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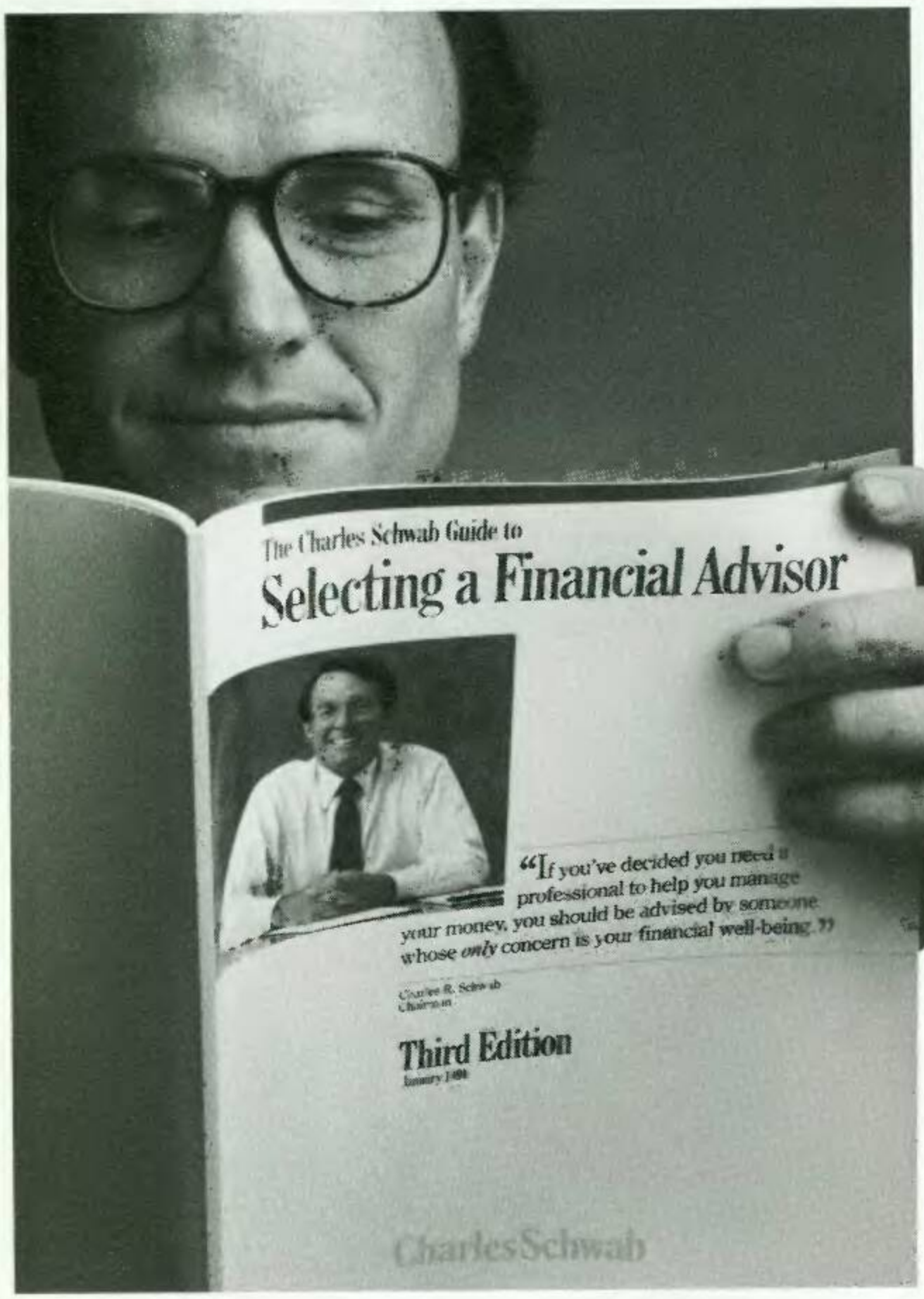


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DRAWINGS: *Mort Gerberg, Robert Mankoff, James Stevenson, Danny Shanahan, Sam Gross, Donald Reilly, Victoria Roberts, John O'Brien, Alicia Czechowski, Jack Ziegler, Ed Fisher, Robert Weber, Mick Stevens, Ed Arno, Edward Frascino, Charles Barsotti, Peter Steiner, Arnie Levin, Bernard Schoenbaum*



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# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

## THE THEATRE

ON film, Lewis Carroll's "Alice" has had imaginative recent interpreters: the director Jonathan Miller, the writer Dennis Potter, and the unclassifiable Jan Švankmajer, among others. Theatrical versions have tended to be less fanciful. (A revival of Eva Le Gallienne's stage version, starring Kate Burton, is the example closest in memory.) An exception to this rule is "Alice in Wonderland," a musical adaptation featuring Bil Baird's Marionettes. The show, which will play twice-daily matinées at the John Houseman Theatre through January 1 (call 564-8038 for tickets), had its New York première fifteen years ago, and we were in the audience that season. Our companion was a six-year-old boy categorized by his father as "delightfully ordinary and ordinarily fidgety." ("He finds Alice slow going," his mother explained.) He was remarkably attentive that day, luckily for us. The musical's cast of fifty-six—most of whom are wooden but not stiff—held his attention handsomely, and the show's lyrics, music, and book (by Sheldon Harnick, Joe Raposo, and A. J. Russell, respectively) sent him scurrying back to his parents' laps full of questions about the source material.

*Karen Allen in "The Country Girl"*

Another Carroll-inspired production, "The Misadventures of Alice E. Neuman," might also seem suitable for young children. At least the show's location—Sideshows by the Seashore, on the Coney Island Boardwalk (1-718 372-5159)—suggests so. The show's content, however, is definitely for ages twelve and up. Or, rather, twelve to sixteen, for, as the title hints, the presiding spirit here is *Mad* magazine, and the parody, despite its stabs at topicality, is apt to make adults the fidgety ones. "Outrageous" liberties are taken with the narrative, and Bugs Bunny, Heckle and Jeckle, and Ralphy Rat are among the substitutes for conventional Wonderlanders. Every creature that crossed the planks to Noah's Ark, it seems, is in the epic-sized cast.

### OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

**ASSASSINS**—A new musical by Stephen Sondheim (score and lyrics) and John Weidman (book); directed by Jerry Zaks. The cast includes Victor Garber, Annie Golden, Jonathan Hadary, Terrence Mann, and Debra Monk. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

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**A BRIGHT ROOM CALLED DAY**—Frances Conroy, Joan MacIntosh, Reno, and Marian Seldes lead the cast in a play by Tony Kushner. Directed by Michael Greif. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

**THE COUNTRY GIRL**—A revival of Clifford Odets' play, with Karen Allen, David Rasche, and Paul McCrane. Previews begin Dec. 26. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

### RECENTLY OPENED

**THE AMERICAN PLAN**—A play by Richard Greenberg, with Joan Copeland, Yvette Hawkins, D. W. Moffett, Wendy Makkena, and Jonathan Walker. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

**ASPECTS OF LOVE**—Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cats or trains) but ends up being a monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/23/90.) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

**BUDDY: THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY**—Anyone who thinks that rock and roll lives on had better steer clear of this ersatz docu-musical about the life of Buddy Holly. (11/19/90) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

**CAMILLE, A TEARJERKER**—Everett Quinton and the late Charles Ludlam are both at their best in this revival of Mr. Ludlam's 1973 spoof, which gives Mr. Quinton a chance to "play the whore" on a grand scale. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Square. 691-2271.)

**CARNAL KNOWLEDGE**—That yesterday's cutting-edge social commentary turns up as today's after-school special seems the only conclusion to be drawn from this brat-pack production of the Jules Feiffer play, on which Mike Nichols based the 1971 movie. With Judd Nelson, Justine Bateman, and Jon Cryer (in the roles created by Jack Nicholson, Candice Bergen, and Art Garfunkel); directed by Martin Charnin. (12/10/90) (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Closes Dec. 30.)

**CIRCLE REPERTORY COMPANY**—The second of five plays in this season's series is **LOVE DIATRIBE,** by Harry Kondoleon. With Barry Sherman and Amy Aquino. (Reviewed in this issue.) (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)

**FALSETTOLAND**—This latest installment of a three-part cantata by William Finn (music and lyrics) is a sequel to "In Trousers" and "March of the Falsettos." Mr. Finn's story presents a number of new elements (among them a Bar Mitzvah in the hospital room of a man who is dying of AIDS) before dissolving in its own syrup. The music sounds agreeable enough, and the performance goes smoothly, under the direction of James Lapine. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

**FIDDLER ON THE ROOF**—The Israeli actor Topol makes a commanding Tevye, the best of all of them, in this production, which falls somewhere between revival and facsimile. The songs are by Bock and Harnick; the dances and direction are re-created from the Jerome Robbins originals; and the costumes are from the Patricia Zipprodt originals. (12/3/90) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510.)

**THE FINE ART OF FINESSE**—A romantic comedy by Marivaux, in a translation by Alex Szogyi. With Robin Leslie Brown, Frank Geraci, Stuart Lerch, and others. Richard Morse directed. (Pearl Theatre, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708. Closes Jan. 12.)

**FOREVER PLAID**—Stuart Ross's loving, tongue-in-cheek salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties is a real treat. The performances of Jason Graae, Stan Chandler, David Engel, and Guy Stroman (as the Plaids, a close-harmony group snuffed out in the prime of life and brought back to earth for a single evening) are so deadpan, and the songs (arranged by James Raitt) are rendered at such a heightened pitch of musical good faith, that only from Ross's script and choreography would you know the thing is a parody. Bring your mom. Hell, bring the whole family. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

**JACKIE MASON: BRAND NEW**—The comedian brings his one-man show to Broadway again. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

**JEAN COCTEAU REPERTORY**—Two plays in rotating repertory: Ibsen's **WHEN WE DEAD AWAKEN** and Cocteau's **INFERNAL MACHINE.** Performances resume Jan. 3. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

**LAMBS THEATRE COMPANY**—The seventh annual presentation of **THE GIFTS OF THE MAGI,** a musical adapted from two O. Henry stories. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. Closes Dec. 30.)

**LIGHT OPERA OF MANHATTAN**—Presenting Victor Herbert's **BABES IN TOYLAND.** Leading the cast are Raymond Allen and Liz Nolan. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Closes Dec. 31.)

**LOVE AND ANGER**—George F. Walker's play about a formerly sleazy lawyer who decides (following a stroke) to spend the rest of his life doing good may be a lot better than the current production allows you to believe. Unfortunately, Saul Rubinek's performance as the lawyer is so dire, and James C. Nicola and Christopher Grabowski have directed so messily, that the author's point is virtually indiscernible, in spite of some dapper acting by Steve Ryan, Arthur Hanket, and Deirdre O'Connell. (12/24/90) (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 279-4200. Closes Jan. 6.)

**THE MISER**—This tiresome, simpleminded, infantile revival of the Molière classic is an almost total washout saved from ignominy only by a dashing comic turn by John Christopher Jones. The director, Stephen Porter, would seem to have found for the divine Philip Bosco a part he can do nothing with. (10/29/90) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Closes Dec. 30.)

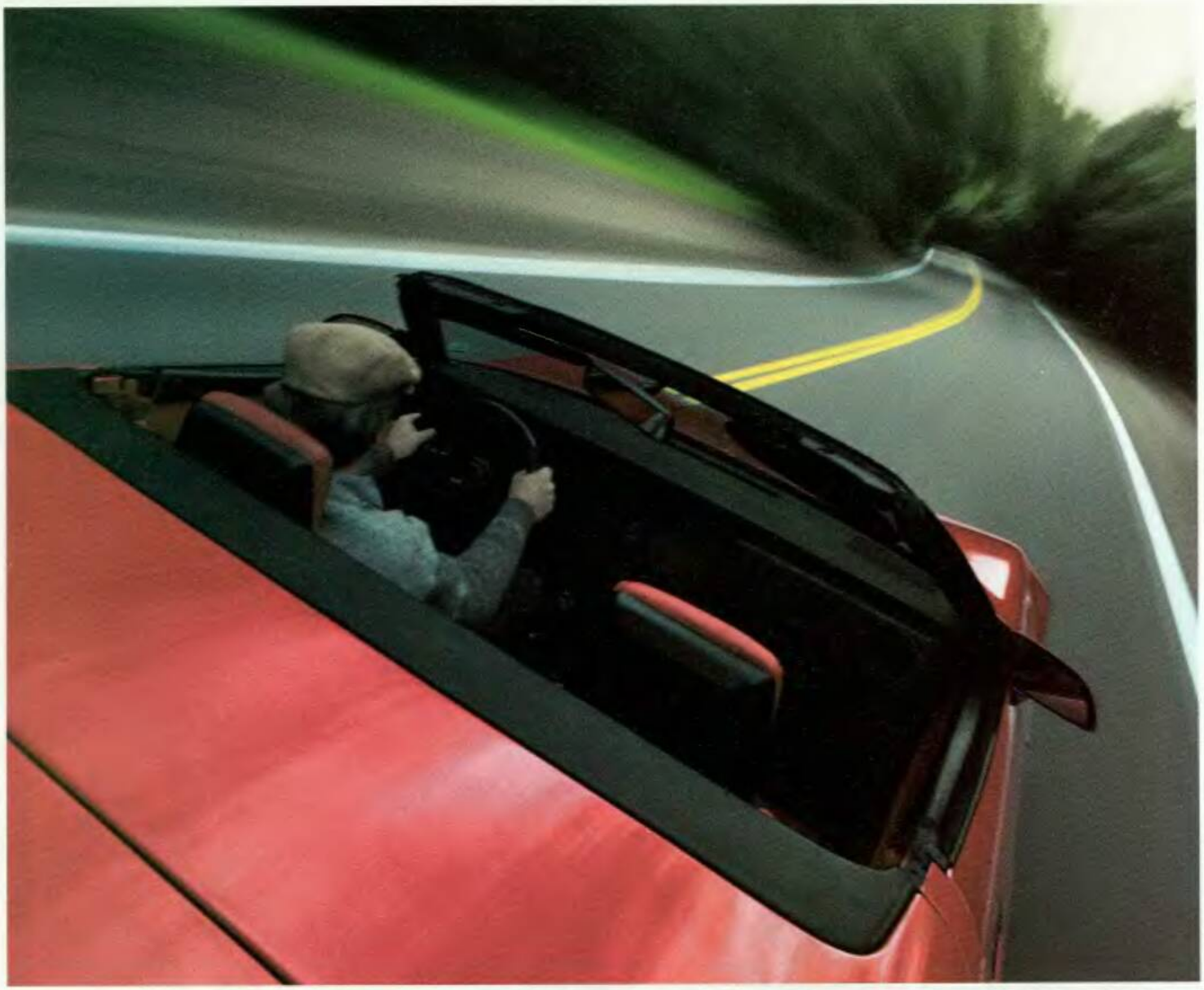
**MONSTER IN A BOX**—Spalding Gray's latest autobiographical monologue. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

**OH, KAY!**—A joyous revival of a musical originally done here in 1926, this time with an all-black (all-gifted) company. The score, by George Gershwin, with lyrics by Ira Gershwin, and the singing and nimble dancing of the whole company are so glorious that they nearly compensate for the damnable din of amplification. With Brian Mitchell and Angela Teek as the romantic leads, and with fleet-footed Gregg Burge, Kevin Ramsey, and Stanley Wayne Mathis as the principal dancers. (11/12/90) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

**ONCE ON THIS ISLAND**—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on Rosa Guy's 1985 novel, "My Love, My Love." (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

**PETER PAN**—Cathy Rigby has the title role in a production of the 1954 musical. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 246-0102.)

**THE PIANO LESSON**—August Wilson's newest drama, the fourth in his series chronicling the black-American experience in the twentieth century, is set in Pittsburgh, in 1936. In its exquisite writing and over-all structure (involving the conflict over a piano that figures hauntingly and intricately in one family's history) the play resembles "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" more than "Fences." Wilson takes refuge in an overly mystical and



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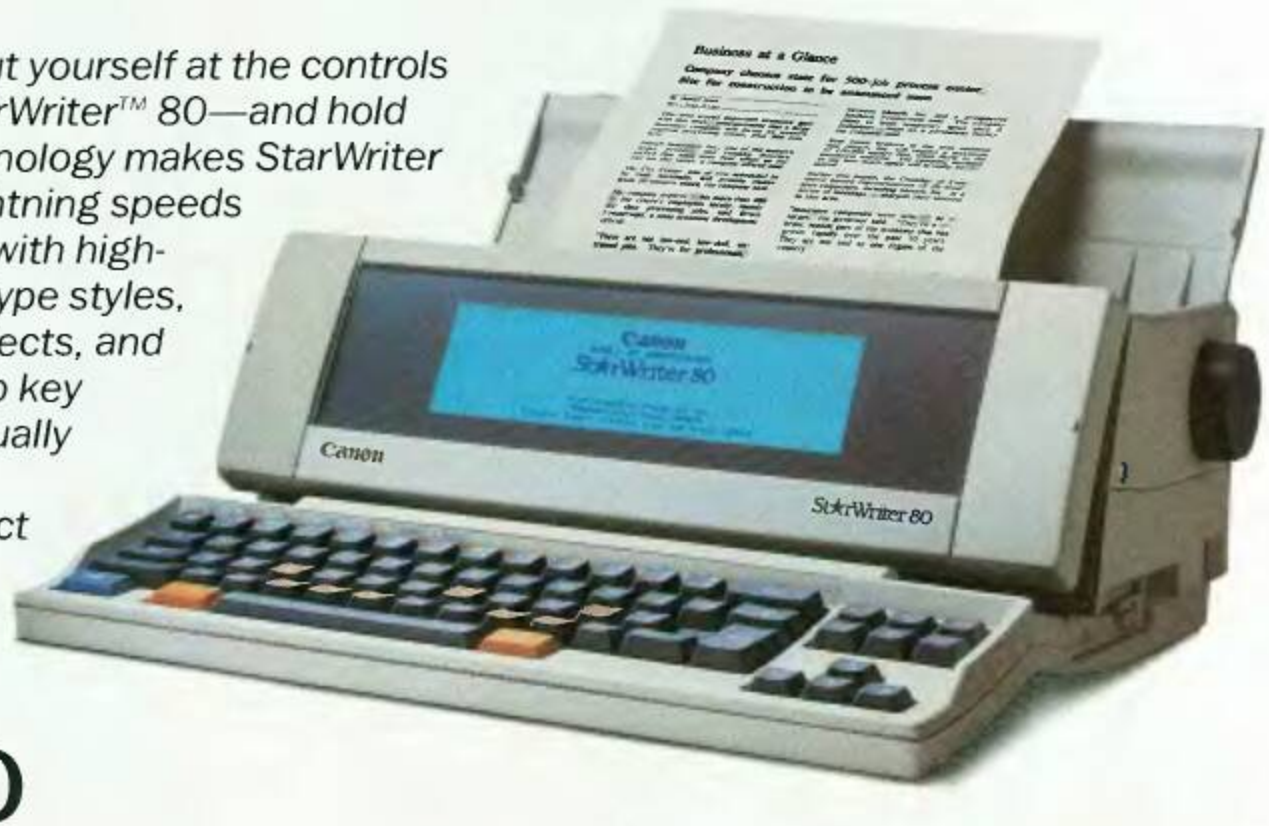


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SARAH BAGWELL, AGE 4, *Cardome Center, Georgetown, Kentucky*

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Although we hope that some day Sarah and her trusty computer will be able to give us the answer.

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## THE THEATRE–Cont'd

melodramatic ending, but there are some great scenes. Lloyd Richards was the director. (4/30/90) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

**Prelude to a Kiss**—Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. Barnard Hughes is the old man, Ashley Crow is the bride, and John Dossett is the groom. (3/26/90) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

**Remembrance**—Aideen O'Kelly, Malachy McCourt, and John Finn in a play by Graham Reid. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 757-3318.)

**Romeo and Juliet**—Robert Sean Leonard and Gerit Quealy star in this Riverside Shakespeare Company production, directed by Charles Keating. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

**The Rothschilds**—A revival of the 1970 musical by Jerry Bock (score), Sheldon Harnick (lyrics), and Sherman Yellen (book). The cast includes Mike Burstyn, Sue Ann Gershenson, John Loprieno, and Nick Corley. Lonny Price directed. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

**The Seagull: The Hamptons: 1990**—D. B. Sweeney and Carol Lynley in an adaptation of the Chekhov classic. (RAPP Arts Center, 220 E. 4th St. 279-4200. Closes Dec. 30.)

**Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll**—All manner of hypocrites, fakes, liars, and other ethical discards are subjected to Eric Bogosian's incomparable mimicry and wit. The evening is anything but depressing. (2/26/90) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. Closes Jan. 6.)

**Shadowlands**—William Nicholson's vulgar stage adaptation of the beautiful television film that he wrote for the BBC about C. S. Lewis is essentially a tourist trap. It Broadwayizes everything that, in the movie, was subtle or sincere. Directed by Elijah Moshinsky; with Nigel Hawthorne and Jane Alexander. (11/26/90) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099.)

**Shogun: The Musical**—Or "James Clavell's Shogun: The Musical," to give credit where credit is due, is a real hoot. It has a shipwreck sequence, a lightning effect, an entire number performed on a treadmill, a slow-motion sequence, a gunshot, an earthquake, a rainstorm, a snowstorm, a cavalry charge, a Ninja raid, a haiku competition, and a song about sex paraphernalia, and it begins with two half-naked men banging on drums. What more do you want? (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102.)

**Six Degrees of Separation**—You're best off knowing nothing about the new John Guare play other than that it represents a perfect meeting of the playwright, director Jerry Zaks, and actress Stockard Channing. Out of a true story—one apparently about celebrity and Good Samaritanism—Guare has fashioned a wistful comedy about race, class, money, imagination, collective conscience, individual psyche, and the impulse toward art. (6/25/90) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

**Smoke on the Mountain**—This loving satire of old-time gospel music, set in 1938, is perfectly delightful. Written by Connie Ray (who also performs, along with six other versatile actor-musicians), it re-creates a Saturday-night service at a small church in rural North Carolina, where a family of more or less devout gospel singers have been invited to appear. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

**The Sum of Us**—David Stevens' poignant comedy about how hard it is for parents and children to break free of each other (particularly if they get on too well) is set in present-day Australia. Depending on how you look at it, the play is either very dear and rather flawed or rather dear and very flawed; but cast and direction are both excellent, and Tony Goldwyn is electrifying as a young homosexual who wishes his father weren't quite so laid back about his homosexuality. (11/5/90) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

**Those Were the Days**—One could almost wish that this tribute to the Yiddish musical theatre, directed and choreographed by Eleanor Reissa, were less assimilated—stricter in its concept and selection (witness the title song, which has nothing to do with the Yiddish musical theatre). But the charming and adept performances of Bruce Adler, Robert Abelson, Mina Bern, and Lori Wilner, together with Zalmen Mlotek's klezmer music, make the show a joyful celebration of the shtetl culture, and put it among the very best of its kind. (Edison, 240 W. 47th St. 302-2302.)

**Township Fever**—Mbongeni Ngema's new South African musical. (Majestic, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100.)

**The Voice of the Prairie**—A play by John Olive. With Wendy Barrie-Wilson, Jack Cirillo, and Kevin Geer; directed by John Daines. (Chelsea Stage, 441 W. 26th St. 760-9810. Closes Jan. 6.)

### LONG RUNS

**Black and Blue:** An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicans of renown have been assembled, and while La Vern Baker, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **Cats:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **City of Angels:** Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular setting and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. Starting Dec. 31, Tom Wopat replaces Mr. Naughton and Michael Rupert replaces Mr. Edelman. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.) . . . **The Fantasticks:** The longest-running long run celebrated its thirtieth birthday last May. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **A Few Good Men:** "Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series. With Perry King, Pamela Blair, and Bradley Whitford. Directed by Don Scardino. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **Forbidden Broadway 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 W. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **Grand Hotel:** The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show, but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. With Rene Ceballos, David Carroll, Lynette Perry, Chip Zien, Timothy Jerome, John Wylie, and Caitlin Brown. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **Gypsy:** This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102. Closes Jan. 6.) . . . **Les Misérables:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. With Craig Schulman as Jean Valjean, Robert Westenberg as Javert, and Christy Baron as Fantine. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **Nunsense:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **Other People's Money:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **The Phantom of the Opera:** This much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

## DANCE

AMID all the splashy new winter books on our shelf is a recent paperback, elegantly produced, that contains some enduring wisdom. The title is "To Be a Dancer," and the author is Helen McGehee—who is remembered by all who saw her as one of the goddesses of Martha Graham's remarkable company during the nineteen-fifties and early sixties. LeRoy Leatherman described her as an "intellectual," noting her "strict, logical mind," her "critical eye," and her "precision and exactitude," as well as her "wealth of feeling," with "currents of violence and tenacious loyalties that come fully to light when she plays Electra in 'Clytemnestra' " (a role she originated, in a work for which she also designed the women's costumes). Paul Taylor, who performed with Miss McGehee in the Graham company, has recorded his memory of the first time he saw her perform, in "Canticles for Innocent Comedians": "When she repeatedly rose on one leg, going from low squat to relevé, the rest of her Juilliard students and I nearly croaked. She's basically a lyric dancer, but she can turn into a spark-ejecting demonette when cast in dramatic roles."

"To Be a Dancer" is a compendium of Miss McGehee's essays, lectures, and notes, interleaved with her costume sketches and with photographs of her when she was performing for Miss Graham. Here are some excerpts:

"Dancing is a visual art aided by the other arts but perceived by the eyes."

"You must allow yourself to be vulnerable. You are exposed on stage. The reason for being on stage is precisely this exposure. This exposure is what you are communicating. Your only 'protection' is your preparation."

"[Martha] believes that 'every act of creation bears within it the seeds of destruction' and of course this is true, but she loved this idea and at times it became the excuse for some rotten behavior."

"Antony Tudor asked Martha whether she preferred to be remembered as a great dancer or as a great choreographer and she replied, 'Dancer.' 'I pity you,' said Tudor."

"Martha Graham said to me, 'Don't follow fashion—make it.' For most of her productive life she did this herself: what happens with her costuming now I don't know. I do know that she created her great company by making them believe that what works for the piece, works for the dancer."

("To Be a Dancer" is available from Editions Heraclita, 2907 Rivermont Avenue, Lynchburg, Virginia 24503.)

**"The Nutcracker"**—Performances by three companies. **New York City Ballet:** Dec. 26 at 2 and 6; Dec. 27 at 6; Dec. 28 at 8; Dec. 29 at 2 and 8; Dec. 30 at 1 and 5; Dec. 31 at 7; and Jan. 2 at 6. Through Jan. 6. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. The season continues through Feb. 24.) . . . **Bolshoi Ballet Grigorovich Company:** Dec. 26-27 at 2, Dec. 28-29 at 2 and 7, and Dec. 30 at 2. (Brooklyn Acade-

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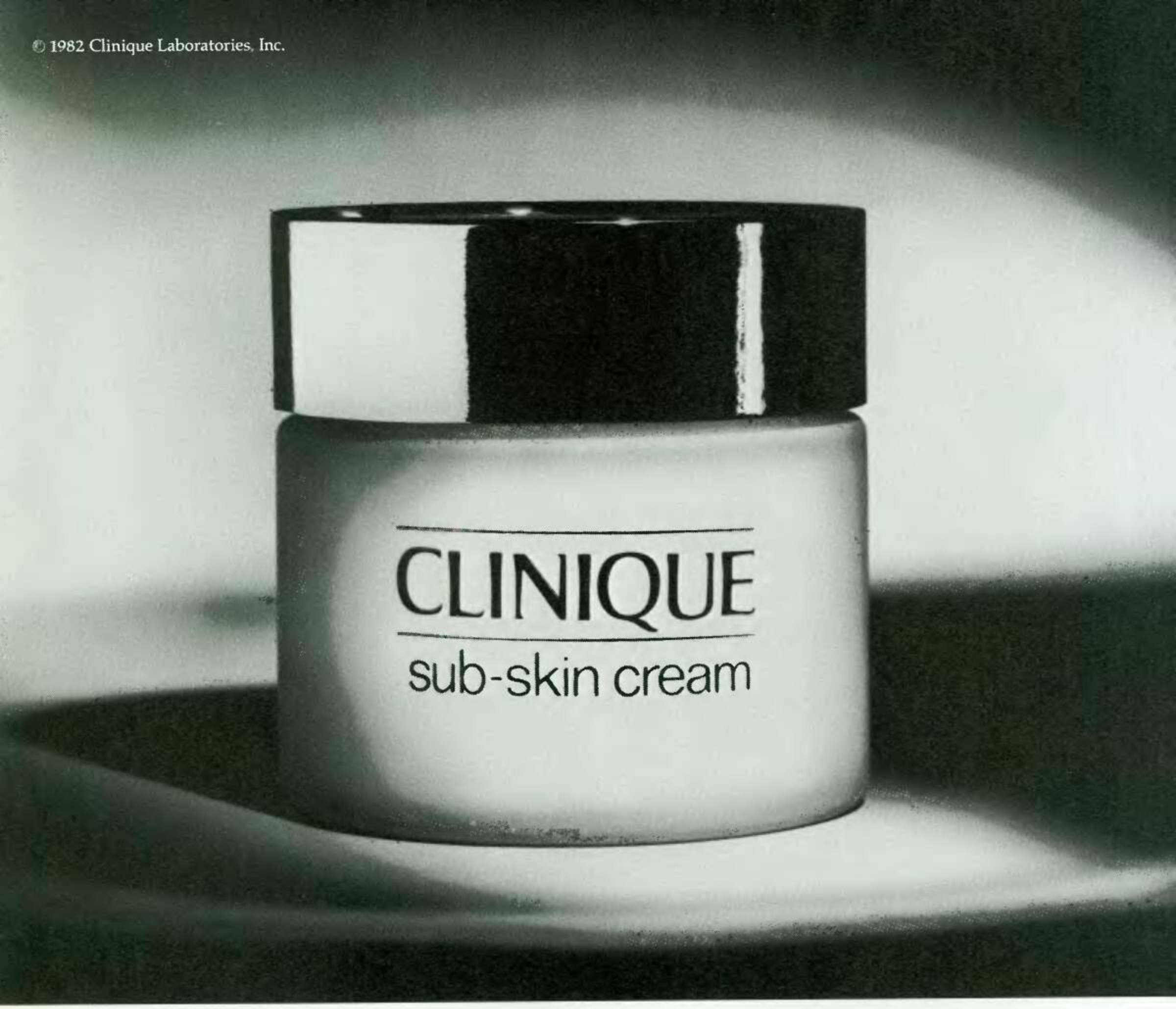


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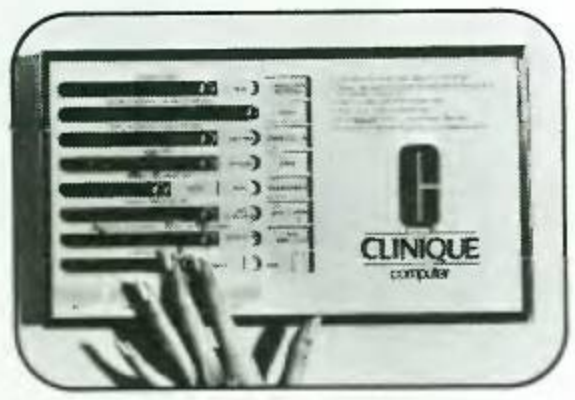


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my of Music, 30 Lafayette St. 1-718 636-4100.) . . . **NEW YORK THEATRE BALLET**: Dec. 24, Dec. 26-27, and Dec. 30-31, all at 1 and 3:30; and Dec. 28-29 at 4 and 6:30. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160.)

**ALVIN AILEY AMERICAN DANCE THEATRE**—Final performances of the engagement. Dec. 25 at 8: "Read Matthew 11:28," "Episodes," "North Star," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 8: "Hidden Rites," "Games," and "Shards." . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 8: "Streams," "Treading," "Impinyuza," and "Memoria." . . . ¶ Dec. 28 at 8: "Night Creature," "Treading," "Forgotten Time," and "The Stack-Up." . . . ¶ Dec. 29 at 2: "Come and Get the Beauty of It Hot," "After Eden," "Suite Otis," and "Read Matthew 11:28." . . . ¶ Dec. 29 at 8: "Streams," "Reflections in D," "After Eden," and "Revelations." . . . ¶ Dec. 30 at 3: "Night Creature," "Hermit Songs," "Forgotten Time," "Suite Otis," and "Read Matthew 11:28." . . . ¶ Dec. 30 at 8: "Read Matthew 11:28," "Games," "Hidden Rites," and "Revelations." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

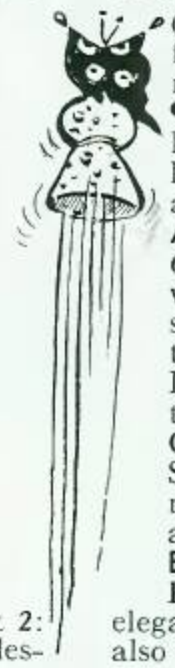
**PILOBOLUS**—Dec. 26, Dec. 29, and Dec. 31, all at 8; and Dec. 30 at 2: "The Particle Zoo," "Moonblind," "Tarleton's Resurrection," "Cedar Island" (New York première), and "Day Two." . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 8: "Molly's Not Dead," "Pseudopodia," "Televisitation," and "Debut C." . . . ¶ Dec. 28 and Jan. 2 at 8 and Dec. 29 at 2: "The Particle Zoo," "Moonblind," "Clandestiny," "Pseudopodia," and "Untitled." . . . ¶ Dec. 30 at 7:30: "Ciona," "Axones," "Shizen," solo from "The Empty Suitor," and "Land's Edge." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. The engagement continues through Jan. 6.)

# NIGHT LIFE

SOME people can't stand to be alone on New Year's Eve. Looking over the names of the musicians who'll be onstage on December 31, we find a lot of people who were whiling away the same hours last year. The jazz-pianist and groovemeister Herbie Hancock, for instance, will join Wynton Marsalis (a newcomer at this year's event) for a gig at the Blue Note; the twenties-minded chanteuse Helen Schneider will be holding sway at the Ballroom; the bebop pianist Tommy Flanagan will be at work at Bradley's; and singer-pianist Bobby Short, who is to the Café Carlyle what the Statue of Liberty is to Liberty Island, will be ensconced in his favorite room.

As the year changes hands, it's nice to see these same faces again—they've become a sort of musical transition team. Of course, there's nothing wrong with bringing in the New Year with a little new blood either. The

exceptionally fine jazz singer Betty Carter—who arches her back when she sings and who, according to one critic, sways "as if she were dodging her own notes"—will be performing at Fat Tuesday's. They Might Be Giants—whose jittery, jokey pop is good for a few laughs if not much else—will be at the Village Gate. There'll be a Gypsy Flamenco Festival at Sounds of Brazil, and the Minneapolis-based rock outfit Soul Asylum will be at Maxwell's, in Hoboken. It's a strange mix of choices, but regardless of your musical leanings you don't have to do the countdown alone.



(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

**ALGONQUIN HOTEL,** 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**SUSANNAH MC CORKLE,** a jazz singer with a rich, effluent voice and a seductive stage persona, can currently be found in the Oak Room. The last time we saw Ms. McCorkle perform, her mind was on Lester Young, with a few thoughts given to Chet Baker and João Gilberto as well. Shows Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine-fifteen, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen. Dining.

**BALLROOM,** 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—It's everything a cabaret should be: sleek, elegant, intimate, and slightly decadent. It also offers something that other cabarets do not: tapas, which come from the Spanish restaurant adjoining the club. The **MANHATTAN RHYTHM KINGS,** a tap-dancing, harmonizing trio who concentrate on old-timey stuff, continue through Dec. 31. **HELEN SCHNEIDER** joins them on New Year's Eve. Tuesdays through Thursdays at nine, Fridays and Saturdays at nine and eleven, and Sundays at three. Closed Dec. 24-25 and New Year's Day.

**BIRDLAND,** 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—Many musicians who visit this jazz house are honored—if that's the word—by having their portraits done, "in concert," by the house artist. These impressionistic renderings round out a glossy décor that includes flying-saucer light fixtures, burgundy velvet drapes, and some neon wading birds. The tenor saxophonist **DAVID (FATHEAD) NEWMAN** will be in residence Dec. 28-31. Early on in his career, Newman put in ten years with the Ray Charles orchestra, and his style still incorporates heavy doses of soul, gospel, and R. & B. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Dec. 24-25.

**BLUE NOTE,** 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—This blue-on-blue club is the place to find big-league jazz artists; it's an institution and it knows it: how many other clubs sell their own belt buckles? **HERBIE HANCOCK** and **WYNTON MARSALIS** share the stage Dec. 31, and Marsalis leads a quintet as of Jan. 1. Music from nine. Dining.

**BOTTOM LINE,** 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The **TURTLES**—featuring Flo and Eddie—will be here Dec. 27-31. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster. Closed Dec. 24-25 and New Year's Day.

**BRADLEY'S,** 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors cooperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. The club pulls out the heavy artillery to close the year: pianist **KIRK LIGHTSEY,** guitarist-bassist **SANTI DEBRIANO,** and bassist **DON PATE** work through Dec. 29; the **PETE MALINVERNI** trio claims Dec. 30; **TOMMY FLANAGAN** and **GEORGE MRAZ** are in on New Year's Eve; and saxophonist **SONNY FORTUNE,** pianist **KENNY BARRON,** and bassist **DAVID WILLIAMS** commence on Jan. 1. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

**CARLYLE HOTEL,** Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to His Shortness, **BOBBY SHORT,** through New Year's Eve. Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans' Bar, pianist **BARBARA CARROLL** is on duty through New Year's Eve; **FRANK OWENS** relieves her at the Steinway beginning Jan. 2. Music from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays. Closed Christmas.

**CBGB & OMFUG,** 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club, a dark, narrow cave with neon-beer-sign stalactites and ancestral graffiti, is part sacred burial ground and part historic landmark, but it hasn't succumbed to nostalgia: new and used bands of every stripe continue to pass through nightly. Music from nine-thirty Sundays through Thursdays, and from ten-thirty on Fridays and Saturdays.

**CONDON'S,** 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. **CLIFFORD JORDAN**—a brilliant tenor saxophonist of thirty-some years' standing—brings his big band in for a week-long gig beginning Dec. 25. Music after nine. Closed New Year's Day.

**CONTINENTAL DIVIDE,** 25 Third Ave., at St. Marks Pl. (529-6924)—Hipsters, posers, N.Y.U. students, the occasional skinhead—a typical East Village bar. The motif is prehistoric punk—a Stone Age mural, assorted toy dinosaurs and pterodactyls—and on peak nights there's a "take no prisoners" atmosphere. **SYLVAIN SYLVAIN,** the former New York Dolls singer and guitarist, will be in on New Year's Eve. While his ex-bandmate David Johansen has metamorphosed into a tongue-in-cheek lounge lizard, Sylvain has retained most of the trappings—and the musical inclinations—of his glam-rock days. The **WALDOS** round out the bill. Shows Sundays at nine, Mondays and Tuesdays at ten, and Wednesdays and Thursdays at eleven. Closed Christmas.

**FAT TUESDAY'S,** 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—Through the iffy-looking side door, down the famous fun-house tunnel that's lined with mirrors and corrugated tin, and down a short flight of stairs, you'll find this softly lit, low-ceilinged, roughly Manhattan-shaped jazz preserve. **BETTY CARTER,** an accomplished chanteuse whose voice is clear and piercing in the higher registers and all business when she dips down for a low note, will be here Dec. 26-31. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

**FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION,** 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—With jazz you get eggroll. At this posh-looking two-floor Chinese restaurant, tucked into a midtown skyscraper, you'll find a lot of business types and a lot of hanging plants. In the middle of the main dining room, you'll also find a trio led by trombonist **AL GREY,** a Basie-band veteran who, aside from being a topnotch soloist, excels in the little-known art of making wah-wah noises with a rubber-plunger mute. Grey's outfit works through New Year's Eve; guitarists **BUCKY PIZZARELLI** and **GENE BERTONCINI** punch in for a week's work on Jan. 2. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays. Closed New Year's Day.

**KNICKERBOCKER,** 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. **JUNIOR MANCE** and **MARTY RIVERA** will be at work Dec. 26-31, followed by James Williams and Christian McBride (beginning Jan. 2). Music from about nine-thirty.

**KNITTING FACTORY,** 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor music-and-performance space, where people come to ponder the meaning of harmolodics and the post-ness of postmodernism. The room is run by two amiable young guys from Wisconsin, whose views on such things as cover charges are enlightened. Dec. 27 belongs to the Charles Taylor Ensemble and the Oren Bloedow band; Dec. 28 brings in the Jazz Passengers. The **MICROSCOPIC SEPTET,** who perform on Dec. 29, have been described as playing music "about jazz"; that is, their work is a hodgepodge of references to every jazz style you care to name. Free jazz is in there, and so is swing; Dixieland pops up and the Duke makes an appearance. The avant-garde electric guitarist **JAMES (BLOOD) ULMER** is in charge on New Year's Eve. Music after nine. Closed New Year's Day.

**LONE STAR ROADHOUSE,** 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant-and-bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars, some Sixth Avenue-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John, and funky French fry–potato chip hybrids. **URBAN BLIGHT** is in on Dec. 26, followed by **WILLY DE VILLE** on Dec. 27. **BOOKER T. & THE M.G.'S,** the mainstays of the Stax sound, gave a performance here not long ago that showed they're still in good form; they can be found here again Dec. 28-30. New Year's Eve belongs to bluesman **BUDDY GUY.** Music after nine. Dining. Closed Dec. 23-25 and New Year's Day.

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## NIGHT LIFE–Cont'd

**Manny's Car Wash,** 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—A recent addition to the Upper East Side club scene. Don't go expecting to be sprayed with soapy water and massaged by large brushes: the sign outside is the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar. The Texan guitarist and singer **Johnny (Clyde) Copeland** holds forth Dec. 27-28. Closed Christmas and New Year's Day.

**Maxwell's,** 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Every campus should have one. **Soul Asylum** and the Pussywillows share the bill Dec. 31. Dining. Closed Dec. 24-25 and New Year's Day.

**Michael's Pub,** 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A mid-Manhattan pub for well-heeled gents and high-heeled ladies. It's not always easy to detect the music over the babble, but if you listen closely you should be able to hear singer **Frank Stallone.** Stallone, who is Sylvester's younger brother and who wrote music for and appeared in "Rocky," is currently in residence, concentrating on big-band arrangements by Billy May and Sammy Nestico. Dining. Closed Sundays. Closed Dec. 24-25 and New Year's Day.

**Sounds of Brazil,** 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—This former luncheonette has a tropical motif—straw huts, bamboo, a fake palm tree, a mosaic of gourds—and one of the city's more international booking policies: Brazil, Africa, and the Caribbean are just a few of the places explored. Dec. 26-27 belongs to the Kwanza Harvest Festival, featuring Kre-A-Shan and Chief Bey, among others; the Gypsy Flamenco Festival, powered by an eight-piece band, is slated for Dec. 31. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays. Closed Dec. 24-25 and Jan. 1-3.

**Spo-dee-o-dee,** 565 W. 23rd St., at Eleventh Ave. (206-1990)—A curious mixture of swank and down-home. (The name comes from the 1949 Stick McGhee song "Drinkin' Wine Spo-dee-o-dee," which was Atlantic Records' first hit.) The music is mostly R. & B., and the furnishings include ballroom-size chandeliers, king-size sofas, and green velvet drapes sprinkled with stardust.

**Tramps,** 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Located on a Chelsea block that has become an urban Disneyland (a pool hall, an indoor miniature-golf course, a trendy all-night diner, Limelight around the corner), this roller-rink-size bar-and-restaurant is a little slicker and a lot roomier than the original Tramps, but the emphasis on solid rock and blues remains. Jazz keyboardist **Merl Saunders** and **Blues Traveler** perform on Dec. 30. Closed Dec. 24-25 and New Year's Day.

**Village Gate,** 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the downstairs room, which is as big and plain as a mess hall, **Tania Maria,** a Brazilian singer equally at home with Latin music and jazz, comes in Dec. 27-29, and **They Might Be Giants** perform Dec. 30-31. . . . ¶ The gravel-voiced singer-pianist **Dr. John** will be at work at the Top of the Gate Dec. 28-31, with sets at nine and eleven (eight and eleven on New Year's Eve). Closed Christmas and New Year's Day.

**Village Vanguard,** 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia, but the music is anything but stale. The **Charlie Haden Liberation Music Orchestra** is in session Dec. 25-30; the **Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra,** which continues to swing in the late drummer's honor, takes over Dec. 31; and the fleet-fingered guitarist **Larry Coryell** starts up Jan. 1. Music after ten. Closed Christmas Eve.

**Wetlands,** 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Good music and grass-roots organizing. Downstairs, one finds a hallway decorated with seventies-ish black-light posters—the kind your sister had in high school—and a relatively quiet, smoke-free bar. Upstairs, there's another, livelier bar and a stage, which, on Dec. 29, will belong to Slipknot and **Babatunji** and His Drums of Passion. State of Dreadness comes in on Dec. 31. Closed Christmas Eve and New Year's Day.

**Woody's,** 82 E. 4th St. (982-3686)—Rolling Stones guitarist Ron Wood's club is a black-painted basement with mirrors, rotating spotlights, and enough sofas to rival Jennifer Convertibles. Stones memorabilia, with an emphasis on Ronnie himself, provide the primary decoration. The **Fleshtones,** specialists in psychedelic raunch, perform on New Year's Eve. Shows Wednesdays through Saturdays, from about eleven. Closed Dec. 24-25 and New Year's Day.

*Gene Bertoncini at Fortune Garden Pavilion and at Zinno*

**Zinno,** 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. Pianist **Geoff Keezer** and bassist **Peter Washington** work through Dec. 29; guitarist **Gene Bertoncini** and bassist Sean Smith claim Dec. 30; and pianist **Kirk Lightsey** and bassist **Cecil McBee** begin a six-night stand on New Year's Eve. Music from eight weeknights, and Sundays from seven. Closed Christmas and New Year's Day.

### EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

JUST because you're starting to feel all cozy about New York, don't credit Christmas. In the air there's a feeling of retro. It's as if this fall a cosmic edict were issued entitling anyone or anything that's hung around long enough to a renaissance. Pucci returns. The Roxy revives. The Market Diner transforms. Mashed potatoes are suddenly ubiquitous.

The latest phoenixing, however, wasn't even popular the first time around. Unless you can't resist a Polish Army Veterans' hall, you'd never have hit Irving Plaza during the disco inferno. Later on, it became a sometime home for bad rock concerts and for awful parties with indecipherable sound and lighting so dim and air so clammy it was only natural to suspect chanterelles were growing in the corners. As of this summer, the space had less cachet than a bridal shower at the Brasserie.

Yet, before one could say "Unchained Melody," Irving Plaza (15 Irving Place) was hosting hundreds of gay men dancing within its rec-room panelled walls (now partially covered by black drapery) every Friday—easy as ABC, which is precisely the name of the place. Though already nicknamed Sound Factory Lite, or Big Boy Bar, ABC amply fills a perilous gap left by the closing of the latter, offering a recurring alternative to the Richie Cunningham scrubbiness of Private Eyes. Carmelita's on Friday wasn't hot stuff and Panty Girdles at the Mike Todd room snapped, but ABC is properly underdressed to meet the competition. Its only visual specialities are the kind of multi-moonbeamed spot Tom Jones might have been backlit by as he sang "Delilah," and a smoke machine treacherously aimed at eye level, releasing clouds with exactly the same aroma as those cherry air fresheners cabbies pick up at the car wash.

There ain't no Donna Summer or Miss Ross retrospectives. The music is house, and it's suddenly attracted some of these dancing gay white boys who formerly avoided the genre as if it would lower their T-cell count. But this new group already has some "regulars" of the two-month-old club night worried about encroachment. "It's gymnification, I can feel it," hissed one wraithlike man. "They should base admission on bicep size. That would keep them out." "Who wants to keep them out?" replied his almost xerographically identical dance pal. "I like looking at them." "You'd dance with them?" "If they asked nicely." "What if they didn't ask nice?" "I'd still dance with them, but I couldn't respect them." Perhaps dance cards should make a comeback.

### IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

**Big Apple Circus**—Performances under the little big top run through Jan. 6 in Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park. For ticket and schedule information, call 268-3030.

**"The Christmas Spectacular"**—Radio City Music Hall's annual Yuletide dancearama—with the Rockettes, of course—runs through Jan. 3. (Sixth Ave. at 50th St. For information about show times and tickets, call 247-4777.)

**Bil Baird's Marionettes**—The troupe's version of the "Alice in Wonderland" story, with songs by Sheldon Harnick and Joe Raposo. (John Houseman Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. Through Jan. 1. For information about show times and tickets, call 564-8038.)

**"The Misadventures of Alice E. Neuman"**—A theatre work loosely based on "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland," written and directed by Dick D. Zigun. (Sideshows by the Seashore, Coney Island Boardwalk at W. 12th St. 1-718 372-5159. Dec. 29-30 at 2 and 6.)

## ART

THE holiday cards we've been getting from friends with small children are all just about the same: an intensely amateurish snapshot of a toddler or two in sombreros, tutus, sarongs, and other elements of party drag acquired during a recent family vacation. No parents in sight—only evidence of the dear old friends' enlightened common spirit, plus the sacrificial lamb. Envy and sympathy are the emotions invited. But there are other seasonal messages around, and the week before New Year's isn't too late to receive them. "An Artist's Christmas: Holiday Images by American Artists 1880-1990," curated by the art historian Ronny Cohen, is at the Midtown-Payson gallery (745 Fifth Avenue, at 57th Street; through December 29—closed December 26), and it shouldn't be missed.

With around two hundred works by more than a hundred and fifty artists, this wonderful little show is a crystal-

lized survey of this century's art—as well as yet another potential coda to MOMA's "High and Low." The exhibition begins with pictures submitted to the printing firm of L. Prang & Co., of Boston, by artists such as Elihu Vedder and Lisbeth B. Humphrey—the only works on view actually designed for commercial holiday use. A couple of cards were privately commissioned—a drawing, for example, by Jean Cocteau, made for George Platt Lynes—but the rest were all sent by the artists themselves, and it is often interesting as well to see who received them.

Between Charles Dana Gibson's 1927 portrait of a granddaughter and Keith Haring's radiant baby of 1988 there's nary an artist's child in sight. You'd almost think the modern age were R-rated! "Mind your head, your heart, and your pocket" is the message scrawled over a snapshot of Erskine Caldwell and the photographer Margaret Bourke-White, while other art-sophisticated highlights here include Waldo Peirce's jazz-age greeting-from-a-garret, a salacious self-portrait of the brush-wielding artist with a nude model on his lap. There's a marvellous and naughty section of Surrealists' best wishes, and some sensational baroque forties angels by Lillian Kiesler. There are, of course, Zen-inspired and conceptual-art greetings, too. But only Louise Bourgeois could speak for the family with an image of herself as a festive-looking penis with a wig on top. So merry Christmas to all, and you'd better watch out.

### MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

**Metropolitan Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries" includes four hundred works of art from the pre-Columbian era through 1950. Through Jan. 13. . . . ¶ "Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court." If you've ever wondered what the Metropolitan looked like before all the variously styled annexes were added, even before it was given its present façade, wander down this oddly long-and-narrow corridor. One of the long walls is the restored 1888 carriage entrance to the museum—part of its first addition—and it is all that remains of the Renaissance Revival façade. Opposite the massive rusticated arched windows of this red-brick-and-limestone relic is a recent neoclassical wall designed by Kevin Roche, with a pitched skylight roof connecting the old wall to the new. The architecture works quite well, even with its hokey trellises and plantings. It is an awful lot of space, however, to devote to an essentially uninteresting smattering of seventeenth-to-nineteenth-century statuary. The best works, in fact, are in an annex—more an architectural afterthought—off to the side of the court, in the entrance to the grandly named Henry R. Kravis Wing. There you will find Rodin's "Burghers of Calais," which is awkwardly sited but would look great anywhere; Bourdelle's amazing bronze statue of the sculptor Carpeaux; and a number of Maillols. Perhaps the finest works in the Petrie Court proper are the earliest: two very funny sculptures of a fruit-bearing Priapus and Flora that originally graced the entrance of the Villa Borghese, by Pietro Bernini, assisted by his soon-to-be-better-known young son, Gian Lorenzo. . . . ¶ "Théâtre de la Mode," in the Costume Institute, is a recreation of a 1945 fashion exhibition that raised money for French war relief. Due to a fabric shortage, the couture, by such designers as Balenciaga, Lanvin, and Worth, was presented in miniature, on thirty-inch wire mannequins with ceramic heads. A hundred and seventy of the original dolls have been restored for this show. . . . ¶ "Albrecht Dürer: The Apocalypse" presents fifteen woodcuts of apocalyptic catastrophes, along with a small number of Gothic and Renaissance prints. . . . ¶ Photographs from the fifties and sixties, selected from the museum's collection. Among the artists shown are William Klein, Helen Levitt, Bill Brandt, and Lisette Model. . . . ¶ The annual Christmas tree and Neapolitan crèche are on view in the Medieval Sculpture Hall. Through Jan. 13. (Open Tuesdays, except Christmas, through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

**Museum of Modern Art,** 11 W. 53rd St.—"High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture" is divided into four themes (graffiti, caricature, comics, advertising) and includes more than two hundred and fifty works. Through Jan. 15. . . . ¶ A breakthrough show of works in various mediums by Kiki Smith, one of the contemporary scene's outstanding originals. Smith, who seems to mistrust slickness and packaging of all sorts, has often displayed an offhand approach to exhibitions. Two of the more memorable pieces on view here are a site-specific floor sculpture consisting of much-larger-than-life-size lead-crystal spermatozoa, and an exquisitely fragile wall relief, made of what appear to be flayed-paper skins, that gives a whole new meaning to the word "bodysuit." Through Jan. 1. . . . ¶ There is not a speck of glamour to be found in "New Photography," an engaging exhibition of photographs by Carl Pope, Paul D'Amato, and JoAnn Verburg. Instead, there's sweat, dirt, poverty, alienation, self-defense. None of the pictures try to woo the viewer. But D'Amato's photo of rosebushes covered in plastic is particularly haunting. It's a lyrical, beautiful image, breaking through the pessimism that characterizes the rest of the show. Through Jan. 8. . . . ¶ A video installation by Gary Hill, consisting of body images displayed through stripped cathode-ray tubes. Through Jan. 6. (Open daily, except Wednesdays and Christmas, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

**Guggenheim Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until autumn, 1991.

**Whitney Museum of American Art,** Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Robert Rauschenberg: The Silk Screen Paintings, 1962-64." It has been more than a decade since the last Rauschenberg retrospective, so this very focussed show of one of the artist's most productive periods comes as a special treat. Half of the nearly eighty silk-screen paintings he made during the early sixties are on view, and their energy is intense. These paintings are striking because while they chronicle the spirit of their time with amalgamations of machine-produced media images—Rauschenberg's Kennedy is as much an icon as Warhol's Marilyn—they are also chockablock full of glorious brushwork. There is a lusty unruliness to this work that sets Rauschenberg apart from his more calculating peers Johns and Warhol. We are distant enough from Pop art now to see "Barge," his thirty-two-foot-long magnum opus of the period, as an everlasting work; its grand scale is related to Pollock and its brilliant mark-making may conjure Twombly, but it remains vintage Rauschenberg. . . . ¶ "Mind Over Matter," a show of works by six "idea-oriented" artists—Liz Larner, Ronald Jones, Tishan Hsu, Nayland Blake, Ashley Bickerton, and Annette Lemieux. Through Jan. 6. . . . ¶ Several animal sculptures from the museum's collection are on view in the lobby, including works by Hunt Diederich, Elie Nadelman, Gaston Lachaise, and Alexander Calder. Through Jan. 6. (Open Tuesdays, except Christmas and New Year's Day, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

**Brooklyn Museum,** Eastern Parkway—A lobby installation by Joseph Kosuth, who has selected works from the museum's collection that at one time or another may have been deemed offensive. Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ An exhibition of sixty paintings by Albert Pinkham Ryder (1847-1917). Through Jan. 7. . . . ¶ "Milton Avery in Black and White" is a display of eighty drawings in pencil, ink, and crayon, made by Avery between 1929 and 1959. Through Dec. 31. . . . ¶ Forty works of art from Oceania (mostly from the Sepik and Ramu river basins in New Guinea), including three-inch-long fishhooks, three monumental carved-wood "guardians," and a skull rack made of palm and bamboo. Through Feb. 4. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

**Cooper-Hewitt Museum,** Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Scenic and architectural drawings by the

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# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

eighteenth-century theatre designers and builders Francesco and Giovanni Carlo Bibiena. Through Dec. 30. . . . ¶ Two hundred pieces of elaborately worked gold jewelry spanning four thousand years of Grecian culture. From the Benaki Museum, in Athens. Through Jan. 13. (Open Tuesdays, except Christmas and New Year's Day, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, Sundays, noon to 5.)

**Grolier Club,** 47 E. 60th St.—A show of several different types of documents produced during the Second World War: pamphlets, posters, propaganda leaflets, invasion maps, personal letters, and official speeches. One display juxtaposes two letters sent home to wives after the launching of D Day: one from Eisenhower, hopeful and optimistic, the other from Rommel, who wrote, "The enemy's superiority in nearly all regards is overwhelming." (Open daily, except Sundays, Christmas, and New Year's Day, 10 to 5.)

**Morgan Library,** 29 E. 36th St.—"Be Merry & Wise" examines the development of children's books in England from the seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth. Among the many books and manuscripts on view are the "History of Tom Thumbe" (1621, the first English folktale in print), Dorothy Kilner's "The Life and Perambulation of a Mouse" (1783), and the third edition of Edward Lear's "Book of Nonsense" (1861). Through Feb. 3. (Open Tuesdays, except Christmas and New Year's Day, through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

**Museum of American Folk Art,** Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"The Cutting Edge." The surprising thing about this show of folk art from the past thirty years is that the work is, indeed, such a thriving art form today—and with all the freshness and inventiveness of historic pieces. One of the most beguiling, for example, is "Cow" (1985), by Manie Deschillie, a Navajo craftsperson who found a new use for cardboard and what appear to be discarded long johns. (Open daily, 9 to 9.)

**Museum of the City of New York,** Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—Through maps, paintings, photographs, and prints, "Within Bohemia's Borders" documents the turbulent history of Greenwich Village from 1830 to 1930. Through Feb. 3. . . . ¶ Forty-five oil paintings by the hundred-year-old Theresa Bernstein, depicting the urban scene in New York City from 1914 to 1930. (Open Tuesdays, except Christmas and New Year's Day, through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

**National Academy of Design,** Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A hundred and thirteen master drawings, from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth, by such artists as Poussin, Fragonard, Delacroix, and Cézanne. From the Louis-Antoine Prat collection, in Paris. Through Jan. 20. . . . ¶ Drawings and watercolors by the British Romantic Henry Fuseli (1741-1825). (Open Tuesdays, except Christmas and New Year's Day, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

**The New Museum,** 583 Broadway—"Rhetorical Image" seeks to investigate the ways in which artists from around the world respond to various political situations. Among the twenty artists presenting photographs, videos, paintings, and installations are Barbara Steinman, Cildo Meireles, and Krzysztof Wodiczko. Through Feb. 3. (Open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8.)

**New York Public Library,** Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"On Paper" examines the history of papermaking, from its invention in China through John Cage's edible paper. (Gottesman Exhibition Hall. Open daily, except Sundays, Christmas, and New Year's Day, 10 to 6.) . . . ¶ Manuscript fragments, letters, first editions, photographs, and illustrations are all part of "Charles Dickens: His Life and Work." (Berg Collection. Open daily, except Sundays, Thursdays, Christmas, and New Year's Day, 10 to 6.)

### GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. They will be closed Christmas and New Year's Day.)

**Sigmar Polke**—An essential show of key sixties works in mixed mediums, probably unfamiliar to many American viewers, by this most mercurial and influential of contemporary German artists. The "Potato House" has been reconstructed, along with other ephemeral masterpieces (this is the conceptual Polke). Through Jan. 19. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St. Closed Dec. 26-29.)

**"The British Imagination: Twentieth-Century Paintings, Sculpture, and Drawings"**—A show in which, even in the most ostensibly abstract art, one detects an obsession with the figure and with narrative. Works by twenty-two artists are included, beginning with the early moderns Walter Sickert and Gwen John, and culminating with some of the best-known English painters working today, including Bacon, Freud, Kossoff, Auerbach, Hodgkin, and Hockney. Through Jan. 12. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St.)

**Short List—Giorgio de Chirico,** Borghi, 26 E. 80th St. (through Jan. 15, except Dec. 24-31); **Glenn Goldberg,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through Jan. 9); **Graham Nickson** and **Paul Resika,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (closes at 3 on Dec. 24, through Dec. 29); **Charles Wells,** Forum, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through Dec. 29, except Dec. 26).

### GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

**Willem de Kooning** and **Jean Dubuffet** (1901-85)—An exceptionally strong and coherent exhibition of paintings, mostly from the fifties, and all of women, by the two masters. For de Kooning, Woman tends to be a frightening though rather familiar bourgeoise: the floozy as Mother. To Dubuffet, she was the eternal archaic mystery—yes, the "Other," which rhymes with . . . —but a benign one really, more like the total *maman*. Through Jan. 19. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St. Closed Dec. 29.)

**Mary Frank**—A compelling and effectively installed show of recent works in various mediums, including ceramic, bronze, plaster, oil on aluminum, oil on and under glass, and drawings on paper as well as on natural elements such as fungi. Frank has always been an extremely idiosyncratic figurative artist whose work, in whatever medium, eludes summary. Mythology—variously Biblical, classical, folkloric, or fairy-tale-derived—is a frequent source, but her subject always seems to be screened through a very specific personal filter. It is often hard to locate an exact poetic mood. A light and somewhat arty girlishness, for instance, is countered by a formidable morbid streak; a stylistic directness is offset by emotional inscrutability. This exhibition stimulates both thought and feeling: it makes you want to linger and figure it out. Through Dec. 28. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays, except Dec. 24.)

**Bill Jacklin**—Big, brash paintings with streaked images and a mishmash of flailing references. The crowded park scenes seem to be a cross between Seurat and Guy Pène du Bois, while a portrayal of people waiting in Grand Central could be a combination of Hopper and Kenneth Hayes Miller. Two fuzzy overviews of theatre audiences recall Everett Shinn at his most saccharine, as well as those cheesy contemporary "Impressionist" canvases one finds in glitzy hotels and high-society galleries. Through Dec. 31. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

**Victor Pasmore**—An engaging retrospective of work, mostly oil paintings and relief constructions, by a mercurial English modernist who is now eighty-two years old but remains little known here. By around 1945, Pasmore, who had begun as a realist-intimist, more or less in the tradition of Walter Sickert, surprised the British art world, revealing himself as an abstract painter, initially in a Constructivist mode. Today he makes lyrical, biomorphic paintings, often on wood, that suggest Tachism. Pasmore, in other words, gets to everything about twenty-five years late, but no matter: he does what he does idiosyncratically and very well. His colors are particularly interesting—close English tonalities and nothing but, yet the tones, especially the blues and browns, really glow. Through Feb. 16. (Center for International Contemporary Arts, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

**Egon Schiele** (1890-1918)—This surprisingly moving show of works on paper indicates that Schiele is the exemplary Expressionist. Almost all of his work is twisted compositionally and conveys bodily angst, and

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*David Wojnarowicz*

### CHOW DOWN

*As the holiday binge-fest pushes on, you may start to feel queasy just looking in the refrigerator. But two art shows in town want to keep your mind, if not your table, set for food, and they may be just the course needed to cleanse the palate. "Food," at the Borden gallery (560 Broadway; through December 29), offers twenty-two photographs covering some tasty ground, although Larry Sultan's not so delicious "Hamburger"—a gristly still from an old home movie of a barbecue—manages to be the least appetizing yet most evocative image in the show. Nearby, Neil Winokur's enormous "Glass of Water" adds the perfect medicinal touch: you want to throw in two Alka-Seltzers and relax.*

*Another, more filling culinary show is "The Artist's Palate," at the tiny Illustration Gallery (330 East 11th Street; through January 13). Judy Pedersen's pastel "Chocolate Cake," with its nine birthday candles, appeals to the heart as well as the stomach, evoking a wistful, semisweet memory. And "The Perfect Biscuit," Dave Calver's colored-pencil work, comes complete with exquisite trails of steam and a full stick of butter. But Jessie Hartland's sculpture "Food of New York" really jump-starts the appetite. Its rotating wheel stuffs and restuffs images of fun-loving food into a wide-open mouth—shish kebab, egg-roll, burnt nuts, cannoli. It's got one message for the weary New York epicurean: Eat (fast), and be merry.*

his sexual renderings are among the most intimate, confrontational, *maudits,* and beautiful. His stringy teen-age Sapphos and Törlesses, and his neurasthenic aesthetes, may make you think that the very flesh of his subjects is being consumed by uneasy desires. Through Jan. 12. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

**Sean Scully**—Few artists have as sophisticated a sense of composition as Scully, and his new works are, as usual, masterly. They feature the artist's stripe configurations, multi-panel formats, and painting-within-painting structures, but now the stripes are very wide and the scale quite corporate. Although they seem to strive for the grand scale of the Abstract Expressionists, the enlargement brings little more than added bulk. Through Jan. 9. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

**Richard Tuttle**—In the nineteen-seventies Tuttle became the master of installation by wedding his very simple objects—an octagon of paper or a slant-edged piece of wood, for example—to walls so that object and support, or art and environment, were inseparable. For his current show, on both floors of Blum Helman, he has made objects that look more independent—very beautiful, humbly framed watercolors of marks, and almost incidental Constructivistic constructions of bits of raw wood—but that are installed in an adamantly environmental way, on walls that have been painted with brushy horizontal bands of blue, green, and yellow. Downstairs, this placement makes for a very odd display because the space itself is so dispersed, as if the artist's focus were being pulled between the object and the wall. But in the upstairs gallery, which is more intimate, the installation nature of the work kicks in strongly. There the artist has created an airy jewel box, in which the watercolors suggest Kandinsky's early warlike "abstract" paintings. Through Jan. 12. (20 W. 57th St.)

**"Classic Modernism"**—An extraordinarily fine show of paintings by venerated twentieth-century figures and by the younger artist Peter Halley, for whom this show is, in a sense, a test. There are delightfully straightforward juxtapositions, principally a chain of audacious red, yellow, and blue paintings by Mondrian, Kelly, and Newman, one having inspired the next. Other telling groupings include a diamond Mondrian hung next to an off-axis Kelly. There is also a wonderful early Ryman with squiggly white paint strokes and bits of underpainting in mustard and rust. While it is perhaps unfair to pit Mondrian and Newman against Halley at this stage in his developing career, his works hold their own quite well. Through Dec. 29. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St. Open Mondays, except Dec. 24.)

**Short List**—**Luis Cruz Azaceta**, Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 29); **Christian Boltanski**, Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 19); **Frank Faulkner**, Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 29); **David Hockney** (through Jan. 5), and **Hans Hofmann** (through Jan. 26), Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.; **Creighton Michael**, Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St. (through Jan. 16, except Dec. 26-29); **George Sugarman**, Washburn, 41 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 19).

## GALLERIES—SoHo

**Anh Duong**—As many people must know by now, Duong is a fashion model (and an inspiration for Christian Lacroix), and this very strong début show of large portrait paintings is indeed wonderfully stylish and astute. Duong paints thin. Her surfaces look stainlike rather than brushy, and her colors are straightforward and tonal, with some good, acid contrasts. Her drawing style is at once dandified and blunt, and these portraits, of various friends and fashionable figures about town, convey likenesses as well as psychologies without expressionistic fuss. Duong gets it all across through the body language of her figures and through individualized background motifs that somehow evoke character without being excessively literal. The socialite Anne McNally (wife of the restaurateur, Brian) is spotlit against a dark ground, and she wears a see-through chartreuse dress and an odd defensive stance: the very image of a harried avant-garde hausfrau. The portraits, in other words, seem to be lightly satiric as well as suavely hieratic. Through Jan. 5. (Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St. Closed Dec. 26-29.)

**Anton Henning**—Well-made abstract paintings with touches of Dubuffet, Tàpies, Rauschenberg, Twombly, Schnabel, and Baechler by a young German artist whose hand is quicker than his mind. Through Dec. 29. (Baghoomian, 555 Broadway. Closed Dec. 26.)

**Jon Kessler**—Very touching narrative tableaux, usually with kinetic elements, that are entertaining but also replete with signs of self-examination. In most there is the sense of life in a fishbowl. In one piece a mechanical arm draws continuously, in an "art performance" that one views through a magnifying sheet of glass. Another mimics an old television console with a scene of a little house on a prairie behind its glass front; painted Plexiglas and a light that fades on and off create the illusion of perpetual sunrise and sunset but also suggest a passing life. There are references to "Blade Runner" and David Lynch's "Dune," as well as to Jules Verne, Gotham City, and medical examinations. Through Jan. 5. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St. Closed Dec. 26-29.)

**Agnes Martin**—A group of large paintings with horizontal slate-gray stripes that are much bolder and more hard-edged—less landscapey too—than before. They are handsome but puzzling. Has the reclusive Martin, who lives in New Mexico, been thinking about cities? Or about Southwestern storms? Through Jan. 12. (Pace, 142 Greene St. Closed Dec. 29.)

**McDermott & McGough**—Of all the gay male teams that deal openly with issues of homosexuality in their art, this one is perhaps the most dandified. At times their work can be too precious, too faux-pre-Edison, but often it is very strong. Some of the most finely detailed paintings in this show have an underlayer of gestural brushwork that in no way corresponds to the needs of the imagery. This kind of subtle deceit—with the wild underlying the domesticated—is a metaphor for much of their work. Among the effective pieces in this show are two retrospective paintings entitled "Splendid Achievements" (given false dates of 1943 and 1912), which are a mélange of the artists' works that have dealt most directly with homosexuality. "27, Rue de Fleurus, 1915," which refers to Gertrude Stein's salon and depicts an Arts and Crafts-type wall with an early Picasso hanging on it, is a very beautiful and mysterious work about the consummate decorativeness of art. Through Jan. 5. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. Closed Dec. 26-29.)

**Mario Merz**—For several decades Merz has been using his neon Fibonacci numbers in all sorts of works, ranging in spirit from aggressively male to poetically vulnerable. The piece in this show is one of the simplest, and a bit of a cross between the two poles. It consists of a twenty-one-unit sequence of the numbers, laid out in a diagonal line, each resting on a brick of plastic-wrapped clay. The clay has an appealing transformative presence—in a symbolic, Beusyian way—but the work's installation on a roped-off red linoleum floor makes it all unnecessarily coy. Through Jan. 26. (SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St. Closed Dec. 26-29.)

**Alexis Smith**—Too many years have passed since this Los Angeles-based artist of evocative narratives has exhibited in New York. Her current piece, "Past Lives," done in collaboration with the writer Amy Gerstler, consists principally of a sea of used children's chairs of every sort and condition, each so rich in its evocation of a specific childhood that they tend to be a little creepy. These chairs do not represent the ideal childhoods suggested by the schoolroom blackboards, enlarged snapshots, and graphic depictions on the walls surrounding them; they are saturated with failure, grief, and loss. But for all the power of the chairs and the wall texts, there is something remote about this installation. A book that accompanies the show expresses the artist's ideas more fully. Through Dec. 29. (Baer, 476 Broome St.)

**David Wojnarowicz**—This artist did not receive much attention until he contracted AIDS and began making art that eloquently expressed his anger at our society and the way it deals with the disease. But, as this retrospective exhibition of paintings and painted objects makes clear, Wojnarowicz has been practicing his own form of guerrilla politics from the start. If you expect his paintings to open a discussion about painting, you are certain to be disappointed; but if you view them as a kind of magical visual poetry, you are likely to find a strange, disturbing, and horrifically beautiful world. A look at some of his writing, a few examples of which appear in the


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catalogue, could serve as a starting point. Wojnarowicz began his artistic life on the street, but, unlike his peers Haring and Holzer, he chose the streets because he grew up on them. There is something of the wild child to his work—much of it fixates on such boy imagery as dinosaurs, skeletons, machines, and sweaty sex. As Wojnarowicz's illness has brought the work a greater urgency and forced him into the larger public eye, the spirit of the boy has remained, bolstered in some odd way by wisdom. His fierce independence is the source of the work's strength. Through Jan. 19. (Exit Art, 578 Broadway. Closed Dec. 26-Jan. 2.)

**"Work in Progress? Work?"**—Once again the Rosen gallery is functioning as an alternative space, this time by tapping into a younger generation of process artists. Two of the artists have turned the tables: Laurie Parsons is working for the gallery for the duration of the exhibition, and Linda Montano will come in a few times to clean the floors and the bathrooms. Matthew McCaslin has built a little studio and storage space. For the observer the atmosphere in this slick gallery space is very bizarre, like watching the boy in the plastic bubble. Sean Landers is represented by his maniacally entertaining videotapes of himself in a process of perpetual change, reworking his appearance so that he wavers between Charles Manson and Jim Morrison. Through Jan. 5. . . . ¶ In the rear gallery is an installation by Mitchell Kane that simulates a self-service counter. Although somewhat dull, it includes some attractive paintings of lists of ingredients for such dishes as "Sesame Quailbirds with Batger's Orange Jelly," with mesmerizing enamel surfaces. Through Jan. 5. (130 Prince St. Closed Dec. 26-29.)

**"The Definitive Contemporary American Quilt"**—Fifty-three examples by quiltmakers from around the country, in a show meant to dispel the usual assumptions about the medium. There's nothing here that you'd curl up under. Materials include everything from quills and buttons to watercolor and acrylic. Ten of the forty-eight artists represented are men. And such techniques as welding, photographic transfer, and assemblage replace time-honored stitchery. Among the many innovative works is Joanne Hammer's "Arcadian Myths," a tracery of metal strips painted in muted tones; within a border of a repetitive image of a fish is a leafy abstract landscape with animal and plant life. So sculptural is the piece that a viewer may well ask—as you do of other works—why quilt? Bernice Steinbaum would say, "We're just talking about artists with extended palettes." Through Jan. 5. (Steinbaum, 132 Greene St.)

**Short List**—**DEBORAH BUTTERFIELD,** Thorp, 103 Prince St. (through Jan. 19, except Dec. 26-29); **DALE CHIHULY,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway (through Dec. 29); **GERTRUDE GLASS GREENE** and **BALCOMB GREENE,** Perlow, 560 Broadway (through Dec. 29); **KEITH HARING** and **JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT,** Shafrazi, 130 Prince St. (through Jan. 26, except Dec. 26-29); **BRUCE KURLAND,** Munroe, 130 Prince St. (through Jan. 19, except Dec. 26-29); **JEAN LOWE** and **GARY PANTER,** Gracie Mansion Gallery, 532 Broadway (through Jan. 12, except Dec. 26-29); **ROBERT MASON,** Katzen, 475 Broome St. (through Dec. 29); **HELMUT MIDDENDORF,** Nosei, 100 Prince St. (through Jan. 12); **CLAES OLDENBURG AND COOSJE VAN BRUGGEN,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through Jan. 12, except Dec. 26-29); **DAVID PARRISH,** Meisel, 141 Prince St. (through Jan. 25, except Dec. 26-Jan. 2); **JUDY RIFKA,** Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through Jan. 5, except Dec. 26); **ALAN SCARRITT,** Lorence-Monk, 578 Broadway (through Jan. 26, except Dec. 26-29); **FRANK STELLA,** 65 Thompson Street Gallery (through Jan. 26, except Dec. 26-29); **ROBERT WATTS,** Castelli, 578 Broadway (through Jan. 12, except Dec. 26-29).

*Agnes Martin*

## PHOTOGRAPHY

BY the time we actually got in to see Herman Leonard's show at Brent Sikkema's gallery (155 Spring Street; through January 5), we were feeling pretty crabby. Initially, we'd found a note on the door that said "2:10" and promised "back soon," and we'd been working as an unofficial information center in front of the gallery. We thought the fellow who finally let us in owed the little crowd that had gathered outside the door at least some words of empathy. The courtesy was not extended.

But how could we not warm up when we saw Mr. Leonard's photographs of jazz musicians, taken in the forties and fifties? Leonard's moody, smoky pictures are wonderfully pure —you can feel his love and respect for his subjects. Although most of his images are of people, many of whom are now mythical figures in jazz history, he also took some still-lifes that memorably capture the culture of jazz. For instance, there's a picture titled "Duke Ellington, Paris, 1958," that features not Ellington but his shoes. This shot of a floor seems to have been taken in Ellington's dressing room; from the look of things, he's just had a cup of tea. Although the lemon slice floating in the teacup is pretty, it's his shoes that are really bonny.

**Jan Groover**—This show of recent color compositions of bottles, bones, and pears, among other things, soars with the notion of possibilities. It's as if the artist's commitment to still-life over the years were being repaid by objects that appreciated her looking. Through Dec. 29. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

**Pierre et Gilles**—In their first solo show in America these two artists, whose hallmark is high-tech painted photography, concentrate on imagery that illustrates, in an inimitable way, the stories of saints. Certainly not alone in their use of Pop, camp, and kitsch styles, Pierre et Gilles nevertheless achieve their own seamless, over-the-top integration of these elements. Through Jan. 8. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Closed Dec. 24, Dec. 29, and Dec. 31.)

**Short List**—**ANSEL ADAMS,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open Tuesdays, except Christmas and New Year's Day, noon to 8; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays. 11 to 6; through Feb. 3); **KEITH CARTER,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (opens at noon on Saturdays, through Jan. 12, except Dec. 29); **ANDRÉ KERTÉSZ** and **MICHAEL SPANO,** Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. (through Dec. 29); **ARTHUR LEIPZIG,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through Dec. 29); **IRVING PENN,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through Jan. 19, except Dec. 26 and Dec. 29); **EZRA STOLLER,** Seagram Building, fourth floor, 375 Park Ave., at 52nd St. (closed Saturdays, through Jan. 25).

## MUSIC

WE spend the week between Christmas and New Year's catching up on recordings. We have them loosely organized, by type of music, into several stacks (in two formats: new compact disks, and old LPs we have picked up in secondhand stores or from street sellers). One stack we are particularly anxious to get to comes from Biddulph Recordings, not a household name even among classical-record-store clerks.

Peter Biddulph is a London-based violin dealer. There is money to be made in that field, much more than in the field of reissuing 78-r.p.m. recordings, which has to be looked on almost as a public-service venture. We find it very satisfactory that Mr. Biddulph has decided to put some of his money into propagating the art of bygone string players. The Biddulph list is full of marvellous and tempting things: two disks of the inimitably stylish playing of Jacques Thibaud; hard-to-find youthful recordings of Yehudi Menuhin, Jascha Heifetz, and Pablo Casals; great amounts of Fritz Kreisler and Joseph Szigeti; collections centered on Brahms' chamber music; and recordings of players like Albert Sammons and Lionel Tertis, remembered today only by specialists. The reissues are produced by Eric Wen and include handsome little booklets, and the remastering of the records themselves is done by Ward Marston, of Philadelphia, who has long been known for his first-class work in this area. We have sampled almost every item in the Biddulph catalogue and can hardly wait for the chance to sit down and hear them all the way through. Peter Biddulph Violins will send a catalogue to any inquirer; the address is 35 St. George Street, Hanover Square, London W1R 9FA.

We also note with pleasure the appearance of a compact disk by Mordecai Shehori, a pianist we once recommended in the unknown-but-special category in these pages. The *Times* has got hold of him since then: the paper's chief critic, Donal Henahan, was observed breaking critical decorum to the extent of applauding at the conclusion of one of his recitals. Mr. Shehori has now been taken up by a large management firm, and Connoisseur Society has issued his recording of Scarlatti, Beethoven, and Brahms (the catalogue number is CD4177). The disk captures much of the charm and inventiveness we value in Mr. Shehori's concerts.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000, and for Avery Fisher Hall 874-2424.)

### OPERA

**Metropolitan Opera**—**FAUST,** with Diana Soviero, Susan Quittmeyer, Neil Rosenshein, Gino Quilico, and James Morris; conducted by Thomas Fulton. (Dec. 24 at 8.) . . . With Diana Soviero, Susan Quittmeyer, Richard Leech, Gino Quilico, and James Morris; Thomas Fulton. (Dec. 28 at 8 and Jan. 2 at 8.) . . . **SEMIRAMIDE,** with June Anderson, Marilyn Horne, Chris Merritt, and Samuel Ramey; James Conlon. (Dec. 26 at 7:30 and Dec. 29 at 1:30.) . . . **ANDREA CHÉNIER,** with

*Peter Schickele as P. D. Q. Bach*

Aprile Millo, Vladimir Popov, and Sherrill Milnes; Julius Rudel. (Dec. 27 at 8.) . . . With Stefka Evstatieva, Vladimir Popov, and Sherrill Milnes; Julius Rudel. (Dec. 31 at 8.) . . . **LA TRAVIATA,** with Marilyn Mims, Neil Rosenshein, and Brian Shexnayder; Rico Saccani. (Dec. 29 at 8:30 and Jan. 1 at 8.)

### ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

**NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC**—Zubin Mehta conducts a lighthearted program of von Suppé, Meyerbeer, Verdi, Johann Strauss, and Bernstein; with soprano June Anderson. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 31 at 8.)

**NEW YORK STRING ORCHESTRA**—Alexander Schneider conducting. Dec. 24 at midnight: A Christmas Eve concert of Haydn's Symphony No. 88, Wolf's "Italian Serenade," and Mozart's Concertone for Two Violins, K. 190. . . . ¶ Dec. 29 at 8: Mozart's Symphony No. 25 and Concertone for Two Violins, as well as Wolf's "Italian Serenade." (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800.)

**NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY**—Jaime Laredo conducts all six of Bach's "Brandenburg" Concertos at each performance. Soloists include flutist Judith Mendenhall, oboist Randall Ellis, trumpeter Neil Balm, harpsichordist John van Buskirk, and Mr. Laredo himself as violinist. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440. Dec. 27 and Dec. 29-31, all at 8.)

**BARGEMUSIC**—Bach's Third, Fifth, and Sixth "Brandenburg" Concertos, performed by an ensemble that includes flutist Michael Parloff and harpsichordist John Gibbons. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Dec. 27 and Dec. 31 at 7:30; the latter is a benefit concert.)

**HANDEL'S "MESSIAH"**—Martin Josman and twenty-two guest conductors direct a National Choral Council Sing-In, with organ accompaniment. With Crail Conner, soprano; Phyllis Jo Kubey, contralto; Gregory Mercer, tenor; and John Ostendorf, bass. (Avery Fisher Hall. Dec. 27 at 7:30.)

### RECITALS

**P. D. Q. BACH**—"Professor" Peter Schickele and his ensemble illuminate the varied facets of the most baroque composer of them all, in a program that includes the dramatic oratorio "Oedipus Tex" and the cantata "Knock-Knock." (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Dec. 26 and Dec. 28 at 8, and Dec. 30 at 3.)

**NEW YORK CORNET AND SACBUT ENSEMBLE**—The early-instrument brass ensemble, with Talisman (a male vocal sextet), performs seasonal selections by Praetorius, Frescobaldi, Giovanni Gabrieli, and others; sacbuttist Ben Peck directs. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Dec. 27 at 8.)

**TSYPIN-HONIGBERG-MUKHADZE TRIO**—Violinist Vladimir Tsypin, cellist Steven Honigberg, and pianist Nana Mukhadze (in various combinations) present works by Beethoven, Debussy, and Paul Ben-Haim; also, the American première of the Piano Trio (1986) by Arman Shakbagian, a Soviet Georgian composer who created what he calls the "N-scale" harmonic system, a method that stresses the affinities between classical harmony and folkloric modality. (New York Academy of Art, 419 Lafayette St. Dec. 28 at 7. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.)

**LEONARD BERNSTEIN MEMORIAL**—A tribute to the late maestro, with recollections from academic, religious, governmental, and musical dignitaries. Performers include flutist Paula Robison; tenor Jerry Hadley; actor Jason Robards; folksinger Odetta; conductors Lukas Foss, Carl St. Clair, Marin Alsop, Yutaka Sado, and Eiji Oue; and an orchestra of players from youth symphonies founded by Mr. Bernstein in Germany, Japan, and the United States. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Dec. 31 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

**ANGELINA RÉAUX**—The soprano presents selections from musical theatre (Weill, Gershwin, and Bernstein) and opera (Puccini, Korngold, and Handel), as well as songs by her accompanist, Ricky Ian Gordon. Trumpeter Stephen Burns assists. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 255-7190. Dec. 31 at 7:30 and 10.)

### JAZZ / POP / ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

**MANDY PATINKIN**—Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Dec. 28-29 at 8.

**BLUES TRAVELER**—Roseland, 239 W. 52nd St. 947-5850. Dec. 31 at 9.

## SPORTS

### HOME TEAMS

**GIANTS**—Away for the rest of the regular season.

**JETS**—Away for the rest of the regular season.

**RANGERS**—Vs. the Devils, Dec. 30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Los Angeles Kings, Jan. 2. (Game time, 7:30.)

**ISLANDERS**—Vs. the Chicago Black Hawks, Dec. 29 at 7:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Quebec Nordiques, Dec. 31 at 2:05.

**DEVILS**—Vs. the Islanders, Dec. 27. . . . ¶ Vs. the Buffalo Sabres, Dec. 29. (Game time, 7:45.)

**KNICKS**—Vs. the Portland Trailblazers, Dec. 26 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Milwaukee Bucks, Dec. 29 at 1.

**NETS**—Vs. the Atlanta Hawks, Dec. 26. . . . ¶ Vs. the Houston Rockets, Dec. 28. (Game time, 7:30.)
(The Rangers and the Knicks play at Madison Square Garden, 563-8300; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Devils and the Nets at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

### RACING

**HORSES**—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. . . . **TROTTING** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . ¶ At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30, starting Dec. 26. Post time is 1:30 on Dec. 31.

## ABOVE AND BEYOND

**BREATHLESS**—On New Year's Eve, various institutions around this city conspire to make New Yorkers out of breath or stunned. There's a come-as-you-are (dazzling or bedraggled) five-mile run in Central Park, starting at Tavern on the Green at midnight. Aid stations serve not only water but champagne. Midnight fireworks will produce city-wide gasps and exclamations: in Central Park near W. 93rd St. and near W. 63rd St.; at the South Street Seaport; and in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, near Grand Army Plaza. . . . ¶ A steady pace sets in at the Paula Cooper gallery (155 Wooster St.), with a marathon reading of Joyce's "Finnegans Wake," which starts at noon on Dec. 31 and ends about thirty hours later.

**WALKING TOUR**—A dinnertime jaunt through Chinatown is sponsored by Adventure on a Shoestring. (Dec. 31 at 6. Call 265-2663.)

**POLAR BEARS**—A hundred or so brave souls will strip to their skivvies on New Year's Day and take a ritual jump into the Atlantic. Voyeurs and scaredy-cats can watch from the Coney Island Boardwalk, near Nathan's, at 1.

**NEW YEAR'S DAY BLOW-OUT**—More than a hundred writers and performers—including Allen Ginsberg (for the seventeenth year), Reno, Eric Bogosian, Penny Arcade, the Microscopic Septet, and Elliott Sharp—will mount the stage at St. Marks In-the-Bouwerie and do their stuff. (Second Ave. at 10th St. Jan. 1, starting at 6:30 P.M. and running until 2 A.M. Tickets on a first-come, first-served basis on the night of the event.)

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# GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

## THE MOVIE HOUSES

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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| | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | | | |

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 21.

*Paul Robeson in "Show Boat"*

### EAST SIDE

**ANGELIKA FILM CENTER,** 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "To Sleep with Anger" (†).
Theatre 2: "Come See the Paradise" (directed by Alan Parker), with Dennis Quaid and Tamlyn Tomita.
Theatre 3: Dec. 24: "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand, Brian Cox, and Brad Dourif. From Dec. 25: "Vincent & Theo" (†).
Theatre 4: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.
Theatre 5: "The Russia House" (†).
Theatre 6: "Metropolitan" (Whit Stillman), with Edward Clements, Carolyn Farina, Christopher Eigeman, and Taylor Nichols.

**PUBLIC THEATRE,** 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
(Separate admissions) "Company" (1970, D. A. Pennebaker), with Dean Jones, Barbara Barrie, and George Coe; and "She's Been Away" (1989, Peter Hall), with Peggy Ashcroft, Geraldine James, and James Fox.

**MOVIELAND 8TH STREET TRIPLEX,** 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 2: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis.
Theatre 3: "The Bonfire of the Vanities" (Brian De Palma), with Tom Hanks, Bruce Willis, and Melanie Griffith.

**LOEWS 19TH STREET EAST 6,** B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Russia House" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dances with Wolves" (†).
Theatre 3: Dec. 24: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen. From Dec. 25: "The Godfather Part III" (Francis Ford Coppola), with Al Pacino, Diane Keaton, Talia Shire, and Andy Garcia.
Theatre 4: "Almost an Angel" (John Cornell), with Paul Hogan.
Theatre 5: "Dances with Wolves" (†).
Theatre 6: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis.

**GRAMERCY,** Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.

**BAY CINEMA,** 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

**MURRAY HILL CINEMAS,** 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "The Bonfire of the Vanities" (Brian De Palma), with Tom Hanks, Bruce Willis, and Melanie Griffith.
Theatre 2: "The Bonfire of the Vanities."
Theatre 3: "The Sheltering Sky" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Field" (Jim Sheridan), with Richard Harris, John Hurt, Tom Berenger, Brenda Fricker, and Sean Bean.

**LOEWS 34TH STREET SHOWPLACE,** 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: Dec. 24: "Ghost" (†). From Dec. 25: "The Godfather Part III" (Francis Ford Coppola), with Al Pacino, Diane Keaton, Talia Shire, and Andy Garcia.
Theatre 2: "Almost an Angel" (John Cornell), with Paul Hogan.
Theatre 3: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.

**34TH ST. EAST,** 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Awakenings" (Penny Marshall), with Robert De Niro and Robin Williams.

**EASTSIDE CINEMA,** 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Reversal of Fortune" (†).

**SUTTON 1 AND 2,** 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "The Bonfire of the Vanities" (Brian De Palma), with Tom Hanks, Bruce Willis, and Melanie Griffith.
Theatre 2: "The Bonfire of the Vanities."

**GOTHAM CINEMA,** 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Come See the Paradise" (Alan Parker), with Dennis Quaid and Tamlyn Tomita.

**PLAZA,** 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Cyrano de Bergerac" (Jean-Paul Rappeneau, in French), with Gérard Depardieu.

**MANHATTAN TWIN,** 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

**59TH STREET EAST CINEMA,** 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Almost an Angel" (John Cornell), with Paul Hogan.

**BARONET AND CORONET,** 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 2: "Awakenings" (Penny Marshall), with Robert De Niro and Robin Williams.

**CINEMA I, CINEMA II, AND CINEMA 3RD AVENUE,** 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: Dec. 24: Theatre closed. From Dec. 25: "Green Card" (Peter Weir), with Gérard Depardieu and Andie MacDowell.
Theatre 2: "Mr. & Mrs. Bridge" (†).
Theatre 3: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.

**GEMINI 1 AND 2,** 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis.
Theatre 2: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.

**BEEKMAN,** 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Havana" (Sydney Pollack), with Robert Redford and Lena Olin.

**LOEWS NEW YORK TWIN,** 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "The Russia House" (†).
Theatre 2: Dec. 24: "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand, Brian Cox, and Brad Dourif. From Dec. 25: "The Godfather Part III" (Francis Ford Coppola), with Al Pacino, Diane Keaton, Talia Shire, and Andy Garcia.

**68TH ST. PLAYHOUSE,** 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Hamlet" (Franco Zeffirelli), with Mel Gibson, Glenn Close, Alan Bates, and Paul Scofield.

**LOEWS TOWER EAST,** 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Dances with Wolves" (†).

**U. A. EAST,** 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Dec. 24: "GoodFellas" (†).
From Dec. 25: "The Godfather Part III" (Francis Ford Coppola), with Al Pacino, Diane Keaton, Talia Shire, and Andy Garcia.

**PARK & 86TH STREET CINEMAS,** 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.
Theatre 2: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

**86TH STREET EAST TWIN,** 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: To be announced.
Theatre 2: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.

### WEST SIDE

**FILM FORUM,** 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: Through Jan. 1: "From Russia with Rock" (1988, directed by Marjaana Mykkanen; in Russian and English). From Jan. 2: "Solovki Power" (1988, Marina Goldovskaya; in Russian), a documentary.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: (Separate admissions) "Kiss Me Kate" (†); and "Akira" (Katsuhiro Otomo), a Japanese animated science-fiction film.

**WAVERLY 1 AND 2,** 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

**8TH ST. PLAYHOUSE,** 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
Dec. 24: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).
From Dec. 25: "Hamlet" (Franco Zeffirelli), with Mel Gibson, Glenn Close, Alan Bates, and Paul Scofield.

**ART GREENWICH TWIN,** Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Dec. 24: "Henry & June" (†). From Dec. 25: "The Godfather Part III" (Francis Ford Coppola), with Al Pacino, Diane Keaton, Talia Shire, and Andy Garcia.
Theatre 2: "Havana" (Sydney Pollack), with Robert Redford and Lena Olin.

**QUAD CINEMA,** 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.
Theatre 3: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 4: Dec. 24: "My Twentieth Century" (Ildiko Enyedi; in Hungarian). From Dec. 25: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).

**CHELSEA CINEMAS,** 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "Havana" (Sydney Pollack), with Robert Redford and Lena Olin.
Theatre 3: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.
Theatre 4: "The Bonfire of the Vanities" (Brian De Palma), with Tom Hanks, Bruce Willis, and Melanie Griffith.
Theatre 5: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 6: "Kindergarten Cop."
Theatre 7: "Come See the Paradise" (Alan Parker), with Dennis Quaid and Tamlyn Tomita.
Theatre 8: "The Long Walk Home" (Richard Pearce), with Sissy Spacek and Whoopi Goldberg.
Theatre 9: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.

**23RD ST. WEST TRIPLEX,** 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand, Brian Cox, and Brad Dourif.
Theatre 2: (Matinées only) "The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film; and (evenings only) "Predator II" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.
Theatre 3: "The Krays" (†).

**GUILD,** 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"The Russia House" (†).

**WORLDWIDE CINEMAS,** 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Hidden Agenda" (Ken Loach), with Frances McDormand, Brian Cox, and Brad Dourif.
Theatre 2: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 3: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.
Theatre 4: Dec. 24: "Avalon" (†). From Dec. 25: "Vincent & Theo" (†).
Theatre 5: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 6: "Postcards from the Edge" (†).

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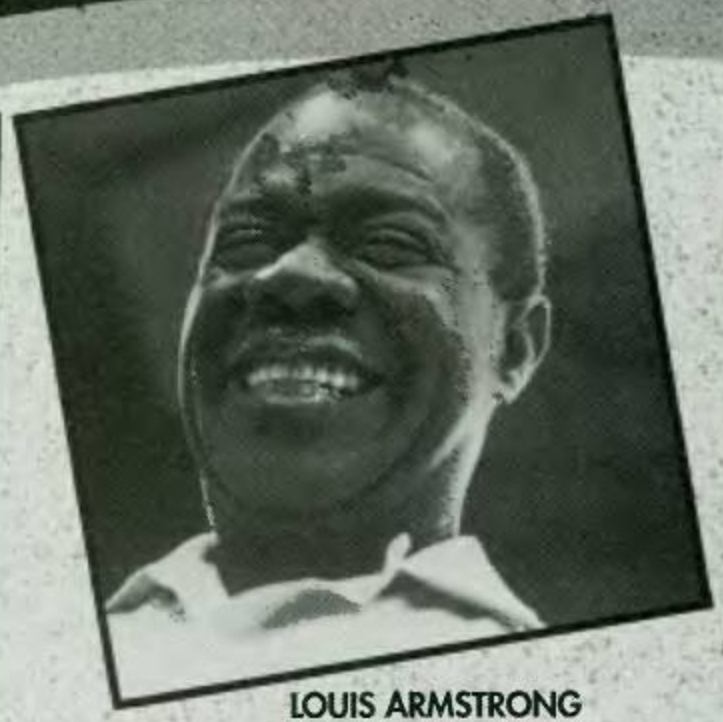

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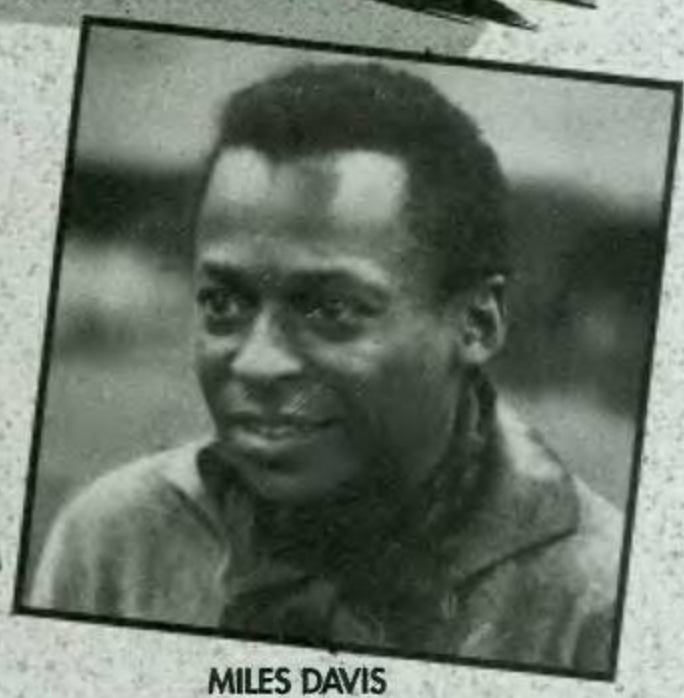

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## MOVIE HOUSES–Cont'd

**Ziegfeld,** 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Edward Scissorhands" (†).

**Loews Festival,** 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.

**57th St. Playhouse,** 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Sheltering Sky" (†).

**Carnegie Hall Cinema,** 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"The Long Walk Home" (Richard Pearce), with Sissy Spacek and Whoopi Goldberg.

**Carnegie Screening Room,** 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"The Long Walk Home" (Richard Pearce), with Sissy Spacek and Whoopi Goldberg.

**Loews Fine Arts,** 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
Dec. 24: "Vincent & Theo" (†).
From Dec. 25: "Alice" (†).

**Cinema 3,** 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.

**Loews Paramount,** B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Dances with Wolves" (†).

**62nd & Broadway,** 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Awakenings" (Penny Marshall), with Robert De Niro and Robin Williams.

**Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3,** B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "The Nasty Girl" (Michael Verhoeven; in German), with Lena Stolze.
Theatre 2: "Freeze—Die—Come to Life" (Vitaly Kanevski; in Russian).
Theatre 3: "L'Atalante" (†).

**Regency,** B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Havana" (Sydney Pollack), with Robert Redford and Lena Olin.

**Loews 84th Street Sixplex,** B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.
Theatre 2: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis.
Theatre 3: "The Russia House" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Bonfire of the Vanities" (Brian De Palma), with Tom Hanks, Bruce Willis, and Melanie Griffith.
Theatre 5: "Almost an Angel" (John Cornell), with Paul Hogan.
Theatre 6: Dec. 24: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen. From Dec. 25: "The Godfather Part III" (Francis Ford Coppola), with Al Pacino, Diane Keaton, Talia Shire, and Andy Garcia.

**Metro Cinema 1 and 2,** B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macaulay Culkin.
Theatre 2: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

**Olympia I and II,** B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.
Theatre 2: "Misery" (Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.

## TIMES SQUARE AREA

**Criterion Center,** B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Misery" (directed by Rob Reiner), with James Caan and Kathy Bates.
Theatre 2: "Predator 2" (Stephen Hopkins), with Danny Glover and Gary Busey.
Theatre 3: "The Bonfire of the Vanities" (Brian De Palma), with Tom Hanks, Bruce Willis, and Melanie Griffith.
Theatre 4: "Misery."
Theatre 5: "GoodFellas" (†).
Theatre 6: "Look Who's Talking Too" (Amy Heckerling), with John Travolta, Kirstie Alley, and Olympia Dukakis.

**Embassy 1,** B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Three Men and a Little Lady" (Emile Ardolino), with Tom Selleck, Steve Guttenberg, and Ted Danson.

**Embassy 2, 3, and 4,** 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "Almost an Angel" (John Cornell), with Paul Hogan.
Theatre 2: "Mermaids" (Richard Benjamin), with Cher, Bob Hoskins, Winona Ryder, and Christina Ricci.
Theatre 3: Dec. 24: "The Rescuers Down Under" (Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel), an animated film. From Dec. 25: (Matinées only) "The Rescuers Down Under"; and (evenings only) "Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone.

*In the rapturous 1989 black-and-white documentary "Let's Get Lost" (playing December 27 at the Donnell Library Center), the visual and emotional fixations of photographer-turned-filmmaker Bruce Weber fuse with the artistry and mystique of jazz-trumpet legend (and vocalist) Chet Baker. The result is an evocation of fifties "cool"—and its corruption—that's both downbeat and exhilarating, and genuinely jazzy. Baker cast a chiselled, matinée-idol image on his album covers and photographs; he seemed fearless and chimerical, candid but self-contained. He inspired and haunted Weber. The photographer repays the late jazzman (who died when he fell out of an Amsterdam hotel window on Friday the thirteenth, May, 1988) by portraying him as a hero who goes wrong in life while continuing to ply a supple, poignant art. The twilight shots of Baker driving around L.A., with velvety palm trees spread out against a charcoal sky, are seductive and disorienting, like Baker himself. Despite his drug addiction and family problems and terminal carelessness, he remained an alternately hopeful and hopeless romantic.*

*The film has a fumy, ebbing and flowing ambiance that smacks as much of the jazz club as of the movie house. William Claxton's stills capture Baker at his heartthrob peak; the eighties interviews and performance clips, shot by the cinematographer Jeff Preiss, delineate the ravages of time. With his provocative boyishness, Baker became as potent a symbol of fifties rebellion as James Dean. But fifties rebels were a peculiar breed—nonconformity could be an awfully ambiguous program. "Let's Get Lost" is about what happens to a rebel without a cause when the times no longer define him.*

**Loews Astor Plaza,** 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
Dec. 24: "Rocky V" (John G. Avildsen), with Sylvester Stallone.
From Dec. 25: "The Godfather Part III" (Francis Ford Coppola), with Al Pacino, Diane Keaton, Talia Shire, and Andy Garcia.

**National Twin,** B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Home Alone" (Chris Columbus), with Macauley Culkin.
Theatre 2: "Kindergarten Cop" (Ivan Reitman), with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

**West Side Cinema 1 and 2,** 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "The Rookie" (Clint Eastwood), with Eastwood and Charlie Sheen.
Theatre 2: "Reversal of Fortune" (†).

## REVIVAL HOUSES

**Biograph Cinema,** 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Through Dec. 25: "Miracle on 34th Street" (1947, directed by George Seaton), with John Payne, Maureen O'Hara, Edmund Gwenn, and Natalie Wood; and "It's a Wonderful Life" (1946, Frank Capra), with James Stewart, Donna Reed, Lionel Barrymore, Gloria Grahame, Thomas Mitchell, and Henry Travers.
Dec. 26-27: "An Affair to Remember" (1957, Leo McCarey), with Cary Grant, Deborah Kerr, and Richard Denning; and "Holiday" (1938, George Cukor), with Katharine Hepburn, Grant, Edward Everett Horton, Lew Ayres, Henry Kolker, and Doris Nolan.
Dec. 28-29: "The Apartment" (1960, Billy Wilder), with Jack Lemmon, Shirley MacLaine, and Fred MacMurray; and "Radio Days" (†).
Dec. 30-Jan. 1: "Show Boat" (†); and "The Awful Truth" (1937, Leo McCarey), with Irene Dunne, Cary Grant, and Ralph Bellamy.
From Jan. 2: "The Great Lover" (1931, Harry Beaumont), with Adolphe Menjou, Irene Dunne, Neil Hamilton, and Olga Baclanova; and "The Secret of Madame Blanche" (1933, Charles Brabin), with Dunne, Phillips Holmes, and Lionel Atwill.

**Cinema Village,** 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
Through Dec. 25: "Wings of Desire" (1988, Wim Wenders; in German), with Bruno Ganz, Solveig Dommartin, and Otto Sander; and "Jesus of Montreal" (1990, Denys Arcand; in French), with Lothaire Bluteau.
Dec. 26-29: "What Have I Done to Deserve This!" (1984, Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish), with Carmen Maura; and "Law of Desire" (1987, Almodóvar; in Spanish), with Maura, Eusebio Poncela, Antonio Banderas, and Miguel Molina.
Dec. 30-Jan. 1: "sex, lies, and videotape" (1989, Steven Sonderberg), with James Spader, Peter Gallagher, Andie MacDowell, and Laura San Giacomo; and "Scandal" (1989, Michael Caton-Jones), with John Hurt, Joanne Whalley-Kilmer, Ian McKellen, and Bridget Fonda.
From Jan. 2: "In the Realm of the Senses" (1977, Nagisa Oshima; in Japanese), with Eiko Matsuda and Tatsuya Fuji; and "Empire of Passion" (1980, Oshima; in Japanese).

**Film Forum 2,** 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through Dec. 27: "Funny Face" (1957, Stanley Donen), with Audrey Hepburn, Fred Astaire, Kay Thompson, and Michel Auclair; and "Roman Holiday" (1953, William Wyler), with Hepburn, Gregory Peck, and Eddie Albert.
From Dec. 28: "Funny Face"; and "Breakfast at Tiffany's" (1961, Blake Edwards), with Audrey Hepburn, George Peppard, Patricia Neal, Buddy Ebsen, Martin Balsam, and Mickey Rooney.

**Theatre 80 St. Marks,** 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Dec. 24: Theatre closed.
Dec. 25-26: "Blazing Saddles" (1974, Mel Brooks), with Cleavon Little, Gene Wilder, and Madeline Kahn; and "Silent Movie" (1976, Brooks), with Brooks, Marty Feldman, Dom DeLuise, and Sid Caesar.
Dec. 27: "Midnight Cowboy" (†); and "The Graduate" (1967, Mike Nichols), with Anne Bancroft, Dustin Hoffman, and Katharine Ross.
Dec. 28-29: "Jules and Jim" (1962, François Truffaut; in French), with Jeanne Moreau, Oskar Werner, and Henri Serre; and "The 400 Blows" (1959, Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud, Claire Maurier, and Albert Remy.
Dec. 30: "The Fountainhead" (1949, King Vidor), with Gary Cooper, Patricia Neal, Raymond Massey, and Kent Smith; and "The V.I.P.s" (1963, Terence Rattigan), with Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Maggie Smith, Orson Welles, Rod Taylor, Margaret Rutherford, Linda Christian, and Louis Jourdan.
Dec. 31-Jan. 1: "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying" (1967, David Swift), with Robert Morse, Michele Lee, and Rudy Vallée; and "The Producers" (1968, Mel Brooks), with Zero Mostel, Gene Wilder, Dick Shawn, and Estelle Winwood.
Jan. 2: "Jezebel" (†); and "The Letter" (1940, William Wyler), with Bette Davis, Herbert Marshall, Gale Sondergaard, James Stephenson, and Frieda Inescort.

## FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

**Museum of Modern Art,** Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)—Dec. 24 at 2:30: Three 1970 Mexican films directed by Arturo Ripstein, in Spanish—"Crime," "Beauty," and "Exorcism."... ¶ Dec. 24 at 2:30: "The Redman's View" (1909), "Captain Barnacle's Chaperone" (1910), and other early American silent films.... ¶ Dec. 27 at 2:30: "Time to Die" (1966, Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Marga López.... ¶ Dec. 27 at 3 and 6: "Going Up" (1990, Gary Pollard) and "Minnie Black's Gourd Band" (1988, Anne Johnson and Andy Garrison), both documentaries.... ¶ Dec. 27 at 6: "Shipwreck" (1977, Jaime Humberto

Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with José Alonso. . . . ¶ Dec. 28 at 2:30: "In for Life" (1978, Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Pedro Armendáriz, Jr. . . . ¶ Dec. 28 at 3: "Her Nephews from Labrador" (1912); "The Massacre" (1914, D. W. Griffith), with Blanche Sweet, Wilfred Lucas, and Lionel Barrymore; and other early American silent films. . . . ¶ Dec. 28 at 6: "Homework" (1990, Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with María Rojo. . . . ¶ Dec. 28 at 6: "The Honor of His Family" (1910), "When Lee Surrenders" (1912), and other early American silent films. . . . ¶ Dec. 29 at 2: "Mary My Dearest" (1979, Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Héctor Bonilla. . . . ¶ Dec. 29 at 2:30: "The Cry of the Children" (1912), with James Cruze; "The Gangsters" (1912), with Fatty Arbuckle; and other early American silent films. . . . ¶ Dec. 29 at 5: "The Realm of Fortune" (1985, Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Ernesto Gómez Cruz. . . . ¶ Dec. 29 at 5: "Little Nemo" (1911), an animated film; "A Tale of Two Cities" (1911, William Humphrey), with Florence Turner, Maurice Costello, and Norma Talmadge; and other early American silent films. . . . ¶ Dec. 30 at 2: "Hell Has No Limits" (1977, Ripstein; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Roberto Cobo. . . . ¶ Dec. 30 at 2:30: "The Priest and the Man" (1913, J. Searle Dawley); "The Mothering Heart" (1913, D. W. Griffith), with Lillian Gish; and other early American silent films. . . . ¶ Dec. 30 at 5: "The Dog's Birthday" (1974, Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Jorge Martínez de Hoyos. . . . ¶ Dec. 30 at 5 and Dec. 31 at 3: "Winning Whiskers" (1914, silent), with Lloyd Hamilton and Bud Duncan; "Shep's Race with Death" (1914, silent); and "The Squaw Man" (1914, Cecil B. De Mille and Oscar C. Apfel; silent), with Dustin Fornum. . . . ¶ Dec. 31 at 2:30: "The Summer of Miss Forbes" (1988, Hermosillo; a Mexican film, in Spanish), with Hanna Schygulla. . . . ¶ Jan. 1 at 2: "The White Tower" (1950, Ted Tetzlaff), with Glenn Ford, Claude Rains, and Cedric Hardwicke. . . . ¶ Jan. 1 at 2:30: "Little Nemo," "A Tale of Two Cities," and other early American silent films. . . . ¶ Jan. 1 at 5: "The Murder Man" (1934, Tim Whelan), with Spencer Tracy, Virginia Bruce, and James Stewart. . . . ¶ Jan. 1 at 5: "The Cry of Children," "The Gangsters," and other early American silent films.

**Museum of Broadcasting,** 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—Programs about contemporary comedians, and people who influenced them. Gilda Radner: Dec. 26-29: Excerpts from Radner's work on television, such as "Saturday Night Live" and "Bob and Ray, Jane, Laraine & Gilda"; and episodes of "The Honeymooners," "Your Show of Shows," and "The George Burns and Gracie Allen Show." . . . ¶ Robert Klein: From Jan. 2: "Robert Klein: Child of the '50s—Man of the '80s" (1984, HBO) and "Bilko the Art Lover" (1958, CBS), an episode of "The Phil Silvers Show." Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15.

**Anthology Film Archives,** 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Dec. 26 at 7: "Man with a Movie Camera" (1929, Dziga Vertov; a Russian silent film). . . . ¶ Dec. 26-30 at 8:30: "Viaggio a Sodoma" (1988, Tonino De Vernardi; in Italian). . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 7: "Entuziazm" (1931, Vertov; a Russian film). . . . ¶ Dec. 28 at 7: "Three Songs About Lenin" (1934, Vertov; a Russian film). . . . ¶ Dec. 29 at 7: "A Propos de Nice" (1930, Jean Vigo; a French film) and "Zero for Conduct" (1935, Vigo; in French). . . . ¶ Dec. 30 at 7: "L'Atalante" (†).

**Donnell Library Center,** 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—Dec. 27 at noon: "Let's Get Lost" (see blurb on page 20). . . . ¶ Dec. 31 at 2:30: "The Magic Flute" (1975, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish).

**Metropolitan Museum of Art,** Fifth Ave. at 81st St. (879-5500)—Dec. 29 at 4 and 6:30: "Lola" (1989, María Novaro; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

**American Museum of the Moving Image,** 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—In either the Riklis Theatre or the Warner Communications Screening Room. Dec. 26-28 at 2, Dec. 29-30 at 2 and 4, and Jan. 2 at 2: Four different programs in the series "Betty Boop & the Fleischer Cartoon Studio."

**Whitney Museum,** Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—"To Take the Glamour Out of War: American Film Against the War in Vietnam." Dec. 26 and 28 at 2: "No Game" (1968), "Struggle for Life" (1968), "Boston Draft Resistance Group" (1968), and "The Resistance" (1968, Leonard Henny). . . . ¶ Dec. 27 and 29 at 2: "Summer '68" (1969, Norman Fruchter and John Douglas) and "The Seventy-nine Springtimes of Ho Chi Minh" (1969, Santiago Alvarez). . . . ¶ Dec. 30 at 2: "America" (1969) and "In the Year of the Pig" (1969, Emile de Antonio). . . . ¶ Jan. 2 at 2: "No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger" (1968, David Loeb Weiss) and "New Left Note" (1968 and 1982, Saul Levine; silent).

**Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building,** 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—Dec. 24 at 1 and 3:30: "Glory" (1989, Edward Zwick), with Denzel Washington, Morgan Freeman, and Matthew Broderick. . . . ¶ Dec. 24 at 6: "Rude" (1982, Rudy Ray Moore), "Dolemite" (1974, D'Urville Martin), and "Petey Wheatstraw" (1978, Cliff Roquemore), all with Moore. . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 1 and 4:15: "Def by Temptation" (1990, James Bond III), with Kadeem Hardison and Bill Nunn; and "House Party" (1990, Reginald Hudlin), with Christopher Reid, Robin Harris, and Martin Lawrence . . . ¶ Dec. 26 at 6:30: "Cleopatra Jones" (1973, Jack Starrett), with Tamara Dobson, Shelley Winters, Antonio Fargas, and Frankie Crocker; and "Coffy" (1973, Jack Hill), with Pam Grier, Booker Bradshaw, and Robert Doquil. . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 1 and 4:30: "Malcolm X: By Any Means Necessary" (1990), a documentary; and "Glory." . . . ¶ Dec. 27 at 6:30: "Abby" (1974, William Girdler), with Carol Speed, William Marshall, and Terry Carter; and "Def by Temptation" (1990, James Bond III), with Kadeem Hardison. . . . ¶ Dec. 28 at 1 and 4: "I'm Gonna Git You Sucka" (1988, Keenen Ivory Wayans), with Jim Brown, Isaac Hayes, Antonio Fargas, Bernie Casey, and Wayans; and "Hollywood Shuffle" (1987, Robert Townsend), with Wayans and Townsend. . . . ¶ Dec. 28 at 6:30: "The Soul of Rock 'n Roll," a three-hour documentary. . . . ¶ Dec. 29 at 1 and 3:55: "Zou Zou" (1934, Marc Allégret; in French), with Josephine Baker and Jean Gabin; and "Princess Tam Tam" (1935, Edmond T. Gréville; in French), with Baker and Albert Préjean. . . . ¶ Dec. 29 at 6: "The Spook Who Sat by the Door" (1973, Ivan Dixon), with Lawrence Cook; and "The Education of Sonny Carson" (1974, Michael Campus), with Rony Clanton, Don Gordon, and Paul Benjamin. . . . ¶ Dec. 31 at 2: "Lester Young: Song of the Spirit" (1988, Bruce Frederick) and "Thelonious Monk: Straight No Chaser" (1989, Charlotte Zwerin). . . . ¶ Dec. 31 at 6: "Super Soul Brother" (1976), with Wildman Steve; "Rude"; "The Avenging Disco Godfather" (1976, Robert Wagoner), with Rudy Roy Moore; and "Redd Foxx: Raw."

*At the Biograph Cinema, Shirley MacLaine and Jack Lemmon in "The Apartment"*

## IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

**Alice**—With Mia Farrow, directed by Woody Allen. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Loews Fine Arts; starting Dec. 25.)

**L'Atalante** (1934)—This extraordinary film was the only full-length feature directed by Jean Vigo, who died (at the age of twenty-nine) just three weeks after its première in 1934. The movie had been drastically cut by the distributor for that first release; it was partially restored in 1940, and it has now been given another major renovation. Vigo's film now looks and sounds better than ever. The screenplay, rewritten by Vigo and Albert Riéra from an original scenario by Jean Guinée, tells the simple story of a pair of newlyweds named Jean (Jean Dasté) and Juliette (Dita Parlo); he's the captain of a river barge called L'Atalante, and she's a girl from one of the villages on his route. As they travel down the river, they become impatient with each other; they are separated, then find each other again, and life resumes its intended course. Vigo treats the story the way a jazz musician treats a popular song, improvising on the melody by plunging into its carefully sequenced chords and predictable rhythms and taking them apart to see what they're made of. He is the most playful and the least rigid of the great film artists: his images seduce us with the promise of a larger, richer world and unbounded freedom to roam in it—the promise, that is, of endless stimulation, inexhaustible sensations. The best thing about this new version is that, for all the restorers' diligence, the film is still messy, imperfect, defiantly incomplete: it's a collection of inspired fragments, the sketchbook of an artist whose imagination was, and will forever remain, gloriously immature. Michel Simon plays a rambunctious old salt called Père Jules, who is the presiding spirit of the movie. Also with Louis Lefèvre and Gilles Margaritis. The stunning cinematography is by Boris Kaufman; Maurice Jaubert wrote the lovely score. In French.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/5/90.) (Lincoln Plaza. . . . ¶ Anthology Film Archives; Dec. 30.)

**Avalon**—In legend, Avalon is an earthly paradise. The writer-director Barry Levinson uses the name as his Rosebud: it's carved into the façade of the castlelike Baltimore apartment house where the five Krichinsky brothers, Jews who immigrated from Eastern Europe before the First World War, make their first American home. In Levinson's view, those early years were a golden age. The film is set mostly during his own childhood, in the late forties, when his parents move to the suburbs, and TV breaks up the clan's social patterns, and the surviving brothers have divided into feuding factions. The scattered fine comic moments don't make up for the wide streak of fuddy-duddyism in the notion that the family used to be the bulwark of the nation's value system. The movie is an elegy to a mythical past, and people emerge from the theatre sniffling. They've been told they're suffering from soul-sickness—the loss of unity, harmony, family music. With Elizabeth Perkins, Aidan Quinn, Kevin Pollak, Armin Mueller-Stahl, and Joan Plowright. —P.K. (10/22/90) (Worldwide Cinemas; Dec. 24.)

**Dances with Wolves**—Set during the Civil War, this big Indians-versus-Cavalry epic is like a New Age social-studies lesson. Kevin Costner, who directed and is the star, has an untroubled face and laid-back diction. As Lieutenant Dunbar, a Union officer, he sees that the Sioux have a superior culture and he changes sides. This is a nature-boy movie, a kid's daydream of being an Indian. When Dunbar has become a Sioux named Dances with Wolves, he writes in his journal that he knows for the first time who he really is. Costner has feathers in his hair and feathers in his head. He and his friend Michael Blake (who worked up the material with him in

mind and then wrote the novel and the screenplay) are trying to show the last years of the Sioux as an independent nation from the Sioux point of view, and it's probably that sympathy for the Indians that the audience responds to. But Costner is a movie-making novice: instead of helping us understand the Sioux, he simply makes the Sioux like genial versions of us. This three-hour Western weeper, with its sluggish action and poorly shaped scenes, was made by a bland megalomaniac. (The Indians should have named him Plays with Camera.) Shot in South Dakota; the wide-screen cinematography, by Dean Semler, is spacious and open at times, and there are fine images of buffalo pounding by. With Mary McDonnell, Maury Chaykin, Robert Pastorelli, Graham Greene as Kicking Bird, and Rodney A. Grant as Wind in His Hair.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews Tower East, and Loews Paramount.)

**Edward Scissorhands**—A Transylvanian castle rises high in the air out of the end of a bare, flat suburban street. One day, Peg Boggs, the Avon lady (Dianne Wiest, magically daffy), makes a call on the macabre, tumbledown place and discovers an adolescent fairy-tale boy, white-faced Edward (Johnny Depp), with two collections of long sharp shears where his hands should be. (He was created in the castle's kitchen workshop by an aged inventor—Vincent Price, in flashbacks—who died before he could attach the hands he had prepared.) Peg invites the boy to come home with her. At first, this movie, directed by Tim Burton, has a lovely comic spirit, but when the suburbanites think Edward is dangerous and turn against him, the material turns into cheesy, plot-centered melodrama. It has a central flaw: the idea of a boy who cuts when he wants to touch is pre-interpreted—he's the pure creative artist who can't be around people because he can't help hurting them; he's the woeful misunderstood kid. Edward is an emasculated Tim Burton; he's Burton saying, "I've always been a sweet guy." (The picture becomes Christmassy and angelic.) With Winona Ryder, Alan Arkin, Kathy Baker, Conchata Ferrell, and Anthony Michael Hall. The score, by Danny Elfman, has an antic sweep to it, and the production design, by Bo Welch, has a fair share of surprises, but the script, by Caroline Thompson, based on Burton's sketches and the story the two of them devised, is undernourished.—P.K. (Ziegfeld.)

**Ghost**—It sounds like a horror movie, but it's a romantic fairy tale. The scariest thing about it is its shamelessness. A young New York bank executive, Sam (Patrick Swayze), is killed, on the street, at a moment in his life when everything seems to be going his way. After his death, Sam sticks around, as a spirit (and Swayze stays onscreen, as a body). He attends his funeral; watches his beautiful girlfriend, Molly (Demi Moore), drift grief-stricken through the spectacular loft they had just moved into; and then devotes himself to protecting her from the people who killed him. Through a reluctant psychic (Whoopi Goldberg), he tries to communicate with Molly; later, an experienced ghost (Vincent Schiavelli) teaches him how to move objects and break stuff. In this movie, death is treated as if it were merely a form of disability, one of those handicaps we've seen people struggle bravely with in TV movies—something for the individual to triumph over with will power, hard work, and love. This creamy-toned fantasy, directed by Jerry Zucker from a screenplay by Bruce Joel Rubin, certainly pushes the audience's emotional buttons. It's a twentysomething hybrid of "It's a Wonderful Life" and some of the goofier, more solemn, episodes of "The Twilight Zone," and there's not a trace of wit or irony in it. Its images of death have a soothing banality, like a greeting-card message from the world beyond. Also with Tony Goldwyn and Rick Aviles.—T.R. (7/30/90) (Loews 34th Street Showplace; Dec. 24.)

**GoodFellas**—The director, Martin Scorsese, gives you a lift. He loves the Brooklyn organized-crime milieu, because it's where distortion, hyperbole, and exuberance all commingle. The movie is about being cock of the walk, with banners flying and crowds cheering. Based on Nicholas Pileggi's nonfiction book "Wiseguy," it's a triumphant piece of filmmaking—journalism and sociology presented with the brio of drama. But the three major hoods, played by Ray Liotta, Robert De Niro, and Joe Pesci, don't have a strong enough presence, and the movie lacks the juice and richness that come with major performances. (It's like the Howard Hawks "Scarface" without Scarface.) What you respond to is Scorsese's bravura: the filmmaking process becomes the subject of the movie. Watching it is like getting strung out on pure sensation. Paul Sorvino as Paulie and Lorraine Bracco as Karen both come through, and other performers in minor roles give the movie a frenzied, funny texture. The screenplay is by Pileggi and Scorsese; the cinematography is by Michael Ballhaus; the editing is by Thelma Schoonmaker.—P.K. (9/24/90) (Quad Cinema, and Criterion Center.... ¶ U. A. East; Dec. 24.)

**Henry & June**—Philip Kaufman's wonderful new film shows us the writers Henry Miller (Fred Ward) and Anaïs Nin (Maria de Medeiros) in the first year of their acquaintance, the period of their brief, intense love affair. It's the love story of two people who are making themselves, and each other, up as they go along; Miller and Nin are at once real people and the products of their own imaginations—collaborators in a matched pair of literary myths. And the action unfolds in and around a city that seems both itself and a figment of itself: the Paris of the thirties. Kaufman brings out the bizarre, almost monstrous comedy of their odd literary/sexual love affair: he presents it as a kind of parody image of relationships between men and women. The third major character, Miller's wife, June (Uma Thurman), is the most mysterious presence here. She seems to represent a demonic, annihilating sexual force, but by the end she's almost a tragic figure. The actors are splendid: Kaufman gets miraculously intelligent performances from Ward and de Medeiros, and Thurman—uninhibited yet also weirdly delicate—gives the picture a jolt every time she appears. The movie creates a world, and Kaufman is both affectionate toward and clear-eyed about the people who live in it; he's concerned more with *enjoying* his characters, in all their contradictions, than with explaining them. The material plays as rich, dark erotic farce—a comedy about the duplicity of writers. Also with Richard E. Grant (as Nin's husband) and Kevin Spacey. The screenplay, by Kaufman and his wife, Rose, is based on Nin's diary. Superb cinematography by Philippe Rousselot.—T.R. (10/8/90) (Art Greenwich Twin; Dec. 24.)

**Jezebel** (1938)—A dazzling romantic melodrama. Bette Davis is impulsive, complex Julie, the Southern belle who destroys her chances for happiness by perversely flouting convention. William Wyler produced and directed this sumptuous, moss-hung evocation of pre-Civil War New Orleans, with its great balls where tradition decreed that unmarried ladies dress in white—and where Julie's red dress wrecks her life. It's hard to know which is Davis's "big scene" in the movie—the painful, flamboyant error of her appearance in red, or the breathtaking moment of her apology in white. The material was already dated but was brought out of mothballs and refurbished because of the popularity of the novel "Gone with the Wind," which the production beat to the screen; without the zing Davis gave it, it would have looked very mossy indeed. With Henry Fonda, George Brent, Margaret Lindsay, Richard Cromwell, John Litel, Donald Crisp, Spring Byington, Eddie Anderson, Henry O'Neill, Irving Pichel, and Fay Bainter. The script, by Clements Ripley, Abem Finkel, and John Huston (based on a play by Owen Davis, Sr.), has some remarkable passages.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Jan. 2.)

**Kiss Me Kate** (1953)—A backstage farce set during the staging of a musical version of "The Taming of the Shrew," with Kathryn Grayson and Howard Keel as the warring stars. Grayson's trilling is something to contend with, and so is her busy, amateurish performance, and there's a lot of badly placed rambunctious comedy from just about everybody. But there's also a marvellous Cole Porter score, with such songs as "Where Is the Life That Late I Led?," "Why Can't You Behave," "Too Darn Hot," "I've Come to Wive It Wealthily in Padua," and "Always True to You in My Fashion." And there is Howard Keel, with his strong baritone and his good-hearted leering; a dark goatee gives him more chin, and with his great height he looks hilarious in Petruchio's striped pants. And there is the dancing of Bob Fosse, Tommy Rall, and Bobby Van—their "From This Moment On" number, choreographed by Fosse, is one of the high points of movie-musical history; in its speed and showmanship one can see the Fosse style in its earliest film realization. This sequence more than balances out the grossly embarrassing moments, such as the one when Keel tells Grayson, who is about to quit acting and go off with a Texan (Willard Parker), that she belongs in the theatre. Maybe because Grayson looks so uncomfortable—so aware of her shortcomings as an actress—Ann Miller, who obviously enjoys performing, comes off as lively and amusing; she doesn't just do her usual ticktock tapping, because she's working with those three leaping male dancers, and with Carol Haney, too. Directed by George Sidney, with dances staged by Hermes Pan. The Cole Porter Broadway show, with a book by Samuel and Bella Spewack, was adapted to M-G-M's requirements by Dorothy Kingsley—i.e., it was cleaned up and overtamed. (Filmed, and shown here, in double-system 3-D.)—P.K. (Film Forum.)

**The Krays**—The twins Ronnie and Reggie Kray, a pair of East End thugs who operated several posh night clubs in London in the nineteen-sixties, are underworld legends for the English. Most Americans don't know much about them; and after two hours of watching this picture we still don't. The director, Peter Medak, and the screenwriter, Philip Ridley, take an arty, elliptical approach to what should be superbly tawdry gangster-movie material. The filmmakers walk up to us with big, mean-looking metaphors in their hands and open fire. The Krays (played by Gary and Martin Kemp, who are brothers but not twins) wander through the movie looking sinister and rather dazed, as if they had forgotten who they were supposed to be. And who can blame them? They spend most of their time gazing into mirrors and telling each other their dreams: they're so burdened with meaning they seem unable to *do* anything. The bizarre, dreamlike tone might have worked—sort of—if the ideas in the script weren't so dopey. The picture advances, for instance, the remarkable theory that the Krays' sociopathic natures were created by the Blitz and an excess of love from their mother. That's the sort of thing Medak and Ridley give us in lieu of information, action, narrative; it won't do. Also with Billie Whitelaw as the twins' mother, Violet Kray. She's a wonderful actress; she no more deserves this movie than Vi deserved her terrible sons.—T.R. (23rd St. West Triplex.)

**Midnight Cowboy** (1969)—Jon Voight as Joe Buck, a dishwasher from a small town in Texas, who hopes to make a living in New York by servicing rich women, and Dustin Hoffman as Ratso Rizzo, the crippled petty thief and con man he meets. The director, John Schlesinger, uses fast cutting and tricky camerawork to provide a satirical background as enrichment of the story, but the satire is offensively inaccurate—it cheapens the story and gives it a veneer of almost hysterical cleverness. The point of the movie must be to offer us some insight into the two derelicts—two of the many kinds of dreamers and failures in the city. But Schlesinger keeps pounding away at America, determined to expose how horrible the people are—he dehumanizes the people Joe Buck and Ratso are part of. If he could extend the same sympathy to the other Americans that he extends to them, the picture might make better sense. His spray of venom is just about overpowering, yet the two actors and the simple "Of Mice and Men" kind of relationship at the heart of the story save the picture. Hoffman's raspy voice and jumpy walk and Jon Voight's pallor and blue eyes and hurt, bewildered stare provide a core of feeling. With Brenda Vaccaro, Sylvia Miles, and John McGiver. From James Leo Herlihy's novel, adapted by Waldo Salt.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Dec. 27.)

**Mr. & Mrs. Bridge**—An adaptation, by the Merchant Ivory team (the director James Ivory, the producer Ismail Merchant, and the writer Ruth Prawer Jhabvala), of Evan S. Connell's novels about the painfully respectable Bridge family of Kansas City. Walter and India Bridge (Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward) are pure exemplars of the middle: they're middle-aged and middle-

*Robert De Niro and Robin Williams in "Awakenings"*

class; they live in a medium-sized city in virtually the dead center of the United States; and they are neither truly happy nor consciously unhappy. They're monsters of moderation. At the beginning of the film, Ivory seems eerily in tune with the novels' distinctive sensibility: the domestic vignettes are sharply dramatized and succeed each other with an even, confident rhythm; the nuances of behavior, language, and décor register and then resonate satisfyingly; the tone is exactly right, cool but not condescending. The picture gets by, initially, on its strange mood of chilling coziness, and when we tire of that—and we do, because it doesn't change or develop—the actors keep us engaged a while longer. Newman doesn't try to soften the character, or to distance himself from it with exaggerated effects, and his scrupulousness pays off. The character seems not more likable but more human than it does in the novels; by very simple means, Newman enables us to understand Mr. Bridge's insensitivity and emotional ineptitude. And Woodward, too, gives a delicate, subtle performance: she embodies a foolish woman vividly and unpatronizingly. But the screenplay retains the static quality of the books' construction, so at a certain point the scenes begin to feel arbitrary. And Ivory's perspective on the material seems to become clouded by a storm of minutiae—a surfeit of period detail. (The action takes place in the late thirties and early forties.) In the end, the Bridges aren't large enough either to move us or to terrify us: they're the Ambersons without the magnificence. Also with Blythe Danner, Kyra Sedgwick, Robert Sean Leonard, Margaret Welsh, and Simon Callow.—T.R. (12/3/90) (Cinema II.)

**Postcards from the Edge**—This tale of a sorrowful, wisecracking starlet (Meryl Streep) whose brassy, boozing former-star mother (Shirley MacLaine) started her on sleeping pills when she was nine is camp without the zest of camp. It's camp played borderline straight—a druggy-Cinderella movie about an unformed girl who has to go past despair to find herself. The director, Mike Nichols, is a parodist who feigns sincerity, and his tone keeps slipping around. What's clear is that we're meant to be enthralled by the daughter's radiant face, her refinement, her honesty. Nichols keeps the camera on Streep as if to prove that he can make her a popular big star—a new Crawford or Bette Davis. (She remains distant, emotionally atonal.) The tacky, bright-colored film—a near-plotless version of a woman's picture—is weightless, yet it's watchable. Its jadedness appeals to the narcissism of show-biz insiders and to the would-be insider in the rest of us. (Nichols is acclaimed for being hip to the Zeitgeist.) There are a lot of people to look at: Gene Hackman, Dennis Quaid, Richard Dreyfuss, Annette Bening, Robert Bartlett, CCH Pounder, Oliver Platt, Gary Morton, Mary Wickes, Rob Reiner, Simon Callow, Michael Ontkean, Pepe Serna, and Dana Ivey.—P.K. (10/22/90) (Worldwide Cinemas.)

**Radio Days** (1987)—Woody Allen looks back fondly, in a warm, amber-toned reminiscence of what radio meant to him and his family at the start of the Second World War. The actors who make up the eleven-year-old hero's lower-middle-class Jewish family in Rockaway Beach are a wonderful group of comedians—Michael Tucker, Julie Kavner, Josh Mostel, Renee Lippin, Joy Newman, Dianne Wiest—yet they're never up close, at the center of our attention. Allen has reduced everyone to harmlessness. It's pure nostalgia—the past sweetened and trivialized. The mood is soft regret: he treats the old songs (the film incorporates a generous assortment of hits) as a value that we've lost. As he spells it out, the public's memories of the stars of radio become dimmer each year. The question the film asks—its theme—is "Will our fame last?" Implicitly, he's saying that we movie stars (and TV stars) must learn humility. With Mia Farrow as the one character whom we follow over a period of years, as she rises from cigarette girl to jewel-decked radio star, and Seth Green as the boy, Gina DeAngelis, Danny Aiello, Denise Dummont, Tito Puente, Jeff Daniels, Tony Roberts, Wallace Shawn, and Diane Keaton.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Dec. 28-29.)

**Reversal of Fortune**—An entertainingly trashy sick-joke docudrama about how Claus von Bülow's conviction for trying to kill his superrich wife was overturned on appeal through the brainpower of the Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz and his team of students and former students. Jeremy Irons' von Bülow is a pop conception of a decadent aristocrat, and the crowd-pleasing satirical subtext is that the heirs and heiresses of the great fortunes are useless, bored, unloving, and unloved. The fun here is that Irons' performance is a masterly conceit. His von Bülow is a depraved cuckoo; he simply can't resist playing ghoulish comedian and making Dershowitz (Ron Silver) his stooge. The script, by Nicholas Kazan, is skillfully constructed, but it's based on Dershowitz's book about the case, and he's the protagonist—the crusading lawyer searching for evidence of innocence. Silver's Dershowitz seems to be overdosing on proud sentimental Jewishness. (That this is a positive stereotype makes it no less a stereotype.) The direction, by Barbet Schroeder, is assured but often impersonal and emptily energetic. With Glenn Close (very effective as Sunny von Bülow, the comatose narrator), Christine Baranski as Andrea Reynolds, Julie Hagerty (uncredited) as Alexandra Isles, and Stephen Mailer, Annabella Sciorra, Uta Hagen, and Fisher Stevens.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Eastside Cinema, and West Side Cinema. . . . ¶ 8th St. Playhouse; Dec. 24. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; starting Dec. 25.)

**The Russia House**—With Sean Connery, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Klaus Maria Brandauer; directed by Fred Schepisi. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Angelika Film Center, Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews New York Twin, Guild, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

**The Sheltering Sky**—Published in 1949, Paul Bowles' semi-autobiographical account of his marriage fascinated readers by its Olympian closeted tone. Under the novel's vaporousness is a pop theme: what happens to a modern, dissatisfied woman—a New York artist-intellectual—if she's in the Sahara, her husband dies, and she's enslaved in a harem? But this is not simply a male writer's version of a woman's harem-whore fantasy: the wife, Kit, seems to be fulfilling the nature and desires that the husband, Port, cannot fulfill for himself. Bernardo Bertolucci's attenuated film version filters out the pop element that gives the book its bit of kicky horror. The movie is about Kit (Debra Winger) giving over to another way of seeing; it's about the shift in her psyche as she becomes a contented love slave and moves away from the verbal, from definitions and categories and neurosis. Bertolucci appears to have lost interest in pace and excitement and verve; he goes deep into monotony. (The whole thing has the impressively decadent look of an Armani ad.) With John Malkovich as Port (who's full of smug self-hatred), Campbell Scott as Tunner, Jill Bennett, Timothy Spall, and Bowles (at seventy-nine) as some sort of presiding expatriate sage. The script is by Mark Peploe and Bertolucci; the cinematography is by Vittorio Storaro; the music is by Ryuichi Sakamoto.—P.K. (12/17/90) (Murray Hill Cinemas, and 57th St. Playhouse.)

**Show Boat** (1936)—This classic musical melodrama with the Jerome Kern songs and the novelistic Edna Ferber plot, full of heartbreaks and miscegenation and coincidences, is hard to resist in any of its versions. This one from Universal has a believability that was lost in the 1951 M-G-M version. It features Irene Dunne and Allan Jones, but its greatest attractions are Paul Robeson as Joe, and singing "Ol' Man River," and the marvellous Julie of Helen Morgan, who sings "Bill" and "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man." James Whale directed, and the cast includes Charles Winninger, Helen Westley, Hattie McDaniel, Donald Cook, Eddie (Rochester) Anderson, Clarence Muse, Queenie Smith, E. E. Clive, and Harry Barris. The screenplay is by Oscar Hammerstein II, from the 1927 Ziegfeld musical that Kern and he wrote, based on the Ferber novel. The lyrics for "Bill" were written by P. G. Wodehouse—the song was a reject from one of the ten musicals on which Kern and Wodehouse had collaborated; Kern is said to have taken the inspiration for "Ol' Man River" from Mark Twain's "Life on the Mississippi." (A 1929 version, also from Universal, starred Laura La Plante, Alma Rubens, Joseph Schildkraut, and Stepin Fetchit as Joe.)—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Dec. 30-Jan. 1.)

**To Sleep with Anger**—A domestic comedy with an unusually dense texture. It's shot straightforwardly, in a style that appears realistic almost to the point of banality, and yet right from the start there's something unsettling about its plainness: Charles Burnett, who wrote and directed, keeps hinting that things are not necessarily what they seem. Gideon (Paul Butler) and Suzie (Mary Alice) are a middle-aged black couple who live in Los Angeles; their roots, however, are in the rural South, and they've retained quite a few of the customs, values, and superstitions of the culture they were brought up in. The story gets going when a friend of theirs from back home appears on their doorstep; they invite him to say with them awhile, and he does. This unexpected guest, Harry (Danny Glover), turns out to be a gifted confidence man, with a sharp eye for human weakness; he's a grinning, honey-tongued demon. He uses his backcountry wisdom with sinister, obscure intent, for purposes that Burnett, cunningly, allows to remain ambiguous. The presence of Harry gives the realistic surface of the movie a vibrant strangeness; he seems to transform everything that happens in these clean, comfortable living rooms and kitchens into dark rituals performed in the woods in the dead of night. The picture has a risky, complex tone: it's a comedy, because the family's threatened world is set right in the end, but there are moments along the way when the intimations of unseen controlling forces—both in Glover's elegantly suggestive performance and in the eerie, calm precision of Burnett's direction—give us the creeps.—T.R. (11/5/90) (Angelika Film Center.)

**Vincent & Theo**—The director, Robert Altman, and the screenwriter, Julian Mitchell, give us an interpretation of the bond that helps to keep Vincent alive while it tears Theo apart. Vincent is obsessive about his painting; Theo is obsessive about Vincent and about his own inability to sell Vincent's work and help him—he can give him only a pittance. This double Passion-play movie is very different from the other Altman movies (even allowing for how different they are from each other). The theme—the bitter entanglement of art and commerce—is Altman's lifelong theme, and, staying with it strictly in terms of the van Gogh brothers, he's able to release his own feelings about how an artist's frustrations lead him to acts of self-destructive fury—cutting off his ear to spite his face. It's a movie about two sensualists made by a sensualist, who understands that their bond of love of art is also a bond of shared rage at the world of commerce. This daring film works on its own relentless, celebratory terms. With Tim Roth, whose acting is a form of kinetic discharge, as Vincent and Paul Rhys as Theo.—P.K. (11/19/90) (Loews Fine Arts; Dec. 24. . . . ¶ Angelika Film Center, and Worldwide Cinemas; starting Dec. 25.)

# WARMEST HOLIDAY WISHES FROM THE PLACE THAT HAS EVERYTHING.

# WELL, ALMOST.

HEARTFELT THANKS TO ALL OUR GUESTS AND PATRONS FOR YEARS OF LOYAL FRIENDSHIP.

THE NEW YORKER

# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

*Notes and Comment*

DURING the hot Philadelphia summer of 1787, while the Constitution was being composed, James Madison was, as he said, "constant in his attendance," and he took careful notes on the proceedings. He wrote later, "I was not absent a single day, nor more than a casual fraction of an hour in any day, so that I could not have lost a single speech, unless a very short one." From Madison's record, which is the standard authority on the Founding Fathers at work as they created the United States, there is no doubt whatever that they intended Congress, and not the President, to possess the power to initiate war against other nations.

The original manuscript of Madison's notes reposes in the Library of Congress. The Assembly Room of the State House in Philadelphia, where the delegates wrote the Constitution, still exists, too. It is a spacious and well-lit chamber, with three large windows rising up on both the north and the south sides toward a white plaster ceiling twenty feet high. The fifty-five delegates to the Constitutional Convention, perhaps thirty of whom attended on any given day, sat in groups of three or four at wide tables draped in green baize and arranged in a semicircle facing George Washington, the president of the convention. When we visited the chamber this fall, carried along in a churn of schoolchildren who had been flown in that morning from Orinda, California, we learned that the green-covered tables arrayed there now are not the original ones, but Washington's chair, which has a rising sun carved inside a crown on its back, is still in place. So is a shining silver inkstand, made in the seventeen-fifties by Philip Syng, Jr., which was used by the thirty-nine delegates who signed the Constitution in mid-September.

The question of war first came up a week after the delegates began their work. On June 1st, Charles Pinckney, of South Carolina, said (as Madison summarized it) "that giving the powers of war and peace to the executive would render the Executive a monarchy, of the worst kind, to wit an elective one." Pinckney's fellow South Carolinian John Rutledge agreed, and so did James Wilson, of Pennsylvania: the war power was not executive but legislative. On June 18th, Alexander Hamilton, speaking for the first time, and at great length, delivered his plan for the government, according to which the Senate would have "the sole power of declaring war" and the President only "the direction of war when authorized or begun." The convention's Committee of Detail proposed simply that Congress would have the power "to make war."

The question was debated on August 17th, and Pinckney argued, as Hamilton had, that only the Senate should have that power. Madison's notes record that Pierce Butler, an Irish-born aristocrat from South Carolina, "was for vesting the power in the President, who . . . will not make war but when the Nation will support it." Butler did not put his opinion into a proposal, and no one sided with him. In fact, after Butler spoke, Madison and Elbridge Gerry, of Massachusetts (who later became Vice-President under Madison), acted together to assign to the whole Congress the power to initiate war. As Madison reported, "Mr. Madison and Mr. Gerry moved to insert '*declare*,' striking out '*make*' war; leaving the Executive the power to repel sudden attacks." Roger Sherman, of Connecticut (who in 1776 had been one of the five members of the committee selected to write the Declaration of Independence, and who, Thomas Jefferson observed, "never said a foolish thing in his life"), now agreed that "the Executive should be able to repel and not to commence war." Madison reported at this point that Mr. Gerry said he "never expected to hear in a republic a motion to empower the Executive alone to declare war," and that George Mason, of Virginia, "was agst. giving the power of war to the Executive, because not safely to be trusted with it." The Madison-Gerry proposal passed, eight states to one. The issue could hardly have been more clearly settled.

The eighty-five Federalist Papers, published, mostly in the New York press, during the ensuing fall, winter, and spring, further manifested the Founding Fathers' determination that the American President would not have the power of the British king to wage war at his pleasure. Absolute monarchs often make war "for purposes and objects merely personal," John

Jay wrote in Paper No. 4. In Paper No. 69 Hamilton wrote that the military authority of the President would be "much inferior" to that of the British king, because the king declared war and raised and regulated the military, "all which, by the Constitution under consideration, would appertain to the legislature"—that is, would belong to Congress. None of the thirteen states wanted an elective king for a President, either. Of seventy-seven amendments to the Constitution which the states recommended at their ratifying conventions, the only one that concerned the war power left it with Congress: New York recommended that a two-thirds vote be necessary for a declaration of war.

During the past four decades, four American Presidents have violated the explicit language of the Constitution by ordering attacks on other nations without first seeking authority from Congress. In 1950, President Truman involved us in the Korean War, and in 1965 and 1966 President Johnson led us step by step into the Vietnam War, and both Presidents did so without appropriate prior authorization from Congress. In 1973, Congress passed, by two-thirds majorities in both Houses, the War Powers Act, declaring anew that war could be initiated only by Congress, or by the President to repel sudden attack; but it was to no avail. In 1983, President Reagan ordered the American invasion of Grenada, in 1986 he ordered United States bombers to attack Libya, and in 1989 President Bush ordered the American invasion of Panama—all without authorization from Congress.

Those Presidents got away with violating the Constitution because of the power of the fait accompli and because of the surge of patriotic unity which envelops any endangered American troops. Never before, however, have the American people—indeed, all the news-conscious people in the world—been extensively forewarned that an American President intends without a congressional declaration of war to attack another nation unless it does what he tells it to. Fifty-three members of the House and one senator warned in November, "Nearly half a million American soldiers will soon be facing the fourth largest army in the world, one million strong and equipped with the most modern technology of war, including chemical and bacteriological weapons. Any clash between these two behemoths is likely to be long, bloody and on a scale not seen since World War II." George Mitchell, the Senate Majority Leader, has declared, "Congress and only Congress can commit the nation to war," and in a *Time*/CNN poll taken late in November nearly three out of four persons surveyed said that, despite the United Nations authorization to use force against Iraq after January 15th, President Bush is required to go to Congress for permission. Yet Bush and his top advisers are insisting, plainly and publicly, that this is not so.

The fifty-four members of Congress who issued the November warning also filed a lawsuit, Dellums et al. v. Bush, in which they asked United States District Judge Harold Greene to prohibit a President from starting a war against Iraq "without obtaining a declaration of war or other explicit authorization" from Congress. The Justice Department responded to the lawsuit with a four-part riposte: that the issue is a political question, which the court should not settle; that the members do not have proper standing to file the suit; that they should seek their remedy in Congress; and that the issue was not ripe for decision. In a twenty-nine-page ruling, which has been poorly explained in most of the press accounts of it, Judge Greene sided with the members of Congress on all but the last point. He held that allowing the President the sole power to decide that any offensive military operation, "no matter how vast," is not a war, and therefore does not require a prior declaration of war from Congress, "would evade the plain language of the Constitution," and he added, "The Court is not prepared to read out of the Constitution the clause granting to the Congress, and to it alone, the authority 'to declare war.' " He also accused the Justice Department of disingenuousness in challenging the members' obvious right to bring the case. But on the issue of ripeness he concluded, "It is only if the majority of the Congress seeks relief from an infringement on its constitutional war-declaration power that it may be entitled to receive it." When not one-tenth of the Congress but half of its members plus one join such a lawsuit, then, if the President's commitment to war is also shown to be ripe, Judge Greene said, "an injunction will be issued."

The question urgently posed by this ruling is not whether a majority of Congress can act but whether it will. Senator Edward Kennedy said as early as November 13th, "Silence by Congress now is an abdication of our constitutional responsibility and an acquiescence in war." According to Senator Mitchell, Congress, after convening on January 3rd, will not recess for three weeks, as is customary, but will remain on call to debate war with Iraq. "The Senate should and will debate this issue," Mitchell said.

Now, it seems logical that within the power that the Constitution gives Congress to declare war there lies, impregnably enclosed, the power *not* to declare war. In order to exert this power in the present situation, a majority of the House or the Senate would have to vote that in the absence of a need to repel sudden attack the United States will not attack Iraq until the economic sanctions have been given enough time to work. With the formal record of the vote as their proof, the members of the congressional majority could ask Judge Greene to order the President not to attack. The people of the United States could then reasonably expect that, at least for a time, not just some voices in Congress but Congress and the judiciary together would confront the President's plain evasion of the plain language of the Constitution.

Those would be extraordinary events, but we are enmeshed in extraordinary circumstances, which force upon us a set of alarming questions. Why should our schoolchildren respect and obey the Constitution if Presidents will not? Why should our young men and women, who in a war are expected to fight and perhaps to die, respect the process by which we enter upon a war with Iraq if the President refuses to follow the supreme law of the land? What is law and what is order, what is democracy and what is the United States, if the law binds the

citizens but not the President?

On Capitol Hill on November 13th, Richard Cheney, the Secretary of Defense, and Colin Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, gave about ninety members of the House of Representatives a closed-door briefing on the situation in the Gulf. Representative Ronald Dellums, who a week later led his colleagues in instituting the lawsuit against the President, said to Cheney, in effect, "You have been a member of Congress for years. Who do you think ultimately has the warmaking power?"

"That's above my paycheck," the Secretary of Defense replied.

"Mr. Cheney," Dellums answered, "it's above your boss's paycheck as well, because I would remind you that under the Constitution it's President Bush, not King George."

*"Make it one for my baby and one more for the road."*

• •

*Dreamer*

Pepe Karmel is an art historian who is preparing a comprehensive catalogue of Picasso's Cubist drawings. In Paris this summer, he came upon a stockbook of the art dealer D.-H. Kahnweiler detailing the order in which Picasso and Braque delivered various pictures to Kahnweiler's gallery—a development that is in the process of yielding new dates for several key works in early modern art. Pepe is also working right now on a long article about a forgotten collector named Frank Haviland, who may have been the subject of a long-lost portrait by Picasso, a version of which Pepe believes may be present in a 1912 photograph of Picasso in his studio. One afternoon earlier this month, however, Pepe put aside all these labors long enough to visit Sotheby's exhibition galleries, on York Avenue, and, walking past some Japanese lacquerwork that was to be auctioned later that week, headed for a gallery devoted to the pre-sale exhibition of artifacts and memorabilia related to the other consuming passion of his life—the American electric guitarist Jimi Hendrix.

"I was listening to the 'Live at Winterland' CD last night," Pepe said to a friend whom he had invited to join him in inspecting the Hendrixiana. "It's a posthumous release. I heard it for the first time on the radio one afternoon while I was working on Picasso, and it has become my favorite Hendrix album. You know, the point of Hendrix's genius was to take blues and break open its rhythmic structure—open it up to space and silence and free-form noise. In this sense, he's very much a swimmer against the tide of the rock trends of his time, where the whole point was either to reimpose a classical sense of time and order, as the Beatles did, or to pare down and amplify blues rhythm until it became a brutal, overwhelming force. Clapton did that, and so, in another way, did Jimmy Page. Hendrix was a dreamer at extremely high volume. What flutes, harpsichords, and violins had been to an earlier time, fuzzboxes, wah-wah pedals, and tremolo bars were to him."

With that, Pepe plunged downstairs into Sotheby's exhibition space, where framed sheets of hotel stationery with Hendrix's drafts of song lyrics hung on the walls, and items of memorabilia (old clothes, old totems, old love belts) were inside vitrines. Pepe walked up to the nearest wall and began to scrutinize Hendrix's lyric sheets.

"They're written in such a careful, studied hand," he said. "So few erasures or crossouts. What's more—" He broke off to look at a sheet titled "Purple Haze," whose first few lines read, "Purple Haze . . . Beyond insane Is it pleasure or is it pain—Down on the ceiling looking up at the Bed See my Body painted Blue and red." "Ha!" he said. "Look at that, a *totally different* original lyrical conception of 'Purple Haze'! The final draft, as you know, is much more erotic—'That girl put a spell on me,' and so on. This is much more self-directed, more self-regarding. I always sense in everything Hendrix wrote a powerful note of insecurity. Now, *this*"—Pepe moved to the next item on the wall—"is *related* to the lyrics for 'Crosstown Traffic' but not *identical* with them. I think we're beginning to develop a whole new picture of Hendrix's technique here. The number of lyrical pentimenti is astounding!" He continued to glide along the wall, and was soon looking at a contract signed by Hendrix. "Well, it's hard to understand what this is about,

but one feels for a certainty that he was getting screwed. And now this." He stopped and pored over one more sheet of Hendrix's handwriting, and then said softly, "Now, this is a *fundamental* discovery." The paper bore a simple lyric and elementary chord patterns (E, B, F-sharp, and D, A, E) and the words "Repeat twice—then break with guitar and Bells—Guitar 1st E string ring open as B and G strings playing slight oriental pattern together. B string notes start on 7th fret with G string on 6th. (Like so: 7 [1,2,3] 10 [1,2,3] 12 . . . then 5 [1,2,3] 7 [1,2,3] 10) Repeat with low click of bass and slide guitar coming from down notes to up— Then vocal, and at same time guitar hitting G chord and bass string and bass guitar hitting A . . . then syncopate chords of B min, C# min, D, up to G . . . then to B."

"Isn't that amazing!" Pepe said. "He knew in advance *exactly* what he wanted to do in each solo, and could articulate it quite precisely. All the fog and fuzz of slides and wails and feedback were precisely calibrated in advance, and articulated to the band. *That's* fundamental. I don't think he could read music, and so when he wanted to transcribe his musical ideas he had to do it in this way—as a *narrative*, a little memo to himself."

Pepe concluded his tour of the Hendrix memorabilia (which was scheduled for auction on December 17th), and afterward, over a hamburger, he mused for a few moments about his feeling for the musician. "I used to think that noise played the role for Hendrix that chance played for Pollock," he said. "How much can you incorporate and still have art at all? In that sense, the discovery of his extreme premeditation might be surprising. But lately I've come round in any case to the feeling that that's a very superficial analysis. Hendrix's music is really a question of timbre: the howl of feedback, the roar of distortion—all those elements that a musicologist would call 'coloration.' He got rid of chordal complexity so he could concentrate on tonal complexity. So that sheet is really an attempt to put his search into words. In the hands of his imitators, of course, Hendrix's example, like Picasso's, was to offer a catalogue of effects. For Hendrix, though, the noise was never noise, and the effects were never effects. It was all simply music."

## *Fanciers*

RIGHT this minute (if you will join us in the historical present), we are in the Eugenia Room of Sardi's. What a treat. Not many actors physically in sight, although plenty of ghosts. Instead, we see dozens of dog fanciers (members of the Dog Fanciers Club), wonderful and exciting pictorial representations of dogs displayed on stands, a few pieces of dog sculpture standing on their own, and, above all these (like classical busts in a Grinling Gibbons room), pictures from what we have come to think of as Sardi's Permanent Collection—i.e., the real stuff. We start with one of Michael Redgrave, by Don Bevan. "Dear Sardi's, I am happy to be here among my friends" is the inscription.

The dog fanciers also seem to be happy to be with one another. Their club has been in existence for about thirty years. It used to meet at various restaurants, even at the old Statler, but for the last fifteen years it has met exclusively at Sardi's. For a time, the dog fanciers just talked about dogs—American Kennel Club rules and things like that—but three years ago Howard Atlee, the club president, decided that their meetings needed what he calls "event identity," and so now they have an annual show of dog art, and judge the art, and the winning artists receive five hundred dollars and are invited to donate their objects to the Dog Museum, in St. Louis. In order that this story won't be threaded through with unnecessary suspense, we can say that the winners this year are "Stumped," by Harry C. Weber, which is a bronze sculpture of two Jack Russells writhing around in the wilderness; "Champion American Bull Terrier," by Babette Joan Kiesel, which is a straightforward portrait; "The Party," by Jodi Hudspeth, which is a bronze sculpture of three Yorkshire terriers having a kind of birthday party, with a gift box and dog bones and a ball and another small thing, maybe a book, in the foreground; and "Autumn Beauty," by Stephen J. Hubbell, which is an oil on canvas of a debonair English setter.

O.K. Now we're back in the Eugenia Room. After looking up at Michael Redgrave, we walked cautiously around. We admired a piece of sculpture called "Sighthound," by Kathleen O'Bryan Hedges, from Great Falls, Virginia. "Sighthound" was very thin and silvery. Then we heard another piece being described as "Matissey" and "Cézanney," and we kept right on going. We talked to Mr. Atlee. "Most people have a picture of a dog, even if they don't have a dog," he said. We have no idea if this is true. Mr. Atlee looked just like Gregory Peck in "To Kill a Mockingbird" as he said it. We were told that Ellen Fisch, who lives in Hewlett, Long Island, and has painted a portrait of Ranger, the Queen Mother's Welsh corgi, and presented

*"And, if by any chance we lose your case, we specialize in sentence reduction, parole eligibility, and locating community service that isn't too onerous."*

• •

it at Clarence House, was there. But we didn't meet her. We did meet Mrs. Edward L. Stone, a distinguished-looking woman, who was one of the judges.

Then we met a real dog fancier, a woman with long dark hair. "Are you fond of dogs?" we asked, because we noticed that she was staring intently at "Sighthound."

"I live for my dog," she said simply.

"What sort of dog do you have?" we asked.

"A Maltese," she said, and then she tried to clarify for us her relationship to the dog world. "There are things I don't do," she said. "I don't travel to Far Hills in the driving rain so that my dog can compete with other dogs. On the other hand, I do do a lot of what you might call *doting*. I pay a lot of attention to how my dog's hair is washed and cut. On the other hand, I don't act as a chaperon for my dog."

We asked her what she meant by "chaperon."

"Well," she said, "it's like children's social life, where your parents pay for you to go, and you have to go and say hello to the ones brought by other parents."

We said that she seemed to be talking from the dog's point of view.

"Yes, that's what I do do," the woman said.

Then we looked at a painting of a huge white dog walking in a vast area of pale-green-and-amber grass. The artist was Patrick McManus, and quite soon we found ourself talking to him.

"What sort of dog is it?" we asked.

"It's a whippet. It needs to be hung in a room bigger than this one."

"What other kinds of work do you do?"

"I do this. I live hand to mouth. I was a construction worker at one time. I'm a recluse. I don't come out too often." He introduced us to his girlfriend, Baby. "I also write songs and write for a dog magazine," he said.

Lunch was served. There were eleven tables of dog fanciers. There were party favors on the tables donated by J-B Wholesale Pet Supplies, Inc. One of them was a yellow rubber lion. "A pet would be afraid of it," someone said. We looked over at the head table. There were Mr. Atlee and Mrs. Stone and also Captain Arthur J. Haggerty, who is a famous dog trainer and is famous in another way, too—for looking like Mr. Clean, the cleanser man. He has a big, very bald head.

"I've just been to the Dog Museum, in St. Louis," the woman sitting next to us said. "They just built a new wing. I saw forty years of Snoopy. *Snoopy*, I thought. Anyway, it's a fine museum."

Two of the judges made speeches. Howard Atlee was at the microphone a lot as he introduced people. He announced the winners. We had a chance to have another talk with the serious dog fancier who thinks from the dog's point of view. We asked her what she most liked about the Dog Fanciers Club.

"Well, my favorite book is dedicated to one of the founders of the club," she said. "I can tell you are going to ask what my favorite book is. It's 'The Complete Maltese,' by Nicholas Cutillo. It's not an old book, but it deals with antiquity. The Maltese is a very old breed."

"Antiquity?" we asked.

"Antiquity. Mr. Cutillo quotes the Roman poet Martial, who wrote about a Maltese who belonged to a Roman governor of Malta. The Maltese was named Issa. I happen to be able to quote you part of what Martial wrote. He said, 'Issa is more frolicsome than Catullus' sparrow. Issa is purer than a dove's kiss. Issa is gentler than a maiden. Issa is more precious than Indian gems.' I find that to be very moving. *My* Maltese is more frolicsome than a sparrow, as a matter of fact. I love the name Issa. If I had read this epigram before I named my Maltese, I might have named her Issa. By the way, the epigram ends 'Lest the last days that she sees the light should snatch her from him forever, Publius had her picture painted.' So that justifies the idea of painting a dog's picture."

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# MY LIFE: A SERIES OF PRIVATELY FUNDED PERFORMANCE-ART PIECES

1. Birth

As the piece opens, another performance artist, "Mom" (an affiliate of my private funding source) waits onstage, consuming tuna-noodle casseroles. Eventually, she leaves the initial performance site—a single-family Cape Cod decorated with amoeboid sofas, Herman Miller coconut chairs, boomerang-print linoleum, and semi-shag carpeting—for a second site, a hospital. There she is joined by a sterile-clad self-realized figure of authority ("Sidney Jaffe, M.D.") who commands her to "push," and then externalizes through language and gesture his desire to return to the back nine. This tableau makes allusion to the deadening, depersonalizing, postwar "good life." "Mom" continues "pushing," and at last I enter—nude. I do this in a manner that confronts yet at the same time steers clear of all obscenity statutes.

2. Coming Home Extremely Late Because I Was Making Snow Angels and Forgot to Stop

Again, an ensemble piece. But unlike "Birth," which explores the universal codes of pleasure and vulnerability, "Coming Home Extremely Late" is a manifesto about rage—not mine but that of the protonuclear family. The cast includes "Mom," "David," "Debra," "Fluffy," and my private funding source. In "Coming Home," I become Object, rather than Subject.

The piece is also a metaperformance; the more sophisticated members of the audience will realize that I am "coming home extremely late" because of *another* performance: "Snow Angels," an earlier, gestural work in which, clothed in a cherry-red Michelin Man-style snowsuit, I lower myself into a snowbank and wave my arms up and down, leaving a winged-creature-like impression upon the frozen palimpsest. Owing to my methodology, I am better at it than anyone on the block. Note the megatextual references to Heaven, Superior Being-as-girl-child, snow-as-inviolable-purity, and time-as-irrelevancy. "Coming Home Extremely Late" concludes with a choral declaration from the entire cast (except for my private funding source, who has returned to reading the sports section), titled "You Are Grounded For a Month, Young Lady."

3. I Go Through a Gangly Period

A sustained dramatic piece, lasting three to five years, depending on how extensively the performer pursues the orthodontia theme. Besides me, the cast includes the entire student population of Byron Junior High School, Shaker Heights, Ohio—especially the boys. In the course of "Gangly Period," I grow large in some ways, small in others, and, ironically, they are all the wrong ways. I receive weird haircuts. Through "crabby" behavior (mostly directed at my private funding source), my noncontextual stage image projects the unspeakable fear that I am not "popular." In a surreal trope midway through the performance, I vocalize to a small section of the cast ("Ellen Fisher," "Sally Webb," and "Heather Siegel") my lack of knowledge about simple sexual practices.

Throughout the piece, much commentary about time: how long it is, why certain things seem to take forever, why I have to be the absolutely last girl in the entire seventh grade to get Courrèges boots.

4. Finding Myself

This piece is a burlesque—a comic four-year-long high art/low art exploration. As "Finding Myself" opens, I am on-site—a paradigmatic bourgeois college campus. After performing the symbiotic ritual of "meeting my roommates" and dialoguing about whether boyfriends can stay overnight in our room, I reject the outmoded, parasitic escape route of majoring in English, and instead dare to enroll in a class called "Low Energy Living," in which I reject the outmoded, parasitic escape route of reading the class material and instead build a miniature solar-powered seawater-desalinization plant. I then confront Amerika's greedy soullessness by enrolling in a class called "Future Worlds," walking around in a space suit of my own design, doing a discursive/nonlinear monologue on Buckminster Fuller and futurism.

Toward the end of "Finding Myself," I skip all my "classes"—spatially as well as temporally—and move into an alternative environment to examine my "issues." At this point, my private funding source actually appears in the piece and, in a witty cameo, threatens to withdraw my grant. Much implosive controversy. To close the performance, I sit on an avocado-green beanbag chair and simulate "applying to graduate school."

5. I Get Married and Shortly Thereafter Take a Pounding in the Real-Estate Market

A bifurcated work. First, another performance artist, "Peter," dialogues with me about the explicit, symbolic, and functional presentations of human synchronism. We then plan and execute a suburban country-club wedding (again, with assistance from my private funding source). Making a conceptual critique of materialism, I "register" for Royal Copenhagen china, Baccarat crystal, and Kirk Stieff sterling. Syllabic chants, fragments of unintelligible words like the screeches of caged wild birds gone mad—this megatonality erupts when I confront my private funding source about seating certain little-liked relatives. At the work's interactive climax, "Peter" and I explode the audience/performer dialectic and invite the audience to join as we "perform the ceremony."

The second part of the piece—a six-month-long open-ended manifesto on the specificity of place—culminates with "Peter" and me purchasing a four-and-a-half-room coöperative apartment with a good address in Manhattan. Conran's furniture, Krups appliances, task-specific gadgets (apple corers, pasta makers, shrimp deveiners), and other symbol-laden icons are arranged on-site. Curtain goes down on the performers facing each other on a sofa, holding a *Times* real-estate section between them, doing a performative discourse lamenting that they have "purchased the apartment at the peak of the market."

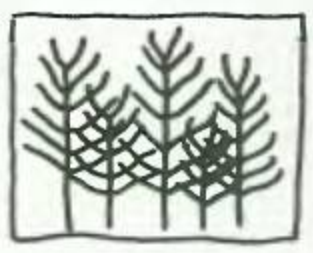
The series will continue pending refinancing.

—Susan Orlean

# GROVER AT THE WHEEL

RALPH CHANG had never been the reflective type. But recently his thesis adviser had given him a book called "The Power of Positive Thinking," and this was making him, well, think. He thought, for instance, that he might have an "inferiority complex." He wasn't sure exactly, but it was certainly true that he had spent his whole life getting C's while people like his sister and Old Chao got A's; and certainly that fact had hounded him from Shanghai clear around the world to New York. It had hounded him from his birth in 1919 right up to this glorious spring moment in 1952. Azaleas bloomed exuberantly; he walked like a prisoner between his sister and his wife. All morning he had tried to practice imagineering, according to the book's instructions. He had tried to visualize, with all his heart, life the way he wanted it. But straightaway, while stopping to tie his shoelace, he had been stung by a bee, right between the eyes. Was that supposed to happen to an imagineer? And now, after two blissful years of successfully avoiding Old Chao, he found himself not only under escort to his ex-classmate's house but under escort wearing baking soda.

"*What do you think of this new style*?" his wife, Helen, asked in Chinese. Ralph continued to move his legs as he glanced gingerly to his right. In truth, his sister still looked like a spinster to him: though Theresa had let her hair out of its bun, so that it fell sleekly to her shoulders and mostly turned under, one section presented passersby with a little bristle bouquet. Also, as if she weren't giant enough already, Theresa was, he noticed, wearing a new pair of rather high heels. Voluptuously curvy, pulsing red, they made her look even more bookish by contrast.



"*Very nice*," said Ralph.

"*If I were a man, I would be dying to marry you*," Helen told Theresa.

Theresa didn't answer.

"*Janis and Old Chao say this man is very nice*," Helen continued. "*So what that he's short and born here and has no Ph. D.? At least he's some kind of Chinese. Plus he's rich.*"

They came to a yellow brick cube with modern sliding windows. The lobby was quiet—Sunday, they were eating dinner in the afternoon, American-style. The elevator was automatic.

"*Welcome! Come in!*" Janis, pregnant, waved from her doorway. In a fit of daring, she had had her hair cut short and curled all over her head in the latest style—the poodle, this was called. A large shadow stepped out from behind her.

"*Old Chao*." Ralph tried to sound hearty and enthusiastic, but his voice struggled from him like a half-drowned river rat.

Old Chao's voice sailed out like a navy. "*Little Chang!*" As always, his smooth face fairly shone with affable ease. Even as they stood there, Ralph suspected him of secretly prospering. "*Come in, come in, come in!*" continued Old Chao. "*What happened to your face?*" Ralph tried to explain about the bee ("*Just this morning . . . right in the forehead . . . I'd stopped to tie my shoelace*"). Old Chao nodded as though this were a story that did not surprise him. Meanwhile, Janis and Helen exclaimed over each other's outfits in English. "Darling! Just darling!"

"Let me introduce . . ." Now Old Chao, in the living room, was speaking English, too.

A man stood up from the sofa; Ralph (who in the commotion had all but forgotten the purpose of the get-together) stepped forward as though he were the chief person being presented.

This flustered Old Chao. "Let me introduce . . ." he repeated. "This is, ahh . . . ahh . . ."

"Grover," offered the man helpfully, flashing a large gold tooth. "Grover Ding." A handsome, burly, breezy man, about Ralph's height, he wore a three-piece suit with a carnation on the lapel and looked confidently around at the company as if at friends. "So whose acquaintance do I have the honor of making here, eh?" He winked deliberately at Helen. "It *is* an honor." With a bow, he extended his hand to her.

"Oh, no no no." She blushed, radiant. "Please to meet my sister-in-law."

Theresa lifted her head shyly.

Grover craned his solid neck up, then down. His hand curled like a cooked shrimp. "Nice shoes," he said finally.

"New ones," Helen volunteered.

"Very darling," said Janis.

"Darling," echoed Helen.

Theresa blushed hard.

"Very darling indeed," agreed Grover. He placed his hands in his pockets. Then he winked at Helen again.

DINNER was ten long courses. These Janis served one after another, banquet-style, more because she had only three working burners and two hands than for formal effect. "Shredded Beef with Peppers," she'd announce, forehead damp, or "Squid with Button Mushrooms." Everyone would exclaim; Theresa and Helen would stand, set aside their napkins, insist they were going to help—Janis was too pregnant to be doing this, really she was—only to have Janis explain that her kitchen was too small for one person, much less two or three. Sometimes this involved pushing her guests back into their chairs. "No, no, your job to eat," she'd say, disappearing again. "Do you know she's think maybe write a cookbook?" Helen asked once. Everyone agreed that Janis certainly could, or should, except Old Chao, who shook his head. "She just like to run after every crazy idea," he said. Everyone agreed with this, too; a more politic subject was tried. Another. But over and over, with a collective sigh, the company was dragged back to its apparent fate—congratulating Old Chao on having received a tenure-track job offer just that afternoon.

"I think you heard more than enough on this particular subject," Old Chao kept saying. As indeed they all had. Anxious that they have some kind of conversation, though—it was a matter of face—Theresa, especially, responded with such keen interest that Old Chao had no choice as a host but to keep talking. He did try digressions—wondering if certain aches he'd been having might be arthritis, for example—but none of these proved sustainable. "And do you know, the department interviewed sixty people—that's six-o, sixty—and, by the end, only two people received so-called offer." This was after the soup, at the fourth course, Lion's Head. "Myself and one very smart guy, much smarter than me, I should say"—a wondering shake of the

*"I'm thinking of having her declawed."*

•  •

head here—"who got his doctorate from M.I.T."

"From M.I.T.! Really!" chorused Helen and Theresa and, faintly, Ralph (who hadn't received his degree yet, and it appeared never would). He couldn't eat.

Old Chao hesitated, apparently aware that he was displaying more self-satisfaction than was seemly. But as the silence mounted he impulsively described another smart guy who didn't get an offer at all. "Can you believe it? Turned down, and he got his doctorate from Calitech."

"From Calitech! Ohh!"

Only Grover said nothing. Here everyone was, speaking English out of consideration for him, and he was too occupied to listen. He removed his jacket, chuckling to himself. He put his jacket back on. He took it off again. He folded the napkin on his lap. He played with his chopsticks. He rotated his plate a quarter turn. Helen eyed him surreptitiously as she nodded in Old Chao's direction; Theresa studiously ignored him.

Ralph stared. Head tilted, mouth slack, he looked for all the world like someone in love. Especially when Grover, whistling, stood to leave the table. What Ralph would have given then to leave with him—goodbye, Old Chao and his tenure-track job offer! Goodbye, social nicety! Ralph could only ogle, though, helpless with envy, as Grover balled up his napkin. Grover did not push his chair back in, but left it angled out, like a door in midswing.

Janis came out with Strange-Flavored Chicken.

By Ants Climbing Trees, Grover hadn't returned. His jacket hung on his chair back; his napkin uncrumpled slowly beside his plate, blooming like something out of a time-lapse photography sequence. All the same, Old Chao spoke in English, as though Grover hadn't left. "Of course, for the back and forth, I had to buy a new car. You remember the old one, I won it in the church lottery?"

"Sure!"

"Well, now I trade it in for a new one."

Shrimp in Hot Sauce. Still no Grover, but they knew that the car was a barely used 1950 Chevy Styleline De Luxe, buttercream yellow. It had a full chrome grille, whitewalls, mud flaps, a push-button radio, the new stove-bolt six engine, and a black convertible top that worked like a dream. It did not have Powerglide automatic transmission, though; Old Chao had had to settle for manual.

By dish ten, a steamed fish, everyone was groaning. "Too much, too much."

Janis took her apron off. "Maybe I should . . . ?"

Grover was neither in the living room nor the bathroom but in the bedroom. Janis knocked. Her guest emerged, coolly explaining that he had needed to make a few phone calls.

In the dining room, he pulled his chair in close to the table. "I do appreciate your saving me some of your, ah, *old chow*." He grinned significantly at his host. Janis spooned some food onto his plate. "Good shrimp," he said. He tried another dish. "Good pork." No one else said anything. "Did I interrupt the conversation?" Looking around, he winked at Helen one last time, rakish—and when she looked stonily down at her near-empty plate, he winked once more, at Ralph.

IT now seemed that they were going to have dinner all over again. Grover began to eat desultorily, and, as Janis hadn't had anything yet either, everyone else nibbled to keep them company. The dishes had all gone cold. Strikingly, Grover did not fidget at all; what was more, he participated in the conversation as deliberately as he had earlier shut it out. Would Old Chao consider telling them some more about his new job? He said he knew how reluctant Old Chao was to talk about himself. But why should he be when one of the candidates turned down had gone to (he gasped) *Caltech*?

And hadn't the other guy who'd gotten an offer gone to *M*. (he breathed) *I*. (he breathed) *T*.?

Old Chao answered from between clenched teeth.

"Well-l-l," said Helen finally. "I've had enough." She gave Janis a look. "Such a delicious food."

Janis pushed her chair back, about to stand up. "Everyone finished now?"

"And did I hear you bought yourself a new car?" Grover lit a cigarette.

Silence. "Yes," Old Chao said. "That's right."

"Well, I'll be damned." Grover blew a smoke ring. "What kind?"

At length it was determined that the men should go out and see the car. Janis tendered the suggestion; the relief was almost audible.

"And what will you girls do?"

"Oh," said Janis, "talk girl talk. Be down in a couple minutes."

Nobody said anything in the elevator. Outside, though, Ralph and Old

Chao and Grover began to talk a little. The weather. The traffic. It had just rained. The sewer drains thundered liltingly; the streets shone like glazed candy. And before them now—the car. A long, curvy, ample machine, it sported some chrome—a front grille like a bulldog's jaw, a back bumper—but mostly it was a heartwarmingly plain, sincere machine, promising good fun and few breakdowns; the sort of car that, especially in soft yellow, looked like nothing so much as a bar of soap.

Grover patted it as though it were a racehorse. "She's some gal," he said, between pats. His diamond ring clanked enthusiastically. Old Chao watched, and, when Grover turned, examined the metal for scratches.

"Beautiful!" Ralph touched it with one respectful finger.

"How does the top work?" Grover asked. "Can we get a look?"

Old Chao started to say no, something about how he didn't like to fold it up when it was wet, but Grover began to clank some more.

"Well, O.K." Old Chao unlocked the door in order to demonstrate how the roof unlatched, how it accordioned. The snaps that held it in place, the cover that fastened over that. "What you think?"

Ralph and Grover oohed.

"You see this?" Old Chao showed them the spare tire, which rode in its own metal case on the rear bumper. Ralph and Grover ahed. "You want to sit inside?" Opening the door, Old Chao seemed to have forgotten his irritation.

Grover settled into the driver's seat. Ralph sat beside him.

"How about the radio there?" asked Grover. "Does it work?"

"Sure." Old Chao reached back into his pocket for the keys. "You got to turn on the engine."

Ralph and Grover tested the radio, the windshield wipers, the lights.

"What an auto-mo-bile," said Grover. "You're one lucky guy. How'd you get so lucky? You got a secret?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Old Chao.

"Nothing you'd care to divulge, huh?"

"I just work hard, you know."

The car hummed.

"I just do what people tell me and don't ask so many questions." Old Chao said this pointedly, but then, as if remembering himself, continued in a more amiable tone. "Maybe that's the trick. You know, American people, they always ask this, ask that. Not me."

"When people tell you to hop to it, you hop, hop, hop."

"That's right. That's the Chinese way. Polite." Something in Grover's voice seemed to have set Old Chao back on edge.

"When people ask a question, you answer. No fooling around."

"Right."

"Hmm," said Grover. "How do you release this brake here?"

"Just pull on the handle." Old Chao answered civilly, modelling his manners. Grover pulled.

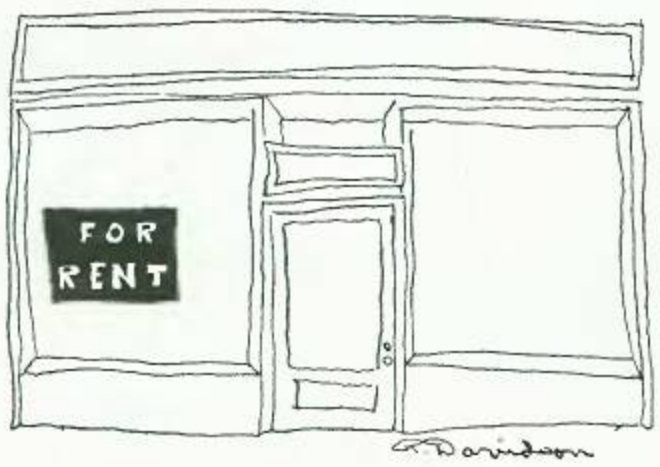
"I wish I have car like this someday," said Ralph.

"And how do you drive it?" asked Grover, hands on the wheel.

"First you put the car in gear," answered Old Chao. "Then you step on the pedal."

Grover put the car in gear, then stepped on the pedal.

"Hey! Stop!" called Old Chao as the car pulled away. "Not funny! Hey! Not funny!"




Grover and Ralph had already turned the corner by the time Old Chao had started running, though; all he got for his efforts was the dwindling sound of the pair of them, laughing.

"MAYBE we better go home," said Ralph, after a while. Grover kept driving. "Where are we going?"

"Where do you want to go?"

"Home," said Ralph, hoping Helen and Theresa weren't too worried. He explained where he lived.

"Hmm," answered Grover, or at least that's what Ralph thought he answered. He couldn't hear anymore. Since leaving the traffic on the George Washington Bridge, they had sped up; now they were headed straight west, fast. The sun was huge and low, directly ahead; it looked like the opening of a hellish arch, only rounder—a moon gate leading to a fiery garden. Ralph put his visor down. "I can't see," he said. "Can you see?" Grover did not respond. How fast were they going? Ralph squinted, straining to see the speedometer. It seemed to say a hundred miles an hour. Surely not, he thought, though he could barely move, riveted as he was to his seat by the wind. "We better go home," he tried to say again. "Where are we going?" And, "I'm cold." But he could not force his words into the air. Ahead, the

## LAST DAY

I'm having a sunbath on the rug
alone in a large house facing south.
A tall window admits a golden trough
the length of a coffin in which I lie
in December, the last day of the year.
Sky in the window perfectly empty.
Naked tree limbs without wind.
No sounds reach my ears except their
ringing, and heart's thud hollow and
slow. Uncomplicated peace. Scarcely
a motion. Except a shadow that undetected creeps. On the table a clay pot,
a clump of narcissus lengthens its stems.
Blue buds sip the sun. Works of the clock
circle their ratchets. There is nothing
to wish for. Nothing to will.
What if this day is endless? No *new*
*year* to follow. Alteration done with.
A golden moment frozen, clenched.

—MAY SWENSON

• •

moon gate stretched wide, just as a cloud cover lowered itself out of nowhere. Lower, lower. It hovered right above them, like an attic ceiling. The town ahead, squashed, became all broad, bright horizon; and when the clouds went gold, it seemed to Ralph that the buildings kindled violently. Such live reds and oranges! And then, as though on cue, they all turned—in an instant—to writhing cinder. Ralph felt smoldery himself. Yet Grover drove through the whole grand catastrophe undistracted, as though the torching of a place simply did not matter to him, or as though it were no more than some stage effect he'd ordered. Background, say, for some larger drama.

Ralph watched him closely. Before this, he'd known only two kinds of drivers—the kind who hunched up, both arms bent, pulling on the wheel as though to keep it from retracting into the dashboard; and the kind who sat so far back that in order to drape one casual wrist over the top of the wheel they had to stiffen their elbows and bend their spines. Grover was neither. He was, rather, a natural driver. He did not move and consider, move and consider, but only moved. As the cinder town began to deepen—cooling to mere scarlet—Ralph began to discern the familiar road again—to reassure himself that they were indeed on an ordinary highway, with other cars. It had seemed that they were hurtling down an exactly straight line, but actually they were snaking their way through traffic. He began to see that Grover was directing that slither—not craning his neck and putting on his blinker and swearing, but simply glancing, passing, glancing, passing.

Then, night—the quick pour of roofing tar that changed everything. Still they drove. Ralph marvelled as the stars came out; the car moved so fast, yet the stars stayed so still. And how many of them there were! He'd never seen so many; he'd never seen such an enormous sky. "What do you say? Don't see stars like that in the city, now, do you?" Grover was speaking. Ralph was surprised at how easy it was to hear him. "If you don't get out for a spin every now and then, you forget all about them. And please take note of the trees." They were driving through forest. "Look like leaves and branches, right? But every one of them is an

*"Really, I promise you that I'll always be your very own personal banker, but please try to understand that I must be that to others, too."*

• •

opportunity. You just have to see it." He nodded to himself.

Ralph nodded, too. And one truth, he found, led to another: "I'm hungry."

"Me, too!" Grover boomed his agreement like a buddy. "Ravenous!"

They pulled so smoothly into the diner parking lot that it took Ralph a moment to realize they had stopped.

THERE were no other customers in the diner. A freshly painted sign over the counter put closing time at nine-thirty; the clock next to it read nine-twenty-five. Still, the waitress took their order as though she would be more than glad to stay as long as they liked. Would they like breakfast, lunch, or dinner?

They had dinner, then lunch, then breakfast.

"My treat," Grover kept saying. "It's on me."

Ralph politely began with a hamburger, plain.

"Nothing to drink?"

Ralph shook his head no.

His hamburger arrived. Grover reached across the table and removed the top half of its bun. "Nobody," he said, "eats a burger naked." He piled on top of it ketchup, mustard, relish, a tomato slice from his own cheeseburger superdeluxe, a few rings of onion, five French fries.

"That's good!" Ralph said, and when Grover ordered another cheeseburger superdeluxe, Ralph shyly did, too, with a black-and-white ice-cream soda. And when Grover ordered a fried-clam plate and a Salisbury steak, Ralph ordered a list of side dishes—onion rings, potato salad, coleslaw. Plus a chocolate milkshake.

"What the heck," said Grover, approvingly.

Ralph laughed. They ate at whim—taking a bite here, a bite there. When their table was full of plates, they moved to another one, where they ordered desserts—apple pie, cherry pie. Black Forest cake. It was a game. They did breakfast foods: French toast, English muffins, German pancakes. They moved to a third table, ordering until the dishes became names, until all they did was look at them.

"We're going to have to haul it all home," said Grover, "in a doggie bag."

"A doggie bag!" Ralph laughed. Everything had begun to seem funny.

"What *haven't* we ordered," wondered Grover.

Ralph roared. "Chinese pancakes!

How come there are no Chinese pancakes?"

"Good point. How astute of you."

Grover burped. Ralph belched. Grover loosened his belt a notch. Ralph loosened his belt and undid the button of his pants, saying, "Hope the waitress can't see."

"And so what if she does?"

"We tell her we're just get comfortable."

"We'll tell her"—Grover winked—"that we're getting comfortable, *so she better watch out*."

Ralph roared again. What an adventure! He pried off his shoes, loosened his collar, slumped in his seat like an opium smoker. He was glad, though, that the waitress was nowhere to be seen. When Grover, getting restless, suggested that they simply go back into the kitchen, to see what was left that they hadn't tried, Ralph hesitated before padding after him, holding his pants up with his hand.

The waitress reappeared. "Ah," said Grover. "We were just saying how we were getting comfortable, you'd better watch out."

"Were you?" To Ralph's surprise, she did not blush.

Grover caressed her earlobe. "Nice earring you've got there."

She giggled. He pulled her to him.

"What do you say?" said Grover, with a wink, to Ralph. "To the kitchen?" Hands on the waitress's hips, he began to walk her like a puppet in front of him.

"Ah," said Ralph. Then, suddenly polite, "No no no no."

RALPH drifted back to the dining room alone, buttoning his pants. Flies buzzed over the tables of half-eaten food. Ralph tried the counter stools, one after another, for squeaks. Then the booths, for spring. In, out. From the kitchen came the sound of pots thrown to the floor and dishes smashing. Then, laughter. What were they doing, that they laughed as they did it? He and Helen never laughed. More dishes. Screeches. He counted the ceiling lights. Then, what sounded like sobbing. Sobbing? Ralph shook his head to himself. Who was going to clean up later? And what about the dishes? And who was going to pay for all the food? Somebody, he thought, was going to have to pay, and though Grover had insisted all along that he would, Ralph began to wonder now if he was going to have to pay, too.

He was brooding about whether to call home when Grover emerged, dusting himself off though he didn't look dusty. "What a mess," Grover said.

Ralph heard the metallic scrape of a car starting up outside—the waitress, leaving.

Grover surveyed the dining room. He examined his hands, morose. "So." His vest was open, his shirt rumpled and misbuttoned. He felt his pants pocket for a handkerchief.

Finally Ralph asked, "So where you from?"

"From?"

"Your home town is where?"

"Home town!" Grover laughed, instantly recovered. "You've been here how long? And still asking about people's home town." He shook his head. "I'll let you in on a secret. In this country, the question to ask is: 'So what do you do for a living?' "

"So what you do for a living?"

Grover laughed again.

"I'm work on my Ph.D.," Ralph offered. "My field is engineering. Like Old Chao, except my specialty is so-called mechanics."

"Is that right."

"So your field is what?"

"What? Field? My *field*"—Grover flashed his gold tooth—"is anything."

"Anything?"

It was almost past understanding: Grover was whole or part owner of any number of buildings and restaurants. He described mines he was in on, and rigs. A stretch of timberland. A garment factory. A toy store.

"Whooo," said Ralph. "That's a lot."

"Think so?" Grover preened, straightening his shirt.

"How come you own so many parts of things instead of one big thing?"

"Good question. And the answer, if you understand me, is that that way it's just a mite harder for people to get a fix on you."

"I got you," nodded Ralph. "The government is pain in the neck. Make you be crazy."

Grover stopped and squinted. "You know," he said, "you got some first-class gears twirling around in that upstairs of yours."

"Think so?" Ralph sat up a little; his waistband pulled.

"I'll tell you who you remind me of."

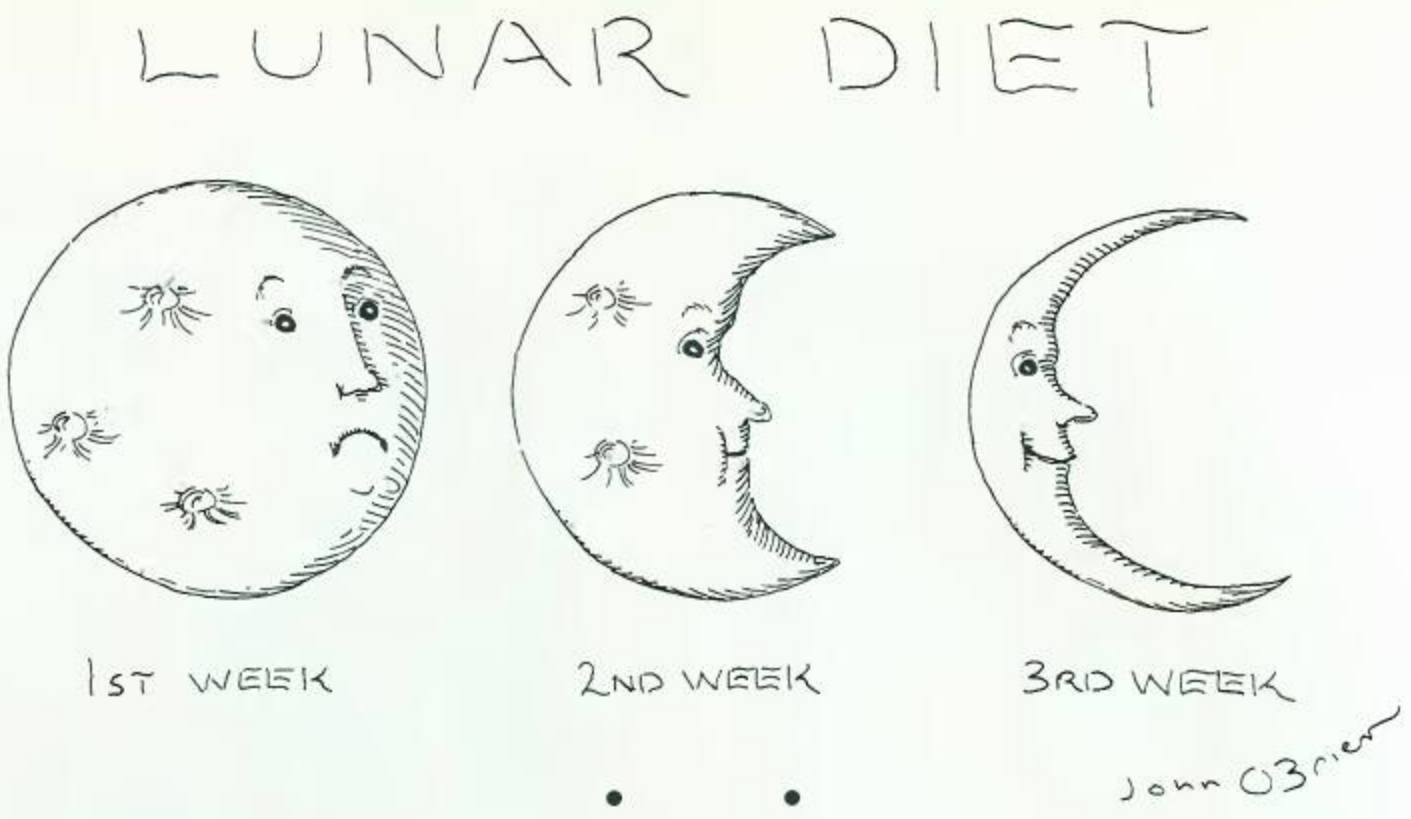
Ralph waited.

"Myself. You remind me of myself, back when I was nobody."

Slouching again, Ralph twiddled with his fork.

"You know, back then, I worked every lousy job in town—you name it. I painted houses. I drove cab. I

*"You're either the olive or the Martini."*




even sang in a music show, get that."

"Show!"

"My authentic Chinese face got me in the door." He sang in demonstration, " 'Happy talk, keep talkin' happy talk.' "

Ralph clapped.

"That's what you are in this country, if you got no dough—a singing Chinaman." Grover paused. "True or false?"

"True," guessed Ralph.

Grover smiled enigmatically. He explained how he got his break—how he kept his eyes open until one day he met this guy who needed somebody he could trust. "We happened to get to talking, just like we're talking now, and the next thing—bang—I'm a millionaire. A self-made man. What do you think of that?"

"Whoo. Mister! Just from one day, happen to get talking!" Ralph was dazed. "Like we're talking now."

"Understand me, I was already the can-do type."

"Doer type. I got you."

"I had the correct attitude. Very important."

"Positive attitude, right? Use imagination?"

"You got it."

" 'I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me,' " quoted Ralph.

"Well, I'll be damned," said Grover. "The engineer's been doing some reading."

" 'Prayerize,' " said Ralph.

" 'Picturize,' " said Grover.

" 'Actualize.' "

Grover slapped his two hands on the table, grinning so that his molars showed. Ralph grinned with his molars, too. "So what business was that?"

"What?"

"Your first business, that you became millionaire."

"That business?" Grover leaned forward conspiratorially. "That was fats and oils. I still have a hand in it." He explained how his factory took leftover cooking grease from restaurants and turned it into nice white soap. "We make it smell good, you know? That's the important thing, the smell. You can sell anything if it smells right."

"Interesting."

"That's a secret. I'm telling you a secret."

They went on to other secrets. How a self-made man should always say he was born in something like a log cabin, preferably with no running water. How all self-made men found what they needed to know in bookstores. How he should close some deals with a handshake.

"A couple of big deals at least. No contract. And favors. Favors are important or the story's not right."

Risk was the key to success. Clothes made the man. Ralph wished the night would go on forever. But finally Grover was winding down. "And one last thing."

Ralph cocked his head, already wistful.

"Keep your ears open."

"Ears open."

"Know who you're dealing with."

"Know who I'm deal with."

"And keep moving." Grover stood up and stretched. "Keep moving." He seemed to be talking to himself. "I'm going to call us a cab."

"What about the car?"

"It's out of gas anyway."

"The bill," Ralph said. "The mess."

"Forget it," said Grover. "I own this place." He called a taxi, and when it came—a big bright-yellow Checker, with a loose muffler—he directed the driver to Ralph's address first.

"How do you know where I live?"

"By your able description, remember?" He smiled winningly. "Your landlord's a buddy of mine."

Ralph gaped.

They rode home as they'd come, in a deafening wind—Grover had insisted that all four windows be opened. Now, though, instead of magic, what seemed to be flying into the car was everydayness. Grit, chemical smells. As the dark slowly gave way to light, they saw that the day was going to be hazy. Ralph propped his feet up on one of the jump seats, like Grover. His bee bite, he noticed, was finally gone. They arrived. Ralph lowered his legs; the jump seat popped right back, vertical, as though it had already forgotten him.

Grover shook his hand. "Goodbye."

"Thank you." To his surprise, Ralph felt his eyes begin to tear. "So much you told me, I know you don't have to."

"Maybe I took a liking to you."

"Did you?" Ralph gripped the door handle. "The way your fats-and-oil boss liked you?"

Grover laughed. "Come on, now. Time to call it a night."

Ralph opened his door.

"But here. My card," Grover said.

"Thank you. Thank you!"

"Give me a ring."

"Goodbye." Ralph climbed out. "See you again!"

Who closed the door? It seemed to slam itself shut. Grover leaned back, disappearing from view as the gay yellow cab puttered away, its muffler clattering forlornly after it. Ralph waved at the empty street awhile; even the gas fumes seemed to be evaporating before he was ready. His feet turned, and shuffled a few steps. Where were Helen and Theresa? What was he going to tell them? For a moment his stomach clutched with worry. But then he did not worry at all. He was an imagineer! A sky opened out around him, a whole starry firmament, as he climbed the long staircase home.

—Gish Jen

# PROFILES

## CHRONICLING THE CHAOS

ALTHOUGH Vitaly Korotich, the editor of a Soviet weekly magazine called *Ogonyok* (Small Flame), has been living dangerously in recent years, he conveys a sense of being wholly comfortable with himself, his job, and the volatile environment in which he operates. More than anyone else, including even Mikhail Gorbachev, Korotich has given voice and direction to *glasnost*, at least in the early stages of this break with Soviet habit and Soviet ethos. In his hands, *Ogonyok* became the point of the spear and also a blunt instrument flailing away at the enemies of change and renewal, including Communist Party notables and formerly inviolate institutions like the K.G.B. and the Soviet Army. Korotich says that he is on a civilizing mission whose goal is "a normal life in an abnormal society," and explains, "For seventy years, we were taught that the son who betrayed his father, or a person who burned a church, was a hero. People have been living a comprehensive lie. We have to show that it is possible to live here and be normal."

In just four and a half turbulent years under Korotich, *Ogonyok's* circulation rose from two hundred and sixty thousand to four million six hundred thousand, mainly because the magazine said aloud what many people only thought. Its articles have confirmed popular suspicions of corruption within the Party's upper echelons. *Ogonyok* exposed the war in Afghanistan as a bloody, unheroic, and futile enterprise. It supported *perestroika*, but went well beyond Gorbachev: he has seemed bent on modernizing a socialist system, *Ogonyok* on burying the system and the myths that sustained it. Korotich, early in his tenure, published excerpts from Anatoly Rybakov's "Children of the Arbat," a novel about Stalinist terror and Stalin's personal involvement. He ran a shocking piece about a criminal suspect who was tortured by police in Petrozavodsk. He was the first to publish excerpts from the works of Boris Pasternak and Vladimir Nabokov. He was the first to publish Nikolai Gumilyov, a poet who

was executed in 1921 as a counter-revolutionary.

*Ogonyok*, which is published in Moscow, is flooded with mail—about a thousand letters a day. (Korotich says that it was getting about twenty a day when he arrived.) Much of the mail is abusive and is addressed to Korotich; threats against his life are routine and, in an increasingly charged environment, rather worrisome. Western diplomats have reports of attempts on his life, including a staged traffic accident in the summer of 1988. Korotich denies the reports. He is not allowed on Soviet television, and he has never achieved national fame as a writer, his chosen métier, yet he has become one of his country's most prominent and most controversial personalities. Little, if anything, in Korotich's past would have alerted Party regulars in the summer of 1986 (when Korotich was appointed) to the possibility that *Ogonyok* was being taken over by a bare-knuckled, crusading reformer. As a poet, an author, and a literary editor in the Ukraine, where he spent the first fifty years of his life, Korotich was politically circumspect; so were most other writers. "He was orthodox, like everyone in the business of journalism," says Gennady Gerasimov, the former Foreign Ministry press spokesman, who himself edited several magazines in the nineteen-seventies. And an experienced Western diplomat says, "What one did before 1985"—the start of the Gorbachev era—"isn't a good litmus test for anyone, including Gorbachev." Nonetheless, a few of Korotich's friends and admirers feel that in taking the risks he has taken at *Ogonyok* he has been atoning for earlier misdeeds, such as praising Leonid Brezhnev's memoirs in a Party publication in 1982, and for excessive prudence.

I asked the poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko about this idea of atonement.

"Vitaly began his atonement not with words but with deeds," he said. "*Ogonyok* was the first to go after the political untouchables and the sacred cows. It was the first magazine to criticize writers who had been considered above criticism."

Korotich rejects the notion of atonement and makes no apology for his past. "I never did the dirty things, like denouncing people," he says. "I feel no shame. I never signed letters against Pasternak or Solzhenitsyn. I never sent secret messages."

"Korotich was thought of in the sixties as a kind of Ukrainian Yevtushenko," says the expatriate Soviet novelist Vassily Aksyonov, who has lived in America for the past decade. "He was one of the poets of the thaw"—the relaxed period that followed Nikita Khrushchev's famous diatribe against Stalin at the Twentieth Party Congress, in 1956. Aksyonov adds that he himself has always thought of Korotich as a "more or less liberal figure" and now holds him in high esteem.

Still, Korotich would not have been picked for the job at *Ogonyok* if he had not been judged politically reliable by the ruling Politburo. To have been an influential Party figure in the Ukraine, as he was, had to mean that he was a trusted ally of Vladimir Shcherbitsky, who, besides being Party boss there, was among the hardest of the Politburo's hard-liners. According to American intelligence sources, at the time of the nuclear disaster in the small

Ukrainian town of Chernobyl, in April of 1986, Korotich was important enough to commandeer an airplane to take him and his family from Kiev, which was within range of the fallout, to Moscow.

The relationship between Gorbachev and Korotich is interesting, if ambiguous. "It has been useful and continues to be useful," an American diplomat says. "Korotich won't let a large gap develop between himself and Gorbachev." Still, Korotich has regularly gone far afield from the Politburo's consensus view and, along with at least two other editors, is detested by part of its membership—probably the larger part. One of the two other renegades is Vladislav A. Starkov, who edits *Argumenty i Fakty* (*Arguments and Facts*), which was once an obscure weekly with a circulation of only ten thousand. Under Starkov, that number has ballooned to thirty-one and a half million, and *Argumenty i Fakty* is now the world's biggest-selling tabloid. Its articles, unlike *Ogonyok's*, are short and nonanalytical. But in both outlook and zeal it resembles *Ogonyok* and also the weekly *Moscow News*, which is edited by Yegor Yakovlev, the other major tormentor of the Party hierarchy and much that it holds dear.

In October of 1989, Korotich, Yakovlev, Starkov, and a few other editors were abruptly summoned to a meeting with Gorbachev, and were told that he thought *glasnost* was being pushed too far. "When you read the newspapers, you get the impression that you're standing up to your knees in gasoline," he said, according to a subsequent report by Yakovlev in *Moscow News*. "All it takes is a spark." Gorbachev accused the editors of publishing "irresponsible" and "negative" articles, which merely added to society's depression and anxiety. He singled out Korotich for a special reprimand, but went even further with Starkov, saying that he ought to resign. The suggestion amounted to an order, or so it seemed, because Vadim A. Medvedev, the Party's chief of ideology, then instructed Starkov to resign. Medvedev also summoned Korotich to a meeting. The American Embassy predicted that both Korotich and Starkov would lose their jobs. It was a reasonable guess, since editors, too, are employees of the state. But Starkov didn't resign, and a few days later he told Korotich over a drink that Medvedev had since advised him to go on doing what he had been doing. I asked Korotich about the whole episode.

"Gorbachev shouted at Starkov and me," he said. "I didn't understand. He didn't look like himself or sound like himself. He accused me of fighting with our opponents. 'We must be peaceful,' he said." Later in the year, Korotich was summoned to a meeting with the Central Committee and simply didn't go. Then came the summons from Medvedev, which he couldn't ignore. He told me, "Medvedev began by saying, 'People reading *Ogonyok* will stop believing in socialism.' I replied, 'People who visit your supermarkets have already stopped believing in socialism.' He then said, 'It's impossible to speak this way.' So we had coffee." A few days after the meeting with Gorbachev, Korotich published an opinion poll that showed declining public confidence in *perestroika* as a vehicle for healthy change. It was a defiant gesture. Gorbachev deplores polls, and a poll on personal popularity printed by Starkov that omitted Gorbachev from the list, presumably because he didn't do well, is believed to be what had set him off.

Like most of the shrewd, well-informed Muscovites one meets, Korotich seems somewhat confused about what is happening to the Soviet Union and is likely to happen. The confusion is understandable: change at the pace and on the scale of the past two years defies comprehension, let alone perspective. Korotich is privately critical of Gorbachev, but in his role as a member of the Soviet parliament he is a loyalist. During a special session of the Congress of People's Deputies last March, he supported Gorbachev's bid to be elected by parliament as the first Soviet President who would possess broad executive powers. Korotich belongs to a bloc of some four hundred liberal-reform deputies known as the Inter-Regional Group, or I.R.G. The position of these deputies, most of whom are radicals, was that the powers of the new office, as they were proposed by Gorbachev, were too sweeping, and that, in any case, he should take his chances in a national election rather than ask the Congress of People's Deputies to anoint him. Out of a possible twenty-two hundred and fifty votes, Gorbachev got thirteen hundred and twenty-nine—a majority of fifty-nine per cent. Much of his opposition came from the I.R.G. Korotich thinks that he was one of only a tiny handful of its members who voted for Gorbachev. One other, he says, was Anatoly Sobchak, a lawyer and a rapidly rising star, who was recently elected Mayor of Leningrad and is currently seen by many of the Moscow-Leningrad cognoscenti as a potential successor to Gorbachev.

Korotich, like Sobchak and a few others, understands that Gorbachev is under pressure from both left and right—is threading a narrow passage between shoals on either side. Korotich doesn't quarrel with Gorbachev's style, which is to accompany one or two steps to the left with another step, usually a smaller one, to the right. He thinks of Gorbachev—and of himself—as being Western-oriented in the matter of politics. But he also distinguishes himself from Gorbachev, pointing out repeatedly, for example, that whereas Gorbachev surrounds himself with aides who are "older"—that is, with contemporaries—he himself picks "younger people, who are fresh and full of ideas and who don't fear me." He adds, "When I arrived, I inherited an editorial board composed only of department heads. I started replacing them with famous and independent people." They included Yevtushenko, a circus clown, and a prominent eye surgeon. "With these more independent people, I began to feel more independent," he says.

Gorbachev's most reliable allies have been Aleksandr N. Yakovlev, a member of the presidential council, who is not related to Yegor, and Eduard Shevardnadze, the Foreign Minister until his sudden resignation on December 20th. Korotich greatly admires both men, and Yakovlev has been his protector. But Gorbachev, Korotich

says, gets too much self-serving advice from people lower down, many of whom, he adds, are conservative and right wing. "Poor Gorbachev," he says —no doubt with some exaggeration. "He has no independent sources of information." The people of whom Korotich disapproves, he says, prepare Gorbachev's memos and letters, and have more access to him than either Yakovlev or Shevardnadze has had. Various other well-informed Muscovites share Korotich's concern, and see Gorbachev as surrounded largely by yes-men, who protect him from bad news; thus he is indeed sometimes badly informed. One view is that Gorbachev minimizes the danger of disloyalty and treachery by relying on people he has known for a long time, including a few with whom he went to school.

A dustup last January involving Korotich and his natural enemies is probably revealing. He, Yevtushenko, and some other notables among the literati were attending a meeting to nominate Korotich to parliament. A society of largely right-wing extremists called Pamyat, or Remembrance, tried to break it up. Pamyat's original function—the restoration of monuments and the preservation of the best of Russia's past—has been lost, and it is now known chiefly for anti-Semitism and for seeing everyone it disagrees with as part of a Jewish-Masonic conspiracy. Korotich, who isn't Jewish, is constantly attacked by Pamyat and right-wing journals as being at the heart of the conspiracy, and at the meeting he drew a large part of the abuse. He decided to turn this affair and the others that loomed ahead to advantage. In early February, the leadership of the Communist Party met in a special plenary session to debate a proposal from Gorbachev that it relinquish its constitutionally assured monopoly of power and agree in principle to something like a multiparty system. On Sunday, February 4th, the day after the special session had begun, a mass pro-democracy rally was held just off Red Square. It drew two hundred thousand people. According to some reports, the regime orchestrated the affair; others said that its origins were unclear. But the first and most stirring speech at the rally was made by Korotich, and I asked him whether he had been the rally's catalyst.

"I organized it," he said. "After the Fascists tried to break up our meeting,

## CAPTIVE VOICES

They always prayed at last.
If not to God, to death.

The trees are turning again,
bedding down for winter. . . .
Our feather bed was getting flat;
did she find more geese?
He went round and round on his tether.
Then the dogs had his bones.

My children are preparing themselves.
When I was sick last year.
In the meantime,
I ride my stationary bike,
and stay right here near my doctor.

The chapter began so well.
It was over the hills and far
away, and the stars still out.
Even when, at daybreak,
they appeared on the path,
we were not sure—so unwarlike,
and in their language.

My contract only stipulated
there be no transfer,
and there was none, per se.
Nobody made a killing. . . .
Some people are like dogs in money,
don't know which way to turn,
guess there's something in it,
something mysterious, sniffworthy—
eat some, drink some, bury some.

Five days later it was not
whether there would be any dinner—
the word didn't apply.
We eyed the offal thrown out to the dogs.
We eyed the dogs.
In January the braves couldn't get near game
for the noise of snow crust breaking;
so it was only some old fox and raccoon bones
boiled till the springs were chewable,
but I did get mine down, and life came back.

I thought I'd die while she ate that rice pudding;
there were just four big shrimps in my whole salad.
But I was down to a hundred and twenty-five Wednesday.

—or prayed to death,
i.e., to the old squaw, faced
like the Devil (where had
Squire Knight observed the Devil?)—
who took a board and shovelled
coals onto the Captain's back
after he fell at last
and lay upon his belly.
After he'd gone round and round
on the coals, tethered.
(If only I had listened to Wawatum!
Often that winter he had been wakened
by *the noise of evil birds*.)
Then they scalped him.

It's the darkness—do you hear it?
I went and sat out in the yard.
The moon had great big eyes. It wanted
to brush against me like a cat.
Not especially affectionately . . .
Pain is what hurts the most. . . .
Then he stood up again, inside the flames.
But I think he did not feel pain anymore.

Well, the doctor didn't want me to become addicted.
So it was Tantalus all over again, with the Tylenol.
I just went wild around the house at night,
upstairs and downstairs, looking for relief.

Having no shoes against the snow,
I stopped and wrapped my feet up in my blanket,
but, growing stiff, and seeing a frozen linnet
under the bushes where I sat, got onto hands and knees,
crawling, I think, several miles, as I thought, east.

During the ice storm
We lost power five whole days.
Soon as they'd fix it, another limb would fall.
People *suffered*.
Nobody keeps a pile of blankets now;
and hundreds of dollars lost in freezer pack,
just when people thought they had something ahead.

They were not strong on landscape,
being captives.
Raising the eyes and looking far
requires a certain off-guard.
Requires, if not pleasure in, some
concord with one's status quo.
Mountains were never sublime and
forests did not breathe grandeur;
the rising sun recharged vigilance and the stars
were reproachful for routes lost.

We put these pines in to screen out
their trash cans (of course in summer
air-conditioning helps drown out the mowers)
and we bought Tim a telescope he's never used.
Too much city light.
Of course, we love this house.

I keep biting the skin off my lip.
I don't know what I'd be upset about
unless it's that baby yelling Mommy.
You see, two people were needed:
somebody to take Dad to the hospital
and somebody to stay with Mom.
That's why it happened—
I couldn't be two people.

Life's no longer simple.
The hunger of the first part
sues the hunger of the second part.

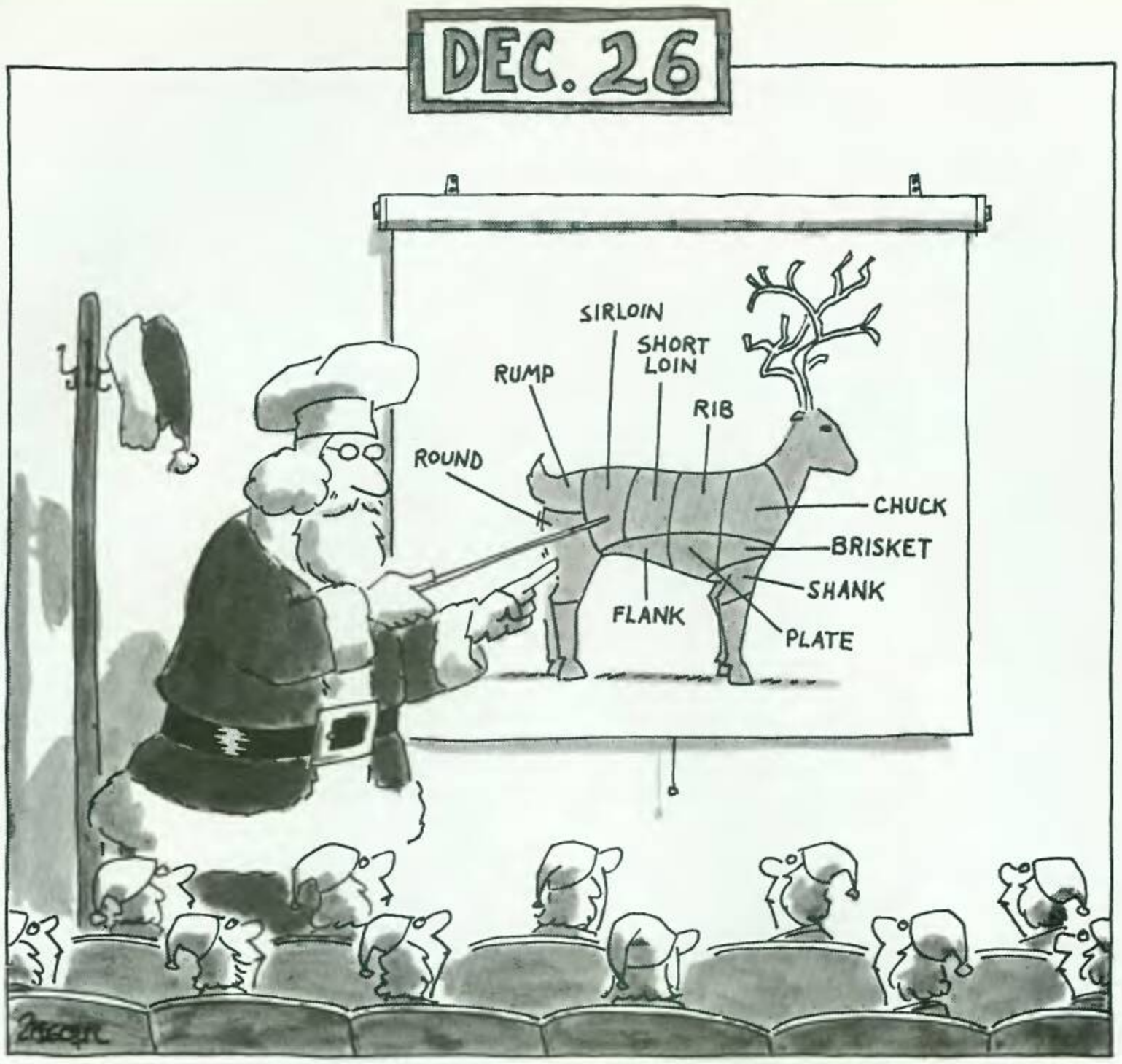
I carry my prayer on a stick:
Overpopulation is murder.

—Eleanor Ross Taylor

I met with local political leaders in Moscow and said we needed an anti-Fascist demonstration. It was to help Gorbachev, and I asked his people to push him to come himself. He didn't. He didn't understand. He'd have been the most popular man in politics for the next fifteen years if he had come."

This conversation occurred while I was visiting Moscow last March. Korotich and I then met twice more a few weeks later—in Washington, where he had come to receive an award. We met again in New York in October; he had come in early September to spend a couple of months as a senior fellow at Columbia University's Gannett Center. He managed to complete his memoirs while he was there. Reviewing talks with him that occurred over a span of several months has sharpened a number of impressions: of a disintegrating society spinning out of control; of Moscow's print media that are steadily gaining in confidence as they chronicle the chaos, and are close now to being able to deal with leadership in the manner of the Western press. The continuity one hears in all this is Gorbachev and a style of leadership that confounds predictions and confuses all sides. In our first conversation, Korotich said that Gorbachev was "lucky"; that he "can slide from one catastrophe to another—unharmed—and that's why I believe in him." In October, Korotich felt much the same, adding that "our stupid system can't provide alternative leaders." I asked about Boris Yeltsin, who is now the President of the Russian Republic. "I'm not sure Yeltsin is the right man to succeed him," Korotich said. "I see him as a primitive, and I'm not for him. But I support his positions more often than I do Gorbachev's." In distinguishing the two men, Korotich cited various divergent plans to privatize the ruined Soviet economy in five hundred days. Gorbachev, he said, "reads the plans and understands them but then can't decide what to do. Yeltsin doesn't read them, but knows what to do. They hate each other, and most avenues of coöperation between them are closed off. They tremble when they talk about each other. I do like the people around Yeltsin, and he will talk to the press. Gorbachev talks only to the foreign press. When Andrei Sakharov died, Gorbachev spoke to the foreign press, but he wouldn't talk to *Ogonyok*."

In October, I asked Korotich wheth-

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er Sobchak and Gavriil Popov, a radical deputy and now Mayor of Moscow, might eventually be contenders for Gorbachev's job. "I have very good relations with both of them," he said. "But I will be with Gorbachev. We [*Ogonyok*] do not attack Gorbachev except to criticize his policies." In April, he said, "Gorbachev is trying to put history on a skewer, like a shish kebab, because we don't have a history, only pieces—pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary, post-Stalin and pre-Gorbachev. But he will destroy himself, because he is a product of the system and a victim of it."

In October, I also asked Korotich who or what would succeed Gorbachev. "Our generation has fulfilled its historic task—Gorbachev, Sobchak, Popov, even me," he said. "Now we need thirty-five-year-olds to lead us." I then asked him to comment on a gloomy prophecy that a few of us had heard from a Soviet official who had recently visited America: his country, he warned, "would become a big Lebanon on the Eurasian land mass with a strong nuclear flavor." Korotich doesn't foresee a civil war à la 1917, but does worry about a military coup. He is a film buff, and says his bitterly divided country reminds him of "a movie called 'The Defiant Ones,' with Sidney Poitier and Tony Curtis—two convicts on a chain gang who escape. They hate each other but are chained together and so are their fortunes."

KOROTICH is an affable character—spontaneous and ebullient, easily amused and vaguely roguish, occasionally abstracted but usually ready to talk about anything. He speaks English as rapidly as he speaks Russian—in torrents, and never hesitating for a word. Instead, he invents the word, or comes up with a reasonable facsimile of the one he wants. He may be one part genius, one part crusader, and one part operator. He has multiple agendas. At fifty-four, Korotich radiates energy, and his rather bulky figure probably isn't much bulkier than it was when he was in college, in the early nineteen-fifties, where he was a wrestling star. One of his interests there was writing, and he edited the school's newspaper, but his father, a prominent microbiologist, and his mother, a physiologist, persuaded him to study medicine and become a doctor. His father is dead now, and his mother, who is eighty, has moved to Moscow and lives in an apartment near Korotich's. Her grandfather was a czarist general. She doesn't remember her mother, but says that her father was unforgettable—a boyar who drank away the family money and behaved like an aristocrat to the end of his days, even if he couldn't live like one. Korotich's own father was of peasant stock, and he managed to become a figure of some consequence in Kiev without ever joining the Communist Party. He was imprisoned under Stalin for a few months in 1938, on a charge of abetting an imperialist plot to destroy Ukrainian pigs, which for a time had been dying in an unexplained epidemic. By one account, Korotich *père's* life was spared when he identified the bacterium that had caused the disease. However that may be, shortly after his release Hitler's panzers arrived in the Ukraine, and he was interned in a German labor camp. His son recalls a German doctor who came to the house in search of the scientist, whose work was of interest to him; on being told that the elder Korotich was a German prisoner, he departed, Korotich says, muttering to himself, "*Warum Krieg?*" —"Why war?"

Korotich completed his medical studies in 1959, and became a cardiologist in Kiev. He wrote in his spare time, and in 1965 he gave up medicine to become the secretary of the local writers' union. Although he wrote film scripts and essays, and some of the essays were collected into books, Korotich became best known as a poet. Some say that he was more productive than inspired, but his poetry was generally admired. Yevtushenko, who first knew Korotich when he was a doctor, and visited him at his hospital, calls one of his poems, "Crossing the Market," a "work of genius." Jack Matlock, the American Ambassador in Moscow, has

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translated half a dozen or so of the poems, Korotich says, and has included them in poetry readings he has given at the Embassy.

In 1969, Korotich was removed from his job with the writers' union for what he characterized in our first conversation as "unspecified reasons," saying, "I was merely told that I was a writer and therefore I should write. I returned to the street without resources." In a later conversation, he returned to this episode and offered an explanation for his loss of the job: In that same year, 1969, he was slated to take a job in the Soviet mission to the United Nations, but before leaving for New York he was ordered by the Central Committee to write an article criticizing the book of a Ukrainian dissident figure. "I said that I wanted to read the book first," Korotich recalled. "But they said no. So I couldn't go to New York, and spent the next years out of everything—free-lancing."

Besides writing, Korotich did a good deal of translating during that period. "I translated Eliot and Walt Whitman into Ukrainian, also Robert Lowell and others," he says. In 1978, Korotich was rehabilitated; he rejoined the secretariat of the writers' union then, although he doesn't talk about that, and he was named editor of the Ukrainian literary magazine *Vsesvit* (*The Universe*). There he began publishing a number of American writers, including poets. (He published all of E. L. Doctorow, of whom he is a great fan.) By then, he had visited America a number of times, had lectured around this country, and had developed a network of American contacts, which came to be important to him. In 1984, he disconcerted his American constituency by assaulting its country in a book called "The Face of Hatred." Numerous Russians were also put off by the book. "It was a slimy book, and it surprised me," says Aksyonov, and he might have been speaking for a number of Korotich's admirers—Russian and American—who had read it.

"I have no apologies," Korotich told me last spring. "In 1982, America had become crazy. It was the start of the Reagan era, and the country was full of hatred." He cited films like "Rambo" and "Red Dawn" as symptomatic. In a newspaper interview in May of 1989 he had said that America "was not always like it is today."

Why, then, I asked, had he chosen to republish the book just a year ago?

"It's bad to turn your back on what you've done," he said. "This was an important book. Hatred can destroy societies. My country was built on hatred. It destroyed the country from within. That's our history. The book sold two million copies and was translated into ten languages, including German and Spanish." Republishing the book may have been Korotich's way of asserting his lack of guilt about the past. A more cynical but not unreasonable explanation is that he wrote this anti-American diatribe in order to promote his own prospects at an especially nasty moment in American-Soviet relations, and elected to reissue the work because it had sold so well.

Korotich is clearly comfortable in America, and, I think, might even live here one day. "I love America. I am happy here," he says. Still, some of what inspired "The Face of Hatred" remains—Korotich's sense that the so-called military-industrial complex is more influential than it actually is, its prospects unaffected by the end of the Cold War. He likes talking about what he sees as contrasting American styles abroad and at home. "The newspaper that represents America abroad," he says, "is the *International Herald Tribune*," which he likes, whereas *USA Today*, he adds, "constitutes the kind of journal that most Americans want, or think they want. The American press never speaks to Europeans as it does to Americans," he says. This reflection leads him into a discussion of the mass media. Americans, he thinks, don't understand what is going on around them. "We are coming to a moment when arms mean nothing," he said in October, seemingly indifferent to the Persian Gulf crisis and the build-up of American forces in the Middle East. "Magazines and newspapers are the new superpower. It is this superpower that made the revolution in Eastern Europe. The war in the Gulf is a media event. Mass media rule us all." He repeated his view that CNN ranks among the best American inventions.

Korotich takes less interest in America's political style than in its movies, which he doesn't like, or so he says. In his book, he equated Ramboism with main currents in the American style, and he still does, talking a lot about what he sees as "America's fixation with muscularity." He says, "Europeans see America as clever and important, but Americans see themselves as muscular and big—as Arnold Schwarzenegger." Some years ago, he says, he thought that Woody Allen and Dustin Hoffman, both of whom he admires hugely, would supersede the famous cowboy stars like John Wayne. "But now, again, you have these huge, muscular people," he says. "America likes to show its criminals and its idiots. Its movies show only Americans killing other Americans. 'Godfather III' is coming out, and there are all the other Mafia movies—'GoodFellas,' 'Miller's Crossing.' All this has nothing to do with the real America."

Korotich greatly admires American music, and says the best Soviet musicians are working here now. Soviet universities, he adds parenthetically, "are being emptied of their best people, who are coming to American universities on grants and leaves of absence." Would he settle down here? He shrugs. "My reputation has enabled me to come here," he says. "But to keep up my reputation I have to go back."

If Korotich guessed that "The Face of Hatred" would do no lasting harm to his standing abroad, he was right. Today, he is popular and admired, and has received many honors, such as an award from *World Press Review* naming him its 1988 International Editor of the Year. He has popped up regularly in Western capitals and also in the Middle East, having often managed to interview such lofty figures as Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and François Mitterrand along the way. The Soviet leadership obviously saw a clear profit in Korotich as a herald and an embodiment of *glasnost*. Thus his international role—and not least his contact with people who matter in countries that matter—has strengthened his hand in Moscow, and could also provide an added measure of personal protection if tolerance for *glasnost* should nosedive. Meanwhile,

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Korotich is taking every possible advantage of the warming trend. "I am always on the lookout for joint ventures," he says. In March of 1989, he reached an agreement to do documentaries with Britain's Central Independent Television. He may have a book-publishing arrangement with a British publisher. He was negotiating with Time, Inc., to publish a Russian edition of *Life*. And he has been negotiating various projects with *Reader's Digest*. All this was—is—envisioned as the ticket to independence for him and for *Ogonyok*.

His negotiations continue, but in October Korotich was thinking still bigger. He hopes to create a European version of CNN after the European Community becomes a single market, at the end of 1992. Elie Wiesel, he says, talked with him in New York about raising money for the project, which he thinks would probably have its headquarters in Luxembourg. Exactly what Korotich's role in such an undertaking would be isn't clear. He talks eloquently about wanting to see news on his screen each day from the capitals of both Western and Eastern Europe. He is also talking now about a Russian-language magazine that would be sold worldwide. He is vague on details.

*Ogonyok* has its offices in a low, charmless building that houses other journals and is within sight of *Pravda*, whose printing house, Pravda Publishing House, prints *Ogonyok*. Korotich's office is a plain affair—a spare rectangle with cheap wood panelling, a small desk, and a long conference table—that is indistinguishable from the office across the hall, which belongs to Lev Gushchin, the first deputy editor. In March, Korotich and I talked in his office and in his apartment, which is in a fashionable, if dreary, high rise and seemed spacious and comfortable. One of our conversations began in his study, which is dominated by a flattering but undistinguished portrait of Korotich by Ilya Glazunov, an intense Russian nationalist, who has painted many Russian and foreign notables and serves as a deputy in the Russian Federation's parliament. On walls and shelves are photographs of people like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir is there, offset by the Emir of Kuwait.

We had lunch, in a comfortable dining room, with Korotich's wife, Zina, a woman of charm and warmth, who once worked as a chemist. They have two sons, both students; one is nineteen (he is studying journalism), the other fifteen. A third son was accidentally electrocuted when he was twelve.

Korotich was due to leave for Kharkov, in the eastern Ukraine, not long after our lunch. Although he is Ukrainian, he had never visited Kharkov until last year, when he campaigned for its votes and became its deputy. There were twelve candidates on the list, he said, and he got eighty-four per cent of the vote. The mayor got one and a half per cent, he added.

Serving as a deputy in a society that is trying out democracy while watching itself disintegrate; editing the most exuberantly hard-hitting of the reformist journals while extending its writ, along with his own, beyond Soviet frontiers—all this Korotich has somehow done without losing his balance or his sense of humor or the impression he gives of having time for everything. "It's a strange life," he said one day. "I've arranged to live it as I want to live it and to pay no price. I've sold no part of my soul."

As politically astute as Gorbachev undeniably is, even he could not have expected that *glasnost* would turn Soviet journalism into a big business. Editors like Korotich, Starkov, and Yegor Yakovlev, dedicated reformers from the start, now also have a vested commercial interest in printing controversial stories. (Some would say that they always did.) Gorbachev's effort to rein in the three editors a year ago pointed up his dilemma. His plans for economic reform require social change; and information, along with goods, must be freely exchanged if the torpid, parasitic system is to be made more productive. But he seems also to want an essentially one-party state and strong executive control. He knows that, having set off the dynamic of openness, he can't stifle it. "The role of the media can't be exaggerated," Anatoly Sobchak says. "Politics here is now carried out in the press and on TV." Whereas the intelligentsia traditionally expressed itself politically in books and poetry, journals like *Ogonyok* and the literary monthly *Novy Mir* now constitute the intellectual's link to politics. "The country doesn't need writers anymore," Aksyonov says. "They were the only

politically active people for a long time because only they were individuals—not part of a collective."

The regime restrains the press administratively, or tries to: it can limit a journal's circulation by restricting its supply of paper; salary levels are set by the state; and it is the state that decides whether, say, a publication's antiquated typewriters can be replaced with computers. When Korotich began looking for joint ventures abroad, it was to free *Ogonyok* from these arbitrary constraints, which are imposed by the Pravda Publishing House. As large as *Ogonyok's* circulation became under Korotich, it might have become even larger by early this year if the magazine had been independent by then. The same is true of *Argumenty i Fakty* and of *Moscow News*, which began in 1930 as an English-language newspaper, for foreigners only. Soviet citizens could not subscribe to it, and there was no newsstand distribution. Not until 1980 was a Russian-language edition of *Moscow News* permitted; it now appears in limited numbers in kiosks on Wednesday mornings and rapidly sells out—as early as 7 A.M., I was told. "*Moscow News* is one of the enigmas of our life," according to Boris Zolotukhin, a deputy and an advanced liberal reformer whom I met last March. The paper is far more tightly constrained by the authorities than *Ogonyok*, he says, and no one knows why. "Yegor Yakovlev is more pro-Gorbachev than Korotich, but he has more troubles," a Western Ambassador says. A year ago, in November of 1989, *Moscow News* gave itself a splashy party to celebrate its fifty-ninth birthday. "Why not wait until your sixtieth?" someone asked Yakovlev, its editor, and he replied, "Because we may not be here then." The birthday party is still being talked about: the new Minister of Culture, Nikolai N. Gubenko, who is a prominent actor and director, sang and played the guitar, and, inexplicably, an Orthodox priest gave a talk on the meaning of the Trinity.

In the past few months, a few of the constraints have been lifted, and most editors feel less pressured. In March, I learned that a new press law had been under discussion within the Soviet parliament for several months, but seemed to be in trouble. "Some high officials are opposing it," Korotich said then. "Gorbachev and Aleksandr Yakovlev understand the usefulness of the press, but they won't fight for the law. And Gorbachev may not want a free press. I don't know." This summer, however, the new press law was adopted. Since the law allows the publication of journals that are free of state control, or even involvement, the staff of *Ogonyok* voted to declare the magazine independent. It is still published by the Pravda Publishing House, but instead of turning over a large share of its revenue—it had been making an annual profit of seventy million rubles under Korotich—it will now simply pay a fee. Still, there is a dark side: competition, falling profits, falling circulation, and a pervasive sense of uncertainty within the staff.

In our first conversation, I had asked Korotich whether he worried about competition that the press law might stimulate.

"It is true that we will lose a lot," he replied. "But I want to survive in a competitive environment."

I returned to the question in our

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April meeting after hearing reports that mass-circulation journals like his had started losing subscribers.

He denied losing circulation. "We have gained a million in the past year," he said. "The real danger for us is the press law. A lot of the new journals will collect our readers." He did sound worried then.

When we met in October, *Ogonyok* had a new set of problems: inflation, the rising cost of newsprint, and a freefall in circulation had forced up the subscription price by two and a half times —to one ruble (or about twenty cents). When I asked Korotich to estimate how far his subscriptions would fall, he said he thought the figure would level off at a million and a half—a drop of three million. "We still depend on the Party for newsprint," he said. "And we don't have enough of it. I am negotiating with the Finns for more newsprint, but they aren't giving it away, either. I need time. The government is trying to show that independence doesn't pay. We at *Ogonyok* feel like people do after a divorce. We have our freedom, but we don't know what to do with it. Normal times are not so easy."

As expected, the new press law has led to the creation of some new journals and newspapers, including two good ones in Moscow that must be cutting into *Ogonyok's* circulation. Also, numerous underground journals are now aboveground; some of them are printing what an American friend of mine who tracks the Soviet press and visits Moscow frequently calls "spicy stuff, reminiscent of what we saw here in the nineteen-sixties and seventies." He adds, "It isn't porn, it's tasteful spice. And those old ladies who sell cut flowers in metro stations are now also selling calendars with this kind of stuff. Who would have believed it?" It may not be porn, but in early December Gorbachev nonetheless formed an anti-pornography commission, directing it to take "urgent measures to protect public morals."

IN the pre-Gorbachev era, *Ogonyok* and *Moscow News* were among the worst of the Stalinist rags, but *Ogonyok* goes farther back. It is the only Soviet journal that existed before the revolution, according to Korotich; it began in 1907, he says, and quickly became a popular family magazine. In 1918, *Ogonyok* was banned for having royalist sympathies, but in 1923 Lenin

temporarily adopted a more liberal line, and *Ogonyok* was allowed to reappear. It was placed under the auspices of *Pravda*, which also controlled *Krokodil*, a kind of Soviet *Punch*. For many years, *Ogonyok* and *Krokodil* were both edited by a rabid Stalinist named Mikhail Koltsov. "He became very important and was used by Stalin to identify 'traitors' publicly," Korotich says. But Koltsov began to displease Stalin, who summoned him one day in the early nineteen-forties and asked him if he had a gun. Koltsov said that he didn't, and asked why. "Because if I were in your place I'd shoot myself," Stalin is supposed to have said. Koltsov was arrested and executed the following day.

Korotich is preoccupied by the Stalinist period, and likes to talk about it. "No one knows why Stalin killed Koltsov," he says. "Maybe his profile got too high." In Stalin's day, the circulation of *Ogonyok* never exceeded a million, according to Korotich. "You could read it in any hairdresser's or Army barracks, but most people looked only at the crossword puzzles," he says. His own immediate predecessor at the magazine was Anatoly Sofronov, whom he describes as "a huge, fat man who was married five times and was the worst writer in the country." Sofronov, who died this fall, at the age of seventy-nine, was also known as a Party hack and a sycophant. When Korotich arrived at *Ogonyok*, he found under a glass desktop in his office a sheet of paper listing the birth date of every member of the Politburo. Among Sofronov's self-serving practices was printing a portrait of a Party grandee in the issue of *Ogonyok* that coincided with his birthday, and personally delivering a copy of the magazine to the official. In the early nineteen-eighties, the Central Committee began to receive anonymous notes from *Ogonyok* staff members complaining about Sofronov's incompetence. More serious, it turned out that for years he had been donating less than the three per cent of his income that officials and other members of the *nomenklatura* were obliged to contribute to the Party. Sofronov's dereliction was ignored until the year after the arrival of Gorbachev and his entourage, in March of 1985, at which point he was fired.

Korotich has a selective memory; it doesn't diminish his unique contribution to the cause of a "normal life" in

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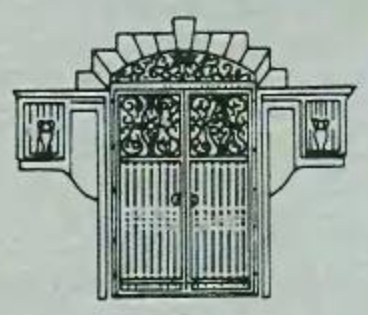

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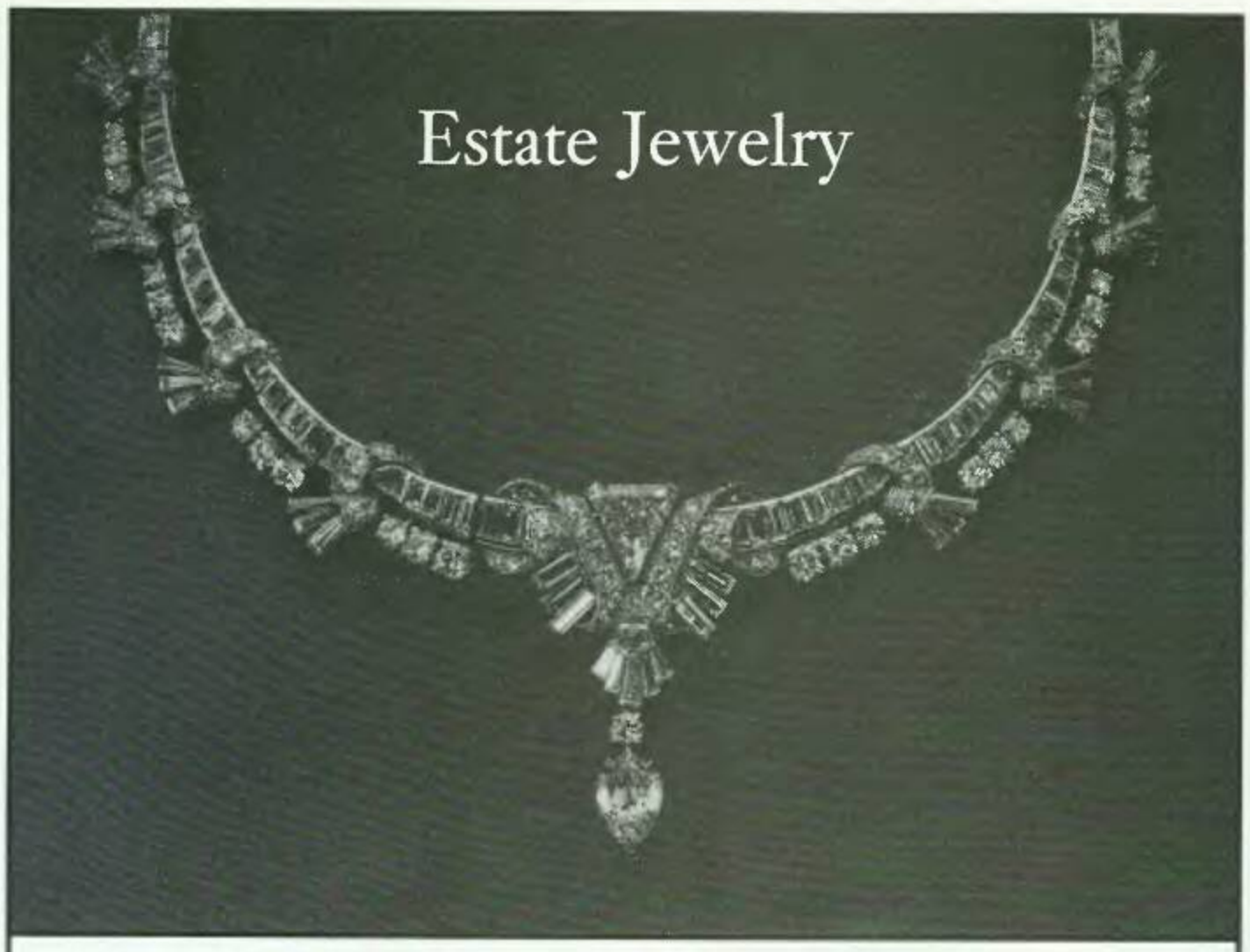


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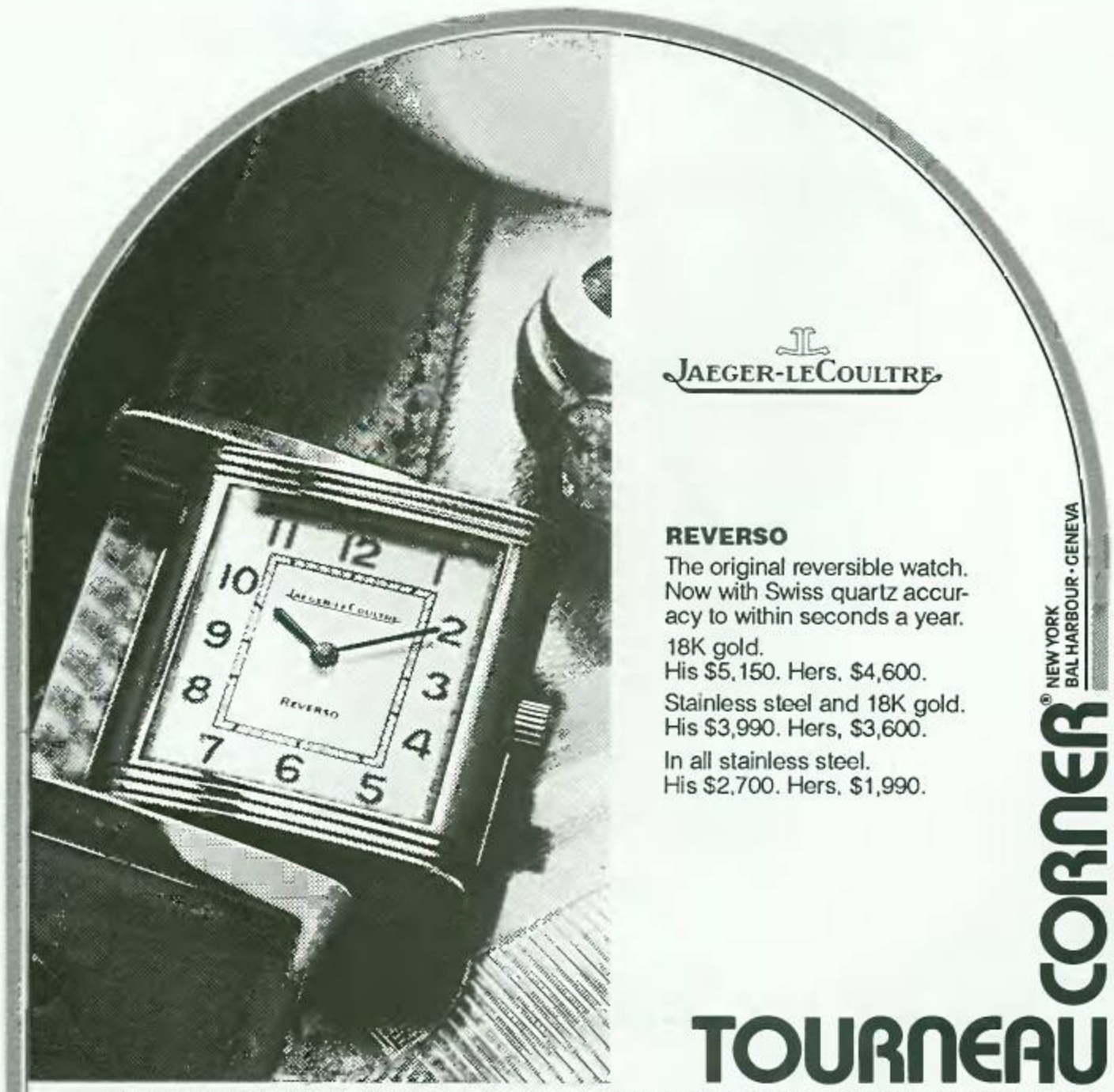



his country to point out that his account of an event may vary from month to month or from one interlocutor to another. For nearly five months, *Ogonyok* was published without an editor. In April, Korotich says, he was summoned to the Kremlin office of Aleksandr Yakovlev, who was known by then to be close to Gorbachev but hadn't yet acquired the key role he was to play. According to Korotich, Yakovlev offered him the *Ogonyok* job. He had always lived in Kiev and was comfortable there. Housing is a key consideration for most Soviets, and in Kiev Korotich had a large apartment that he and his family liked; moreover, his income there was larger than it was likely to be in Moscow. Korotich claims to have said no to Yakovlev—whom he describes as "a great man"—when the job was offered. But they began discussing what Korotich would need, especially in the way of housing, if he did move to Moscow. I told Korotich I'd heard that Yegor Ligachev, the power of the Party's conservative wing, also had something to do with Korotich's appointment. Korotich then acknowledged Ligachev's involvement, explaining that Yakovlev had been in charge of ideology but Ligachev, as the Politburo's second-ranking member, had also had oversight of appointments. Several months later, he says, Ligachev summoned him to his own office (also in the Kremlin) while he and Yakovlev were talking, and began by asking whether he wanted the job of editing *Ogonyok*. "I said 'Yes, but,' " Korotich recalled, adding that he then began listing his needs, starting with an adequate apartment. Ligachev, he said, provided assurances, and then, after a brief interruption, drew Korotich to a side door in his office. "He opened it, and there they all were —the Politburo, fully assembled," Korotich says. (Actually, Gorbachev was not there on that day.) "I had never seen them all together like that except on May Day. Ligachev said, 'I propose the nomination of Vitaly Korotich as editor of *Ogonyok*. Does anyone object?' No one did. So I then understood that I was editor of this huge and impossible magazine." It's a good story and may very well be true. What is certainly true is that long before talking to me Korotich told a Western Ambassador in Moscow that it was Ligachev who sold Gorbachev

on the idea of making him editor of *Ogonyok* and who then summoned him to Moscow.

Korotich's first moves as editor must have come as a nasty surprise to Ligachev and fellow-stalwarts of the Party's right. I asked whether Aleksandr Yakovlev had protected him, and Korotich replied, "Yakovlev said, 'Never come to me with your articles. I don't want to know what you are doing, and don't tell me.' I was free to do what I liked, and I did." Many well-informed Soviets say that Korotich personally cleared any controversial piece with Yakovlev, Ligachev, or Gorbachev; he proudly showed me a phone in his office that gave him instant access to Gorbachev. "Before, no one liked *Ogonyok* and no one hated it. No one believed what it said or took it seriously. But then we began to polarize people. Either they loved it or they hated it."

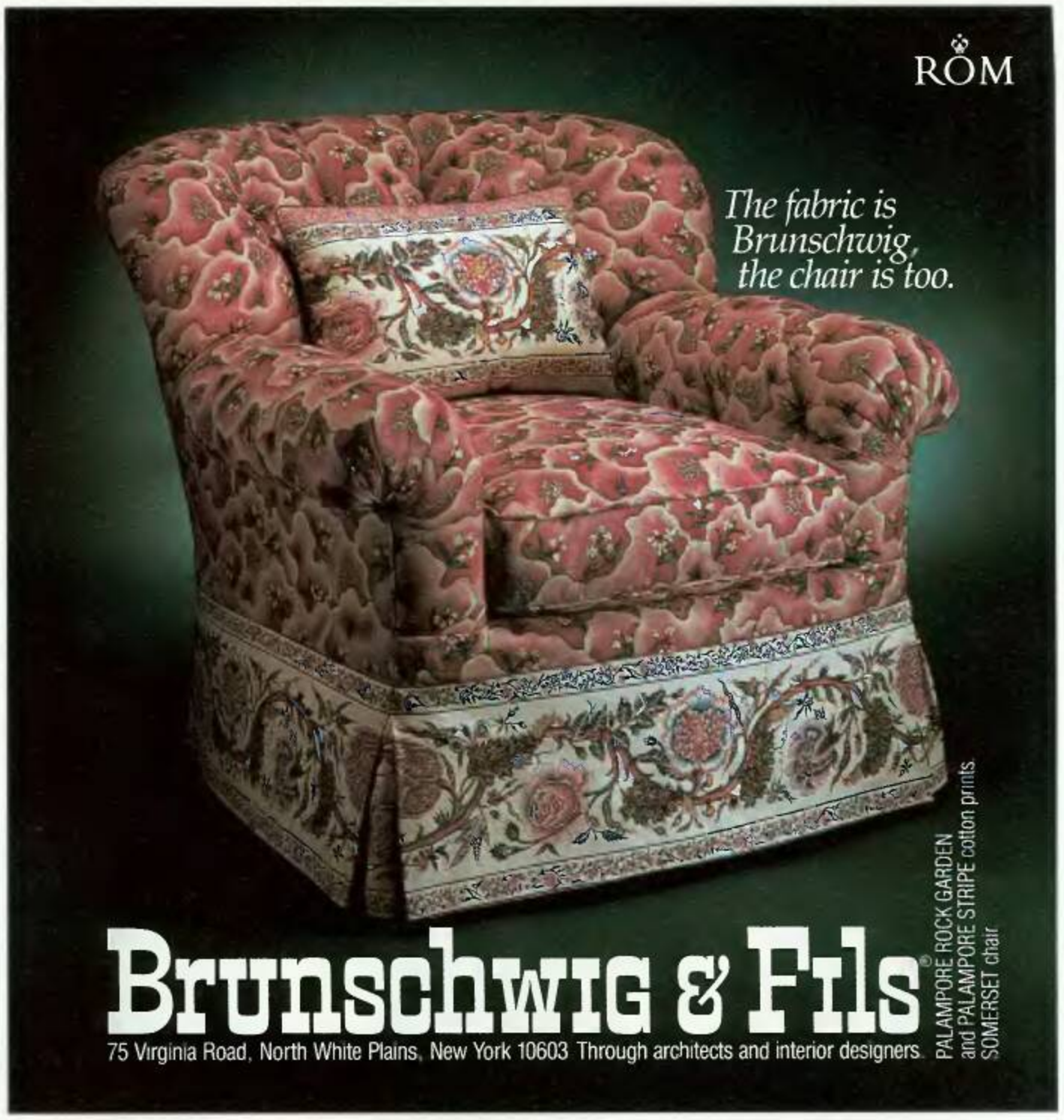
Korotich's début as a crusader, his deputy editor Lev Gushchin told me, took the form of an article attacking a quasi-Fascist youth group that the K.G.B. was using to break up peaceful demonstrations of hippie-like youth groups. Korotich was immediately called before the Politburo, Gushchin said. "Ligachev was there, and they clashed," he said. "But nothing happened."

I asked Gushchin if Gorbachev had reacted to that piece and to similar ones that followed.

"Gorbachev took a neutral position, and Yakovlev defended Korotich," Gushchin said. "Yes, there was danger, but we didn't feel as if we were in danger. People here were unaware of bad news—of danger—because Korotich didn't tell them. He was the ideal leader."

Gushchin had been a journalist for fifteen years—four of them as deputy editor of *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the newspaper of young Communist Party members—when Korotich invited him to become his deputy editor. "I had never met him, and knew him only by his poems," Gushchin says. "He was a man from the provinces, and he didn't know what could and could not be published. When I started work, I was terrified, and said, 'You can't publish this or that.' I had earlier been called before the Central Committee for just small mistakes."

*Ogonyok's* staff members were instantly made aware that things would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be very different now. Korotich assembled them and said, "I don't want you bringing in articles on anything that you don't talk about at home. If a subject does not interest you, it does not interest me." Then he began recruiting young reporters, and within a few months he had acquired four who were twenty-seven or younger. "*Ogonyok* wasn't a soccer team, but I felt it needed fresh blood—young reporters," he says. "It wasn't easy getting them—not with the traditions of *Ogonyok*. I wanted an anti-chauvinistic journal, and that hadn't ever existed in this country. I started to interview independent political figures without asking anyone's permission. Sometimes Gorbachev would call me, sometimes I would call him. I wanted to help him, but I also wanted to be independent of him. It is hard for an American to understand the full significance of this: we were making our own decisions."

On arriving, Korotich had found a lot of deadwood on the staff. His first step—"literally," he says—was to persuade the Party to retire those people with pensions and privileges. "I knew I had to get that done in the first two weeks or so before anything the Party didn't like had appeared in the magazine," he says. After getting the Party's agreement, Korotich says, he called a staff meeting and disclosed the details. "I told half the staff members they would be leaving with pensions and privileges," he says. "And I then said, in effect, 'You are lucky to be leaving like this, because I would have fired you either way. Let's all be friends.' "

Korotich says that another problem in the early days was the inflow of unsolicited pieces from Party members or aspirant writers with Party connections. He rejected such material, and instead set a course that seemed bound to land him in trouble. In the summer of 1987, *Ogonyok* printed a piece about Georgi Markov, the head of the writers' union and a favorite Korotich target. "We said he had opened a museum in his honor in his native village," Korotich told me. "We said it was wrong for a bad writer to create a museum in his own honor—one with paintings and sculptures of himself. *Pravda*, the voice of God, attacked us for that piece. The Central Committee then called, ordering me to reprint that attack in *Ogonyok*. I called my board together." After the board met, Korotich got in touch with the Central Committee and reported that *Pravda's* piece would not be reprinted, because his board had voted against reprinting it. "*Pravda* then got seven writers to say in a letter that Vitaly Korotich was opposing socialism and must be stopped by the government," Korotich told me. He rejected the charge in the letter, and nothing happened. He then attacked Viktor Afanasyev, who was *Pravda's* editor at the time, for having portrayed himself as a foe of Brezhnev's. "I proved that he had been a theoretician under Brezhnev," Korotich said.

And did all this boost circulation?

"It helped," Korotich said. "And afterward it became normal for some other journals to oppose the Central Committee."

The Soviet military soon became a target of *Ogonyok*—an enduring one. "In November of 1988, we attacked General Dmitri Yazov, the Minister of Defense, for his stupidity and for abuses of human rights within the Army," Korotich recalls. "Yazov then went on television and attacked the yellow press. I was in Leningrad with Yevtushenko when it happened. I was saying, in a speech, 'We'll cut the armed forces, starting with missiles and our biggest fools.' Then I got a call from Gorbachev. He shouted at me, 'Why are you criticizing Yazov?' We were at war in Afghanistan, of course, and someone had given him a verbatim transcript of what I had said in Leningrad right after I said it."

Oddly, Afghanistan had by then become *Ogonyok's* best story, and the Army had liked the way it was handled. Among the young reporters Korotich had recruited was Artyom Borovik, who had been in Afghanistan on assignment from a newspaper and wanted to return. Borovik initially turned

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pat of butter
cinnamon stick

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down the offer from *Ogonyok*, but changed his mind when Korotich promised not only to send him back to Afghanistan but also to print everything he wrote there. "No other editor would have offered that," Borovik says. He joined *Ogonyok* in January of 1987, and was on his way to Afghanistan six weeks later.

Borovik intended to set a precedent by reporting what was actually happening. "People here at home knew nothing about the war," he says. "Soviet journalists normally sat in a hotel and talked to a political officer and a soldier—a waste of time. They wrote that our soldiers weren't really fighting—just planting trees and flowers and building hospitals. The soldiers had a very low opinion of them. I had to show the soldiers that I could go through the desert with one canteen and confront the same risks. Vitaly called Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev"—the Chief of Staff—"and asked him to enlist me as a soldier-reporter. Akhromeyev gave me a letter for the commander of the Fifteenth Special Forces authorizing me to take part in combat operations." Korotich says that Borovik's assignment was to show "how the soul of a seventeen-year-old is shaped when he falls into that situation."

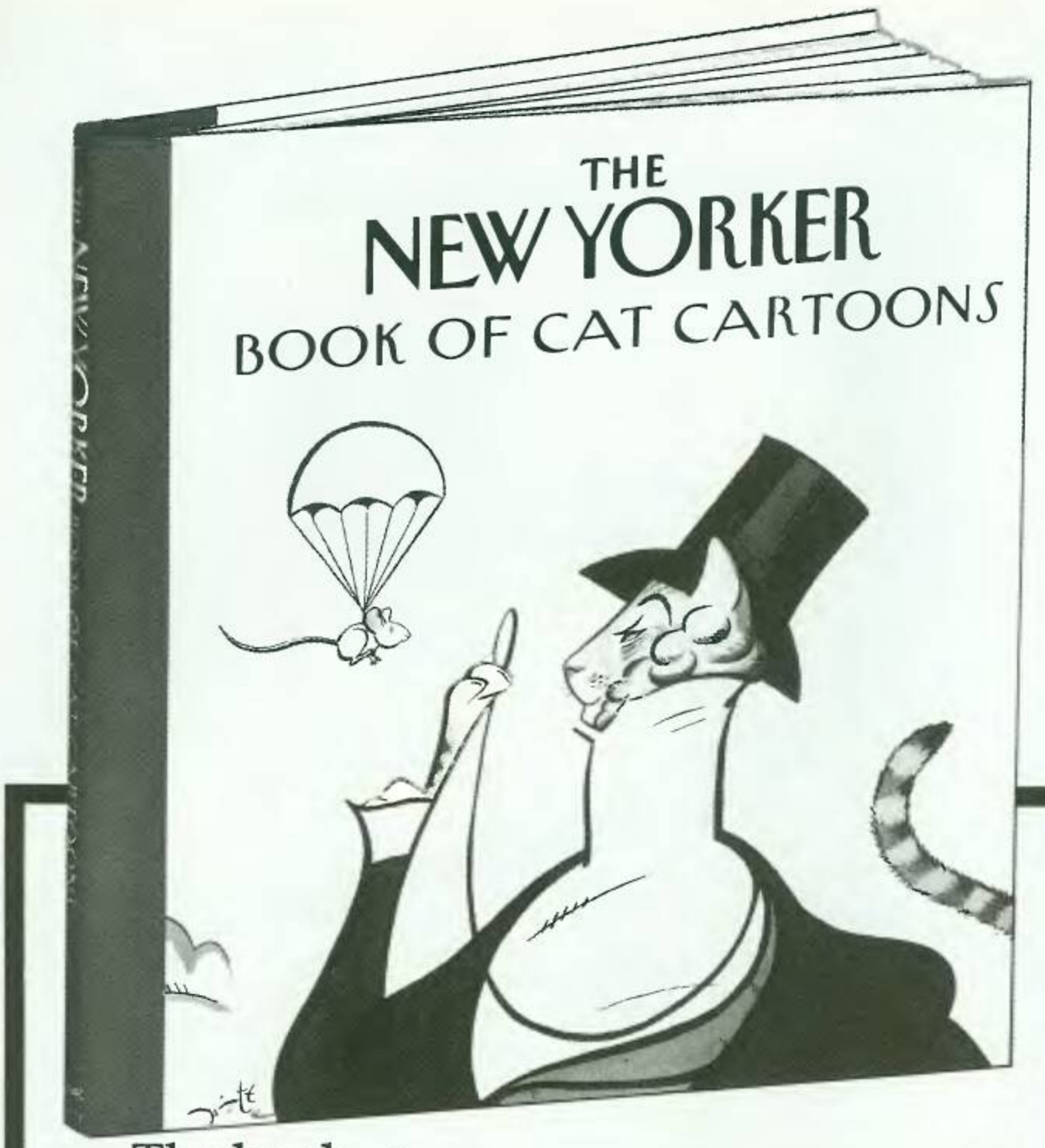
On his first trip for *Ogonyok*, Borovik wrote four articles, and Korotich devoted a great deal of space to them. "I wrote only what I saw," Borovik says. "I never said the war was bad, but the readers saw the carnage and the truth of the war, which the Party élite still described as a national duty. The only way was to show people from inside the war that it was bad. *Sovietskaya Rossiya*"—an orthodox newspaper—"would never have published one per cent of it. Not accounts of soldiers being killed and killing. Only stories about building socialism in Afghanistan would have been allowed."

The reaction to the pieces was probably without precedent. "I never expected it," Borovik says. "We had thousands of letters from mothers saying, 'Thanks for telling the truth.' Or saying, 'How dare you write such things?' Lots of Second World War veterans protested. We were accused of bad-mouthing the Army."

I asked Korotich and Borovik about a second series of pieces, which I had heard had been shelved for a time. Their accounts were quite different. "I did have problems with the second series," Borovik said. "I hadn't written about our crimes and the killing of innocent people. I was living within a battalion. We had an operation scheduled for January 23-26, 1989. But Shevardnadze had already announced that the last soldier would be out of Afghanistan by February 15th. Our Army hadn't really been fighting for the past year. But Najibullah"—the Afghan leader—"was fearful that the rebels would close the road linking Kabul to the Soviet Union. The Army didn't want to do it"—to attack people in the vicinity of the road. "No one wanted to be the last one killed in Afghanistan. Hundreds of Afghan women, children, and old men were killed. I heard of one officer, a colonel, who had killed dozens of people himself. My series was called 'The Hidden War.' "

Borovik said that Korotich "sat on the series for five or six months," and added, "He had given me two or three months off just to sit home and write. In the end, he printed it, leaving out the last name of the colonel. But there were dozens of these kinds of colonels—people who did worse. The piece was cut. It was about two hundred and fifty pages, and the magazine couldn't handle it all. But he did print the important stuff."

Korotich denied having sat on the piece. Borovik, he said, was a slow writer. And, he added, Borovik had to submit the manuscript to Army attorneys, to be sure that the people who were being accused by name of com-

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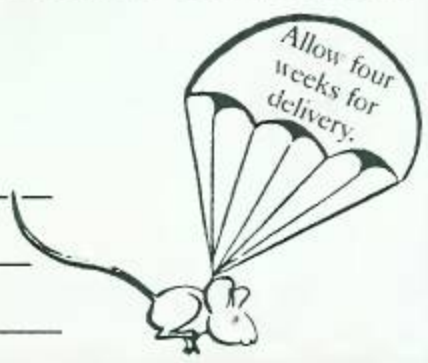


mitting atrocities were judged criminals. "After getting the approval, Borovik signed the piece," Korotich said. "But it could not have been published without that approval."

Borovik speaks unaccented American English, because as a child he spent four years at the Dalton School, in New York. His father, a rather ambiguous figure with strong K.G.B. connections, was then the head of the Novosti news agency's New York office. After his adventure in Afghanistan, Borovik exploited his knowledge of the American idiom to initiate a highly imaginative and original project. In 1989, Korotich provoked a debate by advocating an all-volunteer Army. Borovik recalls saying to him, "There are no more wars. Why can't I serve in the U.S. Army?" He adds, "Vitaly loves all these crazy ideas." What Borovik had in mind was an exchange: he would serve for a time in the United States Army, and an American reporter would spend the same period of time in the Soviet Army. "*Ogonyok* would get a piece that showed why life in an all-volunteer Army is better," Borovik says. "It would also show that American soldiers weren't thirsting to destroy our country." Frank Carlucci, who was then Secretary of Defense, agreed to the idea, but Yazov, his Soviet counterpart, and Marshal Akhromeyev were opposed. After a year of trying to persuade them, Korotich, according to Borovik, misled the military leaders by telling them that Carlucci, besides agreeing to the project, had expressed hope that the Soviet side would also agree. The ploy worked, or seemed to. But on the eve of Borovik's departure for Fort Benning, Georgia, he got a phone call from Akhromeyev. "I forbid you to put on a U.S. Army uniform or fire an M-16," the Chief of Staff said. Borovik called Korotich, and, he says, Korotich asked him, " 'Who is your chief—him or me?' So I went ahead and did it." Borovik spent three weeks at Fort Benning, and during those weeks a reporter for *Life* served in a Soviet Army unit. Borovik wrote a five-part piece for *Ogonyok* on his experience. "We showed that the volunteer Army is best."

There was tension between Korotich and Borovik, and Borovik's run at *Ogonyok* was brilliant but lasted just over three years. "He felt like a young Hemingway, and never wrote anything

for us after the Army piece," Korotich says. "He is a writer of books, not a journalist. I want people who are married to *Ogonyok*." Borovik now works for a television show called "Vzglyad" ("Glance"), which has a format much like that of "60 Minutes," and also for a magazine called *Top Secret*.

However controversial Borovik's *Ogonyok* pieces were, they probably drew less fire from orthodox Party members than most of the rest of what Korotich was printing. For a time, *Ogonyok* all but seized control of the 1987 campaign to discredit Stalin, which was launched, more or less, in a speech by Gorbachev that November—on the seventieth anniversary of the Revolution. Although most of the speech was the usual committee-written boilerplate, one brief passage did seem to invite a review of the Stalin experience. Through this opening charged Korotich and a few others. They and people like them were worried that the damage done to Stalin's reputation by Khrushchev had been gradually undone during the era of Leonid Brezhnev. And Gorbachev, they knew, understood that in order to change the grotesque system that Stalin had created he would have to destroy the Stalin myth, or what remained of it. Yet Gorbachev lacked support within the Party hierarchy to bring Soviet society face to face with the blight of its formative years—to pose the question "Is our system as awful as its creator?"

In the summer of 1987, Gorbachev had set off a major row within the Politburo by trying—unsuccessfully—to float de-Stalinization. Later that year, however, a documentary film called "Risk-1," which had a strong anti-Stalin slant, was being screened by a few of those who could help or harm its prospects for wider presentation. The film had been made by Dmitri Barshchevsky, a director, and his wife, Natalya Violina, a writer, as a labor of love: Barshchevsky's parents had died in the Stalin terror; his wife's stepfather had been executed, and her mother, an elegant woman who is alive and well and is living with them, spent six years in a Gulag. The Barshchevskys' film had a predictably bumpy passage through the system, and would almost certainly not have been approved if Gorbachev had not heard about it from Aleksandr Yakovlev. He arranged a


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screening at his dacha, and apparently decided that the film should be seen on Soviet television—in prime time and two nights before his speech for the seventieth anniversary. Earlier television programs alerted the public to the film, and the estimated size of the audience was two hundred million. (A sequel, "Risk-2," appeared a year or so later, and was even tougher on Stalin; it won the Cannes Film Festival award for best documentary of 1988.)

With the film and the modest but clear encouragement of Gorbachev's speech, the reformist editors fell upon the Stalin experience like avenging angels. Korotich printed the first interview with the widow of Nikolai Bukharin, a celebrated victim of Stalin's show trials of "oppositionists" in the nineteen-thirties. The interview led to Bukharin's rehabilitation and was thus a major step in the anti-Stalin campaign. For the next year or so, a handful of journals, most notably *Ogonyok*, released a torrent of material exposing the excesses of the Stalin period. "The campaign went faster than Gorbachev wanted," Gushchin says. It may actually have gone too far, according to Korotich himself and others at *Ogonyok*. "We overdid it," Borovik says. "If you attack something too often, you start to create the wrong effect." Still, most specialists feel that the anti-Stalin campaign was among the most important episodes in recent Soviet history, and among the least understood. Gorbachev's entire inheritance as leader—Soviet culture, society's instincts, the taboos—had been handed down from Stalin.

The recurring targets—Korotich's obvious favorites—were, and remain, Party scoundrels, the Army, and the K.G.B. *Ogonyok* is now banned from Army libraries—a ban that is hardly surprising, for the magazine often accuses the Army of abusing young soldiers in basic training, of providing inadequate housing for all ranks, and of paying salaries that junior officers can't live on. The generals "are overpaid," Korotich says, and, "We have more generals in Moscow than in all of the United States."

In March, Korotich told me, "We are preparing a new line of assault on the Army and on the K.G.B." He has taken to using his authority as a member of parliament to launch official inquiries. For example, last year, he inquired officially of the K.G.B.

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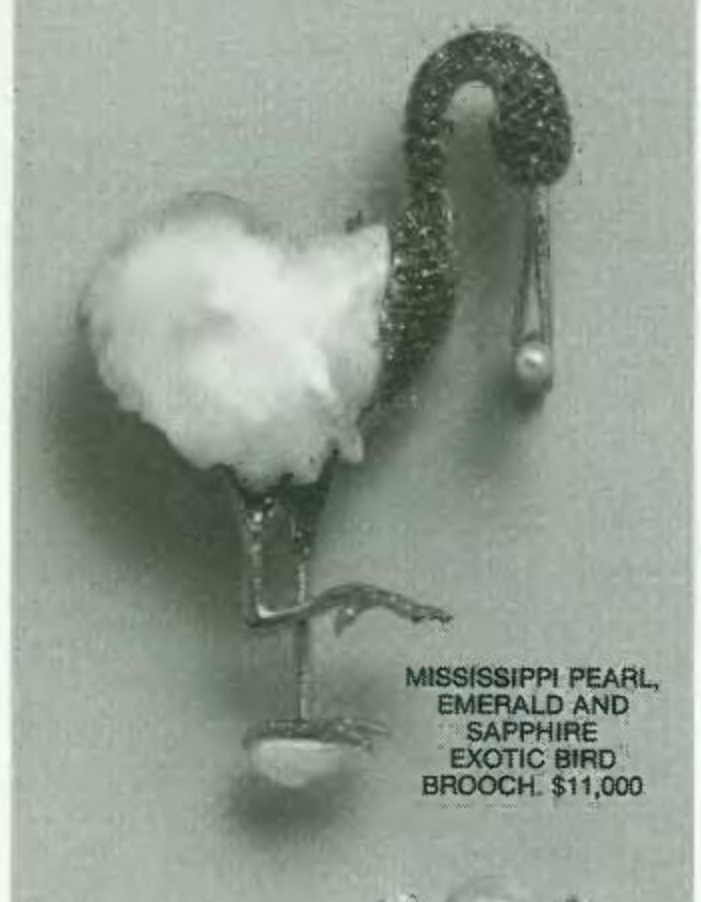

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whether it had advance information about the riots in Baku that occurred last January. If so, had the government been warned? If not, shouldn't the K.G.B. leadership resign? The questions were printed in *Ogonyok*. Disaffected K.G.B. people have helped the inquiries by providing *Ogonyok*, or well-placed allies of *Ogonyok*, with secret government documents on which articles are built. Some K.G.B. officers are even writing pieces anonymously for *Ogonyok*, Korotich says.

At a special Party conference in June of 1988, Korotich was called upon to defend a piece that accused four senior Party officials from Uzbekistan of taking bribes. "All four persons named in this document are delegates to the conference," Korotich is said to have announced. Apparently, he then handed the document to Gorbachev, who was presiding. After the conference, Korotich accused the Party itself of protecting the four officials from prosecution. They were later arrested in what Korotich describes as "a scandal that had never happened before." Equally without precedent in his country was the investigative journalism that Korotich had set in motion.

Although *Ogonyok* has played a leading part in the rehabilitation of numerous writers and poets, Korotich refused for a time to consider publishing Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, whom he denounced as a "fool" and a "Soviet Khomeini." He later changed course, however, and *Ogonyok*, he says, became the first journal to resume publishing Solzhenitsyn. What it published first was a short story. "I did call him the Ayatollah," Korotich says, "and I find him very narrow, but he is a major writer, and everything he has written should be published."

Korotich has so far left *Ogonyok's* format largely unchanged. As in the past, the center of each issue contains graphics, but reproductions of classical art and respectful portraits of political leaders, which were once standard fare, have gone. They have been replaced by the work of contemporary Russian artists, many of them very gifted but little known.

FOR a time, *Ogonyok* was a source —one of a very few sources—of stories about revolts against local Party leaders. One of the first of the revolts occurred in Volgograd (formerly known as Stalingrad). The apparently deserving target of the revolt was Vladimir Kalashnikov, the regional Party boss, whom Korotich describes as "a strong guy and Gorbachev protégé." A reporter named Igor Gamayunov wrote a piece about the incident for *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, another weekly. The article was hard on Kalashnikov, and the editor killed it. Gamayunov thereupon took it to *Ogonyok*. Korotich was away, and Gushchin, as acting editor, didn't hesitate: he pulled a piece from the issue that was just going to press, and replaced it with Gamayunov's. Gushchin is deeply respected by the staff at *Ogonyok*, but he and Korotich are very different. Gushchin is a worrier, unlike Korotich, and some staff people say that he was nervous of the consequences of running the piece about Kalashnikov. The Central Committee said nothing, however.

Korotich and Gushchin see the pressure from censors rather differently. "We are fighting with them all the time," Korotich said in March. "At first, I refused to talk to them. I said they were illegal. We have criminal laws and a constitution. If I make a mistake, call a judge." Just after becoming editor, Korotich sent a letter to a few senior Party members saying that he would accept responsibility for any violations of the criminal code. "It's Kafkaesque," he said last spring. "I never know who the censors are. Between our computers and our printers are the censors. They are physically in the printing houses."

Gushchin, however, told me at the same time that *Ogonyok's* problems with censors were behind them. "After so many battles, we just went ahead and printed," he says. He and Korotich both say that straying into the area of military secrecy must be scrupulously avoided, and that when there is any doubt they clear the piece with military censors.

I asked Gushchin about self-censorship.

"We must look more carefully at what we write," he says. "People's reactions are more of a constraint than official constraints are. Also, things are moving faster than we can keep pace with. *Ogonyok* used to be ahead of events, but not now. We are calmer now and more rational than the Yeltsins."

I asked for an example.

Gushchin cited two public prosecutors—Telman Gdlyan and Nikolai

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Ivanov—who became virtual folk heroes by exposing corruption in high places. But they ventured too far, accusing the Politburo's Yegor Ligachev of taking bribes, and then themselves stood accused, of using improper methods, such as pressuring witnesses. "We supported them two years ago, but no longer," Gushchin said. "They went beyond the limits. We found out they were responsible for the imprisonment of an innocent man —a popular Estonian," who died in prison. "We published that story and made some people unhappy."

After several meetings with Korotich in Moscow, I thought it unlikely that anything he said could surprise me. I was wrong. A few weeks later, I asked about the state's sometimes arbitrary allocation of newsprint. In 1989, he said, Medvedev—the Politburo's chief of ideology—had warned him that *Ogonyok's* newsprint would be curtailed. Korotich said that he then threatened to print a story about Soviet sales of paper abroad, with all relevant details; he clearly had the details, and he must have assumed, correctly, that Medvedev would back off on being confronted with the prospect of a piece that described sales abroad of a product to which heroic institutions like *Ogonyok* had limited access. The incident spoke volumes about Korotich's political license. As long as the licenser, Aleksandr Yakovlev, continued to sit at Gorbachev's right hand (and Gorbachev remained at the helm), Korotich could presumably do just about what he pleased. But Yevtushenko has another explanation. Rather characteristically, he equates Korotich's experience and his own. "Being outrageous is the protection," he says. "I started being outrageous at age eighteen, and people assumed I had someone very important protecting me. It's the same with Vitaly. Being published in *Ogonyok* is like having a pass. You are protected or feel protected."

Because so much material of the sort that would have been judged outrageous not long ago was being printed routinely last spring, the lingering taboos were hard to pin down. I had been told that Gorbachev could not be criticized in print, yet while I was in Moscow he was criticized in *Ogonyok* by Gavriil Popov, who as the new Mayor of Moscow turned up at the last May Day parade standing next to Gorbachev at Lenin's mausoleum, in Red Square. Even Lenin had become fair game by then, although Gushchin said, "Any criticism of him in *Ogonyok* must be documented. Criticizing him is in style—calling him a criminal, even—but we do not write such things."

Two diplomats—one of them a Western Ambassador—told me in March that one unchanging taboo was the use of the term *chastnaya sobstvennost*, meaning various forms of private property, such as real estate and means of production. (*Lichnaya sobstvennost*, the term for lesser kinds of property—books, television sets—is unobjectionable.) The explanation, according to diplomats and others, was that although Communism has been discredited, its residue is a perverse egalitarianism: if many people are badly off, all people should be badly off. The attacks on coöperatives—the nearest equivalent of private businesses —reflected this sentiment. Anatoly Sobchak, who is a prominent advocate of the coöperatives, said then that although Gorbachev was far more "progressive" than the people around him and had more common sense, "he himself is not without a few inhibitions regarding private property." It turned out, however, that *chastnaya* had lost its standing as a taboo word even as I was having those conversations. *Ogonyok* had begun making free with it. "We have used it in our articles about the struggle for independence," Korotich says. "Without private property you can't have independence."

Various other supposed taboos that I was told about also turned out to be inactive. In a volatile, dynamic environment, keeping up with what the press is doing is difficult for anyone.

Around the time of the Party conference in June of 1988, controls on the press in general were loosened. The warming trend was traceable to Aleksandr Yakovlev, who had just taken over-all responsibility for ideology, which had been controlled by Ligachev. The shift was seen as a crucial victory for Gorbachev, and television, it appeared, might be a major beneficiary. Censorship of programs was relaxed, and more documentaries appeared. But last spring the trend in television was unclear; the glass could be said to be half full or half empty. A Western diplomat said that two programs—and especially one called "Seven Days"—did a very good job on the collapse of the Communist Parties of Eastern Europe. "The message of these shows was clear," he said. "It was 'Get your act together.' Also, some TV producers will put Pamyat on TV so as to show it up for what it is. All kinds of games like that are played."

When I asked Korotich then whether any of the new television programs, such as Borovik's, might draw off magazine readers, he shook his head. "Borovik's program is no longer live," he said. "The material is all approved in advance. TV is part of the conservative establishment. TV is going in the wrong direction, but that is the right direction for me."

On July 15th, Gorbachev announced the end of the Communist Party's monopoly of state-run television and radio; all political groups, according to the decree, would have access to the airwaves. In October, I asked Korotich how that had worked out.

"The Party still controls TV and controls it very strongly," he said. "It is very official now and very primitive" —a favorite word of Korotich's. "Yeltsin objected a lot to not being shown on TV, and now he is being seen. But I cannot be shown, even in crowds. The same applies to certain other deputies. I have been told that by a few television people."

An American Soviet specialist agreed. "The new freedom doesn't apply to broadcast media," he said. " 'Vzglyad,' which used to appear late Friday night for two hours, was just taken off the air, but Yeltsin and a few others got it reinstated. Visitors tell me that Yeltsin is on television nearly every night. Also Sobchak and Popov." Another American specialist says, "TV is less interesting than it was. But the print media have taken

# The Changing Currents of the Danube

© Adam Woolfitt / Woodfin and Camp Associates

Europe's second-longest river has a propensity for change. The seventeen-hundred-and-seventy-six-mile Danube takes on many colors, changing from blue to brown to green. It has different names, too, as it curls through Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, and the Soviet Union.

Lately, the Danube region has been going through political changes, as well. The cities along the Danube today reflect the collapse of Communism as, one by one, the nations of Eastern Europe are converting their former state-planned economies into market economies. But this kind of change cannot be an overnight phenomenon and will take at least a few years before the "new" thinking has an impact on visitors from abroad.

Meanwhile, the countries lapped by the Danube provide plenty of opportunities for visitors interested in observing its changing currents, as well as its past history, firsthand.

Not far from the eastern Black Forest town of Donaueschingen, Germany, where the Danube bubbles up from underground, lies the city of Ulm, a delectable toy box of a Danubian town. It houses the world's largest Protestant cathedral with the tallest spire to be found anywhere. But Ulm may be best known for the annual July event known as the "Nabada," when residents and visitors line up on both banks of the Danube to watch gaily colored boat-floats bob by. The merriment climaxes when people of all ages jump into the drink for their once-a-year Danube dip.

Once it has left Ulm, the Danube makes haste to get to the postcard-pretty town of Passau. Mapmakers describe Passau, moored in the southwestern-most corner of Germany, as a "floating city." Passau embraces three rivers—the blue-green Danube, the River Inn, which rises in a mountain lake in the Swiss Alps, and the Ilz River,

*Schonbuhel Castle sits riverside in Austria's Wachau wine district;* inset: *cart with harvested hay in Cetate, Romania* (left), *and replicas of the Hungarian crown regalia in Kalocsa*

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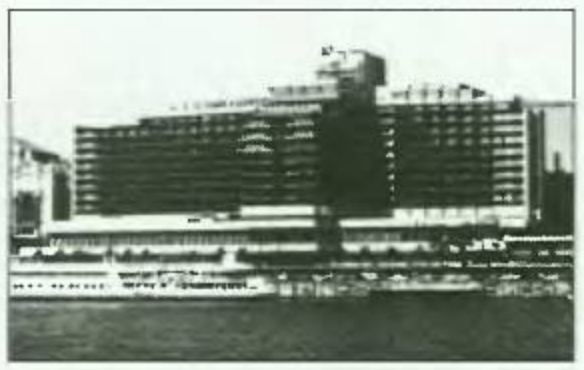

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Courting a particularly enticing bend of the river as it gurgles from the Black Forest is the city of Regensburg. As a Free Imperial City for six hundred years, Regensburg had the function of maintaining internal peace and external security for the federation of states forming the Holy Roman Empire. In the Altes Rathaus, where elections for emperors once took place, there are guided tours every day of the well-preserved 1408 Gothic Hall and the historic, elegant Electors' and Princes' chambers.

The Danube becomes more robust and river-like as it enters Austria, ambling through Schloegen toward the Wachau gorge. Running some twenty miles between Krems (the wine capital of Austria) and Melk (with its huge, silhouetted Benedictine abbey making a beautiful reflection in the Danube), the enchanting Wachau is a gem.

The whole region of the Wachau is studded with castles and towns whose past lives alongside the present. Durnstein, for instance, is the village where England's King Richard I spent a year in a castle prison. Today the castle is a tumbledown shambles—yet it draws lionhearted tourists who make the climb to inspect it. From the ruins you see the Danube's unforgettable serpentine curves.

Just north of Vienna, near Klosterneuberg, the Danube turns blue, perhaps acknowledging its own history in this tradition-bound region. Vienna may be the last romantic capital city anywhere. If your time is limited, the best way to see Vienna is to stroll along the Ringstrasse (known as the Ring), "the most beautiful avenue in the world," which contains nearly all of Vienna's major sights and sites. This magnificent artery is the perfect place for a relaxing walk; in the spring the blooming trees form an umbrella of shade.

Along the Ring you come across the ornate State Opera, considered the heart and pulse of a city that bills itself as the "musical capital of the world." Beneath this crossroad lies the so-called Opern Passage, a brightly lit, busy pedestrian underpass with boutiques and shops of all kinds, rest-room facilities, and a relaxing café restaurant-in-the-round in the center.

From Vienna, the Danube continues eastward to Czechoslovakia, where until recently the politics, if not the river itself, were distinctly red. There lies Bratislava, close to Austria and Hungary. The massive Bratislava Castle dominates the old city, from whose walls you get splendid views overlooking three countries. In the courtyard of the Old Town Hall, with its superb Renaissance arcades, concerts take place during spring and summer.

**Clockwise, from left:** *The beautiful wine-growing town of Durnstein, Austria; the medieval charm of an Austrian village; a view of Passau, Germany; a golden wedding celebration in Kirschberg, Austria*

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# MEET W. A. MOZART IN 1991

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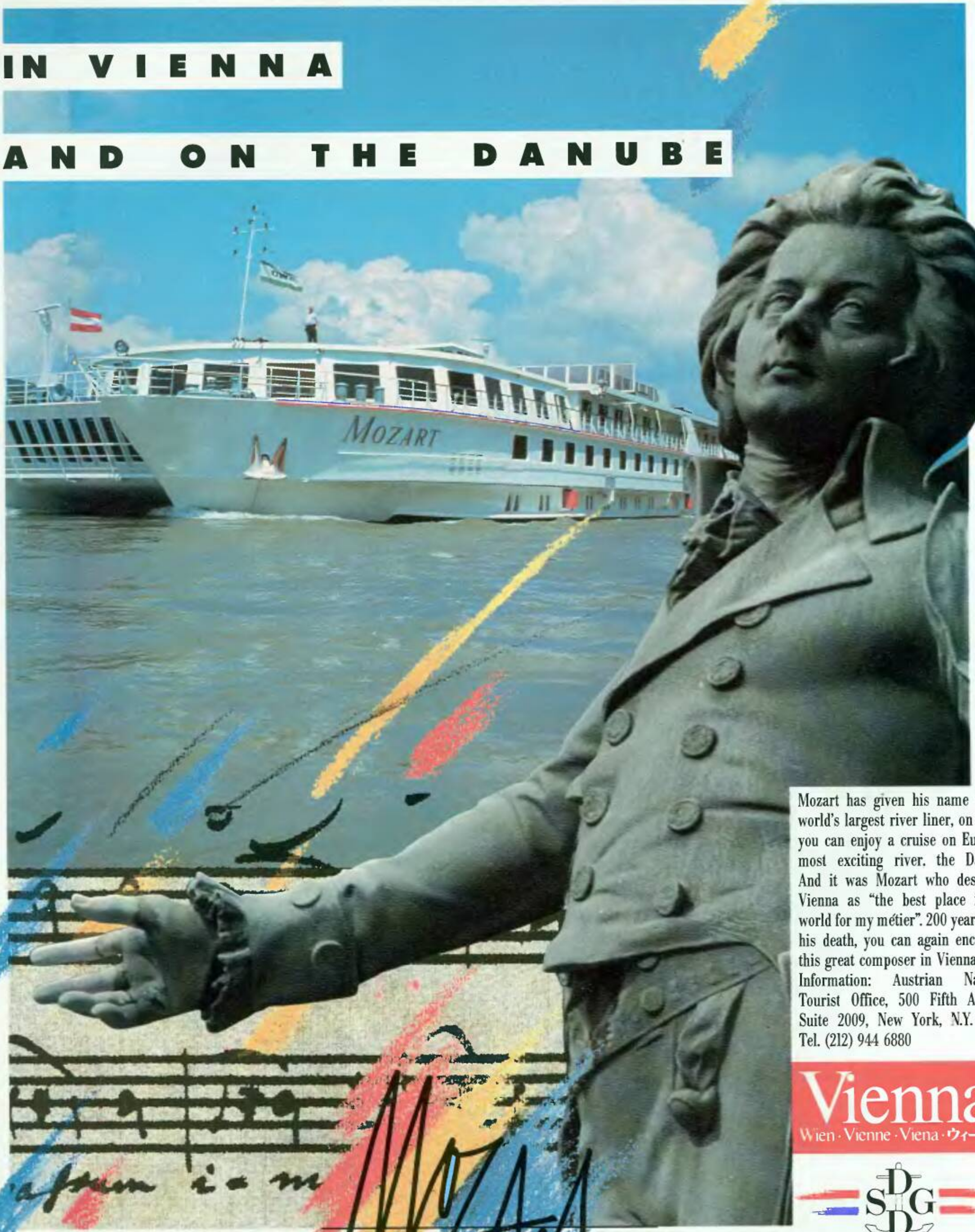


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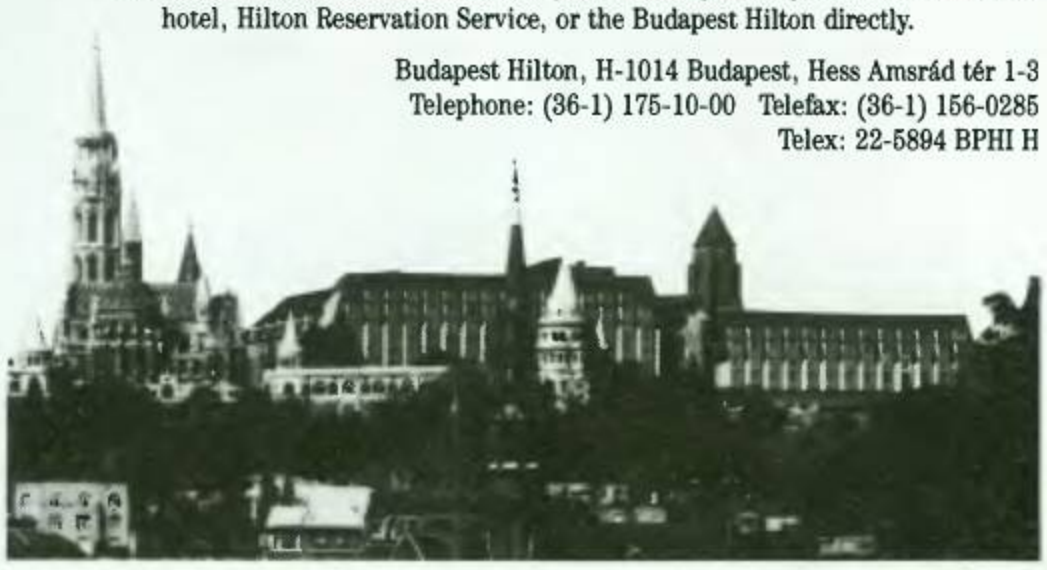

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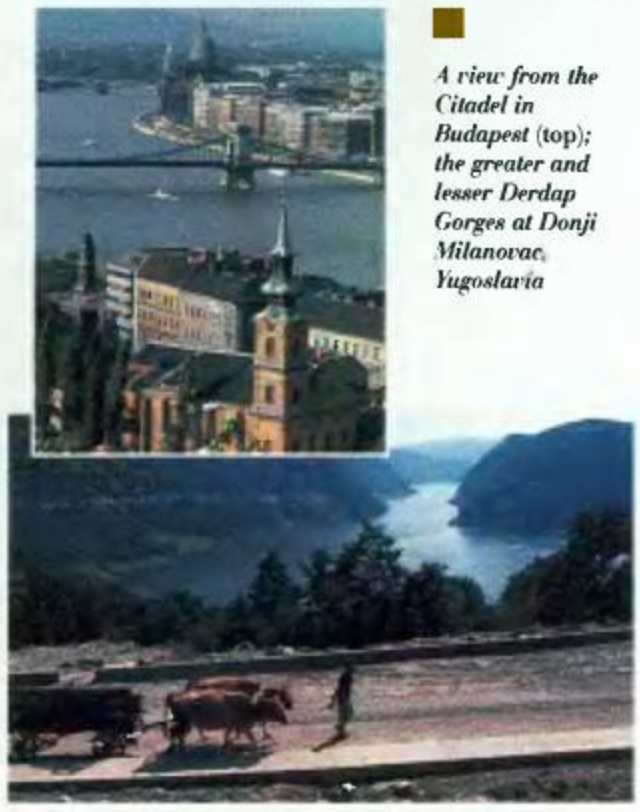
The Danube makes its way slowly into Hungary, meandering gently through the awesome treeless plain known as the Puszta before reaching Budapest. There the river's currents divide two cities: green, hilly Buda on the right bank and flat, busy Pest on the left. Rising imposingly above the river in Buda is Castle Hill, which has been the seat of the Royal Palace since the fourteenth century. Not only is the castle itself impressive, but so is the Fishermen's Bastion, a fortification that today provides the most picturesque site in the capital. Nearby is the Matthias Church with its stunning roof mosaic.

A visit to Budapest should include a trip to Margaret Island, the vivid green, boat-shaped oasis built up by Danube pebbles over the centuries. Mother Nature must have been in a generous mood when she created this river-girt fairyland where an idyllic serenity reigns.

The mighty river is known as "the dustless road" when it heads south out of Hungary and into Yugoslavia, where it turns eastward toward Belgrade. As both a shore attraction and the capital of Yugoslavia, Belgrade provides visitors with a chance to stroll along a bustling pedestrian zone dotted with charming shops. Nearby Skardalija is the place to go for a Serbian dinner with a backdrop of a Gypsy orchestra.

Perhaps Belgrade's biggest attraction is the most extensive fortification network in existence—the Kalemegdan. Conspicuously occupying the bluff that overlooks the Danube, this complex of parks, gardens, and fortifications houses an imaginative military museum. To help you recover from exploring the Kalemegdan, there's an open-air café with a stunning view of the Danube and its whirlpool rapids.



*A view from the Citadel in Budapest* (top); *the greater and lesser Derdap Gorges at Donji Milanovac, Yugoslavia*

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Beyond Belgrade, the Danube reaches Romania and the outstanding Iron Gate. So named because it is a spectacular narrow gorge which the Danube has carved over the centuries on its way through the Transylvanian Alps, this wasp-waisted stretch of river forms the border with Yugoslavia, flowing through deep gorges at Turnu-Severin. The splendid Iron Gate scenery brings out every cruise-ship passenger to view this sightseer's dream.

Still further on, along the Romania-Bulgaria border, lies lively Ruse, the main Danube port in Bulgaria and the country's fourth-largest city. Ruse has many pleasant riverside walks and a multiplicity of outdoor cafés. Worth a visit is the high-tech Mayan Pantheon, a temple where you find an eternal

*Golubac Castle in Yugoslavia, at the western edge of the Iron Gates, is half submerged* (top)*; a view of the Danube's channel at Sfintu Giorgiu, Romania*

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flame to Bulgaria's heroic revolutionaries, and the embankment house of Baba Tonka, a feisty nineteenth-century woman who led Ruse's militant women in a raid on the Turkish prison to free her compatriots. The Levanta Restaurant, housed in an eighteenth-century hilltop fortification, features intimate chambers decorated with the folkloric art of each of the countries through which the Danube flows.

From Ruse, the currents head north into Romania, where it takes a forty-mile drive from the Danube port of Giurgiu to reach Bucharest. Romania's tourism officials plan to mobilize their former dictator's five yachts and his sumptuous private train to attract hard currency from foreigners who seek a luxury railroad ride and a leisurely cruise down the Danube.

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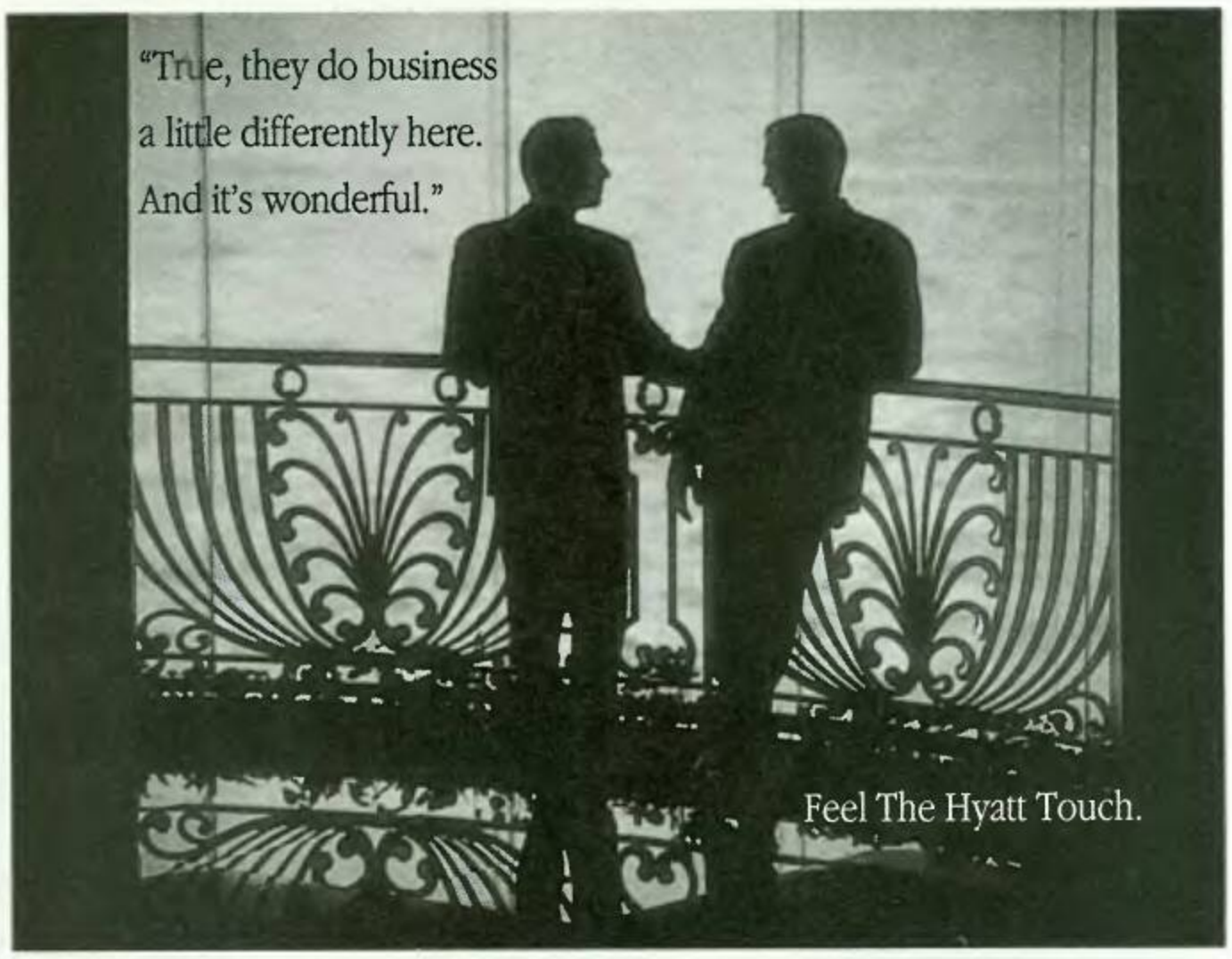
*Nino Lo Bello is an American writer who has lived in Vienna for twenty-six years. He contributes to several North American newspapers and has written nine books on travel and the Vatican.*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off. As for taboos and censorship, direct and vicious attacks on Gorbachev are out, but attacking other people is essential to demonstrate seriousness of purpose."

Censorship was supposed to have been abolished by the new press law, but the censorship office, although subdued, still functions. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* got hold of a document recently which said that although censorship no longer existed, the media were forbidden to comment on certain topics, including the morale of the armed forces, and the availability and distribution of meat. Radical deputies used the document to attack the government. I asked Korotich how *Ogonyok* dealt now with any lingering censorship problems. His secretary, on her own initiative, he said, solved the problem of continued directives from the Party headquarters. After the new press law was passed, he said, "She simply decided to send them all back unopened."

Korotich is acutely conscious of other media, whether competitive or not. I asked him about the influence of *Moscow News* and *Novy Mir*.

"*Moscow News* is a beautiful, liberal newspaper," he said. "But it's not so dangerous for officials—no problem for the leadership." Yet the leadership restricts the circulation of *Moscow News* to between three hundred and fifty thousand and four hundred thousand. Everyone knows that if *Moscow News* were free of constraint, and had unlimited access to newsprint, its circulation would be several million—and more than *Ogonyok's*. Of *Novy Mir* Korotich said, "It owes its large subscription to Solzhenitsyn, who gave it permission to publish him. Now it is printing all his books, in issue after issue." In fact, *Novy Mir* publishes many prominent writers, and its articles on a variety of topics are widely read and admired.

"*Ogonyok* is for the intellectuals," some of its critics say. When I relayed that comment and similar ones to Korotich last spring, he said only, "I don't know who the intellectuals are and who the workers are," and shrugged, clearly finding the topic unworthy of discussion.

Gushchin reacted by saying, "*Izvestia* maneuvers a lot, just like Gorbachev. *Ogonyok* and *Moscow News* are aligned."

Moscow's journalists like to gossip and speculate about *Ogonyok*—especially about the Korotich-Gushchin relationship and the division of labor between them. Some say that Gushchin, because he is there day in and day out, is the one who really edits the magazine. I asked Korotich about this in March, and he said simply, "Gushchin makes business decisions. I chose him because he was trained as an economist. He'll be the publisher of our operations after we have expanded." In another conversation, he conceded that Gushchin did make "many decisions," but added that although he himself travels a good deal, he approves every piece of any sensitivity that goes into the magazine. Yevtushenko, who is a board member, concurs. "Vitaly has the responsibility," he told me last spring. "Without him, *Ogonyok* wouldn't exist." According to Borovik, the Korotich-Gushchin relationship reflects "the traditional way of running a journal in the Soviet Union." He explained, "If the editor is afraid"—of printing a certain article—"he goes to the hospital for a checkup for a few weeks and his deputy publishes it. So no one is to blame when the piece appears. The blame is diffused. Some of Korotich's absences are tactical. On the other hand, his interviews give the magazine more authority. If he went to the North Pole, he'd find someone to interview. And if he is on friendly terms with these very important Americans he can't be fired."

In our conversation in New York, Korotich sounded as if he were still very much in charge of *Ogonyok*, although a lot had happened, including *Ogonyok's* independence, since his departure in early September. "Gushchin and the other editors are running it as my team," he said. "We make decisions as a team." He and Gushchin (and only Gushchin) communicate every day by fax machine.

Korotich travels the country as well as the Western world. Not long after becoming editor, he launched "outreach evenings," which are discussions

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Sweet Babylon, headphones. Song bones.
At a slate stairway's base, alone and unready,
Not far from the taxis and bars
Around the old stone station,
In the bronze, ordinary afternoon light—
To find yourself back behind that real
City and inside this other city
Where you slept in the street.
Your bare feet, gray tunic of a child,
Coarse sugar of memory.

Salt Nineveh of barrows and stalls,
The barber with his copper bowl,
Beggars and grain-sellers,
The alley of writers of letters
In different dialects, stands
Of the ear-cleaner, tailor,
Spicer. Reign of Ashurbanipal.
Hemp woman, whore merchant,
Hand porter, errand boy,
Child sold from a doorway.

Candy Memphis of exile and hungers.
Honey kalends and drays,
Syrup-sellers and sicknesses,
Runes, donkeys, yams, tunes
On the mouth harp, shuffles
And rags. Healer, dealer, drunkard.
Fresh water, sewage—wherever
You died in the market sometimes
Your soul flows a-hunting buried
Cakes here in the city.

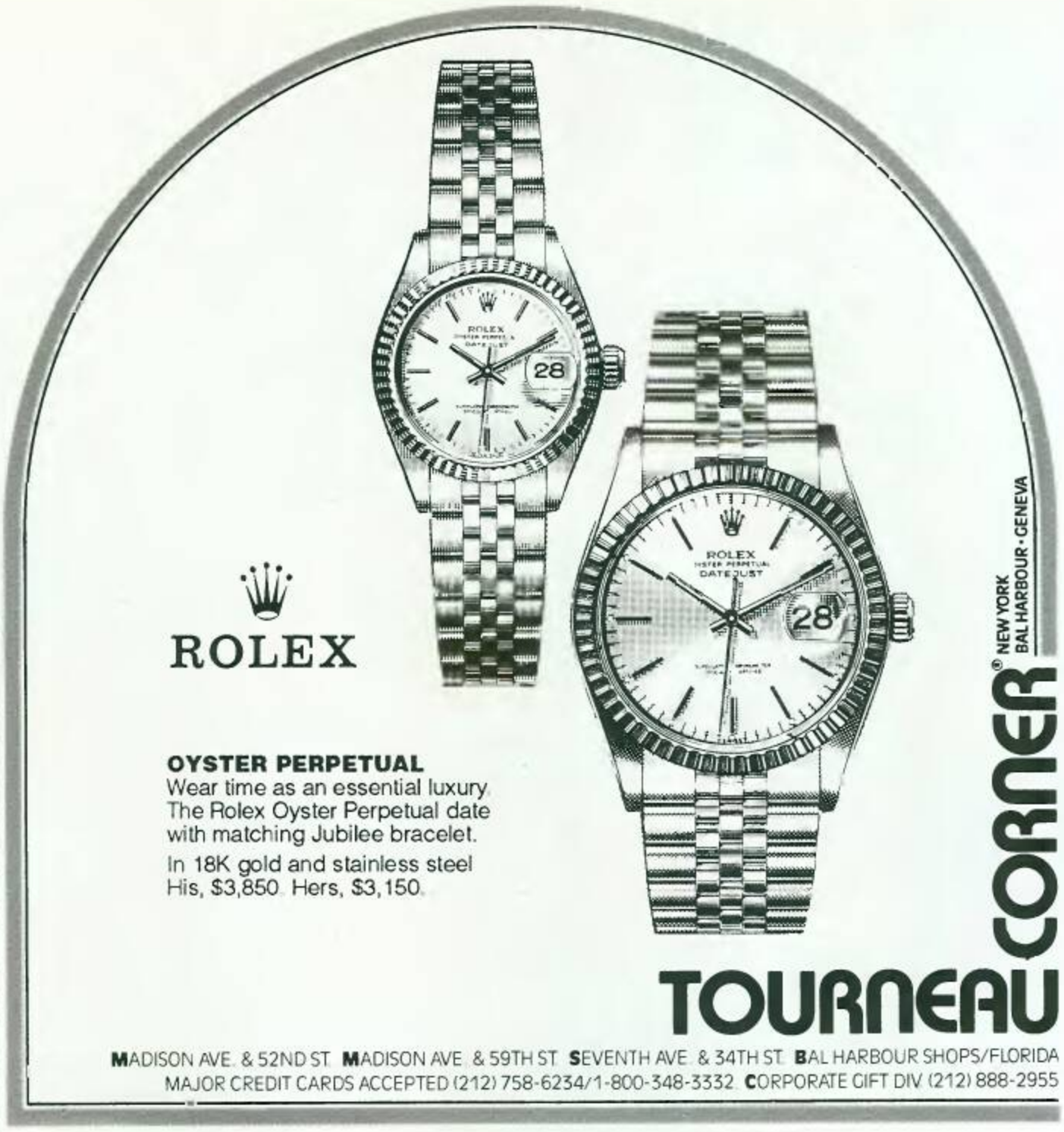
—Robert Pinsky

between the *Ogonyok* staff and the public. They were held in cities around the country, in professional clubs, cinemas, sports arenas, and concert halls, and attracted thousands of people. They have produced what an American reporter has described as "some of the most lively political discussion ever seen in the Soviet Union." Borovik used to take part in these events, and he says of Korotich, "He is a virtuoso. His wit and eloquence are stunning. He can hold an audience enthralled for two hours, discussing the major direction and the goals of the magazine, and then take questions and introduce staff people and let them talk about their pieces. He handles hostile questions brilliantly." What kind of hostile questions? "Questions like 'Are you a Jew?' And 'Why did you change your name when you were twelve years old?' Vitaly has endlessly amusing ways of dealing with such questions."

Other Soviet journalists told me in March that Korotich had not one but two so-called deputy editors, and that the second one, Vladimir Nikolayev, did literally nothing. Nikolayev's function, one journalist says, "is to hold the title of deputy editor, so that the Central Committee doesn't put someone else in the job." Korotich nodded when I asked at that time whether he was employing a wholly idle deputy editor. "He doesn't make the situation worse" was Korotich's rather elliptical way of defining Nikolayev's role as a tame political watchdog. But in October he said that even Nikolayev was now doing something—editing cultural-affairs pieces.

Most of Moscow's working journalists seem to feel that *Ogonyok* is the best, or most useful, publication around; some journalists have, however, identified what one of them called "aspects of yellow journalism" that are creeping into it. And some admirers say that while *Ogonyok* urges radical reform it is vague and ambiguous about the particulars of what it wants. "Although there is an occasional signed editorial by Korotich, *Ogonyok* hides behind individual writers," one critic said, adding, "Afghanistan and de-Stalinization were the high points." A Soviet journalist with many friends at *Ogonyok* said, "The staff is very eclectic but is working in behalf of some central purpose, which is unstated, and which no one can identify."

Korotich sees his internal problems

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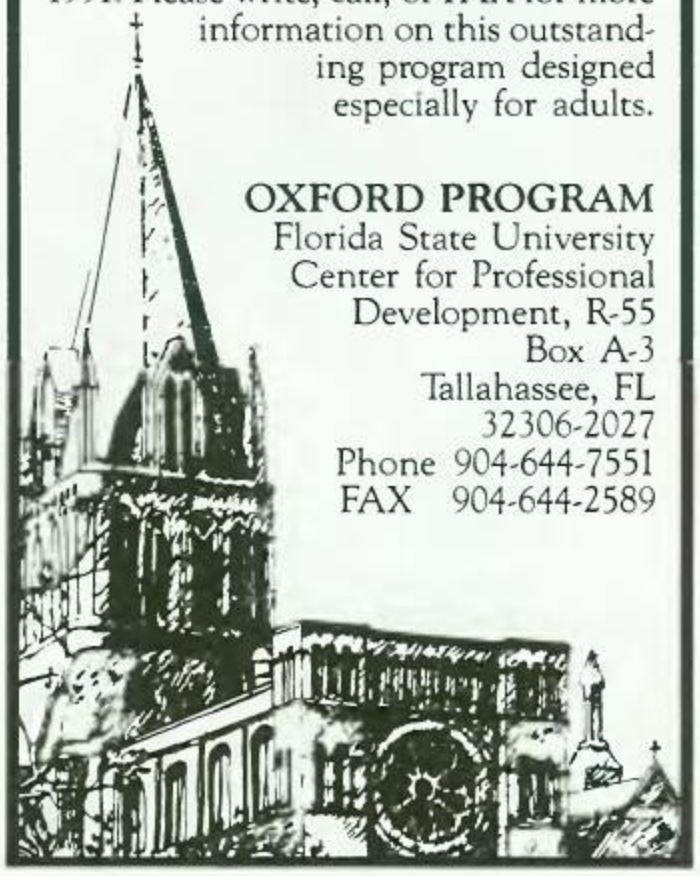

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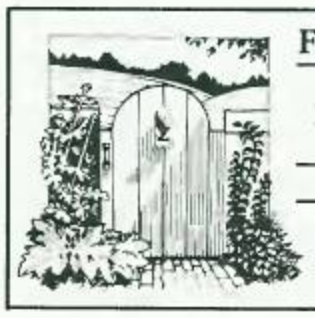

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as being mostly about money. "They are working mainly on enthusiasm," he said of his staff last spring. "Salaries here at *Ogonyok* are what they were in the nineteen-sixties. *Pravda's* people make three times what I pay mine. The government doles out money like a good wife giving her husband money for cigarettes. Department heads at *Pravda* get more than I do."

Besides being underpaid, the *Ogonyok* staff contends with an insufficiency of equipment, furniture, and space. A principal art editor who had been on the staff for eighteen months when I was there had yet to receive a desk or a table, let alone an office. She was working from her lap, or from the floor while on her knees. The staff complains that Korotich and Gushchin pay scant attention to such inconveniences.

KOROTICH may have peaked as a force for change. A few of Moscow's press watchers see him as less important than he was a year or two ago. "Korotich is one of half a dozen people who rocketed to fame in the early Gorbachev days," an American diplomat says. "At one time, you could count on the fingers of one hand the people who were close to Gorbachev. The same could have been said about aggressive reformers. Now there are more of both. And, of course, familiarity breeds contempt. People are more suspicious now of words without deeds, and that rubs off on all the reformers."

Korotich may even be forced out by his staff, according to one Soviet watcher I know, who says, "He is seen as behind the curve, as being too close to Gorbachev and also his patron, Yakovlev. Yakovlev is less powerful than he used to be." Recently, I was told that Oleg Kalugin, an ex-K.G.B. major-general who once directed espionage operations in North America, went to see Korotich earlier this year at the suggestion, he says, of Anatoly Sobchak. Kalugin was ready to reveal much of what he knew. Korotich decided against publishing Kalugin, a decision that was bitterly opposed by Gushchin. I was told that Yakovlev had influenced the decision, and I asked Korotich about it in October. "Kalugin came to see me with his materials," he replied. "He started talking about K.G.B. stories but refused to discuss his own story. Then Yakovlev told me that Kalugin and he had been students together at Columbia. Yakovlev was worried that he himself would be seen as having inspired an attack on the K.G.B. Yakovlev said, 'Please don't do it.' Kalugin was a special case. We discussed it within the staff, which agreed with my decision." Kalugin then published his material in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, where it set off a scandal that led to his election as a deputy to the parliament.

What is next? I asked Korotich in our last conversation. "If I can survive, I'll be there—at *Ogonyok*," he said. "But eventually I want just to write. If they push me, I'll go." I asked about the threats on his life, and he said they were increasing. The only pressure to oust Korotich that seriously worries him, he says, is from the Army. "It reacts hysterically to me," he said, adding that a deputation of twenty marshals and generals recently petitioned Gorbachev to consider their complaints against Korotich and his journal. (A senior Soviet diplomat recently told me that Korotich wasn't overstating his problem with the military.) "I am more controversial than I was, even if I no longer can surprise people," he said. "The country is on the edge of tragedy. The Army and the Party bureaucracy see themselves as losing everything." In a telephone conversation on the day Shevardnadze resigned, he was even gloomier: "It's a really dangerous moment. Our hard-liners are pushing strongly ahead. I feel they are trying to show that democracy and anarchy are synonymous. Shevardnadze clearly resigned because he felt powerless, and I feel powerless, too." The tone of these remarks is not typical of Korotich. There is more than a hint of elegy—perhaps for *glasnost*, perhaps for *Ogonyok*, perhaps for its editor.

—JOHN NEWHOUSE

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[*From the Lihue (Hawaii) Garden Island*]

The largest body of fresh water in Hawaii is Lake Waita on Kauai which is really a reservoir made by man. It measures just 422 acres (or .66 square miles). This provides Hawaii with the distinction of being the state whose largest body of water is the smallest of all the largest of every other state—by a long, long shot.

To be absolutely fair, Halalii Lake on Niihau—a lake almost no one has even heard of—would be the largest if it were continually full of water, which it isn't. Still, it would be only 841 acres when full and Hawaii would continue to hold the smallest-largest distinction above stated.

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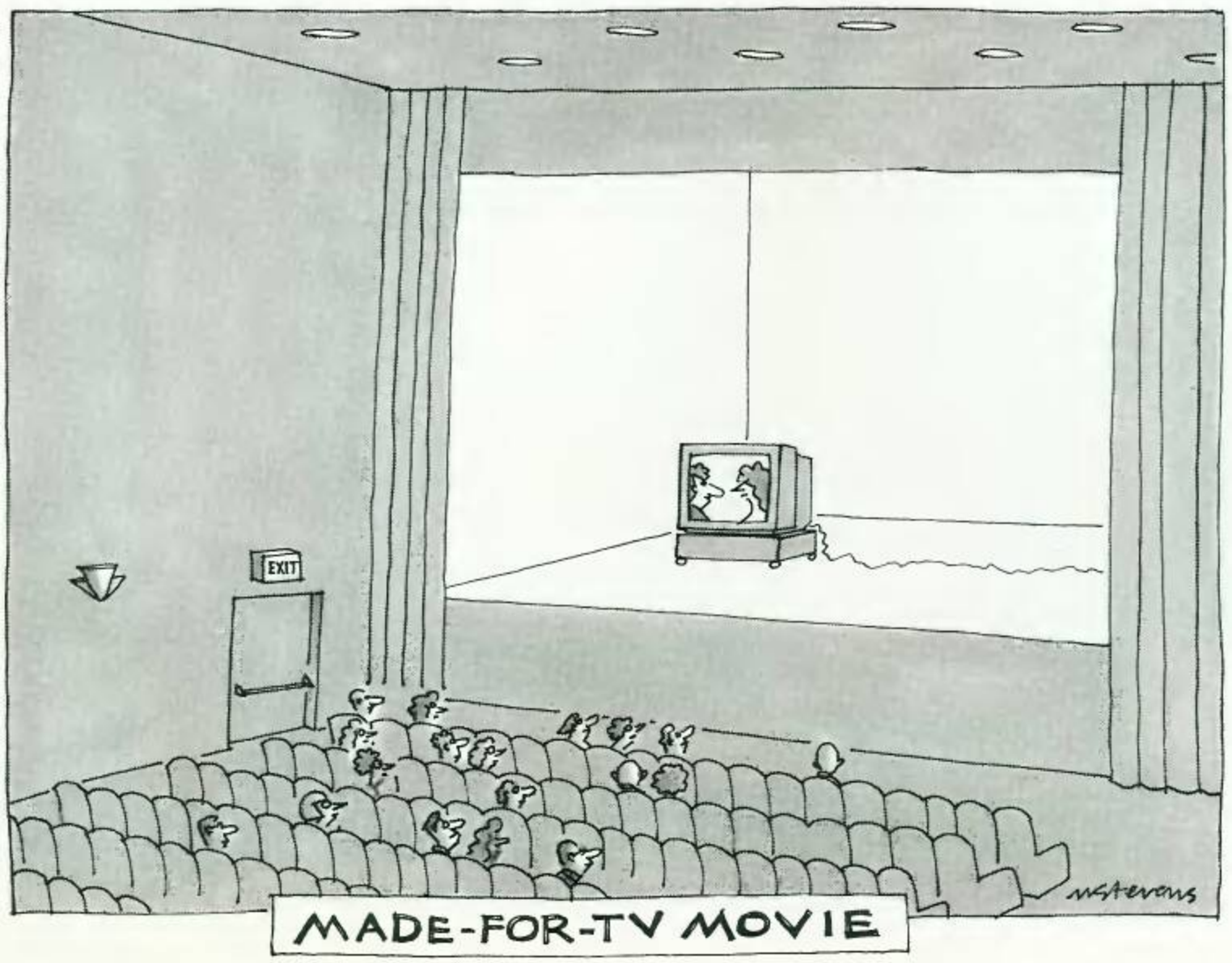
# IN FASHION

*Retroactivity*

IN his book "The Italians" Luigi Barzini says flattery is so common in Italy that "everybody is constantly being vaguely praised by everybody else." Like other fashion journalists from all over the world, I arrived in Milan at the beginning of October for the Italian ready-to-wear collections and found awaiting me baskets of fruit, bouquets of flowers, candied violets, signature scarves, and invitations addressed to my "kind attention." The manager of the Hotel Gallia came out from behind the counter to welcome the retailers and the members of the foreign press who regularly stay there, as if he'd been anticipating their return ever since they left six months before. All over town, banners proclaiming the shows at the Fiera were stretched across the busiest streets. At the boutiques on the Via della Spiga, the salespeople commended the customers time and again on their exquisite taste in having chosen just that jacket, just those shoes—the most beautiful items in the store, which other people had passed right over. This is fashion week in Milan, when commonplace editors and department-store buyers are made to feel like visiting royalty as they enter a monthlong tunnel that passes through London and Paris and ends in New York, where they finally emerge from a pitch-dark world illuminated for a few minutes at a time by follow spots and flashbulbs into daylight and real life.

Tunnel vision is endemic. The daily drill of five or six or more fashion shows numbs the brain. The hand, like a dutiful envoy cut off from headquarters, continues to sketch and write descriptions, even after the mind has gone blank. Every once in a while, something comes crashing through the haze and registers: the skillful cut of a suit, a charming print, the blouse that you forgot to pick up at the dry cleaner's before leaving home, a famous model's new hair color, a phone call you never got around to returning, a fragment of the lyrics of the brokenhearted song that's playing. The mind sings along. Fashion and popular music have always gone hand in hand, maybe because they serve such similar functions, intensifying our sense of the present. If you look like this, everyone will love you: that is fashion's implicit promise, held out at every collection, and it subliminally focusses the audience's attention on romance, so that as the parade progresses from sundresses to swimsuits to evening gowns you eventually find yourself contemplating the current state of your relationship with your boyfriend, or wondering why that guy you met at a dinner party never called.

It's not surprising that under these circumstances the mind busies itself with trying to make order out of the chaos that is fashion these days. An evening dress over shorts walks down the runway and you think, Huh, that's the third one of those I've seen this afternoon. And that's what you remember when you leave the collection, even though the outfit itself struck you at the time as not that great-looking. And that's what the reviews of the show all remark on, so that before you know it the evening dress over shorts is a trend. Journalists, understandably, look for themes that they can use to characterize a season—to distinguish it from every other season—and by the time the end-of-collections roundup appears the disparate labors of over a hundred designers in four cities are reduced to a few breathless banner headlines: "THE YEAR OF THE BABY-DOLL DRESS," "COLOR MAKES A COMEBACK," "SHORT, SHORTER, SHORTEST!" Fashion as it's presented on the runways is nowhere near as unanimous as it used to be, but coverage of it in the press still focusses on hemlines and colors and items—on what the collections have in common. In the end, this does a disservice not only to the individual designers but to fashion as a whole, reducing it to trends: women (and men) read that skirts are short, that Pucci prints are hot, that bike racers' shorts are a must-have for anyone who wants to appear up-to-date next season, and, understandably, they think how silly fashion is. The truth is that these days you can find practically anything in somebody's collection somewhere. It's the randomness that makes fashion now so unwieldy, so hard for journalists and stores (and women) to deal with. Still, you can't blame the fashion writers for seeking a theme that would make some sense out of what they've seen: their job is to find a story. This season, in Europe in particular, they didn't have far to look.



The sixties are back, with a vengeance.

Driving the bandwagon was Gianni Versace, who staged a show that was one long, steady crescendo, so theatrical and exciting that the audience was ready to stand and cheer even before the finale was over. Versace is on a roll. *I've got the power!* There was Snap belting out what might be Versace's theme song now that he has propelled himself out of a remote corner—making tough, sexy clothes for a rock-star clientele—and into the forefront of fashion. This season, his bright-colored prints, which he designs himself, looked like Pucci gone wild, or like Pucci crossbred with Hermès, or like Pucci seen through the whimsical eyes of Piero Fornasetti, one of the cult figures of Italian design, who reached his zenith in the sixties. Versace often plays his prints against black-and-white—checkerboards, polka dots on different scales, gigantic plaids. *She would never say where she came from.* Sleeveless print dresses, with matching coats, matching shoes, matching bags with a scarf knotted, sixties style, around the chain strap. The No. 1 hit song of the collections this season was, hands down, "What Is Love?," by Deee-Lite, a trio that, appropriately, comes packaged in sixties psychedelia. *How do you say de-licious? De-lovely? De-lectable? De-vine?* Print jackets with Lycra leggings in the same print. Print bathing suits with shirts in coördinating prints. *It's been seven hours and fifteen*—print shirts—*days*—side slit, over tights—*since you took your love away*. Dresses with very full, very short skirts, and with pockets constructed to stand away at the hip. *I just want your extra time and your*— A silk shirt- jacket printed with the covers of recent issues of American *Vogue*, featuring Madonna, Ivana Trump, and several of the models in the show. Pants with James Dean's face silk-screened on one thigh. A dress printed with a crowd in which every face is Marilyn Monroe's. A short dress with a long *Vogue*-printed train that is lined in stripes. A beaded translucent unitard with more *Vogue* covers, placed like fig leaves. Versace himself, taking a curtain call. *I've got the power!*

"Here comes the Gherardini spring/summer collection," the press release announced, "tuned to the rhythm of sixties music." A baby-doll dress with the bodice basket-woven of strips of black and white leather which are released at the midriff into an Op-art version of a grass skirt, with black hiphugger hot pants underneath. "Part sixties, part futuristic" is how Mario Valentino's press release described a collection that fell far short of the sources of inspiration cited in the program, among them Emma Peel, of "The Avengers," and Brigitte Bardot in "Voulez-Vous Danser Avec Moi?" *How do you say de-groovy? De-with it? How do you say deee-lite?* At Ferragamo, the mini-length white piqué skirts, with double rows of gold buttons, were A-line, reminiscent of the sixties. There were blouses worn Bardot style, with the shirttails tied in a knot to bare the midriff. George Michael on the soundtrack: *All we have to do now is take these lies and make them true somehow.* A little gold bag hanging from a ring on a powder-blue-gloved hand. A brightly printed strapless unitard with a chain-link miniskirt.

There were white zip-front short jackets with A-line miniskirts at Helmut Lang, along with a turtleneck dress fringed with feathers at the bottom, and a macramé trapeze cage over shorts; the fabrics included black rubber and a lot of cheap-looking knits that were synthetic and proud of it, recalling the seventies era of miracle fibres with funny names. Martine Sitbon showed white leather shorts suits with over-the-knee boots to match. *Mesdames et messieurs, ladies and gentlemen, I ask you, Is it a crime to fall in love?* Also, a polyester jersey that looked and draped and moved exactly like Qiana (remember Qiana?). At Chanel, the classic chain belt, with a swag that drapes across the stomach, turned up in sixties-style circle links. *Groove is in the heart.*

THE people most enthusiastic about the revival of the sixties seem to be those too young to have participated in the real thing. Those of us who wore hot pants and bell-bottoms and poor-boy sweaters and granny glasses are in no particular hurry to get back into them. Dior's New Look is said to have been inspired by his childhood memories of the way his mother dressed during the Belle Époque. The eighties revival of the fifties nicely coincided with the baby boomers' arrival at their thirties, as a lot of women whose mothers, wearing red lipstick and strapless evening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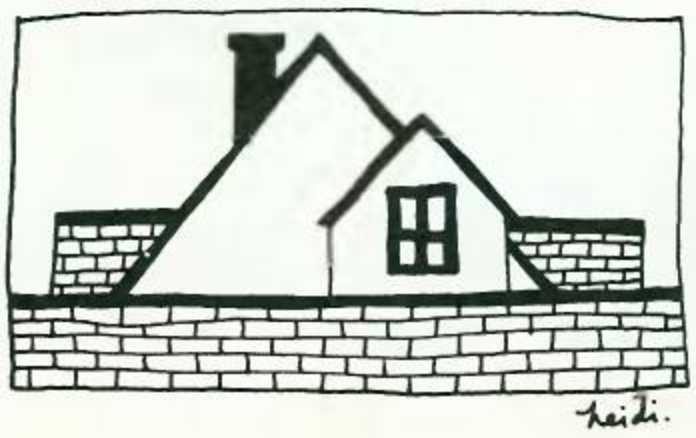
gowns, put them to bed before going out on the town now replayed the scene—kissing their own children good night while wearing red lipstick and strapless evening gowns.

When, stylistically speaking, did the fifties end and the sixties start? Certainly not on schedule. The shifts and prints and matching pocketbooks that dominated the first half of the sixties were taking the fifties into overtime. At Gucci, now under the visionary leadership of Dawn Mello, the former president of Bergdorf Goodman, the classics of those years—Gucci's heyday—are being revived. The Hobo bag, a shoulder-strapped leather pouch, has been brought back in a new range of colors; the Bamboo bag, a leather pocketbook with a curved bamboo handle, has become a theme on which new variations have been produced, and the results are appealing, even if the sources of the ideas are often apparent (a silver Bamboo-bag pillbox after Hermès's Kelly bag; a bright-colored miniature satin Bamboo bag with a shoulder strap, after Karl Lagerfeld's quilted dance bags for Chanel). The classic Gucci loafer is now available in new colors and materials, including fuchsia suède, and also in an unconstructed version, elasticized and without a heel, to serve as a slipper. Besides all this, there are luxury editions of items that the sixties never dreamed of: backpacks in red suède or a quilted silk print; banana bags (like the ones bike riders strap on around their waists) with luggage clasps.

When did the sixties end and the seventies start? This season's revivals sparked a lot of debate between the literal-minded and those who regard the sixties as spilling over into the seventies, stopping a year or so short of disco. Do platform shoes qualify as sixties or seventies? The White Album? Bowie's Ziggy Stardust getups? In an abandoned parking garage in Paris's Eighteenth Arrondissement, Martin Margiela showed a collection that was sixties-going-on-seventies, and so authentic that it looked vintage, as if it had spent the past fifteen years at the bottom of a bin in the back of a thrift shop. *You say you want a re-vo-lu-tion, well, you know*— The music was vintage, too. Faded-denim maxi-coats, long skirts sewn in bias diagonal strips, silver-lamé thong boots, indented between the big and the second toe. While other designers were memorializing early Courrèges and Cardin, Margiela had moved on to Late Hippie. It used to be that there were mainstream designers and, one step ahead, the avant-garde; this season, while the mainstream designers resurrected the sixties the avant-garde, still out in front, resurrected the seventies.

It was, of course, during the seventies that Italian ready-to-wear came into its own, and became a force on the international fashion scene, and this season it seemed as if several of the big names that put Milan on the map hadn't strayed very far from their original vision. If the current sixties revival is to be followed by a reprise of the seventies, then fashion will soon come back around to houses like Krizia, Armani, and Missoni, if they'll just sit still a little longer. At Missoni, the theme changes from one season to the next (this time it's Africa) and the patterns vary, but the outcome is pretty much the same: more multicolored knits. Armani has ventured farther afield, but the slouchy jackets and pants he showed this season—loosened-up versions of a man's suit, with unlined blazers and fluid silk trousers—are fundamentally no different from those which formed the cornerstone of his style in the seventies; his palette, running the gamut from beige to gray, is unchanged. Krizia this season showed platform sandals and swingy little dresses in floral prints that recalled the early seventies' romance with the thirties.

At a retrospective of drawings and designs by Walter Albini, at the Galleria Carla Sozzani, Anna Piaggi —the Italian fashion editor who simply by getting dressed every morning elevates fashion to a performance art—showed up wearing flame-stitch Missoni palazzo pants, the height of seventies chic. The clothes that Albini designed for Krizia, Callaghan, Basile, and others—streamlined trouser suits, bias-cut evening gowns, middy blouses, and tap pants—were reminiscent of the clothes of the late twenties and the thirties. His highly stylized drawings —particularly an ad for Misterfox featuring a woman with a helmet of yellow hair, consulting the mirror of a big green compact—were all arcs and circles, in the manner of illustrators like Georges Barbier, Benito, and Erté. In a book just published under Sozzani's imprint, with text by Anna Masucci, Albini is quoted as saying of the twenties and thirties, "It is the only period in which people knew how to live and dress with an innate, natural, spontaneous elegance. Today we are no longer able to invent anything in fashion. I limit myself to retrieving from memory that which I like, which seems to me to make women beautiful."




Of course, designers consistently borrow from the styles of preceding generations in ways that aren't in the least unsportsmanlike—new work that incorporates the tradition also extends it. But usually when fashion has resurrected some defunct style wholesale it has been because the people living in one era wanted to borrow something from another. (The Napoleonic appropriation of the glory of ancient Greece is one instance.) It wasn't until the early seventies that the time machine went into overdrive, and we started replaying first the thirties, then the forties, then the fifties, now the sixties. There was, as I recall, something disturbing about this even then—a vague awareness that, for all the rediscovered splendor of Art Deco living rooms and Busby Berkeley films, there was something bogus, that we had surrounded ourselves with things in a style we could never call our own. But now that our nostalgia has come full circle, and we've ended up back at the start of the seventies, there's something especially alarming about the recycling of that decade, as if all history were turning into a hall of mirrors.

ONE of the buzzwords of this season's tour of duty was vulgarity: "the new vulgarity," one fashion editor predicted, would be the style of the nineties. There's something both innocent and decadent about this vulgarity. For one thing, it isn't erotic, though there's plenty of skin showing. Besieged by explicit images on billboards, in the pages of magazines, at the movies, on TV, we are witnessing what *Le Nouvel Observateur* calls "*la banalisation du sexe.*" Statistics cited in a recent cover story ("*Sexe: Quand le*

*cœur n'y est plus*"—"When the heart isn't in it anymore") claim that twenty-three per cent of Frenchmen and thirty-one per cent of Frenchwomen now acknowledge being bored when they make love—a condition described as "*l'atrophie du désir.*" A doctor specializing in sexual dysfunction is quoted as saying that half of his patients are technically capable of making love but have simply lost all interest in doing it. The thrill is gone in fashion, too: as clothes have left less and less to the imagination, we've reached the point of diminishing returns. You can bare everything now, to little or no avail.

Nor is the new vulgarity the sort of nouveau-riche exhibitionism that animated the eighties. Money, too, has lost its allure. Compared with the vulgarity of five years ago—the vulgarity of, say, a Lacroix pouf dress in a grab bag of different prints, or a gold-buttoned Chanel suit overloaded with jewelry—the new vulgarity is hollow somehow. It doesn't have sex or money on its mind; it doesn't stand for anything except a certain jaded, been-there, done-that outlook on life. (Nevertheless, Lacroix and Lagerfeld are surely two of its leading proponents.) The new vulgarity is abstract and purely aesthetic, heaping on the accessories, the bright colors, the wild prints—a kind of postmodern rococo, which might take as its slogan "When too much is not enough." In the crush to get to the exit after Lacroix's show, I overheard one man advise a friend, "Don't stand still too long—you might get appliquéd." Not coincidentally, elegance is almost completely lacking in the clothes this season—it's not a virtue that fashion aspires to anymore. Here and there, it resurfaces—at Claude Montana, at Romeo Gigli—articulated in new, often unfamiliar terms. But elegance as we have known it, as it was exercised by Saint Laurent and, less consistently, by a handful of other designers, now looks vaguely old-fashioned. In fact, this sort of elegance no longer exists even at Saint Laurent, where the clothes have been so erratic lately and so uniformly below the standard he himself set that it's hard to believe he's had anything to do with them. The second half of this season's collection, an extended harem sequence set to Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade" (which, coming on the heels of the Elvis Presley medley that served as accompaniment for the first half, made for the most jarring musical transition of the season), was more credible, but was in a vein of Léon Bakst-style, Ballets Russes Orientalia that Saint Laurent has already mined (for the fall of 1976), and to better effect. Watching elasticized off-the-shoulder tops that pushed the breasts down in a most unflattering way and dresses with gigantic ostrich-feather pom-poms—one at one shoulder, one at the opposite hip—I found myself thinking, to my own consternation, They should just close the house.

"Do you know the name of this song? It's driving me crazy," the woman sitting next to me at Fendi said. The song was DNA's remix of "Tom's Diner," by Suzanne Vega, and it was driving everybody else crazy, too, with its yammering vocal line: *Dit duh-duh dit, dit duh-duh dit.* The photographers chimed in. There were white T-shirts and clear plastic zip-top shoulder bags with the names of zodiac signs (the theme was astrology) scrawled across the front in what the program told us was Karl Lagerfeld's very own handwriting; black bike racers' shorts; big white cotton shirts over black miniskirts and black-and-white jailbird-stripe leggings. "If this is fashion, I'm the Queen of England," my neighbor said. A glance confirmed that she was not. However, there was Valentina Cortese, the Italian actress, in the front row, dressed in layers and layers of blue chiffon and with a matching scarf tied gypsy style around her head; halfway through the show, she rose, put on her ermine cape, and left. Apart from a passage of bathing suits constructed along the V-shaped lines of eighteenth-century basques, or bodices, and worn with tricorne hats, she didn't miss a thing.

In the crush between shows, one overhears snatches of conversations in French, German, Spanish, Japanese, English, and, of course, Italian. As the weeks wear on, an awareness sets in that America, once so important as a market, is losing its influence now that the value of the dollar is somewhere in the basement, and now that the Japanese have taken our place as the world's No. 1 consumers. An American winds up feeling like a tag-along guest at a party in someone else's honor.

The seating assignments at the shows are a matter of protocol—a dem-

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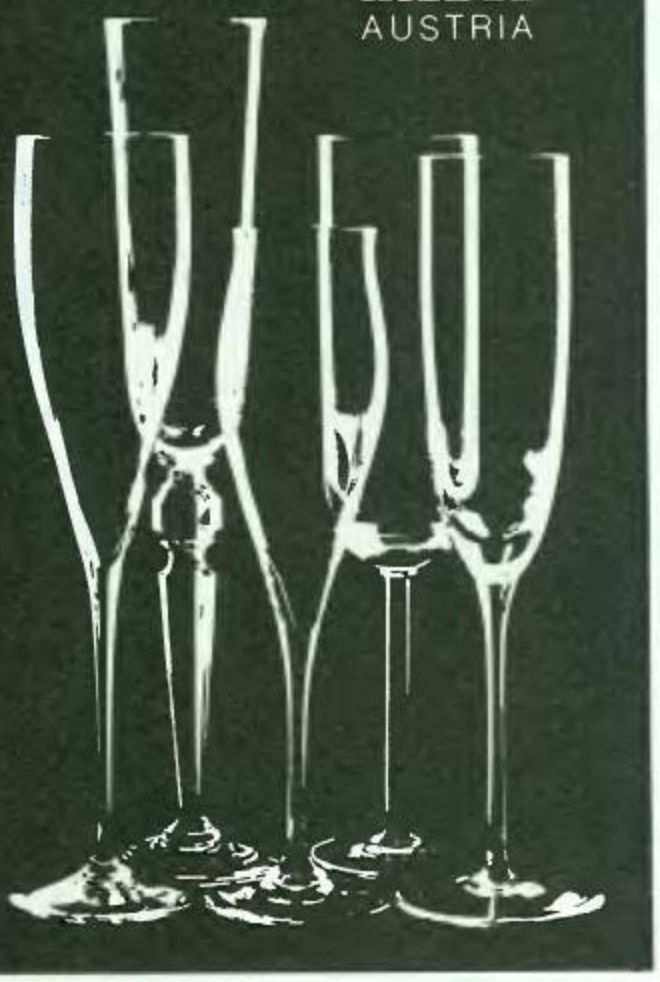

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onstration of who stands where in the eyes of the house. Each season, there are stories about a journalist (usually for a newspaper, since most magazine coverage is favorable) who wrote something that displeased some designer and was consequently banished from the designer's presentation. The author of a long feature article may be rewarded with a conspicuously important seat. What have you done for us lately? One veteran newspaper columnist confided—in dismay mingled with horror that such a thing could matter to her—that at one designer's shows she had been drifting backward, row by row, for several seasons now. The cast of characters assigned to ringside, however, remains pretty much the same from one house and one season to the next: Bernadine Morris, of the *Times*, in her wood-frame glasses; Suzy Menkes, of the *International Herald Tribune*, who has never been accused of restraint when it comes to accessories; Anna Wintour and Franca Sozzani, the editors of American and Italian *Vogue*, behind their black sunglasses; Kal Ruttenstein, the fashion director of Bloomingdale's, with a battery-powered fan propped on his knee. The photographers, lined up on either side of the runway, check out the models, who sashay—swaybacked, breasts pointed skyward—through their midst in time to the music; the journalists check out the photographers. Sometimes making the rounds of all these shows in four weeks with the same few hundred people (supplemented in every city by throngs of local supernumeraries) feels like being back in high school—but a school where everybody dresses to the teeth every day and there are no nerds. There are your friends, the people you know; there are the people you've never met but know by sight; and then there are the nameless faces you see every day, which have a way of turning up in your dreams.

ALREADY, barely one year into the nineties, there are certain obvious similarities between this decade and the sixties: racial tensions, an increased respect for nature and concern for the environment, a renewed interest in spiritual values, debates over censorship and free speech, the prospect of involvement in a faraway war about which many people have their doubts. So maybe it's no wonder that fashion has brought back the uniform of a generation that thought it could change the world—as if, after two decades of cynicism, of black and beige, we could use clothes to help us recapture the courage of our former convictions. But it's hard to work up the sort of idealism that was the sixties' common faith—particularly in the face of a lot of problems the sixties never dreamed of—and after a while the current wave of nostalgia begins to seem like a misguided attempt by a lot of well-meaning fashion people to think positive, as if we could put on an upbeat jacket and absorb its optimism through our skin. The styles of the sixties, removed from their original social and political context, and no longer informed with the exhilarating feelings of social progress and sexual freedom which were in the air at the time, now look arbitrary, like costumes. The correspondence, however compelling, is superficial.

In this context, the designers who resisted the temptation to shift into reverse deserve special mention, if not medals. Sybilla continued to explore the science of dressmaking in unprecedented ways, demonstrated by a group of black clothes consisting of geometric panels held together by transparent thread spanning the spaces in between; the effect is of shapes that float on the body. Romeo Gigli displayed in his Paris boutique a spring collection built around a woodland theme, with shoes that lace up the leg, like vines, and a bustier carpeted in silk flowers. Claude Montana, in a breathtaking opening passage of silver and white, which created a hush and set a solemn tone for the rest of his show, met the future head on, with a series of dresses in gazar, in organza, in silk faille, in satin, in taffeta—dresses so precise they looked as if they'd been cut with a razor. Issey Miyake closed his show with a group of opalescent white dresses that were in a fabric made from fishing line and were bolted into folds, produced "without the use of needle, thread or scissors," according to the program.

Jean Paul Gaultier presented a show best described as sweet: Adam, with long hair, and Eve, with a crewcut, promenaded around the Garden of Eden under a large, leaf-covered umbrella with an apple hanging from its spokes. The voice of M.C. Hammer: *You can't touch this*. They eat. Thunder, lightning, and the voice of God

*"Now that we're dead, it's just taxes."*

• •

decreeing that "as punishment, you will have to wear Gaultier's clothes for the rest of your life." *I believe in the power of love.* The models came out in pairs. A woman in a black-and-white floral-printed leotard and stockings that kept sliding down—no garters—accompanied by a man who walked along pulling them up for her. Stiff accordion-pleated tutus in mustard or acid green or navy blue and black—colors never seen at the ballet—with an overall-bib bodice, or a sailor-collar jacket, or pants underneath. Dresses gathered up with drawstrings, like Austrian shades. For men: black bike racers' shorts and sheer black T-shirts with ruffled short sleeves; black jeans cut off and gathered into bloomers; clear plastic vests, jewelled and embroidered, with leggings. Two men together, two women together, an occasional group of three. Eve returned, wearing a brown dress ruched on the diagonal and with a long train swept up and covering an umbrella, which was carried by a different partner—Adam had moved on to someone else—wearing sheer black tights with runs like random stripes.

A large sign posted at the entrance of the Palais de Tokyo, where Thierry Mugler was holding his shows, said "Merci de Votre Patience." After an hour-and-a-half delay, by which time the photographers had turned mutinous, it was finally announced that the sound system was on the fritz but the show would start anyway. Under black light, in gray vinyl tights, clear plastic over-the-knee boots, rubbery jackets molded to look like a model for robot circuitry, and other clothes intended for people who sleep all day and crawl out from under their rocks in the dark of night to go to clubs, the models gamely strode the runway, looking as exposed by the silence as if they'd been caught out on the street at high noon. *Dit duh-duh dit, dit duh-duh dit,* the photographers sang helpfully. A housewifely gingham romper suit with a white vinyl pinafore. A black turtleneck leotard—the center vinyl, the sides mesh—worn with mesh over-the-knee platform boots with black vinyl bands at the top. At last, the soundtrack back in working order: Deee-lite again, this time in a custom mix. *How do you say Moo-glair? Dee-groovy Moo-glair?* Suits with steel nipples or with crescent-shaped insets under the breasts. Lauren Hutton, modelling a black wool suit, arrived at the end of the catwalk, whipped off her jacket to reveal steel cones over her breasts, swung it around, and hit a woman sitting in the front row. "Ex-*cuse* me," she said.

HIPS too big? Chest too flat? Short legs? No waist? It used to be that among the many promises fashion held out to women was the one that said: These clothes will make you look perfect. Whatever a woman's shortcomings, fashion would find a way to camouflage them. Either clothes had a distinct shape of their own, a shape that converged at certain well-chosen places on the body within them, or they followed the contours of a woman's figure fairly literally but with some leeway—not like adhesive, the way they do now. Then fashion was a woman's best friend, the keeper of her secrets, not her personal trainer, urging her to do another five minutes on the Stairmaster. Designers dealt in little white lies, and the difference they made was for most women worth the money. Today, the terms of the contract that fashion offers are completely different. First, get perfect, the clothes tell women. Then fashion can do something for you. *Then* you'll be eligible to wear the sheer nylon unitards with discreetly positioned Lycra palm fronds at Katharine Hamnett, the beaded bodysuits at Versace, the jewelled maillots at Ferré—which one fashion editor called "the showgirl look." If you don't have the body to qualify for the Folies-Bergère, you might as well stay home.

For much of the seventies and early eighties, fashion magazines emerged from the exotic fantasy world they'd projected for their readers in the sixties and turned their attention to real life instead, presenting themselves as a service to a new population of working women, which reflected the readers' circumstances more accurately. In what is probably a reaction to those years and to that documentary realism, most fashion magazines have lately swung back in the direction of fantasy.

The boundary between fashion houses and the press, which has never been very clear, is beginning to disappear in some cases. Versace's new ad campaign superimposes quotes from Liz Smith, of the London *Times*, Suzy Menkes, and Bernadine Morris—like theatre critics' endorsements of a Broadway show—across pictures of clothes from his current collection. In an insert in the press kit accompanying the show Versace justified his *Vogue* print: "I would surely have never thought of conceiving a shirt composed of past and present *Vogue* covers if Anna Wintour had not asked me to participate in the collecting of funds to benefit AIDS research being promoted by the C.F.D.A." (That's the Council of Fashion Designers of America; he is donating the proceeds from the sale of the shirt.) At Blumarine, the show was styled by Manuela Pavese, a fashion editor for Italian *Vogue*. At Dolce & Gabbana, the models, thanks

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to dark eye makeup applied with a heavy hand, and Barbie-doll hairdos, looked so much as if they'd stepped out of the pages of Italian *Vogue* that extensive editorial coverage seemed inevitable.

The realm of fantasy which most fashion magazines now project is, naturally, inhabited by people who are physically perfect. Perfect breasts (large), perfect hips (small), perfect thighs (thin), and, lately, perfect lips (thick). Plastic surgery today makes it possible for some women to interpret these images literally—to go out and buy themselves a new body the way a woman used to buy herself a new dress. Breast implants have become fairly routine among models. The clothes being shown on the runways these days could make liposuction compulsory for a large part of the female population. Rumor had it that Madonna, who was in the front row at Jean Paul Gaultier's show, had had her lips injected with collagen. Everywhere you looked this season, on every runway, nearly every model had a mouth like a ripe piece of fruit.

FOR those members of the fashion press with a sense of humor as black as their wardrobes, the high point of fashion week in Paris was undoubtedly the press conference at the Hôtel Ritz introducing the Paris Lip, a procedure for collagen injection. Lauren Bacall, who was identified in the press release as special guest hostess, proclaimed the Paris Lip "a new fashion accessory that goes wherever you go," and then took us on a guided tour, with slides, of lips in movie history. There was Jean Harlow, with her "pinched" mouth—"all the lipstick focussed on the center, as if she were in a permanent pucker." Mae West: "Her style was big and bold except for her lips. Painted, but don't they look a little thin?" Ava Gardner: "You immediately notice the slight uplift to her lip, but see how far outside the lips' outline the lipstick was applied." Jane Fonda: "The way her upper lip pulls slightly away from her teeth—I don't know how she does that." Next, the inventor of the Paris Lip, Dr. Thierry Besins, a tall, debonair, blue-eyed man with an unctuous manner, took the stage—first to explain, then to demonstrate the procedure on a model who was incongruously tan and extremely blond, and was wearing towering high heels and a black leather suit that looked as if it had been molded to her body. He introduced her as Christine (no last name) and told us that she had already had collagen injections for her facial wrinkles as well as for her lips. A young woman in a white lab coat wiped away Christine's lipstick; Dr. Besins removed his double-breasted jacket and his cufflinks, rolled up his sleeves, put on rubber gloves and glasses, and got to work. A video camera trained on Christine's face was hooked up to the screen, so that the people in the back of the room could watch in giant closeup as he pinched her upper lip with his left thumb and forefinger and drove a hypodermic needle into the fold of skin. Christine did not flinch. Next, he injected the two vertical ridges above the lip to form what he had called the "signature" of his technique—a pronounced Cupid's bow, or deep V—and finally he injected the lower lip. A little blood was blotted with a tissue. The Paris Lip, Dr. Besins declared as he rolled his sleeves back down, is "a very quick, safe technique, *un*-painful, with immediate results—and you can reapply your makeup immediately." Christine was spirited away behind a blue velvet screen.

This collagen, Dr. Besins told us, is just like our own collagen. "It's going to wear away when you're out in the sun," he explained. "Or with a lot of *kiss*-ing. So it requires a little maintenance." Some of his patients, he said, have it done just before special occasions, like a wedding or the holidays. Others have made it "part of their beauty routine," like a pedicure or a facial. Christine returned, wearing a fresh coat of lipstick.

Question and Answer: How much? Five hundred dollars a treatment. What kind of collagen? The very thick one, called Zyplast—the third generation of collagen implants. Is there any loss of sensation? "Only a very *love*-ly sensation," Dr. Besins replied. Afterward, he said, "your lips are very *firm*, and you want to *use* them." Could the model answer the question, please? "*No*," Dr. Besins said. "She is a little bit paralyzed now—she is not allowed to move for one hour." A "before" image of Christine was projected on the screen alongside the simultaneous video enlargement. Her lips—particularly her upper lip—looked swollen, as if somebody had socked her in the kisser. The president of Collagen Biomedical,

the company sponsoring the demonstration, invited us all to adjourn to another room, for champagne and hors d'oeuvres. "I guess the model won't be joining us," the woman sitting next to me said. We filed out, exchanging glances of horrified amazement, then made a beeline for the front door and the fresh air of the Place Vendôme, dogged by the memory of Christine—her face frozen, her lipstick meticulously reapplied.

Well, I argue with myself, how can you expect women to feel good about themselves when fashion no longer meets them on their own terms—when it confronts women with a list of requirements? What is it about women, I wonder, that makes us so eager to please and so willing to submit to any number of procedures that we hope will change our lives? Twenty years after feminism called into question the herd instinct, fashion has grown so conformist that women are being sold plastic surgery and body parts in place of clothes and accessories, or perhaps as the criteria for the clothes and accessories. George Michael: *Went back home, got a brand-new face for the boys at MTV.*

From where I sit, way up here on my high horse, this business of redesigning one's face or hips or breasts has a lot in common with the revivalism that's sweeping fashion these days. Both spring from the notion that things could be a lot better than they are, and this is, after all, the impulse at the very heart of fashion, the reflex that keeps us coming back for something different. Lately, however, that impulse has become perverted—transformed into the craven desire to be somebody else, in another time. There is no dignity in this position. It seems to me that a woman's powers of attraction are largely based not on her physical equipment but on the peace she has made with herself, and that the alternative—to have one's least appealing features overhauled—is a far less strenuous undertaking. By the same token, it seems to me easier to take shelter in the style of another decade than to invent a style for one's own time and refurbish the world in it. Either way, it's a cop-out, a means of abdicating the life that we've been dealt. How do you say de-lusion? How ironic that the current nostalgia is for an era one of whose mottoes was: Be here now.

—Holly Brubach


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# THE THEATRE

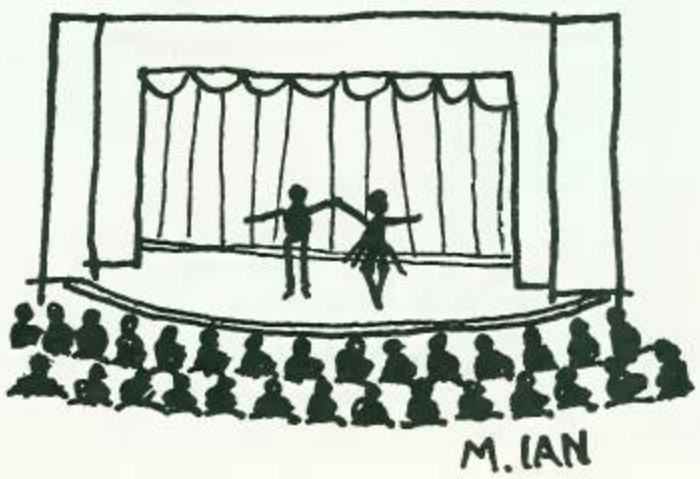
## *Arrested Developments*

THE Cathy Rigby "Peter Pan," which flew into the Lunt-Fontanne at the beginning of December for a six-week run (it has been touring the country for the better part of a year), is very much what you'd expect of a road-show revival that has as its star a world-class gymnast: it's shopworn—if good, clean—fun. In view of Miss Rigby's qualifications, the only surprising thing about the production is that the "flying" does not provide a more spectacular element. Until the curtain-call finale, when Miss Rigby soars out over the audience sprinkling "fairy dust," she does pretty much what Mary Martin does in the broadcast version—now one of the best-selling children's videos, along with the Disney animation. The aerial work, as always, is achieved through the agency of Flying by Foy—they handle most of the "Peter Pan"s that get produced professionally—and your program tells you that Peter Foy, who founded the company, manned the guy wires for Jerome Robbins in the original 1954 Broadway production of the Carolyn Leigh-Moose Charlap musical (which has additional lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, and additional music by Jule Styne) and for the 1950 Jean Arthur–Boris Karloff version (that had music by Leonard Bernstein), and that he apprenticed with Joseph Kirby, the technician who had flown Maude Adams in the 1912 and 1915 American revivals and had worked on the original 1904 London production. As Miss Rigby swings back and forth across the stage, sometimes followed by Cindy Robinson, Chad Hutchison, and Britt West (as Wendy, Michael, and John), you get the firm impression that she is following in a long tradition, not carving one out. Even so, the emphasis in this production—directed by Fran Soeder—is more on musculature than on charm. There are no scrawny, neglected children here; nobody is ragged or underfed. The costumes that Mariann Verheyen has devised for the Lost Boys and Indian braves seem calculated to show off the maximum amount of "definition," and even the ruffles on Wendy's nightgown seem to have been pumping iron.

I missed the Sandy Duncan revival of "Peter Pan" in 1979. But I saw the Mary Martin television version once or twice as a child, before it stopped being broadcast, and charm was what I remembered most about it—so much so that, coming to it fresh, years later (it was shown a couple of New Year's Eves ago), I was surprised that it should appear crude to me. More recently, memory and reality have become one: "Peter Pan" now seems to me exactly as charming as I thought I'd remembered it being (which suggests that what children retain of artistic experiences isn't so much the events themselves as the aura that surrounds them). Watching the show now, moreover, I couldn't get over how much this musical, like the turn-of-the-century play it's based on, seems to reflect the anxiety of an emerging middle class about feeding its children. It's about a new gentility, and uneasiness with the idea of having to work for a living.

Much has been made of the infantilism of J. M. Barrie and the "cult of charm" he helped to foster. The last word on the subject probably belongs to the social historian Martin Green, who, referring to Disney's attempts to vulgarize "Peter Pan" (particularly, to sexualize Tinker Bell), commented that Barrie and Disney could "hold hands and simper at each other." (Green called them "the two great seducers of English-speaking childhood.") In America, where charm never took hold in quite the same way it did in England, what has always made us willing to put up with this story (in the interests of cuteness and sentimentality, which *are* valuable commodities here) was the presence of the adult, female star.

Cathy Rigby sings flat in all the places where Mary Martin used to do her famous dip. She's cute, in a clean-cut sort of way, taking up a Marquis of Queensberry stance, and she has a feel for broad comedy, but there's something weirdly sexual about her presence: she actually seems like a boy. (Martin never did.) Mostly, though, what's peculiar about the production—and Miss Rigby's performance—is the absence of any sense of naughtiness or danger.



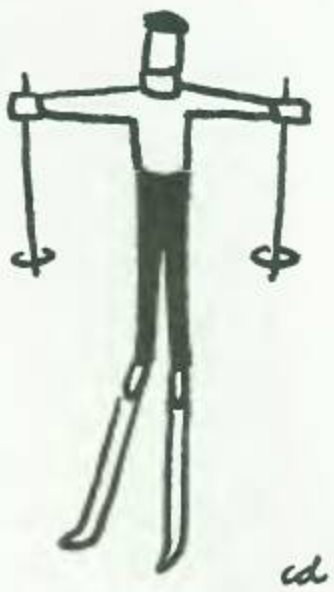

You can tell a lot about a Peter Pan by the conviction with which he presides over the "not me–not I" controversy. When Miss Rigby uncorrects everyone's grammar in "I Won't Grow Up," you get the feeling that she is soft on this issue—that were you to make it worth her while, she would be willing to speak properly. But what matter? The children who attend this production of "Peter Pan" have the Mary Martin version at their fingertips—the record and the videocassette (it's narrated, by the way, by Lynn Fontanne). They know how "Tender Shepherd" is supposed to sound and how Neverland is supposed to look. They know that Liza the housemaid is supposed to follow the children there, that she's supposed to dance a little ballet (it's cut in this production, along with "Mysterious Lady," the siren song in which Mary Martin imitated the sound of a flute), and that it is she, not Michael Darling—the servant, not the master—whom Peter is supposed to teach how to crow. So what difference does it make that the snow outside the window in the first scene looks like an invasion of fireflies, that there's no real singing or dancing going on, or that Stephen Hanan, who isn't Cyril Ritchard, doesn't lace his picture of villainy with Restoration fop. What the kids in the audience probably take away with them isn't James Leonard Joy's garish Neverland scenery or the cartooniness of the Darling children but the set for an old-fashioned nursery (you can't see *that* on television) and the memory of a top hat and a long, frilly nightgown waltzing around. Nor do they miss the point. The eight-year-old to whom I pointed out that Mr. Darling and Captain Hook are played by the same actor nodded, saying, "That's how it always goes."

ACTUALLY, "Love Diatribe," Harry Kondoleon's new play about a young man (Barry Sherman)

who goes to his parents' house for dinner and is so overcome by depression at what he finds there that he gradually becomes immobile, reminded me even more of the "Peter Pan" I grew up on, possibly because in "Love Diatribe" Martha Gehman gets us all clapping our hands to show we believe in "the healing power of love." If you consider that Off Broadway is the place for truth (which Broadway tends to mistrust), then "Love Diatribe" is probably the perfect Off Broadway play: it's just the right length and just the right breadth, and has just the right degree of zaniness with something real at its core. It also has just the right amount of metaphorical content. (Mr. Kondoleon's point is something about letting go of old grudges.) The play makes just enough references to real trouble to put the problems of its protagonists in perspective—and they're references of just the right variety. In short, the play sends you out of the theatre feeling good but not smug, and that's probably all I should say about it, because good Off Broadway plays are delicate things and should be left as found.

Jorge Cacheiro, who directed, has assembled the perfect cast of perfect Off Broadway actors. They all give marvellously over-the-top performances—particularly Mr. Sherman, whose portrait of mute, debilitating ambivalence is so funny, and Michael Rispoli, whose plight as the only surviving child of a woman (Jane Cronin) determined to blame the neighbors for her other son's AIDS-related death seems so sad. Miss Cronin moves gracefully back and forth between seeming real and seeming not real, which is what Kondoleon's writing calls for, and Amy Aquino does a wonderfully laconic Eve Arden turn as Mrs. Sherman's acerbic sister. Edward Seamon, who plays the father, nearly cracked himself up the night I saw the play, and Lynn Cohen, who plays the mother, cracked me up many times, as did Miss Gehman, who comes frighteningly close to acting with her tongue in her cheek and unquestionably gets away with it.

"THE AMERICAN PLAN," which opened December 16th at the Manhattan Theatre Club, is Richard Greenberg's new play. Directed by Evan Yionoulis, it concerns Lili (Wendy Makkena), a lonely and unbalanced young woman, who meets and falls in love with Nick (D. W. Moffett), an attractive young man, who will ultimately betray her, in spite of the promise of love, happiness, and sanity that he holds out to her. Nick doesn't *want* to betray Lili—he's a darling guy: nice, clever, and responsible (he used to write for *Time*) but not superficial (he doesn't anymore). Like Lili, who has been institutionalized, he has known real sadness (his father blew his brains out when he lost all his money). Nick doesn't mind at all that Lili is crazy—that she tells lies and does destructive things, like spreading a rumor that he has syphilis; he wants to marry Lili. But the machinations of Lili's mother, Eva (Joan Copeland), prove too much for him—and is it any wonder? One minute, the woman is throwing her diamond rings on the ground, making out that she wouldn't be at all surprised (or mind) if they disappeared. ("Will you be good to her, whatever the cost?") The next minute, she's turning the girl against him. Just which of these women is the crazier or the more manipulative is anybody's guess, and before long Nick is taking refuge in the familiar arms of his former lover, Gil (Jonathan Walker), who has shown up at the cottage where Lili and her mother and their maid (Yvette Hawkins) spend their summers.



"The American Plan" is set in the Catskills in 1960. Mr. Greenberg's "Life Under Water," which had much the same plot, was set in the Hamptons. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, Mr. Greenberg since graduating from the Yale Drama School has never written a play that wasn't either about writers or set in a vacation spot. He seems to traffic in two genres: forced comedies that fail to amuse or edify because he has neither an ear for naturalistic speech nor sufficient perception to detect the vacuity of his own characters, and glandular melodramas about young people who suffer because their parents are rich and vulgar, or rich and hypocritical, or just plain rich. In the current instance, he seems to be trying to suggest something about why little children from Central Park West grow up to lead unhappy lives in psychiatric consulting rooms. (You want to find analogues—other streets in other cities—but you can't; Greenberg's vision is too limited.) Unfortunately, the simplicity of his point, that mothers are monsters, is belied by the twists and revelations—dark intimations about people's origins, how they made their living, and how they died—he peppers his play with and, for the most part, leaves unresolved.

In view of the confusion in which Mr. Greenberg has left his actors no less than his audience, it's a wonder they manage as well as they do. D. W. Moffett, as winning as ever, spends a good deal of the evening bent at an angle of forty-five degrees—perhaps because he spends so much of it sharing the stage with women who are considerably shorter than he is. With Mr. Walker he straightens up, but there's no chemistry between the two men—in passion or in conflict. Miss Makkena, whom I have seen five or six times onstage and have never before known to be unsubtle, here does a lot of silent overacting. In her attempts to keep an impossibly precious and self-involved character from being repulsive, she is aided greatly by Jess Goldstein's costumes, which give her the fragile, vulnerable aspect of the young Audrey Hepburn and do more than the playwright to suggest in a final scene (set ten years later in a Central Park West apartment) that Lili is showing signs of becoming her mother. But it's Miss Copeland and Miss Hawkins who come close to making the evening bearable.

I don't think it's any accident that Greenberg named the monster-mother Eva Adler—which is one-half Hitler's mistress and one-half Freud's disciple. But if Greenberg's play is asking why so many Jewish refugees survived war, famine, and persecution only to raise children to whom events like divorce or being bored in a resort area are the end of the world, I don't think he's the man to provide the answer. He is, himself, too mired in a sort of shopping mentality. The only exchange in the entire play that rings true is one in which Eva Adler asks what you have left when, time and time again, you've revised your idea of what you want, and Gil answers, "Other things you want. The trick is wanting a lot of things."

—MIMI KRAMER

# THE CURRENT CINEMA

## *The Spy Game*

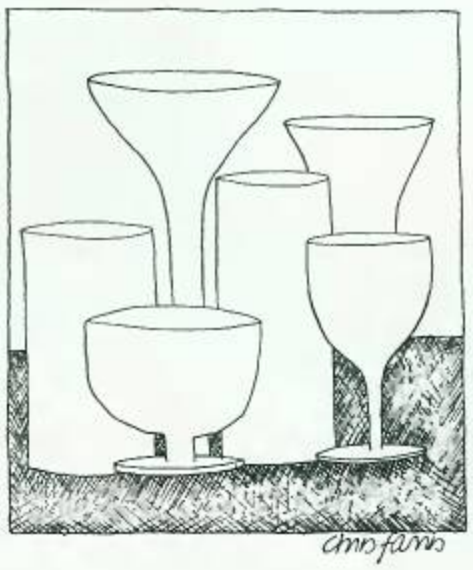
Fred Schepisi's "The Russia House," based on the novel by John le Carré, is an espionage thriller in which things are much, much simpler than they appear to be—a notion that all but subverts the premises of the genre. As is usual in such stories, there are important secrets up for grabs; here they're contained in a manuscript written by a top Soviet defense scientist, and this document whips the Cold Warriors of MI-6 and the C.I.A. into a state of almost dangerous excitement. The intelligence professionals spring into action with characteristic deviousness and complexity, but the effect of their machinations is uncharacteristically ironic. Everything they do is oddly beside the point, because it's all based on a mistake about the nature of the story that's unfolding: their plotting is like an elaborate mathematical proof built on erroneous postulates, a furiously inventive jazz improvisation on the wrong chords. There's a fundamental disparity between the intelligence agencies' way of seeing the world and that of the Russian source, Yakov (Klaus Maria Brandauer). His manuscript, a passionate muddle of technical data and visionary philosophy, was never meant to be sold in the shadowy specialized markets of Whitehall and Langley; Yakov, a true innocent, thinks of his book as a message to the world, and tries to put it in the hands of a man he considers a kindred spirit—an alcoholic, saxophone-playing English publisher named Barley Blair (Sean Connery). The government agencies that wind up in possession of the manuscript are unwilling or unable to accept Yakov's declared intentions, and so they set in motion a scheme that turns his attempt at direct communication with the West into something clandestine—a personal letter encrypted in the form of a spy story.

EDGAR ALLAN POE RETURNS A CHRISTMAS GIFT

The novel, which was published last year, is a modest and graceful work. It doesn't have the Byzantine, occluded quality that made le Carré's novels about George Smiley so memorable; in "The Russia House," the fine-tuned paranoia of the Cold War espionage game seems almost comic. The novel's narrator, a British intelligence agent, writes, "There is no such thing, we older hands like to say, as an intelligence operation that does not occasionally run to farce." The operation by the British and American intelligence wizards of this story is more than occasionally farcical; it is deeply and essentially ridiculous, a meticulously plotted exercise in absurdity. The choice of Tom Stoppard as the screenwriter to adapt this material was inspired; he's a connoisseur of both intricacy and futility, a writer who has always delighted in watching clever people get tangled up in their proudest intellectual constructions. And Schepisi is a virtuoso at making complicated action lucid—at keeping the audience alert to everything that's going on and yet not overwhelmed with information. The movie has a very tricky structure: many scenes require cutting back and forth between events in Russia, where Barley is trying to make contact with Yakov, and the spymasters monitoring his progress from listening posts in the West; and both the opening and the concluding sequences are constructed as flashbacks, with characters explaining the action in voice-overs that sometimes repeat and reinterpret things we've already seen. But the picture never feels hectic or flashy. It has an even, flowing rhythm, because Schepisi knows that suspense-movie technique is as irrelevant to this story as the tactical expertise of the intelligence services—that the thriller elements are a farcical counterpoint to the real story, in which all the thrills are emotional ones. The movie, like the book, diagrams the moves of the professional spy game while keeping our attention focussed on the amateurs: Barley, Yakov, and Katya (Michelle Pfeiffer), the beautiful woman who acts as a messenger for Yakov.

Le Carré has created in Barley Blair a character who seems to stand for everything that was repressed by the cool, crafty, and thoroughly professional demeanor of George Smiley. What's extraordinary about the Smiley

books is that, while they never deviate from the thriller form, they are also penetrating explorations of a certain mode of Englishness: the reserve and wariness in one's approach to the world; the horror of calling attention to oneself; the cautious and precise relation to language, as if one were always sending and receiving messages in code. In all these respects, Barley Blair is utterly un-English. His publishing business, which he inherited, doesn't engage him much (his failure to show up at a Moscow book fair is the reason Yakov's manuscript gets dropped in the lap of MI-6); he loves drinking, playing jazz, and having long, loud, grandiose philosophical conversations with Russians. He's all intense, undirected passion—an amateur in every way—and it's this quality that both attracts Yakov and confounds the intelligence mandarins. The genius of le Carré's conception is that this unreliable middle-aged man isn't a bungler or a lost soul (as Graham Greene, say, might have portrayed him). Beneath the surface mess of his behavior Barley has a strong, clear sense of who he is and what he wants; and when he sees a reason to act he does so with startling skill and effectiveness—he becomes a tiger. Barley Blair is a great character, and a great role for Sean Connery. He imbues the character with a sharp, self-deprecating wit, and also with a kind of rough Celtic romanticism that takes us straight to the heart of le Carré's theme.



For all the brilliantly engineered spy-versus-spy gamesmanship in "The Russia House," the point of the story is the possibility that the East and the West might be able, now, to learn the truth about each other by means other than the painstakingly choreographed dance of intelligence operations. The vehicles of this message are Barley and Katya, who fall in love and foul up the steps; improvising, they produce something better than what they've been given to perform. It's brave of le Carré to build his narrative on such an unsophisticated, fablelike notion; he risks seeming naïve and sentimental. But his dry, precise style enables him to put this humanistic love story over on the page, and Schepisi, Stoppard, and the actors make us believe it on the screen. Connery and Pfeiffer are superbly matched, because they're both exceptionally direct, unfussy actors. There's nothing devious or self-conscious in their relation to the camera or to each other. We never have to guess what they're supposed to be feeling; it's right there, and they're not afraid to show it. Stoppard's cleverness actually enhances the effect of the big emotions; his irony is just a frame—it's pleasing in itself but always enables us to remain focussed on what's inside, which is the real thing. (It's worth noting that Stoppard's taste for wordplay and Wodehouse-like farce construction isn't the product of an entirely English sensibility; he was born in Czechoslovakia.) And Schepisi knows enough not to lean on the audience. He doesn't manipulate us; he lays everything out and trusts us to recognize what's important. And we do.

Perhaps the reason "The Russia House" is such an immensely satisfying entertainment is that it appears to have been put together with care rather than mere calculation. The people who made this picture clearly know what they're doing, and, better yet, they seem to know why. Its professionalism is bracing because the enthusiasm and the generous spirit of the amateur are still in evidence. We can feel the thrill of conviction in Connery's acting: this is his richest and most affecting performance. And we feel, too, the unself-conscious awe of Schepisi and his cinematographer, Ian Baker, as they drink in the Russian scenery: they treat all these unfamiliar sights with affection, and even the grimmest-looking Stalinist architecture somehow becomes expressive. The movie isn't stingy with the sorts of pleasures it's willing to give us; there are small delights throughout. (Since Schepisi knows where the story is going, and isn't trying to kill us with suspense, he allows himself to linger on anything that interests him.) James Fox gives a subtle, elegantly detailed performance as Ned, the donnish British agent who runs the Yakov operation. And Ken Russell, who plays a rumpled British Sovietologist named Walter, is exuberantly funny; his joy at the prospect of rummaging through the mind of a Soviet defense scientist is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childish, irrepressible. Together, Fox and Russell dramatize vividly one of the sly subtexts of all le Carré's works —the resemblance of British intelligence to a particularly intense university seminar. "The Russia House" is serious about important things, and it also knows how to have fun. The novel's epigraph is a quotation from the poet May Sarton: "One must think like a hero to behave like a merely decent human being." (Barley speaks the line in the movie.) The kind of simplicity that le Carré and Schepisi and Connery aim for isn't easy to achieve, either. "The Russia House" has a heroic decency.

WOODY ALLEN's latest picture, "Alice," is also trying to tell us something about behaving decently. Its three-part lesson is: know yourself; rid yourself of the things of the world; help people. The trouble with the movie isn't so much the message as the way Allen delivers it: "Alice" is an awkward blend of whimsy and moralizing. The title character, played by Mia Farrow, is a pampered Upper East Side lady-who-lunches. She lives in a huge apartment with her handsome husband, her adorable children, and a staff, and she looks terrific. Her suspicion—surprising to her but, somehow, less so to us—that her life is totally empty and false is symbolized by persistent back pain, which her expensive doctors and physical therapists can't diagnose or relieve. In desperation (or simply out of boredom), she consults Dr. Yang (Keye Luke), a healer who works out of a dim, cramped Chinatown apartment. He tells her, with heavily accented wisdom, that her problem is not physical, and gives her a variety of herbal remedies to knock the yuppie malaise out of her system. One of them makes her invisible; one makes her see the ghost of her first boyfriend (Alec Baldwin); one makes her sexually aggressive, and helps her break the ice with a guy she's had her eye on (Joe Mantegna); one makes her irresistible to men. As these fantasy episodes mount up, Alice begins to see how artificial her life is, how far she's strayed from the pure ideals of her Catholic girlhood, how much more love she needs than she has been getting, and what a revolting piece of Wasp slime her husband is. This journey of self-discovery ends with Alice's becoming a saint: she goes to India to meet Mother Teresa and returns to New York to do some sort of charitable work with the poor. These developments are reported, in voice-over, by a pair of her gossipy former friends, one of whom adds, "She looks great." At the close, we see her in a modest apartment; she's wearing a sweater and jeans, and no makeup defiles her face.

There are more jokes in "Alice" than there have been in any of Allen's last few movies (with the exception of his hilarious segment of "New York Stories"), but the picture isn't really a comedy; it's a sermon with gags. On the face of it, Alice's conversion should be rich in ironies. An affluent, spoiled lapsed Catholic, nostalgic for her lost innocence, decides—after discovering that her husband fools around a lot—to purify herself through good works: she gives away her Ralph Lauren outfits, cancels the manicure and the lunch at Le Cirque, and throws herself humbly at the feet of an old nun. That sounds like a pretty funny Woody Allen scenario; what it doesn't sound like is a very effective vehicle for teaching the virtues of charity and selflessness, which is the way it was apparently intended. In the end, the heroine seems, incredibly, to have redeemed herself through self-absorption; the movie doesn't benefit from any such miracle. The characters, Alice included, are too thin to support the moral weight Allen piles on them.

Some of the fantasy sketches are funny, though. Bernadette Peters does a sensational brief turn as a cynical muse who appears to the heroine during a phase when Alice is trying to be a writer. A scene in which Alice has to fend off the attentions of every man at a party (a love potion given to her by Dr. Yang has found its way into the eggnog) is a classic set piece. And Farrow has a great comic moment in the scene in which she comes on to Mantegna: without knowing quite what's happening to her, demure Alice turns into a sultry seductress, cooing suggestive phrases into the ear of a man she has never spoken to before—while they're sitting on a bench in a private school waiting for their children to get out of class. Moments like these remind us how good Woody Allen can be. They should remind him that he doesn't have to throw away everything he has; the ability to give this kind of pleasure is a form of charity, too.

—TERRENCE RAFFERTY

# LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

DECEMBER 20

As Washington headed into the holidays, the mood was one of anxious festiveness, and the question most often asked when people encountered one another at the numerous Christmas parties was "What do you think is going to happen?" No one needed to refine the question further; everyone understood that it meant: Would there be a war in the Persian Gulf before long or might there be a peaceful resolution? Either possible answer—and no one knows which it is—causes some anxiety, because a number of people here fear a settlement about as much as others are alarmed by the prospect of a war. This argument doesn't fall along conventional "hawk-dove" lines, or even partisan ones, though the issue over the Gulf has been increasingly portrayed as partisan, and some people have an interest in so portraying it. The subject divides friends as well as people who are normally allies. The situation also produces deep unease about the unknown, about what is in the minds of two men—George Bush and Saddam Hussein. The endless speculation keeps running into the wall of that unknown. Still, within the past couple of weeks the general feeling here shifted—from thinking, toward the end of November, that war was very likely to thinking increasingly that some sort of settlement was more likely. In recent days, given the rhetoric on both sides, it has begun to shift back again, but it isn't clear how seriously the rhetoric should be taken. It remains a hairbreadth situation.

However it comes out, the turning point will be seen as having occurred in about mid-October, when key officials decided, for a variety of reasons, that the policy of sanctions and implied military threat wasn't enough to dislodge Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, and that it was getting time to bring matters to a head—one way or another. Thus arose the policy of setting a deadline for Hussein to withdraw—or else. According to officials, the deadline grew out of impatience on the part of the President and some key advisers, a feeling that policy in the Gulf was adrift, worry that events concerning Israel (the controversy over the killings of Palestinian demonstrators at the Temple Mount on October 8th) were distracting attention from Hussein's deeds, and a growing sense that the only thing Hussein would respond to was a credible threat of force. At the time, Hussein was manipulating the hostages—dribbling them out to visitors—in an apparent attempt to weaken the world's resolve. A senior Administration official says, "Our original strategy wasn't working. We were in a totally reactive mode."

Some officials had an overoptimistic view of how quickly sanctions might work, in part because they were unprecedentedly strong. In the course of the recent argument over how long sanctions should be tried before force is resorted to, Secretary of State James Baker and other officials have said that other countries told us it would take only two or three months; another official told me that the Soviets, the Egyptians, and the Turks had said that sanctions would have a powerful effect within one or two months. (Not everyone accepted this view, and the Administration seems to find it convenient now to say that others said that brief sanctions would work.) Further, officials explain, there was concern that, as time went on, other Arab countries would begin to think that Saddam Hussein might prevail and would become more inclined to cut a deal with him. (The potential unreliability of our Arab allies is a constant theme.) Our officials were being told by others who saw Saddam Hussein that he believed that time was on his side—that he believed he could count on the coalition against him becoming less disciplined, on creating diversions over the Israel-Palestinian issue. The idea was to have one more diplomatic go, through the United Nations, as, an official says, "a necessary analogue to the military strategy"—to show that the Administration wasn't just committed to a military solution, thus gaining support for a military solution if it came to that.

The new diplomatic approach was considered necessary to keep the coalition together—and there was the possibility that it might work. It was thought that the deadline would give Saddam Hussein more of an incentive to comply—and, if he didn't, would give us more authority to go to war. Since the United States would occupy the chair of the Security Council for the month of November, that was seen as a good time to try to ratchet up the U.N.'s demands. (We would be followed in the chair by Yemen, which has sided with Iraq.) At the same time, the decision, announced on November 8th, to dispatch nearly twice as many troops to the desert put pressure on us as well as on Hussein. In any event, the "logic" of events and the mood of our highest officials put us on the path toward war—unless Hussein backed down.

Actually, it had been clear from the early days that the Administration envisioned a sequence that could take us to war before very long: sanctions would be tried, then diplomacy would be tried (or apparently tried), and if neither of these worked we might well go to war—saying that we had tried the other courses. What was unstated, and apparently unknown within the Administration, was how much time would be given to each step. But there was certainly a lot of chatter here, starting fairly early, about

*"Oh, that's a break. His job description is right on top."*

when we would be at war. (Many predictions had us at war before year's end.) The sanctions were, after all, the only step available at first—it would take a while to get enough troops to the region to carry out an offensive military strategy (the requirements for which kept being raised by the military). Sanctions were, a senior official says, "a box to check—if we had gone to military force soon, people would have said, 'Why didn't you try sanctions?' " The concept developed by the Administration was that Hussein would be given time to act before the deadline. The officials' first choice was January 1st, but at the behest of the Soviets and others this was moved to January 15th. The winning of the November 29th U.N. resolution, which stated that if Hussein didn't comply with earlier resolutions calling on him to withdraw from Kuwait, restore the legitimate government, and free the hostages the U.N. members were free to use "all necessary means" to get him to do so, was seen by the Administration as a major triumph—but it came at a cost. We may never know all that Bush and Baker gave away to get the votes, but the lobbying was untiring (sending Baker all around the globe) and also somewhat unseemly: the arm-twisting and the boodle (known and unknown) took something away from the moral aura of the resolution. Also, whatever effect it will have had on Saddam Hussein, it didn't have its intended effect on the American political scene.

BUSH and Baker seem to have become so absorbed in winning the support of the leaders of other nations that they overlooked their domestic politics. Further, the Administration seemed to believe that once it won the U.N. resolution the United States Congress would have no choice but to endorse it. However, by that point, largely as a result of hearings conducted earlier that same week by the Senate Armed Services Committee, political resistance had grown against going to war without giving sanctions more time. The Administration understood that, in particular, the testimony by two former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff urging that sanctions should be given more time—and, in effect, raising the question of whether waging war to liberate Kuwait would be worth the costs—had been very damaging. The Administration had elected not to send witnesses until after the U.N. vote, and, in a reflexive action, charged that Senator Sam Nunn, the committee's chairman, had used the hearings to further his own Presidential ambitions. What struck many people here was the number of people associated with the military—former chiefs, former Defense Secretaries—who argued that military action should be avoided if at all possible. These people, plus Nunn, who has been more pro-Pentagon than most of his Democratic colleagues, gave others cover for opposing going to war any time soon—or ever.

A lot of people have been talking in code, and it's hard to know whether they would ever support the use of force in the Gulf, even if they say they would. Arguing that sanctions should be stayed with for a year or eighteen months, as the former chiefs and a number of others did, was undoubtedly, for some, a way of pushing off the question of war altogether and hoping that sanctions would work or something would turn up. In the hearings, Colin Powell, the current chairman of the Joint Chiefs, questioned whether, if we gave sanctions twelve to eighteen months, "at the end of the day, will the consensus be there" to use military force? In the minds of at least some Democrats, such a postponement could have the President fighting a war in the course of the 1992 elections, which could be to their advantage. (Some Republicans have been concerned about this possibility.) But many proponents of giving sanctions more time sincerely believed that the Administration was engaged in an unnecessary headlong rush toward war.

As the argument went on, people were dealing in assertions: that the sanctions would or wouldn't work; that Iraq would or wouldn't have a usable nuclear device soon (this left aside whether Hussein would risk the consequences of using such a device); that the anti-Iraq coalition would crack if we stuck with sanctions for quite a while longer or it would crack if we went to war; that Iraq would grow stronger or weaker if sanctions were given more time. The burden of the evidence is that Iraq will have no serious deliverable nuclear capability for at least a year or two, and probably longer. People opposed to going to war to eliminate what is now there argue that when Iraq does have such a capability it can be eliminated, if necessary, by other means, and that in any event an anti-nuclear regime is needed in the entire Gulf region. Whether or not there is a war, it is expected that there will be an enhanced international effort to bar nuclear weapons from whatever form of Iraq remains. A number of countries are in the process of getting such weapons, these people argue, and we'll have to try to deal with them in some other way. (How successful we can be at this is another question.) The Administration's argument that the fact that Iraq might soon get a nuclear device was a reason for going to war—first trotted out seriously by Bush when he spent Thanksgiving with the troops in Saudi Arabia—might have been more persuasive had it been less sudden and had it not coincided with polls showing that the public felt that preventing Iraq from obtaining nuclear weapons was the most compelling reason for going to war.

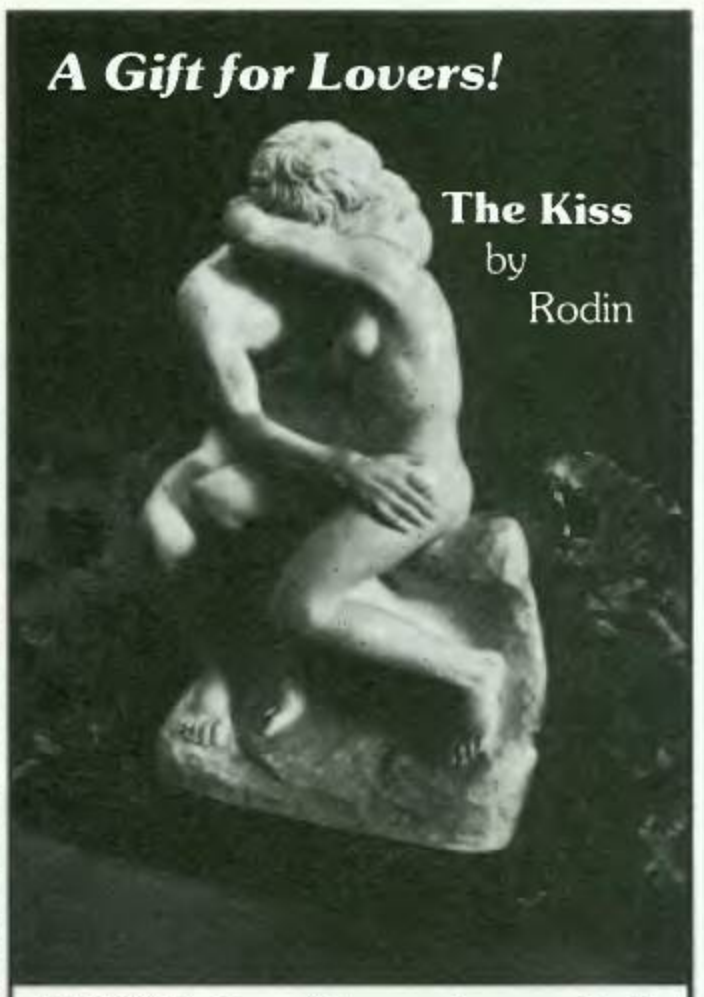
The best single explication of the President's policy was given by Baker in his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on December 5th. Finally boiling it all down to one sentence, Baker said, "A very dangerous dictator—armed to the teeth—is threatening a critical region at a defining moment in history." Baker's testimony, which was aimed at Hussein as much as at Congress and the public, was the best case for not giving the sanctions much more time, but it probably didn't change any minds here. And his argument was still somewhat shaky, based on a debating point, that "no one can tell you that sanctions alone will ever be able to impose a high enough cost on Saddam to get him to withdraw." This was the burden of the Administration's argument: that sanctions might hurt *Iraq* but not hurt Saddam Hussein enough to cause him to withdraw from Kuwait. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, in his testimony, and Vice-President Dan Quayle, in a speech at about the same time, argued that Iraq could become militarily stronger if the sanctions were given more time—but they were the only ones who argued this. William Webster, the C.I.A. director, picked his way

through the minefield by saying that the sanctions were doing increasingly grave damage to Iraq's military capability, but also sticking to the Administration's position that sanctions were no guarantee that Hussein would leave Kuwait. In remarks that were evidently addressed to Hussein, Baker said that if we used force it would be used "suddenly, massively, and decisively." In response to Cheney's and Powell's testimony about the futility of sanctions, Nunn said, "If we have a war, we're never going to know whether they would have worked, are we?" Nunn says that if the sanctions were left in place, within twelve months after the August 2nd invasion of Kuwait Iraq would be "a subsistence economy." One possible long-term consequence of the Administration's trashing of sanctions has been generally overlooked: What happens the next time an Administration asks other nations to join in international sanctions against some transgressing nation? We won't often send two hundred and fifty thousand or four hundred and fifty thousand troops somewhere in the world.

THE President's announcement, on November 30th, that he would meet here with the Iraqi Foreign Minister and send Baker to Baghdad sometime before January 15th was at the least a well-timed political stroke, coming on the Friday morning at the end of a week of damaging testimony, and the day after the U.N. vote. (That it was on Friday was no accident: it changed the context for the weekend talk shows. This is standard practice.) Bush made the surprise announcement at a press conference after giving his clearest rationale for his Gulf policy, but the news of the proposed visits took over. Bush's saying that the announcement showed he was prepared to "go the extra mile for peace" was a smart move in terms of domestic politics. He had seemed hellbent for war; perhaps he needed to in order to try to induce Hussein to withdraw, but his doing so had stirred a domestic backlash, which the hearings had reinforced. Whether or not he had convinced Saddam Hussein, he had convinced many Americans, including congressional figures who met with him, that he was very serious about going to war. For Bush, it seems both an issue of principle —that he is truly offended by the rape of Kuwait—and something that he has made quite personal. He would say in meetings, and finally said publicly, that he was "provoked." He snaps at Saddam Hussein through the media.

It was little noticed at first, when Bush made his announcement, that he also said that he and Baker would be prepared to "discuss all aspects of the Gulf crisis," which suggested various diplomatic possibilities. Bush did say that he would not waver from the U.N. resolutions that had been passed—including the first one, which called for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait "unconditionally." But the U.N. resolutions, and statements by Bush and Baker over the past months, have left open a sequence of events that could lead to a peaceful settlement. Bush also said he felt that Hussein hadn't "got the message" that if he didn't comply he would be attacked militarily, adding, "I hope this will do it." No sooner had the President made his announcement than people here fell to arguing over what it meant and what it should mean.

The decision to send Baker to Baghdad had been very tightly held within the Administration—only the President's closest advisers knew about it, and it appears that not all of them agreed that it was a good idea. An official says, "The exchange of visits was the President's idea." Several key people didn't know about it until it was announced. Among the ideas that had been discussed within the Administration for making one last diplomatic stab —and being seen to have made one—after the latest U.N. resolution had been adopted was that the U.N. Secretary-General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, meet with a high Iraqi official in Geneva or Baghdad, perhaps in Baghdad with Hussein himself. Some domestic pressure had been building to send a high-level emissary to Baghdad, and the announcement that Baker would be sent lanced that movement. It also appeared that the decision was sped up to get the announcement made by Friday morning; later, when the difficulty arose over the timing of Baker's trip, some of the cost of such secrecy (lack of adequate staff preparation) and speed came home. Only Bush, Baker, and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft were in on the drafting of the statement. Later, it became clear that by saying the talks could occur "at a mutually convenient time" before January 15th, the President was giving Hussein an opportunity to stall. Even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Bush had to publicly admit that he should have "been a little more explicit" about wanting the Baker mission to take place well before the January 15th U.N. deadline for Iraq's having withdrawn from Kuwait. His saying this wasn't reassuring. (Bush and his top men also hadn't thought through the implications of suggesting that our coalition allies join the talks in Washington, and when Hussein parried with a proposal that the Palestinians sit in on the talks in Baghdad, Bush dropped the idea.)

The announcement of the Baker visit did have the desired political effect of silencing some—but not all—of the President's critics. "This changes everything," a Democratic leadership aide said shortly after the announcement. The Democrats were already in a dicey situation. If the President's policy was what the President said it was—that he was being bellicose in order to achieve a peaceful solution by convincing Saddam Hussein that the alternative was war—the President's critics were in danger of appearing to undermine, or of actually undermining, that policy. Further, if the policy worked they would have been in the wrong place. This was the major reason the Democratic leaders avoided a special session before the end of the year (though they gave a variety of reasons). They didn't want to vote to authorize Bush to use force, and they also didn't want to vote against what he said was his current policy. They were worried that he would call them into session and were relieved that he didn't. A number of Democrats realize that the President could have a political success out of the situation, through either a peaceful resolution or a short, popular war, and are reluctant to take him on frontally now. Baker suggested in his testimony that by asking that sanctions be given more time members of Congress were encouraging Saddam Hussein to hold out; and leading Democrats who have met with Bush have come away feeling they were being set up. Though the Democratic leadership would still prefer to avoid a vote on the issue—for substantive (not wishing to encourage Hussein's intransigence) as well as political reasons—the pressures from many of their members plus Republicans may have made a vote unavoidable after Congress reconvenes in January. The plan is to stay more or less in session after the usually pro-forma convening at the beginning of the year—ordinarily, nothing happens before the State of the Union message, later in the month—and probably vote on some sort of resolution. What form it would take would be largely determined by the circumstances at the time (including whether there had been a Baker trip to Baghdad and how it had gone). The general feeling here is that the President's political position will get stronger over time—but he still could face a very divided Congress.

The Administration miscalculated in its assumption that it would be able to get Congress to quickly endorse the U.N. resolution, and the President accepted the view of House Speaker Thomas Foley and Minority Leader Bob Michel that even if he won the vote it would be by a narrow margin and with a very contentious debate. In the Senate, where both Republican supporters of the President's policy and some liberal Democrats, including Edward Kennedy, who had become an outspoken opponent, were agitating—for different reasons—for a special session, it was considered that an endorsement of the U.N. resolution was somewhat more likely, if by a very narrow vote, but not everyone agreed it was a sure thing. The view of the Senate Republicans was that the Democrats should be put on the spot. In part, members of Congress resented the idea that the Administration seemed to want to roll them right after the U.N. vote. Aside from the fact that a substantial number in each chamber genuinely opposed the idea of going to war—at least, without giving alternatives more time—a large number also wanted to preserve what's left of their constitutional prerogative to be the ones who formally declare war.

Whatever the near-term or long-term discomfiture of the President's opponents, the situation exposed a weakness in the construction of the President's policy. It rested on having behind it a domestic consensus that might or might not be there. This is one of the "risks" of a democracy. But if a policy depends on having support that may not exist, and on having no open questioning, it is a flawed policy.

Stuart Leeds

Bush couldn't face Saddam Hussein with a united country if he hadn't united the country behind the policy. And he couldn't conduct a war for very long without domestic support—he would pay a very big price if he tried to do so. He could well enjoy support at first, and a lot of politicians would suspend judgment until they saw how things turned out. (Bush and Baker have taken more time recently to meet with selected members of Congress.) However, the "logic" of the President's strategy was that in order to threaten war credibly he had to be prepared to wage it. If it's an act on his part, it's been convincing. The exercise of brinksmanship requires a willingness to go over the brink.

THERE has been much talk about whether Baker should or would "negotiate" with Hussein if and when he meets him, but this misses the point. We have been awash in semantics. There are things Baker can do that he can claim didn't constitute negotiations, and he has insisted that he won't "negotiate downward from the U.N. resolutions." Officials say that there are things Baker can "discuss" with Hussein. One senior official says, "Baker can't negotiate, but he can answer questions." The outlines of a diplomatic settlement have been apparent for a long time. It has long been a matter of sequence and choreography. A senior official says, "A lot of people have taken the language of unconditionality in the U.N. resolution and our language about 'no linkage' to say that no things can be discussed. There are certain things that can be discussed in sequence among the proper parties."

Both Bush and Baker have said that if Hussein complies with the U.N. resolution calling for him to withdraw from Kuwait "unconditionally," territorial disputes between the two countries can then be settled between them. This, too, is set forth in a U.N. resolution. And though the Administration insistently denies "linkage," the President, in a speech before the U.N. on October 1st, said that Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait would offer the "opportunity" for a regional settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute. Officials who should know say that the Baker mission —should it come to pass—would try to lead Hussein into a peaceful resolution. First, of course, Hussein would have to be convinced that it is in his interest to

withdraw from Kuwait—and that, in turn, depends upon his understanding that his choices are stark. As of now, officials are saying that he still isn't convinced; but he has been known to turn on a dime. It can't be ruled out, officials say, that he will miscalculate again (as he did when he invaded Kuwait), believing that a dictatorship can outwait a democracy. Though Baker has described the U.N. resolution as an "authorization," and not a requirement, Hussein must be made to understand, officials say, that we will go to war, fairly soon after the January 15th deadline, if he doesn't withdraw. (The statement yesterday, for whatever reasons, by the deputy commander in the Gulf that we won't be ready on January 15th wasn't helpful in this respect.) Officials have also said that if Hussein does withdraw by then we won't attack him. As Powell said in the hearings, the carrot is that "we don't use the stick." Elements in the Administration had become concerned that because of some of the rhetoric (including the President's) Hussein might have decided that we would attack him even if he did withdraw.

Baker is both a steely-eyed fellow and a dealmaker, so if he can convince Hussein that there is only one way out (if he hasn't been convinced already), Baker will then, as officials put it, "show him the open door." He would warn Hussein not to confuse dissent in a democracy for a lack of Presidential will. There are things, an official says, that Hussein can be given assurances on if he agrees to have withdrawn by January 15th, other things that he can't be given assurances on but that can be discussed. According to the envisioned sequence, Baker could tell Hussein that if he withdraws, food and medicine might arrive fairly quickly but sanctions on equipment useful to the military won't be removed. Hussein would be told that since he has attacked two of his neighbors (albeit one of them, Iran, with our encouragement), and has weapons of mass destruction, his military wherewithal has to be reduced. He would be told that some of the economic sanctions would be removed but not so many of them that he could use exports to supply his military. The bilateral talks between Iraq and Kuwait, an official says, "could happen very quickly" after Hussein withdraws.

The chief reason the Administration has been at least rhetorically firm on the point that there shouldn't be linkage between the Persian Gulf issue and the Palestinian issue is to prevent Hussein from presenting himself afterward as the Palestinians' hero—a prospect that horrifies our allies in the region. So the Administration worked to prevent U.N. action on a resolution, being pushed by Yemen but incorporating language we have approved before, calling for a Middle East peace conference "at an appropriate time." Baker says this isn't an appropriate time. (A non-binding statement calling for a conference was adopted today.) But Baker might tell Hussein that he had spent a great deal of time on the Middle East in the first eighteen months of the Administration (an arguable point) and then the Gulf crisis had made this impossible; Baker could well say, according to an official, that once the crisis is settled he is prepared to become fully engaged in the question of a Middle East settlement. If Hussein says he will use this to claim he has achieved a victory for the Palestinians, Baker may well say that Hussein can claim what he wants but we will say that there is no linkage and that whatever we do to help the Middle East peace process we will be doing to bring stability to the region, not as any favor to Iraq.

There is a school of thought here, held strongly—but definitely not only—by people sympathetic to the Israeli government's point of view, that any settlement, no matter what the sequence, that gives Hussein anything out of the venture is a disaster. The argument goes that if he gains any territory, or is left in place with his armaments (though Administration policy doesn't contemplate this), it will be seen as a victory for him in the Arab world, and other Arab governments will be more compliant. People here, most of whom understand little about the Arab world, make sweeping judgments about what it thinks. The evidence is that it is as divided as everyone else; even the Saudi royal family is said to be divided. The response to the argument that if Saddam Hussein gets anything out of this it's a disaster is that if he is forced to withdraw from Kuwait, has suffered grave economic damage, is faced with a long-term security structure to deter him, and has had

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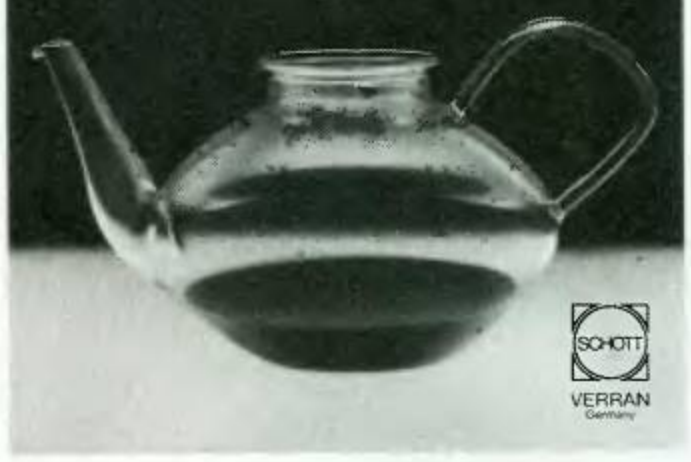


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forced upon him a reduction in his armaments he hardly comes out a winner. A senior Administration official says, "To eliminate a menace parked inside another country, you have to be willing to use force to push him back. But if he withdraws he becomes a transformed menace, a menace nonetheless, and there are other means that can be employed peacefully to meet that threat." In the hearings, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs William Crowe called the idea that Hussein would have won anything from a peaceful settlement "both weird and wrong." For decades, the United States has sought a long-term military presence in the Gulf region, and now it is very likely to have one. It is considered highly indelicate to suggest long-term stationing of American ground troops in the region (as Baker once did, though he hastily retreated), so what is discussed publicly is the possibility of an international peacekeeping force, preferably made up of Arabs, with the United States having an increased naval presence and an ability to conduct exercises there; also, equipment would be pre-positioned in the region, so that the next time a crisis occurs there that we wish to respond to, it won't take us two months to get there.

FOR some time, a number of people, in and out of the Administration, have seen the possibility of an untidy, unbelligerent outcome, in which Hussein withdraws from most but not all of Kuwait. To some people, in and out of the government, this is the "nightmare," because they believe that an important principle will have been violated yet it would be all the more difficult to gain domestic support, not to mention support in the rest of the world, for going to war. A drawn-out resolution, with Saddam Hussein twisting and turning, doing enough to suggest he'll leave Kuwait to undermine what will for war exists here, is what worries a number of policymakers. Baker had warned before against "the siren song of partial solutions" and this week, at a NATO meeting in Brussels, gave more emphasis to the unacceptability of a partial withdrawal—in an attempt to both keep the coalition together on this issue and convince Saddam Hussein that it wouldn't work. (The sudden resignation today of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, amid growing turmoil in the Soviet Union, obviously came as a shock to Baker, to whom Shevardnadze had become close, and other officials, and threw into question Soviet support for our Gulf policy.) The Administration has deliberately been making a lot of public statements this week (few of them new), in order to maintain the alliance's cohesiveness and build congressional support. An official says, "We don't have to be reactive—we're trying to get out in front and define it our way."

The argument that any settlement is a disaster—that Saddam Hussein must be militarily defeated and his weaponry destroyed by force—rests on an agenda that goes beyond what the U.N. has said, and beyond what the Administration's stated policy is. The premise of those who make the argument is that if Saddam Hussein isn't wiped out now and Iraq reduced as a military power, he will, in a few years' time, go after another neighbor—for which read Israel. Opponents of this view argue that there are other possible Saddam Husseins in Iraq; that it overlooks the possible large adverse consequences of our getting in a war against Arabs; that there are other ways to contain Iraq in the future; that there are other dangerous characters in the Middle East; and, of course, that the war itself could be disastrous.

When Washington and Baghdad hit the snag over when Baker would meet with Hussein, the White House let it be known—and this was faithfully transmitted through the press—that the Administration was losing interest in the talks; thus another message was sent to Baghdad. Probably in no other prelude to a possible war has the media played such a prominent role as a transmission belt—for feelers, for threats, for war scenarios designed to intimidate, and for military information perhaps designed to mislead. The President's being such a frequent participant —one wishes he would pop up on the White House lawn a little less often—takes something away from what should be the dignity and the gravity of the situation, puts him on a "nyah-nyah" par with Saddam Hussein, and causes him to make mistakes. His inclination toward Clint Eastwoodism makes a lot of people here uncomfortable. As the holidays themselves approached—along with January 15th—everyone waited, anxiously, for the dénouement. —ELIZABETH DREW

# A CRITIC AT LARGE

## THE DARK CONTINENT OF HENRY STANLEY

HENRY MORTON STANLEY wrote three great books of travel and exploration: "How I Found Livingstone" (1872), "Through the Dark Continent" (1878), and "In Darkest Africa" (1890). All three were an immense success, selling hundreds of thousands of copies and making Stanley a wealthy man. Now only one—"Through the Dark Continent," which is available in a Dover paperback facsimile edition—remains in print. This is unfortunate, because all three, especially if they are read with some biographical guidance, are perfectly marvellous. Part of what makes them so good is that they are written with dated entries, as if they were journals. During his trips, Stanley did keep careful journals, under almost impossible conditions, and the books consist of his edited selections. (The journals on which "Through the Dark Continent" was based were published by Vanguard Press in 1961. The others are in the Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, in Belgium. For its own reasons, the museum has refused permission to reprint or quote extensively from them, but a microfilm copy at the British Library is available to scholars.) The journal form preserves the illusion that Stanley did not know the outcome of the events he was writing about—who had survived and who had died, who had behaved well and who had broken, what had been accomplished and what had failed—and the quality of immediacy thus attained adds much to the books' appeal.

One of the most remarkable entries is from "Through the Dark Continent" and is dated May 28, 1877. To set the stage: Two and a half years earlier—on November 12, 1874—Stanley had sailed from the island of Zanzibar as the leader of the largest expedition ever to attempt an exploration of the African interior. With him were three European assistants and some three hundred porters, guides, and armed Zanzibari soldiers. A forty-foot boat named the Lady Alice, with which Stanley intended to explore the inland waters, was transported in sections. Once the expedition had landed on the continent's east coast, it formed a procession half a mile long. What Stanley hoped to do was to cross the continent, and in the process he intended to settle once and for all the origin of the White Nile. (The Blue Nile, which joins the White Nile in Khartoum, was already known to rise in the Ethiopian highlands.) Despite the efforts of such explorers as Richard Burton, John Speke, James Grant, Florence and Samuel Baker, and David Livingstone, this was still an open question. Indeed, Stanley saw his mission as completing the work of Livingstone, who had died the previous spring. Stanley was thirty-three. By this time, he had become world famous as the man who "found" Livingstone; he had come upon the Doctor in the village of Ujiji, on the northeast shore of Lake Tanganyika, on November 10, 1871. In later life, Stanley told a visitor that he had said "Dr. Livingstone, I presume" because he couldn't think of anything else to say.

Livingstone was not lost when Stanley found him—he knew perfectly well where he was—but he was at the end of his rope. He had been in the interior for five and a half years, and during most of that time had been in contact with the civilized world by letter. But the letters had stopped in 1869. His disappearance had greatly alarmed not only the Royal Geographical Society, in London, which sponsored his expeditions, but the general public; Livingstone's books on his African explorations had made him a Victorian hero. He was engaged in a pilgrimage—inspired by the Biblical story of Moses—to find the source of the White Nile, and he had persuaded himself that it was a river called the Lualaba, which lay to the east of Lake Tanganyika and flowed north at that latitude. (This later proved to be the Congo.) He reached a river town called Nyangwe, but was unable to get the canoes he needed; desperately ill with dysentery, malaria, and a host of other diseases that beset all African explorers, and short of medicine, he decided to return to Ujiji, where he hoped to be resupplied. No shipments awaited him there, but, as luck would have it, five days after his return, Stanley, then a correspondent for the New York *Herald*, arrived with abundant supplies. In an unguarded moment, Livingstone referred to the *Herald* as a "despicable" newspaper. Stanley records the adjective in his journal but leaves it out of

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his book. When Livingstone heard that people were saying that Stanley would make a fortune out of writing about his life, he remarked, "He is heartily welcome, for it is a great deal more than I could ever make out of myself." Stanley quickly came to idolize Livingstone, who was his senior by twenty-eight years. They spent four months together in Central Africa—including several weeks exploring the northern end of Lake Tanganyika—and Stanley later wrote, "I have had no friend on any expedition, no one who could possibly be my companion, on equal footing, except while with Livingstone." Having failed to persuade Livingstone to return to England, Stanley finally left the older man to continue his search alone. A year later, Livingstone succumbed to disease, before he was able to settle the question of the Nile. In an uncommon act of devotion, two of his African companions removed his heart and entrails and buried them in a tin box under a tree, and then carried his sun-dried body, wrapped in tree bark, to the east coast, a journey of more than a thousand miles. From there it was shipped to England. Livingstone was laid to rest in Westminster Abbey, on April 18, 1874, and Stanley was one of the pallbearers. Another of the mourners in the Abbey was Edwin Arnold, the editor of the London *Daily Telegraph*. He had the idea that his newspaper should send Stanley back to Africa to complete Livingstone's work, but Stanley was still under contract to the *Herald*. Eventually, the two papers agreed to split his services and the cost of the new expedition; hence Stanley's departure from Zanzibar in November of 1874.

By late May of 1877, the time of the aforementioned journal entry, barely a hundred members of the expedition remained, the rest having either deserted or died. Stanley had suffered continually from malaria. Among the dead were two of his three European companions; the third—one Frank Pocock—drowned soon thereafter, in an attempt to shoot the rapids below Stanley Pool, a wide stretch of the Congo near what is now Kinshasa. (Occasional discrepancies exist between Stanley's journal and his book; I have adopted the version of events given in the book.) The expedition had engaged in numerous skirmishes with natives—encounters in which it was always outnumbered but managed to prevail because it was better armed. The reader shares Stanley's relief at finding himself among the apparently friendly Mowa people. His men were on the verge of starvation. Stanley's normal weight was about a hundred and eighty pounds, but he estimated that at this stage of the journey he weighed not much more than a hundred. He and Frank Pocock were presented by the Mowa with gifts of palm wine, cassava bread, and bananas. But then, suddenly, things changed. Here is his entry:

> On the third day of our stay at Mowa, feeling quite comfortable amongst the people, on account of their friendly bearing, I began to write down in my note-book the terms for articles in order to improve my already copious vocabulary of native words. I had proceeded only a few minutes when I observed a strange commotion amongst the people who had been flocking about me, and presently they ran away. In a short time we heard war-cries ringing loudly and shrilly over the table-land. Two hours afterwards, a long line of warriors, armed with muskets, were seen descending the table-land and advancing towards our camp. There may have been between five hundred and six hundred of them. We, on the other hand, had made but few preparations except such as would justify us replying to them in the event of the actual commencement of hostilities. But I had made many firm friends amongst them, and I firmly believed that I would be able to avert an open rupture.

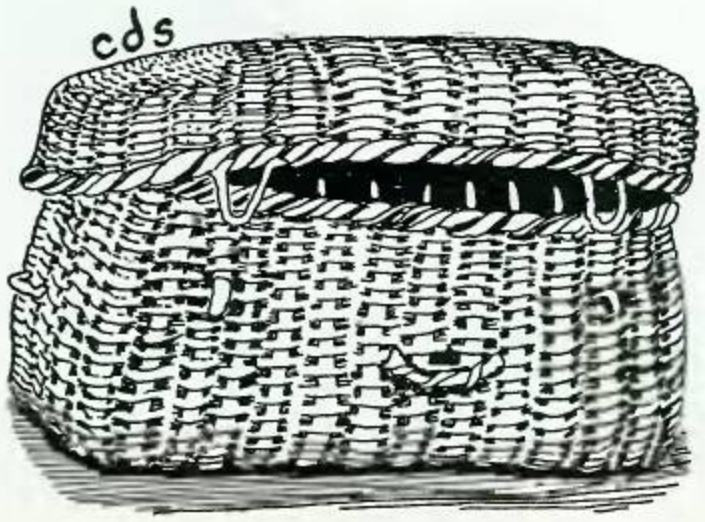
Stanley and Safeni, one of his African companions, went to meet the advancing warriors to learn the cause of the difficulty. One of the warriors explained, "Mundelé [a local term of respect], our people saw you yesterday make marks on some *tara-tara* [a word for paper, perhaps reflecting the sound it makes when torn]. This is very bad. Our country will waste, our goats will die, our bananas will rot, and our women will dry up. What have we done to you, that you should wish to kill us? We have sold you food, and we have brought you wine, each day. Your people are allowed to wander where they please, without trouble. Why is the Mundelé so wicked? We have gathered together to fight you, if you do not burn that *tara-tara* before our eyes. If you burn it, we go away and shall be friends as heretofore." Stanley continues:

> I told them to rest there, and left Safeni in their hands as a pledge that I should return. My tent was not fifty yards from the spot, but while going towards it my brain was busy in devising some plan to foil this superstitious madness. My note-book contained a vast number of valuable notes; plans of falls, creeks, villages, sketches of localities, ethnological and philological details, sufficient to fill two octavo volumes —everything was of general interest to the public. I could not sacrifice it to the childish caprice of savages. As I was rummaging my book box, I came across a volume of Shakespeare (Chandos Edition), much worn and well thumbed, and which was the same size as my field-book; its cover was similar also, and it might be passed for the note-book provided that no one remembered its appearance too well.

Stanley presented this decoy *tara-tara* (in his journal he says that it was simply a sheet of paper covered with writing) to the warriors, who refused to touch it. They insisted that he burn it himself. He writes, "We walked to the nearest fire. I breathed a regretful farewell to my genial companion, which during many weary hours of night had assisted to relieve my mind when oppressed by almost intolerable woes, and then gravely consigned the innocent Shakespeare to the flames, heaping the brush-fuel over it with ceremonious care."

I don't know how the Victorians reacted to this passage, but not long ago I came across a more contemporary reaction—one that surprised me. In 1958, an American writer named Thomas Sterling decided, after reading Stanley's account, to make the same trip. He did, and a delightful book called "Stanley's Way" resulted. He mentions this passage and then comments, "To anyone who has ever read 'Through the Dark Continent' . . . this will seem one of the most unfair acts of barter ever practiced by a European on gullible aborigines."

When I came across these words, I had just read Stanley's travel books, and I was consumed by hero worship. I was so puzzled by Sterling's unkind remark that I decided to begin reading whatever else I could find about Stanley. I soon learned that Sterling is one of a long line of people who have concluded that Stanley was not quite first-class—not the right sort of chap at all. For one thing, the members of the British



geographical establishment could not accept the fact that an outsider—and (so it seemed) an American, to boot—had succeeded in locating Livingstone, something they felt that they should have done themselves. It was suggested that Stanley was a fraud, and that the letters and journals in Livingstone's hand which he had brought back were forgeries. This canard was laid to rest when the Livingstone family attested to their genuineness, but the accusations made Stanley bitter. By the time he wrote "How I Found Livingstone," though, he seemed to think that he had been accepted. He writes, "The mills of the gods are said to grind slowly but surely; in like manner the Royal Geographical Society discovered slowly but surely that I was not a *charlatan*, and that I had done what I *said* I had done, and then they extended to me the right hand of fellowship with a warmth and generosity which I shall never forget." He must have been further reassured when, in September of 1872, he was invited to an audience with Queen Victoria at Dunrobin Castle. He never knew that a few hours after this encounter the Queen wrote to her daughter, the Crown Princess of Prussia, that she had found him to be a "determined, ugly little man—with a strong American twang." (Stanley was five feet five, somewhat taller than the Queen.) He probably also never knew that after Florence Nightingale read "How I Found Livingstone"—which by then was a best-seller both here and in Britain—she commented that it was "the very worst book on the very best subject I ever saw in my life."

Miss Nightingale's objection to Stanley's book may have been similar to objections that many Victorians had. The books were just too graphic. Stanley made no attempt to conceal whatever brutalities attended his encounters with antagonists—and there were many such encounters, with members of his own expeditions as well as with African natives. He does not prettify anything. The Victorians probably objected less to what he had done than to his having made no attempt to cover it up. Other Victorian explorers—Burton, for example—had written about violence, but they had made it seem almost debonair. There is nothing debonair about the violence in Stanley's books. Moreover, by his own admission Stanley had a ferocious temper, and once it was aroused he would commit mayhem; this tendency disturbed some of his public. Denis Boyles, the author of "African Lives" (1988), characterizes Stanley as "the Rambo of explorers," and writes that he "cut through Africa with mean efficiency, blasting away at troublesome native settlements, flogging porters to death, leaving his expeditions' sick and lame to die on the trail and the deserters hanging in the trees." Then, there was the matter of the utterly misnamed Congo Free State, which King Léopold II of Belgium created for the sole purpose of exploiting its resources—primarily rubber. There has probably never been a worse example of colonialism. It was Stanley's writings that brought this region of Africa to Léopold's attention, and in 1878 he offered Stanley a five-year contract to "explore" the Congo. The real purpose of Stanley's mission would be to establish river stations, so as to strengthen Belgian claims to the region. Stanley spent the next five years in the Congo, where he founded Léopoldville (now Kinshasa) and acquired the native name Bula Matari (Smasher of Rocks). The atrocities committed in the Congo Free State were perpetrated by the Belgians, and largely after Stanley left, but they were so heinous—for example, a native who refused to collect rubber would have a hand cut off, and all such severed hands were smoked to preserve them until they could be shown to the European officials who had set the rubber quotas—that his reputation was tarnished by association.

The cloud over Stanley as a consequence of his role in the formation of the Free State persists. Dorothy Middleton, the author of the entry on Stanley in recent editions of the Encyclopædia Britannica, felt it necessary to defend her man. In the 1990 edition she writes:

> From a modern viewpoint, much contemporary criticism of Stanley appears unjust. To the select band of travellers whose centre was the Royal Geographical Society . . . his motives in exploring were suspect, and his methods were considered to be rough. His humble origin probably mattered less than he supposed to men who came, in fact, from a variety of social backgrounds, but his uncouth and uncoöperative manners and his tendencies toward self-righteousness and boastfulness ensured him an unpopularity that long coloured his reputation. Harsh and humourless, touchy and intolerant, Stanley antagonized many who should have been his friends, and the controversies that arose around him have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tended to obscure his considerable achievements.

The earliest biography of Stanley I have found was published in 1890, in Boston. It is called "Stanley's Adventures in the Wilds of Africa," and it was written by J. T. Headley and Willis Fletcher Johnson, about whom I know nothing. I bought it for eight dollars and fifty cents from the University Place Book Shop, that extraordinary ninth-floor warren beloved of everyone who has an interest in books about Africa. It was in 1890 that Stanley's last great travel book, "In Darkest Africa," was published. Within a few weeks, it had sold a hundred and fifty thousand copies and was being translated into five languages. Stanley was at the zenith of his popularity, and this biography is unabashed hagiography. Reading it is like waterskiing in treacle. Stanley's nerves "never flinch," and he is possessed of "a will that neither an African fever nor a wasted form could break down, and a resolution of purpose that the presence of death itself could not shake." As a biography it is worthless; as a curiosity I think it is worth the eight-fifty I paid for it. Three years later, Stanley began writing an autobiography. Unfortunately, it stops when he is twenty-one years old. It was not that Stanley died before he could finish it—he lived until 1904. He simply stopped writing it. People have conjectured about the reasons for this. To me, the most plausible explanation is that he found the process of recalling his early life too painful. What he did finish was published five years after his death, under the title "The Autobiography of Sir Henry Morton Stanley." His widow, Dorothy Tennant Stanley, had edited the manuscript and added various carefully selected items from his journals. (The widows of prominent Victorians practiced a curious form of suttee: instead of throwing themselves on their husbands' funeral pyres, they threw those documents connected with the deceased which they didn't like into the fireplace. Isabel Burton burned entire books; Dorothy Stanley burned only the odd document.) The tone of the "Autobiography" is so sincere and often so wrenching that it is hard to imagine that anything in it could be false. It became the basis of all the Stanley biographies written for the next sixty years. I was struck by the fact that Dorothy Middleton's latest Britannica article uses material from the "Autobiography," even though by then a good part of it had been debunked.

IN a sense, all autobiographies are a form of fiction. Some of the fiction is inevitable. It is the same kind of fiction one employs when one says that one has climbed a mountain: there is a tiny path traced by the climber, surrounded by a vast blank wall that neither he nor anyone else has climbed. There is, of course, a different kind of fiction, in which one claims that one has reached the summit when one has not. Stanley's "Autobiography" is filled with fictions of both sorts. The first person who seems to have understood this was Richard Hall, a former correspondent for the *Observer* and the author of several books on Africa. In 1974, he published his wonderful biography "Stanley: An Adventurer Explored," in which he managed to separate the fact from the fiction in the "Autobiography." Mr. Hall's book is now, sadly, out of print, but two new biographies—"Dark Safari," by the journalist John Bierman, and "Stanley: The Making of an African Explorer," by Frank McLynn, a British historian—have just been published. Both have built on Hall's research (which they generously acknowledge) and have also had access to sources unavailable to Hall. Both Bierman and McLynn conclude that Stanley was a repressed homosexual. McLynn, in particular, has attempted a deep psychological portrait, of the sort that Frank Manuel drew in his "Portrait of Isaac Newton"; in fact, the picture of Stanley that he has come up with bears striking similarities to Manuel's Newton, who is also seen as a repressed homosexual, with this repression manifesting itself in acts of sadism. In Newton's case, these episodes occurred late in life, after he became Master of the Mint. In those days, "clipping and coining"—that is, shaving coins, or counterfeiting them—were capital offenses in England, and Manuel vividly describes Newton's pleasure in interrogating clippers and coiners and their kith and kin. Stanley, for his part, is reported by McLynn to have relished the corporal punishment—the caning and flogging—he inflicted on anyone he found to be derelict. Yet one wonders how reliable the clues these biographers have followed are.

Could not the evidence be read in a number of ways? The human personality is much too complex, in my view, for historical reconstructions such as these not to contain ambiguities. Nonetheless, anyone who is interested in reading Stanley's books—and particularly the "Autobiography"—would be well advised to have Hall or Bierman or McLynn along as a guide.

The fiction of omission in the "Autobiography" begins near its beginning, with the sentence "My father I never knew"—which might mean anything. However, the register of St. Hilary's Church in Denbigh, Wales, notes the christening of one "John Rowlands, Bastard," born on January 28, 1841; this is the future Henry Morton Stanley. The senior John Rowlands was the village drunk of Denbigh. He claimed the paternity of the firstborn of a nineteen-year-old Welsh butcher's daughter named Elizabeth Parry, but the local gossip had it that Rowlands let his name be used as the father for a consideration, to conceal the real parent, who was a prominent lawyer. Elizabeth Parry went on to bear four more illegitimate children, by various men. Almost at once, she abandoned baby John to the care of her father, who died when the boy was five. Whatever family affection Stanley knew as a child stopped abruptly with the death of his grandfather. His two maternal uncles decided to get rid of him. For a few months, he was the ward of an elderly couple, but his uncles decided that the fee they had to pay was too onerous, and he was placed in a workhouse near Denbigh.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, England and Wales had been divided into fifteen thousand parishes, and these were organized into what were known as poor-law "unions," each of which was required to set up a workhouse. "The great building with the iron gates and innumerable windows, into which I had been so treacherously taken, was the St. Asaph Union Workhouse," Stanley writes. "It is an institution to which the aged poor and superfluous children of that parish are taken, to relieve the respectabilities [sic] of the obnoxious sight of extreme poverty, and because civilisation knows no better method of disposing of the infirm and helpless than by imprisoning them within its walls." There were some forty boys in residence, taught by a former coal miner named James


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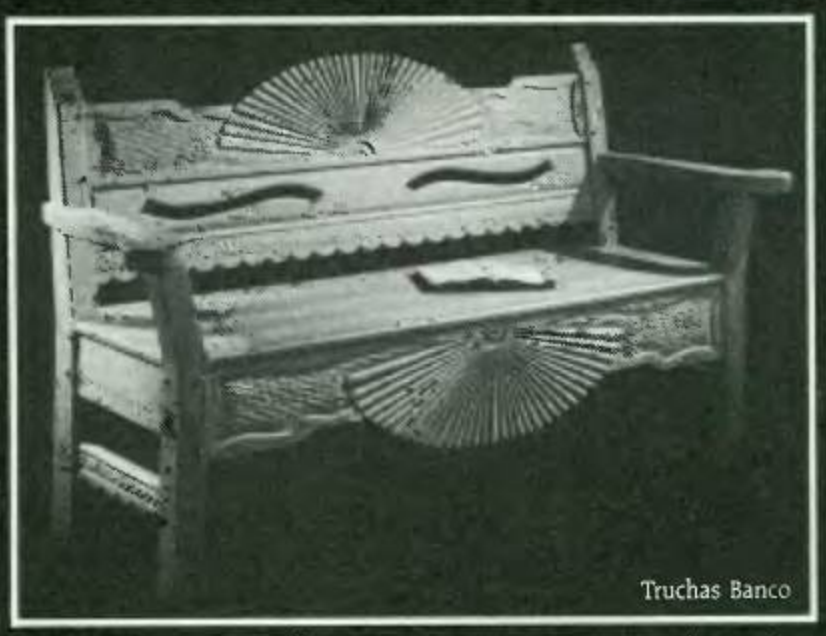

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Francis, who had lost a hand in a mining accident. Stanley's description of life at St. Asaph's apparently benefitted greatly from a close reading of Dickens, and if one credits his account Francis was a villain of the deepest dye. Stanley gives a lurid description of being shown the body of one of his schoolmates, Willie Roberts, in the "dead-house." He conveys the impression that Willie had been beaten to death by James Francis. However, Bierman makes a convincing case that this account is a total fiction, and both he and McLynn dispute Stanley's story of the manner in which, at the age of fifteen, he left the workhouse. In the "Autobiography" Stanley tells us that he prevented Francis from flogging him by beating the man insensate and then ran away. The fact is, however, that the last recorded entry concerning John Rowlands in the record of the workhouse reads simply, "Gone to his uncle at the National School, Holywell." There is no indication that Stanley left St. Asaph's other than peacefully. There is even evidence that he was one of Francis's favorites: he was an excellent student, and while he was in the workhouse he supplemented his native Welsh with English. He was also taught penmanship, and his journals demonstrate the excellence of his handwriting. (In fact, one can tell when Stanley was in extremis by seeing how his penmanship was affected.) On leaving the workhouse, he found no welcome with his uncles; eventually, he moved in with a cousin in the nearby village of Brynford. Stanley had a brief, relatively happy period as a pupil-teacher in the village school, and one can imagine that he might have become a Welsh schoolteacher. But he was shunted off to yet another relative and then made his way to Liverpool. There he found a job as a delivery boy in a butcher shop. While making a delivery to the American packet ship Windermere, he met its captain, who offered him what promised to be a cushy job as a cabin boy. This turned out to be a ruse. As soon as the ship left port, Stanley discovered that he was a simple deckhand, to be treated with the same brutality as everyone else was. Later, some of the men who travelled with Stanley in Africa published memoirs; one of the things they held against him was that he swore at them like a sea captain.

The captains of many merchant ships in those days had a device for not paying the crew: they made shipboard life so intolerable that at the first port of call the men would desert without collecting their wages. This device worked in Stanley's case, and he found himself adrift in New Orleans, where several women make their appearance. There are the "four gay young ladies, in such scant clothing that I was speechless with amazement," who "took liberties with my person." Stanley literally ran from the bawdy house where he met them. "My disgust was so great," he notes, "that I never, in after years, could overcome my repugnance to females of that character." Then, there was Alice Heaton, who presented herself as "Dick Heaton," a "blue-eyed and fair-haired lad," with whom Stanley shared a fourposter bed in a boarding house for four nights, he says, before discovering that the "lad" was a girl. He reports that on the fourth morning he woke at an early hour and "on looking towards Dick, who was still sound asleep, was amazed to see what I took to be two tumours on his breast. . . . I anxiously inquired if those were not painful." With that, Alice Heaton revealed her secret: she had run away to sea and been engaged as a cabin boy on the Pocahontas, which had also docked in New Orleans. Stanley listened sympathetically to this tale and then went off to his newfound job as a clerk in a local store. By the time he returned to the bedroom with the fourposter in it, Alice had disappeared. He muses about fate: "I think it was wise, in separating two young and simple creatures, who might have been led, through excess of sentiment, into folly." And then there was Frances Stanley, who was the wife of Henry Hope Stanley, a British-born cotton broker who had emigrated to America in 1839.

The saga of how John Rowlands of Wales became Henry Stanley of the United States is a staple of biographies of Stanley. The canonical version is the one that Stanley gives in his "Autobiography." It was taken at face value by all of Stanley's biographers, until Richard Hall showed that much of it was pure invention. (This does not seem to have come to the attention of Middleton: in her 1990 entry she still recounts Stanley's version of the events, although she cites the Hall book as one of her references.) In the "Autobiography" Stanley tells us that while he was walking about in search of a job, soon after he jumped ship, he chanced upon "a gentleman of middle age . . . reading a morning newspaper." He continues, "From his sober dark alpaca suit and tall hat, I took him to be the proprietor of the building, over the door of which was the sign, 'Speake and McCreary, Wholesale and Commission Merchants.' " If we are to credit Stanley's Dickensian account, he asked the unknown gentleman, "Do you want a boy, sir?" The gentleman, needless to say, was Henry Stanley, and the store belonged to a friend of his. After thoroughly testing young Rowlands as to his ability to read and write, and having him cleaned up somewhat in a nearby barbershop, this kindly gentleman got him a job as a clerk. Stanley tells us that he made such a favorable impression on his benefactor that he was soon being invited to Sunday breakfast at the Stanley home. He goes into raptures over Mrs. Stanley (although he never bothers to tell us her first name). "The elaborateness and richness of her dress, the purity and delicacy of her face, the exquisite modulations of her voice, the distinctness of her enunciation, and the sweet courtesy of her manner, I will not say awed me, but it kindled as much of reverence as ever I felt in my life," he gushes. Stanley would have us believe that this idyll ended a few months later, when Mrs. Stanley took deathly ill. He tells us that he rushed to the bedside of the dying woman, who, motherlike, near the end whispered to him, "Be a good boy. God bless you!" This scene is alleged to have taken place in 1859, but the real Frances Stanley died almost twenty years later; one can only speculate about why Stanley felt compelled to invent it—and why he also felt compelled to kill off his adoptive father, who, two chapters later, is sent off to Havana to visit a brother, only to die "suddenly in 1861." The fact is that the real Henry Stanley died in 1878, shortly after his wife. Hall, Bierman, and McLynn make about as much sense of this as one can. They believe that it was not so much a case of John Rowlands' being adopted by the Stanleys as the other way around. And it was very likely, they feel, that at some point the Stanleys decided they had had enough of John Rowlands and determined to detach themselves from him. Given the

pattern of rejection and betrayal in Rowlands' past, it is not hard to imagine him wanting the couple dead. This theory is supported by his behavior in 1891, when, a celebrated explorer, he returned to New Orleans to lecture: he refused to see anyone there who had known him as young John Rowlands, and his standoffishness evoked angry comment from a local newspaper.

Stanley's dual identity is reflected in his military career: he served on both sides in the Civil War. By 1861, the year of the "demise" of his "father," he was living in Cypress Bend, Arkansas, not far from Little Rock, having probably been shipped there by the elder Stanley. He had again found work in a store, among whose customers was a slave-owning family named Goree. Stanley had given very little thought to the questions of slavery and secession, but he did have a terrible crush on young Miss Margaret Goree. While Bierman and McLynn find "repressed homosexuality" in Stanley, what I find in him is perpetual adolescence. When it came to women, Stanley was full of a kind of puppy-dog romanticism. This is something that, for better or worse, most of us grow out of, but Stanley seems never to have done so. He stumbles from one hopeless infatuation to another, getting badly hurt and learning nothing. (McLynn argues that Stanley unconsciously pursued relationships that were certain to fail.) Stanley tells us rather little about Miss Goree in the "Autobiography," but he does describe how she shamed him into enlisting in the Confederate Army. He writes, "About this time, I received a parcel which I half-suspected, as the address was written in a feminine hand, to be a token of some lady's regard; but, on opening it, I discovered it to be a chemise and petticoat, such as a negro lady's-maid might wear. I hastily hid it from view, and retired to the back room, that my burning cheeks might not betray me to some onlooker. In the afternoon, Dr. Goree called, and was excessively cordial and kind. He asked me if I did not intend to join the valiant children of Arkansas to fight? and I answered 'Yes.' "

The last three chapters of the "Autobiography" are about the Civil War as seen through the eyes of a foot soldier. Much extraordinary writing came out of that conflict, but Stanley's account is one of the most gripping I have ever read. All of Stanley's contemporaries who saw him under fire—even those who came to hate him—agreed that he had amazing sangfroid. This is what got him (and many of them) out of mortal danger. He was also lucky. At the Battle of Shiloh, for example, men all around him were hit. "One man raised his chest, as if to yawn, and jostled me," he writes of this battle. "I turned to him, and saw that a bullet had gored his whole face, and penetrated into his chest." Before Stanley could be wounded or killed, he was captured, and shipped by steamer and rail, along with other captives, to Camp Douglas, a prison camp outside Chicago. The prisoners were left there to rot. Vermin were everywhere, and the men began dying of typhus and dysentery. After six weeks, Stanley decided to accept an offer of freedom on condition that he join the Union Army. He enrolled in the artillery service and was sent to Harper's Ferry, but before he saw any more fighting he was discharged, because of the deplorable state of his health. At this point, the narrative ends; however, one can follow his career in the Hall, Bierman, and McLynn biographies. He took various odd jobs until, on July 19, 1864, he enlisted for three years in the Federal Navy. He served on the frigate Minnesota, which participated the following December in the bombardment of Fort Fisher, on the coast of North Carolina. Although it would have meant nothing to Stanley then, some weeks earlier a young soldier in the Union Army calling himself Rupert Vincent had been wounded in a skirmish at Laurel Hill, in Virginia. He was then captured and sent to a North Carolina prison camp. "Rupert Vincent" was in reality Robert Livingstone, the oldest son of David Livingstone. He had quarrelled with his father, who was in many ways a singularly unattractive man and was often unkind to members of his family. Robert had then run off to America to enlist. In "How I Found Livingstone" Stanley writes of learning about these events from Livingstone during the months they spent together in Africa. Robert Livingstone died on the fifth of December, a few days before his nineteenth birthday and two weeks before Stanley's arrival off the North Carolina coast.

John Rowlands did not turn into Henry Stanley all at once. Though he had fought as Stanley, he signed the visitor's book of Denbigh Castle on December 14, 1866, as "John Rowlands, formerly of this parish, now ensign in the United States Navy in North America, belonging to the U.S. ship Ticonderoga, now at Constantinople, Turkey, absent on furlough." The only part of this declaration that was true was his name and birthplace. Soon after the bombardment of Fort Fisher, Stanley jumped ship, along with a fellow-sailor named Lewis Noe. Noe went home to New York, and Stanley went West. Somehow he got

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the idea of writing for a newspaper, and he became a stringer for the *Missouri Democrat*, of St. Louis. One is repeatedly struck by Stanley's success in creating professions for himself: no one taught him to be a journalist, nor was he ever coached in the art of organizing large and complex expeditions. His autodidactic talents bordered on genius. After a tour of the West as a reporter, Stanley persuaded Noe to leave home and accompany him to Turkey. They went there to seek their fortunes; instead, they were captured by Turkish brigands, and what followed is somewhat murky. It appears that Noe was raped. (After Stanley died, Noe blackmailed his widow with certain letters and photographs. Bierman reports that Noe was paid a hundred dollars for them and that they were promptly burned.) The two young men were rescued, thanks to the intervention of a provincial governor. Stanley then borrowed six hundred dollars, which he never paid back, from the American Ambassador in Constantinople. With part of the money, he had his own version of a naval officer's uniform made for him, complete with Turkish buttons; thus he became an "ensign" stationed in Constantinople.

Stanley tried, without much success, to capitalize on his Turkish adventures by giving lectures in the United States. He offered to close "the exercise of the evening by singing a Turkish song *à la Turque*." Meanwhile, he resumed work as a reporter for the *Democrat*, this time covering the attempts by the Army to subdue the Plains Indians. Stanley began by despising the Indians but ended by pleading for their survival. In one of his dispatches he refers to them as "these wronged children of the soil." This is worth recalling when one evaluates his attitude toward Africans. He was not a racist in the way that, say, Richard Burton was: to Burton, blacks were just above animals. Stanley is constantly trying to define his feelings about the African people. Sometimes, as when they practice cannibalism, he finds them inhuman, but often he writes with great admiration of their skills and their physical beauty. There is a remarkable passage at the end of "Through the Dark Continent" in which Stanley, who has been living among Africans for three years, encounters four Europeans. He writes, "As I looked into their faces, I blushed to find that I was wondering at their paleness. Poor pagan Africans. . . . The whole secret of their wonder and curiosity flashed upon me at once. What arrested the twanging bow and the deadly trigger of the cannibals? What but the weird pallor of myself and Frank!" This was Pocock, the last of his white companions on that expedition. "In the same manner the sight of the pale faces of the Embomma merchants gave me the slightest suspicion of an involuntary shiver," he goes on. "The pale colour, after so long gazing on rich black and richer bronze, had something of an unaccountable ghastliness. I could not divest myself of the feeling that they must be sick; yet, as I compare their complexions to what I now view, I should say they were olive, sunburnt, dark." In our day, such an appraisal might seem condescending, but to Stanley's Victorian audience these sentiments must have sounded radical indeed.

In December of 1867, Stanley came to New York to try to land a job at the *Herald*. He was then twenty-six—five months older than the *Herald's* erratic publisher, James Gordon Bennett, Jr. There were no staff vacancies, so Stanley arranged to become the *Herald's* roving war correspondent by agreeing to pay his own expenses. He covered a British campaign in Abyssinia, managing to scoop his fellow-correspondents. He also covered a Cretan revolt against Turkish rule and had an abortive romance with a local beauty. Not long after that, on a return trip to Denbigh, he fell in love with a nineteen-year-old girl named Katie Gough-Roberts, the daughter of a local solicitor. To woo her, he wrote a fifteen-page autobiography explaining his humble origins, with the usual distortions. (After he died, his widow felt obliged to buy it back for a hundred and fifty pounds and burn it, but Katie kept a copy of it.) While he was in Africa looking for Livingstone, Katie married someone else.

As Stanley's journalistic coups piled up, his relationship with the egomaniacal Bennett worsened. Bennett could neither tolerate Stanley's increasing fame nor do without him. The story of how Stanley was sent by the *Herald* to find Livingstone is now legend. In the introduction to "How I Found Livingstone" Stanley tells us, "On the sixteenth day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine, I am in Madrid, fresh from the carnage at Valencia. At 10 A.M. Jacopo . . . hands me a telegram: on opening it I find it reads, 'Come to Paris on important business.' The telegram is from Jas. Gordon Bennett, jun., the young manager of the New York *Herald*." Stanley says that on receipt of this missive he immediately packed all his belongings and left Madrid for good, taking the next express train to Paris. One wonders how he knew that Bennett planned to give him a new assignment, let alone one that would take him out of Spain. Such was Bennett's whimsical nature that he might well have summoned Stanley to Paris to fire him. Be that as it may, upon arriving the following night, Stanley went straight to Bennett's hotel and knocked on the door of his room. On being admitted, he found Bennett in bed. Bennett's first words were "Who are you?" Having been enlightened, he told Stanley to go to Africa to search for Livingstone, and to take enough in the way of material goods to provide Livingstone, if he was still alive, with anything he needed. There was, of course, the matter of money. Stanley is asked to give Bennett an estimate. "Burton and Speke's journey to Central Africa cost between £3,000 and £5,000," he replies, "and I fear it cannot be done under £2,500." This does not seem to faze Bennett, who says, "Well, I will tell you what you will do. Draw a thousand pounds now; and when you have gone through that, draw another thousand, and when that is spent, draw another thousand, and so on."

Stanley's latter-day biographers are skeptical of this account; indeed, if we were to believe Stanley we would expect him to have rushed out of the hotel that very moment and taken the next boat to Africa. But, as he tells us, he is instructed to get there by way of Egypt, Turkey, and India, among other places. "Baghdad will be close on your way to India," Bennett says helpfully. "Suppose you go there and write up something about the Euphrates Valley Railway." In the event, it took Stanley fourteen months to get to Zanzibar to begin organizing his expedition. Once there, he discovered that Bennett had not been covering the promised thou-

sand-pound drafts. It was only when Stanley was well into the interior and had begun filing dispatches that Bennett began paying the bills; he may have worried that Stanley would find Livingstone and sell the story to another paper.

On Stanley's next expedition, the role of Katie Gough-Roberts was filled by a young woman named Alice Pike. That we know this is entirely thanks to Mr. Hall, since there is no mention of her in "Through the Dark Continent" or the "Autobiography"—or, indeed, anywhere else in Stanley's published œuvre. Just as he had killed off his "parents," he tried to make Alice Pike vanish from the face of the earth. Hall had never heard of her, but he was confronted by a mystery: Why had Stanley named the expedition's portable boat the Lady Alice? "There was no obvious candidate among the aristocracy of the time to whom he might have wished to pay a compliment," Hall writes. "I looked in vain for a clue in his published writings, but it seemed significant that all reference to the name of the boat had been taken out of Stanley's uncompleted autobiography." Hall discovered the identity of the eponymous Alice purely by accident, while he was foraging through some back numbers of the *Bulletin* of the Missouri Historical Society trying to piece together some of the details of Stanley's life in the West. He writes, "A brief article mentioned a letter given to a Portuguese traveller by Stanley for despatching at the end of his Congo journey: the fate of the letter was unknown, but the address to which it was sent has survived on a slip of paper in a Lisbon archive. Stanley had been anxious to speed his letter on the way to a Miss Alice Pike, of 613 Fifth Avenue, New York." Hall then dedicated himself to the task of tracking down this long-vanished young woman—a task made much simpler by coincidence. The father of a friend of Hall's—a man named Gerald Sanger—had once served as a magistrate on the same bench as Major Denzil Stanley, the explorer's son, and had been given access to some of Stanley's private papers in order to write a biography. It was never published, but among the papers were love letters exchanged by Alice Pike and Stanley. Sanger told Hall that her family came from Cincinnati. This led him to the Cincinnati historians, and "the long-forgotten romance of Henry Stanley began to take shape."

Alice Pike was the youngest daughter of a German-Jewish millionaire named Samuel Pike. He had made a fortune distilling a whiskey called Magnolia, and then moved from Cincinnati to New York, where he made another fortune, this time in real estate. He died in 1873, and his widow decided to console herself with an extended tour of Europe, taking along her three daughters. Alice was then seventeen. It was during the family's stay in London that she met Stanley. By that time, he had acquired a middle name. He had experimented with "Morelake," "Moreland," and "Morley" before settling on "Morton." Alice Pike apparently called him "Morton"; at least, that is how she addresses him in her letters. In addition to a middle name, he had also acquired a sort of foster son named Kalulu, who had been a slave and had been a "gift" to Stanley from an Arab trader while Stanley was in search of Livingstone. Stanley was the talk of London when Alice Pike met him. As photographs in the "Autobiography" show, he was a handsome young man. Hall notes that "he had wavy black hair, flecked with grey" and "highly arched brows over . . . remarkable eyes." A photograph of Alice in Hall's book shows her to have been a wonderfully beautiful young woman, and Stanley was smitten. The couple saw each other every day while he was in London. On the pretext that he had urgent business with Bennett, he followed her to New York, where he proposed and was accepted. However, Mrs. Pike decided that the couple should wait to marry until Stanley returned from Africa. The two young people signed a marriage pact: "We solemnly pledge ourselves to be faithful to each other and to be married to one another on the return of Henry Morton Stanley from Africa. We call God to witness this our pledge in writing." With that, Stanley sailed off to spend the next three years in Africa.

The Lady Alice was made in five-foot sections by a boat builder at Teddington, on the Thames. It was built to Stanley's specifications out of Spanish cedar. It proved to be a great deal more durable than the engagement vows. Stanley wrote to Alice constantly, pouring his heart out. It was a one-


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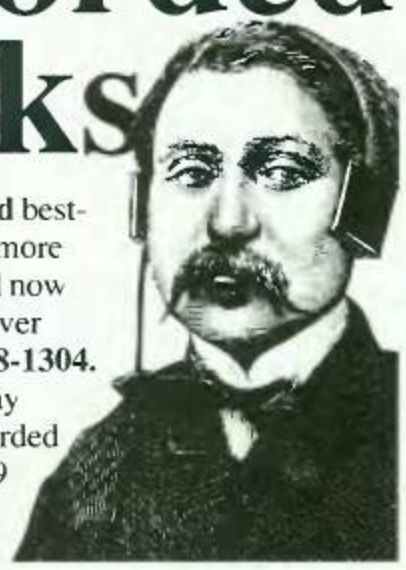

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way correspondence, since none of her letters reached him until he got back to Zanzibar. This was just as well, in the light of their contents. "I do love dancing so much," she writes. "Honest, I would rather go to an opera, though, than a party. . . . Almost every evening some fellows come in—I get awfully tired of them." The inevitable happened. A year and a half after Stanley's departure, Alice married Albert Clifford Barney, the heir to a railway-carriage fortune. The last letter she wrote to Stanley he received in London on his return. It read:

DEAR MORTON,

Among the many congratulations and praises showered on you, receive my humble rejoicings also, of all you have accomplished. I am proud to know how bravely you have borne your many hard trials.

Poor Stanley! How much you have lost, but your gain has been great indeed. I shed tears when I read of the fate of Kalulu and the "Lady Alice." [Kalulu drowned in the Congo, and the Lady Alice was abandoned.] I had hoped she would have proven a truer friend than the Alice she was named after, for you must know, by this time, I have done what millions of women have done before me, not been true to my promise. But you are so great, so honoured and so sought after, that you will scarcely miss your once true friend and always devoted admirer of your heroism. For indeed you are the hero of the day. That alone should console you for my loss. No doubt before long you will think it a gain, for Stanley can easily find a wife—all his heart could desire to grace his high position and deservedly great name. . . .

If you can forgive me, tell me so; if not, do please remain silent. Destroy my letters, as I have burnt all yours. Adieu, Morton, I will not say farewell, for I hope in some future time we may meet—shall it be as friends?

ALICE BARNEY

PERHAPS the greatest of Stanley's books of African exploration is the last one, "In Darkest Africa." The dire events described in it—and in the journals of other participants in the expedition—have had a literary impact extending from Joseph Conrad to the British playwright Simon Gray. Conrad undertook his voyage up the Congo at just the time of Stanley's last expedition. He must surely have heard, either then or later, of the fate of the rear column—the group of ill and disabled men left behind by Stanley on the banks of the Congo when he headed overland. Its commanding officer went mad and was murdered, and the second-in-command died of a fever not long after witnessing an act of cannibalism. Some composite of these two men seems to have been the inspiration for Kurtz in "Heart of Darkness," which Conrad published twelve years later.

My admiration for "In Darkest Africa" is such that I invested in a somewhat creaky two-volume set of the original 1890 edition. The illustrations—etchings or drawings—were still intact, and there was a map, folded in an envelope attached to the inside back cover, which I extricated an inch at a time, fearing that it would fall apart. There were a few holes in it, but they have been patched, and the map, mounted and framed, hangs above my desk. It represents everything that Stanley knew about the geography of Central Africa in 1890, and Stanley knew more than anyone else. The Congo Free State, in pale yellow, takes up most of the map. The French naval officer Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza was on the river in 1881, when Stanley founded Léopoldville. There was a good deal of rivalry between them at first, but in the end they decided to split the Congo, with the French getting the part north of the river and the Belgians the south. Brazzaville was founded in 1884, just across from Léopoldville, and it still carries that name. Both settlements are shown on Stanley's map. Stanley's route on this expedition is a thin red line stretching from coast to coast. Some seventy miles of it run north-south, alongside the Ruwenzori Mountains, which Stanley labels on his map. He is credited with being the first European to see them, and he gives the altitude of the highest as nineteen thousand feet. This is some twenty-two hundred feet too high; the Margherita, the highest peak of what is now called Mt. Stanley, stands at 16,763 feet.

With the discovery of the Ruwenzori range, the origin of the White Nile was truly settled. John Speke had decided that Lake Victoria was its source, without having circumnavigated the lake; Burton, for one, argued that Speke's claim had no empirical basis, and geographers were bitterly divided on the issue. In the eighth chapter of the fourth volume of his "Geography," the second-century Alexandrian polymath Claudius Ptolemaeus, using information he says he obtained from Marinus of Tyre, thought that he had settled the Nile. He wrote that at a longitude and latitude he specified—a point close to the equator and not far from Lake Victoria—"there arises the Mountain of the Moon, whose snows

*"Without a doubt, Alfredo, you've broken new ground."*

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feed the lakes from which the sources of the Nile flow." Ptolemy's "Mountain" of the Moon became in time the fabled Mountains of the Moon, and finding them became a primary aim of African exploration. They were occasionally identified with Kilimanjaro or Mt. Kenya. Speke identified them with the volcanoes of the Virunga range, but none of those feed the Nile. Stanley claims, in his book, to have had the range pointed out to him by a young native boy on May 24, 1888, although two of his officers, T. H. Parke and A. J. Mounteney Jephson, later claimed that they were the first white men to see the mountains and had told Stanley about them. The young African boy, Stanley informs us, thought the mountains were covered with salt, there being no knowledge of snow among any of the local tribes. The reason that the Ruwenzori are so hard to see is the microclimate they engender. It rains in these mountains some three hundred and fifty days a year, and, even when it is not raining, the miasma from the Semliki River, which runs along the western slope of the range, rises and condenses into a thick fog on the summit glaciers. Stanley named the Ruwenzori from a mixture of two local words—*Rwenjura* and *Rwenzururu*—both having the sense of "hill of rain." The expedition followed the range south, along what is now the Zaire side, and then went east into Uganda. Stanley was ill, so he deputized one of his men, William Stairs, to lead the first climbing expedition on the Ruwenzori. Stairs got to a ridge some two and a half miles away from a fifteen-thousand-seven-hundred-foot mountain now called Mt. Emin. On Stanley's map we see the Semliki River flowing into Lake Albert. This lake is also fed by waters from Lake Victoria, and in turn feeds the White Nile. The Mountains of the Moon supply some twenty per cent of the White Nile's water, and the rest, as Speke had long ago conjectured, comes from Lake Victoria.

To understand what Stanley was doing in this part of Africa, we must make another brief detour into Victorian history. Late in 1883, General Charles George Gordon was offered employment in the Congo Free State by King Léopold, as Stanley's successor. He was prepared to resign his commission in the British Army, but before he could there was a rebellion in the Sudan, where he had recently been governor-general. The rebellion had Muslim-fundamentalist overtones: it was led by a charismatic figure named Muhammad Ahmad Ibn el-Sayyid Abdullah, who had proclaimed himself the Mahdi—the Messiah. By 1884, the Mahdi had conquered much of the Sudan, and his army was threatening to spill over into the rest of North Africa. The British government, which had installed a large army in Egypt and was the de-facto power in that country, persuaded Gordon to return to Khartoum to deal with the Mahdi. Instead, the Mahdi dealt with him. After laying siege to Khartoum for nearly a year, the Mahdi's troops broke into the city, and Gordon was killed on January 26, 1885, just two days before the arrival of a British column that had been sent to relieve him. This touched off an explosive reaction of anger and frustration in Britain which set the stage for Stanley's expedition.

Left in the detritus of the Sudan was one of those resourceful European eccentrics who found their way into the African interior in the nineteenth century. This one was known as Emin Bey—later, Emin Pasha—and Mt. Emin was named for him. Emin Pasha, who was a year older than Stanley, was born in Silesia. His real name was Eduard Carl Oscar Theodor Schnitzer. There is some difference of opinion as to his background. Historians agree, however, that he studied medicine in Berlin, then migrated to Turkey and served as tutor to the family of Ismail Hakki Pasha, who became the governor of Western Albania. Schnitzer accompanied him to Albania and at that point began calling himself Emin Effendi Hakim. Hakki Pasha died in the early eighteen-seventies, and Emin took it upon himself to adopt his young wife and children. He soon deposited them with relatives of his in Neisse, and went off to Alexandria to practice medicine. He never saw them again. From Alexandria, Emin went to Khartoum. He made a favorable impression on Gordon, who appointed him surgeon-general to the forces in an ill-defined southern province of the Sudan known as Equatoria. It did not actually span the equator but extended as far south as Lake Albert. In 1878, Gordon made Emin the governor of Equatoria.

In many ways, Emin was more of a professor of zoology than a governor. He was short, slight, and extremely nearsighted. He was a talented pianist, spoke most European and several Asian languages and a number of African dialects, played excellent chess, and was a tireless collector of plant and animal specimens. By the time he ar-

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rived in Equatoria, he had taken an Abyssinian wife; she soon died, leaving him with a young daughter named Ferida. When the Mahdi's forces began overrunning the Sudan, Emin migrated south to the town of Wadelai, not far from Lake Albert. That is where he was at the time of Gordon's murder. It is not clear how much danger Emin was in—he had with him a force of some fifteen hundred soldiers armed with Remington rifles—but he certainly felt endangered. Word got back to England that the last of Gordon's lieutenants was likely to share the same fate as the General. This intelligence provoked a fierce debate in Parliament, with the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, taking the position that since Emin was a German it was not England's problem. (The Germans took the position that since Emin did not hold a German commission it was not their problem, either.) It was then proposed that a small scientific expedition be mounted, with the ancillary purpose of bringing supplies to Emin. However, this did not satisfy British public opinion. A campaign in the press began in favor of mounting a large expedition to relieve Emin, and of making Stanley its leader.

As it happened, at just about this time Stanley had suffered still another romantic disaster. In the summer of 1885, he was introduced to the aristocratic artist Dorothy Tennant. As far as her social development is concerned, she was something of a mirror image of Stanley. She was, at thirty-four, still sharing a bedroom with her mother. Her father had died fifteen years earlier, but she addressed him each night in her diary. When she met Stanley, he was still in mourning over his affair with Alice Pike, but his confidence in Miss Tennant's feelings grew to the point where he could discuss this with her. She confided to her father's shade that she wished that Alice Pike had died, so that Stanley could have remembered her only with love. The relationship grew more intense, and a year later Stanley proposed. To his amazement and devastation, she turned him down. Being offered the command of an armed expedition to Central Africa must have come as something of a relief.

In order to finance the expedition, a committee of backers had raised twenty-one thousand five hundred pounds, almost half of it from the Egyptian government, which was Emin's nominal employer. But by the time Stanley was offered the job, the backers had surreptitiously changed the expedition's objective. Relieving Emin had become a pretext for establishing a new British colony, to fill the vacuum created by the chaos in the Sudan. The possibility of having a British rival in Central Africa had not escaped King Léopold, who summoned Stanley to Belgium with instructions to sign Emin up as governor of an extension of the Congo Free State, once Stanley had stabilized the situation. This understanding explains the bizarre route that Stanley took to reach Emin. The logical route would have been overland from the east coast. But Léopold's claims would be strengthened if Emin was reached via Belgian territory, so, having landed in Zanzibar and organized his forces, Stanley proceeded to sail around the Cape of Good Hope to the mouth of the Congo. In his book he gives half a dozen reasons for choosing this detour. They include his expectation that he would be able to use a fleet of steamers he had left at the mouth of the river, and the notion that the Zanzibaris in his entourage would be less likely to defect if they were in unfamiliar territory. Nowhere does he mention the real reason—that he was once again under contract to the King of Belgium.

"In Darkest Africa" opens with Stanley's account of how he recruited his officers. When he wrote it, of course, he knew what had become of them, and it is interesting to go back to these interviews after finishing the book and see how Stanley subtly hinted at how they would behave. Of the ever-reliable William Stairs he notes, "The concise style and directness of the application appealed strongly in his favour." Of A.J.M. Jephson, who disputed his claim to the first sighting of the Ruwenzori, he notes, "On some members of the Committee, Mr. Jephson made the impression that he was unfitted for an expedition of this kind, being in their opinion too 'high class.' But the Countess de Noailles made a subscription in his favour to the Relief Fund of £1,000, an argument that the Committee could not resist." A little later in the book, Stanley reconstructs his initial interview with the ill-fated Major Edmund Musgrave

Barttelot, who commanded the rear column. Stanley claims to have told Barttelot, "I read on your face immense determination and something like pugnacity. Now, a pugnacious fellow, though very useful at times, you know, is not quite so useful for an expedition like this." It was Barttelot's unbridled pugnacity that got him murdered.

Stanley's expedition sailed from Zanzibar on February 25, 1887. Among the passengers were eight European officers, six hundred and twenty Zanzibari porters, sixty armed Sudanese soldiers, four Syrians, and thirteen Somalis. There was also an Arab slave dealer, whose given name was Hamed bin Muhammad but who was known as Tippu-Tib, after the sound of his guns. Tippu-Tib and Léopold exploited contiguous regions of Central Africa and were often in conflict. Léopold wisely decided to settle this business by making Tippu-Tib the governor of a portion of the Free State, and Tippu-Tib was now on his way to set up headquarters near Stanley Pool. He had a retinue of ninety-six, including thirty-five wives and concubines. The presence of Tippu-Tib was, from Stanley's point of view, an extremely unfortunate necessity. Stanley's attitude toward slavery had evolved from the indifference he exhibited at the time of the Civil War to absolute loathing. Some of this had come about as a result of his friendship with Livingstone. Though slavery had been abolished in the British colonies in 1833, it was still practiced on a huge scale by Arabs and Portuguese who had penetrated the interior. A large part of the trade was in women and children. A party of slavers would descend on a village, kill many of the men, set fire to the huts, and march off with the survivors, who were constrained with heavy wooden forks around their necks. Livingstone had witnessed all this, and what had appalled him most was the destruction of human dignity. He wrote in his "Last Journals," "The strangest disease I have seen in this country seems really to be broken-heartedness, and it attacks free men who have been captured and made slaves." Livingstone succeeded in communicating his outrage to Stanley, and Stanley became the medium that conveyed it to the British public. The slave market in Zanzibar was finally closed in June of 1873—a month after Livingstone's death—but the commerce in slaves continued elsewhere in Africa into the twentieth century.

Nonetheless, as a practical matter, both Stanley and Livingstone had to deal with powerful slave traders like Tippu-Tib, because they were the only people who could muster the hundreds of men who were needed as porters. It should be understood that the porters were not, strictly speaking, slaves; they were to be paid a wage. However, once an expedition was under way, they were not allowed to desert. Stanley's rationalization of this stricture was survival: deserters usually carried away with them part of an expedition's matériel, including weapons—something that Stanley was determined to prevent. His usual modus operandi was flogging, often followed by the use of slave chains to confine the runaway. No one was exempt; even his beloved Kalulu was put in chains after he was caught stealing. In his books Stanley makes no attempt to hide his disciplinary methods; perhaps he felt that they would not shock Victorian sensibilities. After all, corporal punishment was part of the ethos; Stanley himself had been subjected to it in the workhouse. But to a modern reader these scenes are very painful. One tries to put oneself in Stanley's place—to imagine the strain he was under—but in the end one reads these passages with acute discomfort and repugnance. For whatever it is worth, it is also true that many of the Africans who returned from one of these expeditions would volunteer for the next.

When Stanley and his men reached the mouth of the Congo, he discovered that the boats he had left there had been allowed to deteriorate in his absence to the point where they were useless. He then marched his people for twenty-eight days overland to Léopoldville, along a road he had built seven years earlier. Once there, he commandeered whatever boats he could find, and the expedition headed nine hundred miles farther upstream to the village of Yambuya. There he made a decision that would have fatal consequences. He decided to leave about a third of the expedition—some two hundred men—in the charge of a very reluctant Major Barttelot. Simon Gray has described the events that followed, in his 1978 play "The Rear Column." It is faithful to the facts, but—at least in my view—does not really capture the cumulative horror of the experience. Nothing replaces the effect of reading, for example, "Jameson's Story of the Rear Column," the posthumously published diaries of James Jameson, Barttelot's second-in-command. By and large, those left behind were sick or wounded, and Stanley felt that they would not be capable of making the forced marches he was about to begin through unknown country in order to reach what he assumed to be a desperate Emin as soon as possible. He gave Barttelot a voluminous letter of instructions—he reproduces it in his book—which included detailed plans for building a stockade. Tippu-Tib was to supply six hundred additional porters, and when they arrived the rear column would be able to make its way to Lake Albert. Before leaving, Stanley gave Barttelot a pep talk, which concluded, "For us the word is 'Right Onward'; for you 'Patience and Forbearance.' I want my tea. I am dry with talking." By this time, the two men hated each other. Four days later, Stanley marched out of Yambuya. When he returned, fourteen months later, Barttelot and Jameson were dead, and the column had been decimated.

"In Darkest Africa," which is over a thousand pages long, was written in feverish spurts during the fifty days that Stanley remained in Cairo after the expedition was over. Certainly one of the reasons for the haste was Stanley's apprehension that the dark side of the expedition would be exposed. He had tried to guard against any sort of literary competition by including in the contracts he had made with his officers a stipulation that their accounts would not appear in print until six months after his own. But there was nothing to stop people from talking. He wanted to get the official version out as soon as possible. And, in fact, we have several accounts of the events, since all eight of the officers kept diaries. These often conflict with Stanley's book, and are sharply critical of him. (None of his officers had very much affection for Stanley, although they spoke with admiration of his abilities.) Stanley had little time to worry about the problems of the rear column; he had enough of his own. His route led through the Ituri forest, which took him a hundred and sixty days to cross. Stanley's books are full of descriptions of difficult ter-

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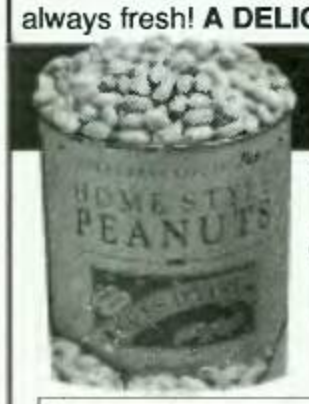


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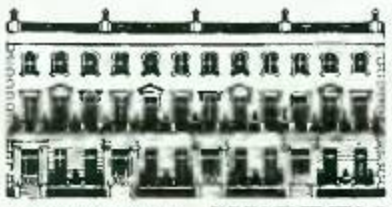

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rain, but the Ituri forest was unique. He writes of it in Conradian terms: "Drowsy, like a great beast, with monstrous fur thinly veiled by vaporous exhalations," it rests "in its infinite sullenness, remorseless and implacable as ever." But at least he was on the move. The effect of the forest on the rear column was devastating; to judge from what its members wrote, they were unaware of what it was doing to them morally and psychologically. There is no more dreadful episode in all the exploration literature known to me than the May 11, 1888, entry in Jameson's diary. He had gone to Tippu-Tib to try to persuade him to supply the porters he had promised. They were not immediately available, and Tippu-Tib kept bargaining the price up. The two men began to talk about cannibalism, and Jameson said he thought that the reports of it were "travellers' tales." One of Tippu-Tib's men, who had overheard, said to him, "Give me a bit of cloth, and see." Jameson produced six handkerchiefs. He writes, "Presently a man appeared, leading a young girl of about ten years old by the hand, and I then witnessed the most horribly sickening sight I am ever likely to see in my life. He plunged a knife quickly into her breast twice, and she fell on her face, turning over on her side. Three men then ran forward, and began to cut up the body of the girl; finally her head was cut off, and not a particle remained, each man taking his piece away down to the river to wash it. The most extraordinary thing was that the girl never uttered a sound, nor struggled, until she fell." Jameson then reports that he returned to his quarters to try to sketch the scene. "No one here seemed to be in the least astonished at it," he writes. Indeed, that afternoon Tippu-Tib was bargaining with him as if nothing had happened.

Stanley reached the south shore of Lake Albert on December 14, 1887. Emin was now stationed at a place called Mswa, on the western shore, but Stanley expected to meet him on the south side of the lake, since Emin had been informed by letter of Stanley's approximate arrival time. But there was no Emin. The natives told Stanley that his private steamship, the Khedive, had not been seen on that part of the lake for many years. Furthermore, there were no large trees with which to make a canoe to reach him. A small steel boat, which had been carried in sections, had been left at a rear camp, and a group was dispatched to get it. This having been done, A.J.M. Jephson was sent with a contingent of shipmates to Mswa. Not until the following April did Emin dock the Khedive near Stanley's lakeside camp. At this point, a certain element of farce enters the narrative. Thinking that Emin might be in need of clothes, Stanley had had a suit made for him in Egypt. The pants proved to be six inches too long. Moreover, it became clear that Emin was not in any particular need of supplies; in fact, his circumstances were far better than Stanley's. Seething with frustration, Stanley left the lake on May 22, 1888, to return through the formidable Ituri forest to recover the rear column. On August 17th, he reached a village named Banalia, ninety miles from Yambuya. There he came upon an encampment of men from the rear column. "Pen cannot picture nor tongue relate the full horrors witnessed within that dreadful pest-hold," he wrote. Dead bodies lay unburied, and the "smitten living with their festers lounged in front of us by the dozen." Stanley began to piece together the calamity that had taken place. Tippu-Tib had finally produced some porters, and Major Barttelot, in a futile attempt to join Stanley, had got some of his men as far as Banalia. Only sixty of the original two hundred were alive, including the last of the Europeans, a former noncommissioned officer in the British Army. Barttelot had been murdered in Banalia on July 19th, under circumstances that might have come directly from Conrad. As his difficulties mounted, Barttelot's behavior had become more and more unhinged. On the morning of the nineteenth, an African woman began playing the drums and singing. He sent a young boy to tell her to stop. This only produced more noise. Barttelot left his quarters, armed with his revolver, and ordered the woman to stop. A shot rang out, and he fell dead. It had been fired by the woman's husband, who doubtless concluded that Barttelot had gone mad. The culprit fled into the forest, and Jameson pursued him. He was eventually caught, tried, and executed by firing squad, and as he lay dying Jameson noted that "the look he gave us was the most horrible I

think I ever saw on a man's face." Jameson died of a fever on the way back from this excursion, on the same day that Stanley arrived in Banalia.

It is a testimony to Stanley's greatness as a leader of men that within four days of encountering this debacle he had begun to move what was left of the rear column to Lake Albert. He reached the lake in the middle of January, 1889. By that time, the Mahdi's troops had occupied half of Equatoria, and the issue of creating a new colony —whether for Léopold or for the British—was moot. However, Emin began vacillating about whether or not to leave the province. Stanley's patience, never his strong suit, gave out. He announced that he would begin a march to the east coast on the morning of April 10th, with or without Emin and his people. At this, Emin finally decided to be "rescued," and the caravan, when it left, consisted of some fifteen hundred people and stretched for four miles. In December, the expedition reached the town of Bagamoyo, on the Indian Ocean. This town had a German military governor, who welcomed Emin as one of his own. It was clear that Emin wanted nothing more to do with Stanley, and soon after reaching Bagamoyo he accepted employment with the German government for a thousand pounds a year. In his new job, he was asked to return to the region around Lake Victoria to secure the territory for Germany. After reaching the lake, Emin headed west toward Stanley Falls, on the Congo. He seems to have wanted to follow Stanley's route to the Atlantic. On October 23, 1892, while he was sitting in his tent in the Ituri forest surrounded by the specimens of birds and insects he loved to collect, he was seized and brutally murdered by Arab slavers. The Egyptian government eventually agreed to pay about fifty-two hundred pounds in back salary, some of it to his long-abandoned common-law wife in Europe and the rest to his Abyssinian daughter, Ferida.

STANLEY returned to Britain a hero. He was offered a knighthood by Queen Victoria, which he had to refuse: it turned out that he had become an American citizen in 1885, to protect his American royalties. But quite apart from this, Stanley had always presented himself as an American: an American flag invariably flew over his tent, and many of the references in his books have American nuances. (Residents of New York City might note Stanley's lament in "In Darkest Africa" when his view of Lake Edward is interrupted by fog. He writes, "And oh! what might have been seen had we but known one of those marvellously clear days, with the deep purified azure and that dazzling transparency of ether so common to New York!") Among the letters of congratulation waiting for him was one from Dorothy Tennant, to which Stanley made no answer. Nor did he follow up on her invitation to visit her. More letters followed, until Stanley saw fit to reply. They were married on July 12, 1890, in Westminster Abbey. His surviving companions from the expedition were his groomsmen. Late in life, Alice Pike seems to have decided that she, too, had made a mistake. She confesses as much, in a four-hundred-page manuscript that Mr. Bierman uncovered. In it, she confesses that if Stanley had only "kidnapped" her he would have won her over, and she refers to him as "one of Nature's gentlemen."

Stanley's marriage seems to have been a happy one. He and Dorothy settled into a town house in Whitehall. In 1892, his wife persuaded him to give up his American citizenship, so that he could eventually be knighted—as he was, in 1899. In 1896, they adopted a boy from Stanley's home district in Wales, whom they named Denzil Morton. Stanley served a not very distinguished term in Parliament, beginning in 1895. By that time, his health, which had suffered terribly in Africa, was beginning to fail. He and his wife remodelled a rambling mock-Tudor manor in Surrey as a country retreat. She named a stream on the property Stanley Pool, to remind him of the Congo. He died in Whitehall, on the morning of May 10, 1904. His last words, upon hearing Big Ben strike four, were, "So that is Time! Strange." He had told his wife that he wanted to be buried in Westminster Abbey, next to Livingstone. The Dean of Westminster, Joseph Armitage Robinson, refused the request.

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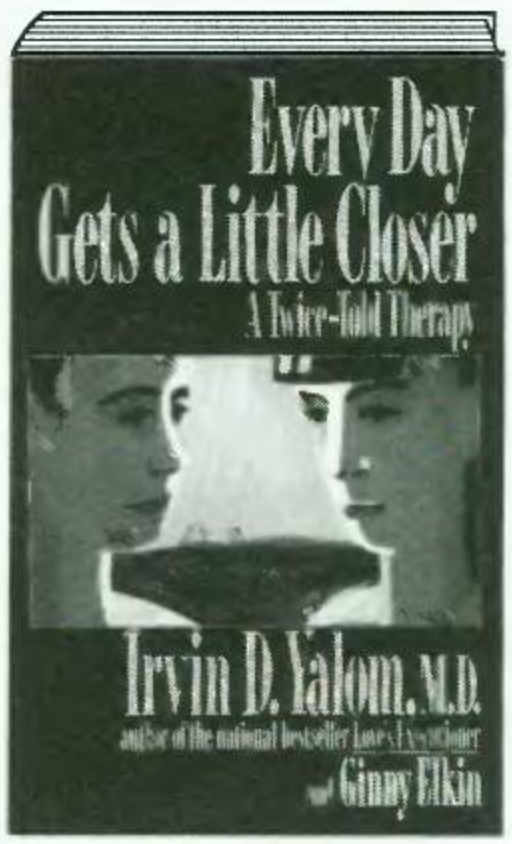


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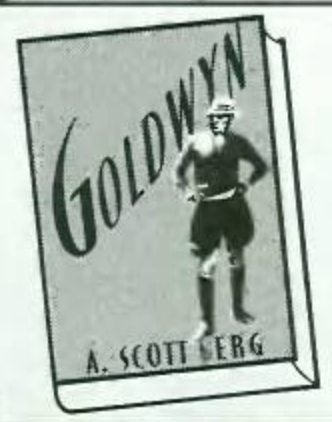


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