddenly reduced to triviality. Going to the rescue of a father whom he scarcely knows, Lipsha casts aside the shlemiel for the warrior, stealing a car that happens to have a baby in it and driving out into a blizzard ready for whatever might come.

Erdrich's North Dakota tetralogy can be read as a symphony in four movements, this last book having all the snap, the brio, the resilience of an allegro. There is likely to be some complaint that such resilience belies the history of the Chippewa people and draws attention away from the tragic lives we find in *Love Medicine*. Maybe so, though without that voice, with all its range and high spirits, we might not be reading Erdrich at all.

Mark Shechner is a writer living in Buffalo and a regular reviewer for The Bookpress.

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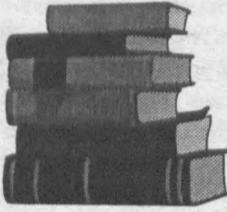
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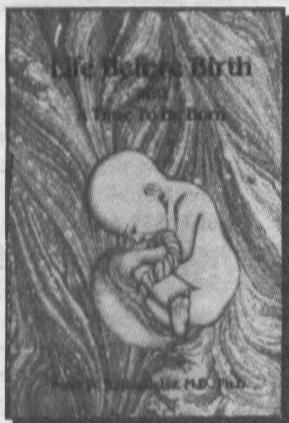
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- Airport,
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- Café Decadence
- Cabbagetown Café
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- Center Ithaca
- Collegiate Bagels
- Cornell Cinema
- Cornell University
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- Courtside Fitness
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Syracuse:

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- Fay's
- I've Been Framed
- Good Bookstore
- Lemoyne College
(various locations)
- Marshall St. Mall
- Mallard Tobacconist
- Metropolitan School of the Arts
- My Sister's Words
- Onondaga Community College
(various locations)
- On the Rise Bakery
- Pastabilities
- Seven Rays Bookstore
- St. Basil's
- Syracuse University
(various locations)
- Syracuse Civic Center
- Syracuse Stage
- Tales Twice Told
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Salina St., and Shopping Town)
- Wescott Library
- Wescott Market

Owego:

- Hand of Man
- Riverrow Bookshop
- Tioga County Council on the Arts
- Geneva:
- Hobart and William Smith Colleges
- The College Bookstore
- Buffalo:
- Anderson Art Gallery
- Bandbox Cleaners
- Barbara Schuller Galleries
- Bond's Art Supply
- Bradens
- Brower's Books
- Buffalo Graphics
- Buffalo Picture Frame
- Buffalo State University
(various locations)
- Buffalo (cont.)

- Calumet Café
- Café in the Square
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- Everything Elmwood
- Family Tree Restaurant
- Frame & Save
- Gnome's Needle
- Guildcraft Arts & Crafts
- Health Food (Kenmore)
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- RIT
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Brockport:

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Fredonia:

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Aurora:

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- Burt's Bookstore
- Gil's Book Loft
- New Ritz
- Roberson Center
- SUNY Binghamton (various locations)
- Tom's Coffee & Gifts
- Vestal Historical Society Museum
- Whole Earth Store & Coffeehouse

Union Springs:

- Talcott Books
- Union Springs Library

Skaneateles:

- Gallery on the Lake
- Herb's News
- The Bookie
- Vermont Green
- Mt. Specialty Co.
- Skaneateles Library
- Sherwood Inn

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- Cayuga Community College
- Finger Lakes Photography
- Lincoln Galleries
- Nature's Storehouse
- Schweinfurth Museum
- Seymour Library

Weedsport:

- Weedsport Library

Austen

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between Georgiana and Elizabeth in the final pages of the novel, as Georgiana arrives at the expected state of enlightenment, casts light on the values that *Presumption*, in the spirit of its benefactor, purports to uphold:

'But dear Lizzy,' then burst forth Georgiana, 'how may one judge the measure of a man? Not only was Captain Heywood's manner beguiling, his family was unexceptionable, was connected indeed with my own. If he cannot be supposed to be righteous, then who can?'

'So proper a question,' replied Elizabeth, 'merits no less than an exact response; how unreasonable that there is none. But this much I do know. An unexceptionable lineage is no more a guarantee for virtue than it be for the shade of a man's hair, nor a courtly air, of benevolent intent....'

Presumption relies more on Georgiana's mistaken sense of how the world should work than on Elizabeth's. How may one judge the measure of a book? While the virtuous novel could be judged purely on its own characteristics, the fashionable novel can only be evaluated on how well it conforms to the rules of a given genre, or a set of expectations, which is exactly what *Presumption* does. Without its beguiling manner and unexceptionable lineage to buttress it, the archaic story and overelegant language of *Presumption* would certainly not get far in the ruthless world of publishing today, at least not in the high-powered literary circuit it is traversing like the well-worn path between Pemberley and Pelham Hall.

Resurrecting the Bennets and the Darcys and the society that frames their story ultimately maligns the possibility that Austen offered—the accumulation of enough common sense among us to end the hypocrisies of polite society, and to consider the true nature of gentility. *Pride and Prejudice* opens the door to the possibilities of individual freedom that the Romantics went on to explore; *Presumption* slams it shut by turning the real world that Austen describes into the site of a pastoral romance where nothing ever changes. And it diminishes Austen's real accomplishment: social commentary so acute that we still find it valuable.

Class difference in *Presumption* is reduced to an irritating issue to overcome, a barrier to true love, as opposed to a complicated and systematic way of regulating and maintaining wealth. As Lady Catherine observes of the match Georgiana finally makes for herself, "a person of obscure birth must remain ungentle." If the reader wants to know what the implications of an obscure birth really are, though, she will have to turn to *Pride and Prejudice*.

In Austen's novel, when Collins, the cleric of Catherine de Bourgh's estate, asks Elizabeth to marry him, he includes among his reasons the fact that he wishes to help keep the Longbourn estate in the Bennet family's hands, which he will inherit in place of the son the Bennets never had. Collins makes the generic problem clear:

"You should take if farther into consideration that in spite of your manifold attractions, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made you. Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications."

While *Presumption* maintains the tone of Austen's novel, it never entertains at all the serious nature of the rules of inheritance, and the traditions of society that form the backbone of the original.

All in all, it is best not to ask too much from *Presumption*. As appetizing as it sounds, Barrett's novel ultimately seems like a superfluous gesture, as if the family silver were being hauled out for an evening of take-out Chinese.

Amy Zalman is a graduate student at Cornell University.

Reserva- tions

continued from page 9

ever more attenuated forms, they need to be reinvigorated to deal with the onslaught of a dominant culture that simultaneously ignores and appropriates Indian mythology. The trick then is to redraw connections, using whatever materials are at hand, to somehow adapt to the world while retaining a sense of identity. In one of the collection's better stories, "Because My Father Always Said He Was the Only Indian Who Saw Jimi Hendrix play 'The Star-Spangled Banner' at Woodstock," the adolescent narrator tries to do this while musing over his absent father:

On the nights I missed him the most I listened to music. Not always Jimi Hendrix. Usually I listened to the blues. Robert Johnson mostly. The first time I heard Robert Johnson sing I knew he understood what it meant to be an Indian on the edge of the twenty-first century, even if he was black at the beginning of the twentieth. That must have been how my father felt when he heard Jimi Hendrix. When he stood there in the rain at Woodstock.

Then on the night I missed my father most, when I lay in bed and cried...I imagined his motorcycle pulling up outside. I knew I was dreaming it all but I let it be real for a moment.

The bitter quality of the stories stems from the recognition that this imagination, while capable of great flights of fancy, isn't quite capable of effecting real change. Imagination is always falling short of reality. This is, of course, an enduring literary theme, and at times it dovetails poignantly with the historic, timebound plight of Alexie's characters—who more than Indians know what it is like to see their entire world completely destroyed? Time and time again, they are forced to confront this reality about themselves. "At what point do we just re-create the people who have disappeared from our lives?" asks the narrator of "Witnesses, Secret and Not." "Sometimes it seems like all Indians can do is talk about the disappeared."

While the best pieces in *Lone Ranger* are very good, the quality of the collection is uneven. At times, the stories spin off into uninteresting repetition or mistake obscurity for profundity. When Alexie tries to track his characters over long periods of time, as he does in "Jesus Christ's Half-Brother Is Alive and Well on the Spokane Indian Reservation" and "Indian Education," the results are largely uninteresting. A running gag about basketball actually being invented by Indians is used to little effect or point; stories revolving around the worn-out conceit of broken-down high-school sports stars fail to arouse much interest or sympathy.

Still, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* is a striking debut. Alexie has a distinctive voice, one capable of telling affecting and effective tales. He is only in his late twenties, which means that he has, potentially, a long writing career ahead of him, well worth following.

Nick Gillespie is a writer living in Los Angeles.

Canon

continued from page 3

university literature departments apart—have ultimately had minimal effect on undergraduate literary studies or on the understanding of the term "literature" in the world outside the university's gates.

The institutional transmission and reception of the work of Paul de Man—work which stands in Guillory's account as representative of Theory as a whole—has produced nothing more than a "canon of theory" which exists alongside the literary canon without reforming, deforming, or even to any great degree disturbing the latter tradition. Guillory offers a compelling account of this process of institutionalization, engaging along the way topics rarely afforded serious treatment in the profession, such as discipleship, the erotics of pedagogy, and what he calls "the conditions of institutional life, the everyday life of the professors of literature."

Guillory's analysis of how Theory has come to constitute an alternative tradition takes a surprising turn when he proceeds to link the history of theory's reception with another site of departmental contestation—composition studies. While literature departments were grimly forecasting their own demise in the face of infiltration by theorists of all possible persuasions, Guillory argues that the real threat was the reorientation of the university from the reproduction of "cultured" individuals to the production of a New Class with minimal linguistic competency—the "technobureaucratic elite."

As literary departments followed with varying degrees of attention the aims and claims of historicist, Marxist, feminist, postcolonial, and rhetorical readers, the university as a whole was adapting to the requirements of a late-capitalist multinational economy—an adaptation which has resulted, in Guillory's words, in "the absence of a central social function for the literary curriculum." Literary historians have tended to see these two historical shifts—the rise of literary theory and the decline of an identifiable "social function" for literary studies—as somehow causally linked. Guillory demonstrates, however, that while they may result in similar effects by producing alternative canons—a "canon of theory" and a "canon of composition"—the simultaneous appearance of these alternative bodies of knowledge should not blind us to their very different origins, in the culture of the university and the condition of late capitalism, respectively.

Guillory concludes from this that "theory," in its institutionalized form, can only constitute "an interim, imaginary solution to the new conditions of intellectual labor, conditions that will require a thorough rethinking of what it is that literary critics do in the classroom and in their writing"; further, that in order to imagine what this future "intellectual labor" might look like, we should turn our attention not only to the "canon of theory," but to the "canon of composition"—the ever-increasing role of composition programs in disseminating to university students the alternative, and perhaps

now more lucrative, cultural capital known as Standard English.

In his closing chapter, Guillory takes up the question of "value" as it relates to literary works in general and the canon debates in particular. Responding to recent work by Barbara Herrnstein Smith and other liberal theorists of relativism, as well as to a Marxist tradition of ideology-critique leveled at the concepts of "value" and "aesthetic judgment," Guillory argues powerfully against the fantasy that "human beings could ever refrain from judging the things they make." For Guillory, altering what Bourdieu calls the "conditions of access" to cultural capital involves not dispensing with judgment, but "reforming the conditions of its practice." Countering the abandonment of evaluative judgment advocated by canonical reformers from across the political spectrum, Guillory remarks, "the most politically strategic argument for revising the canon remains the argument that the works so revalued are important and valuable cultural works."

Perhaps, after all, the multicultural "victory" depicted on *Cultural Capital*'s dustjacket is integral to Guillory's thesis. If the names of Sor Juana and her literary sisters are now contained within the archive and the architecture of the university, Guillory's point may be that such a victory constitutes not an ending but a beginning of the effort to question the nature and purpose of "our" national culture.

What would it mean to redefine the object of our critique as the institution of the school, of which the syllabus is only an instrumentality? It would mean acknowledging that the canonical reformation has somewhat less social effect as an agency of change than it claims, by which I mean, precisely, "less." To have drawn up a new syllabus is not yet to have begun teaching, nor is it yet to have begun reflection upon the institutional form of the school.

Jody Greene is a graduate student in English at Cornell University.

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Dali

continued from page 2

his plate, grunted, and licked his fingers. He was American and Dali said he'd seen him in New York, "in zee gutter," and because he was the spitting image of Dali as a young man, he'd brought him to Spain.

According to Etherington-Smith, in 1963 Gala fell in love with a William Rotlein, who looked a lot like Dali as a young man. It never occurred to me that there was any romantic connection between them—not even later that summer, when I heard the rumors that the young men with whom Gala surrounded herself were her lovers. Either they took great pains to keep it secret (unlikely), or else the alleged romance hadn't yet occurred. Dali actually seemed more taken with Bill than Gala did. Furthermore, Bill was stupendously dull. He might have been the first drug casualty I ever met, barely able to construct a full sentence and, despite his good looks, curiously asexual. I also assumed, from my twenty-year-old perspective, that both Gala and Dali were too old to have any genuine sexual appetites (a notion I later had to revise). Dali at that time was sixty and Gala seventy-one. Gala looked astonishingly well for an old lady, I thought. She had chiseled features and small, dark eyes. Her hair was black and styled the way she'd worn it all her life and the way it looks in all of Dali's paintings. She certainly didn't look older than Dali. She always wore slim silk pants and open-necked silk shirts and tons of jewelry. It was much later that I came to appreciate what a feat it is for a seventy-year-old woman to wear tight pants and look elegant.

After dinner, Dali showed me pictures of himself as a young man to demonstrate his likeness with Bill. He also showed me a book with surrealist pornographic photographs. The most explicit one was of a beautiful naked woman with perfect breasts and a huge, erect penis. I was trying to adopt a demeanor that was interested but not enthusiastic, guarded but not prudish, sophisticated but not blasé. More tightrope walking. In truth, I was alarmed.

I didn't think I had made an especially good impression on anyone, not having eaten the dinner and probably having drunk too much of the pink champagne (which I later found was served to visitors from morning to night). Dali nevertheless asked me to come back the following day to pose for him.

At lunch the next day, pink champagne in hand, I had a better opportunity to appreciate the house. It was

poised on a cliff above a small, half-moon sandy beach. Rocks jutted out into the water where two black swans swam. (I was later told by someone that Dali had introduced the swans and had their wings clipped, but that the salt water wasn't at all suitable for them, so the swans frequently died and had to be replaced.)

The house had begun as a one-room fisherman's shack. When they could afford to, Gala and Dali had built additions. The result was a remarkable jumble, a labyrinth of rooms with steps leading up and down to different levels. In one place, you had to enter a wing through the bathroom of another wing. The initial shack served as the entrance hall where there was a huge stuffed bear standing on his hind legs, his ferocity tempered by the fact that he held a pair of gloves, wore pearls, and was dyed pink.

All the rooms were furnished in different styles. The most unusual was a round room whose walls were covered with pleated yellow silk. It was unfurnished except for benches along the walls which had a built-in sound system that produced a kind of muted, indistinct whisper of many voices.

Dali took me to his studio where, to my great disappointment, there were only some drawing materials—no paintings in progress. It was filled with gadgets, curiosities, objets d'art, anatomical charts, rhinoceros horns, bones, and classical plaster busts enhanced by Dali. A large table was covered with boxes full of glass eyes, which at that time he was collecting. There were literally hundreds of them, along with some contact lenses in a rainbow pattern.

I asked Dali where the paintings were



Photo: Les Waldman
Bill



Photo: Les Waldman

and whether he was going to paint me. He told me, "nobody sees Dali paint" (he mostly referred to himself in the third person singular). He took me into another room where there were brushes and oil paints and a very large, white, stretched canvas without a mark on it.

"Zees," said Dali, "eez bootiful. Now Dali will put full of shit."

We went back to the studio. Dali handed me a clay vase and told me to break it for good luck. I threw it on the floor and he applauded. He then asked me to take my clothes off and wrap myself in a sheet he gave me. He wished to draw me as an angel, he said, with little shells for wings. I liked to draw and had taken lessons in figure drawing with nude models, so I wasn't at all squeamish about being naked. Still, I was grateful for the sheet (which was only used that first session).

Dali whistled and talked while he worked and he asked me to make whatever noises I wanted to. I could scrape my foot or grind my teeth or fart or sing or talk or whatever I wanted. He said that he liked to hear noises.

During the months I posed for him, I told him stories—fairy tales and allegories—and I made whatever noises I could think of. I was too much a lady to fart.

When I left the house, Dali made a new

appointment with me and stuck a bunch of bills in my hand. I protested, but he said posing was work and he'd pay me, but that Gala was not to know. True to his word, he almost always gave me money after I posed—whatever he had in his pocket—sometimes it was a lot and sometimes just a few pesetas. Etherington-Smith writes that he had no concept of money and, except for the crumpled up notes he pressed on me, I never saw him pay for anything. When we went to restaurants in the area, no checks were presented and no money changed hands. I used to think that maybe the chauffeur took care of it, or that the bills were sent to his home.

Marvelling at my great luck, I walked the stony dirt road back to Cadaques, to find that I had become an overnight celebrity among my friends.

I was Dali's model.

(To be concluded in the March issue.)

Gunilla Feigenbaum lives in New York City and is a regular contributor to The Bookpress.

(Photos by permission of the author)

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Warrior Marks—Alice Walker and Pratibha Parmar's controversial new film, recently challenged by Seble Dawit and Salem Mekuria in *The New York Times*:

A media campaign in the West will not stop genital mutilation. Westerners and those of us living in the West who wish to work on this issue must forge partnerships with the hundreds of African women on the continent who are working to eradicate the practice. Neither Alice Walker nor any of us here can speak for them; but if we have the power and the resources, we can create the room for them to speak, and to speak with us as well.

Filmmaker Pratibha Parmar in *Black Film Bulletin*:

One of my very fundamental premises in making the film was that African women's voices were central. I had seen quite a few documentary films in the past and some had sensationalized the issue and some had approached it as Western outsiders. I often asked where were the African women's voices. In my research I found that African women had been fighting against this traditional practice for many years, so I was very keen to ensure that a wide variety of African women's voices would be there in the film.

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