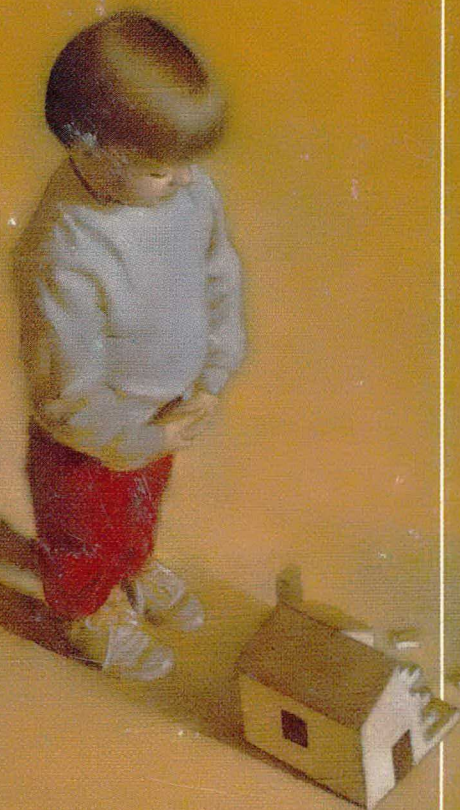


The Atlantic

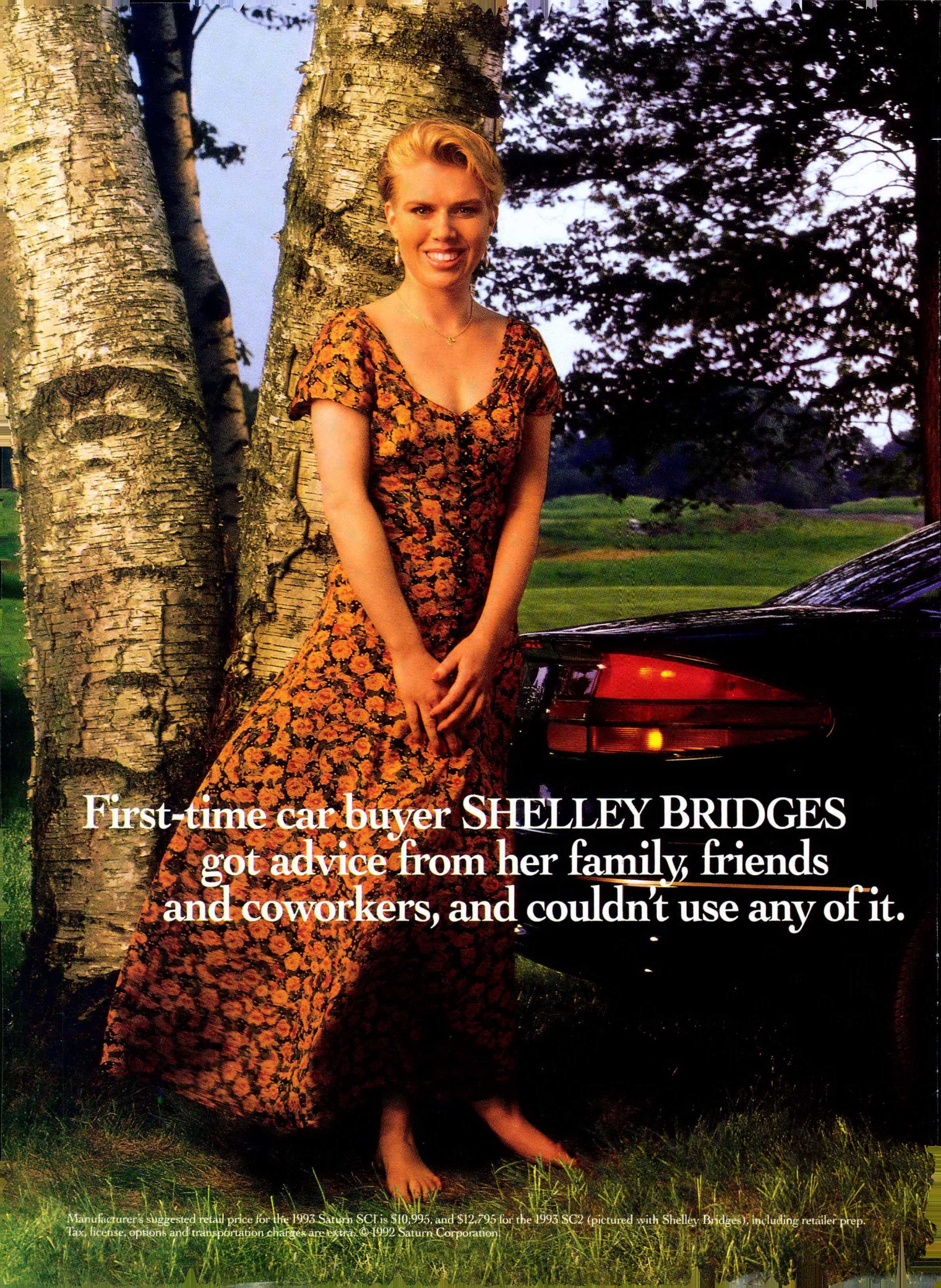
DAN QUAYLE WAS RIGHT

After decades of public dispute about so-called family diversity, the evidence from social-science research is coming in: The dissolution of two-parent families, though it may benefit the adults involved, is harmful to many children, and dramatically undermines



\$2.95

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A woman with blonde hair, smiling, stands barefoot in a grassy field. She is wearing a long, flowing dress with a bold orange and black floral pattern. She is positioned next to a large, textured tree trunk on the left. To her right, the rear of a dark-colored car is visible, with its taillight glowing red. The background shows a lush green landscape with more trees under a soft, late-afternoon sky.

First-time car buyer **SHELLEY BRIDGES**
got advice from her family, friends
and coworkers, and couldn't use any of it.

Manufacturer's suggested retail price for the 1993 Saturn SCI is \$10,995, and \$12,795 for the 1993 SC2 (pictured with Shelley Bridges), including retailer prep. Tax, license, options and transportation charges are extra. ©1992 Saturn Corporation.

Having achieved the age of 24, Shelley decided it was time to stop driving the former family car. Out of college and into a job, she was feeling the new fullness of her bank account, and wanted a car that was more her style.

But somehow, in all her years, she'd never been inside a car dealership. And she found that lots of people had strong opinions on the subject.

"Don't let them pressure you," advised family. "Watch out for tricks," urged friends. "They won't take a woman seriously," cautioned coworkers.

Now it happens that the car Shelley had her eye on was a Saturn coupe. She had admired them around town and read positive reports about them. (She even liked the ads.)

So, her head full of warnings (and not exactly into shopping around), it was a shy, apprehensive Shelley who visited the Saturn showroom in her southern Maine town.

"Huh," Shelley thought, as she drove off in her new coupe, surprised at how "stress-free" it was to buy it. "What were they so worried about? That was almost — fun."



The new Saturn SC is for those of you who've always admired our sport coupes, but felt you couldn't afford one.

Well, now you can.



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To know more about Saturn, and our new sedans, coupes and wagons, please call us at 1-800-522-5000.



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Vice President Quayle was scorned and ridiculed last year when he took issue with Murphy Brown's family arrangements. But an accumulating body of social-science research supports Quayle's view. Children in single-parent or stepparent families are more likely than children in intact families to be poor, to drop out of school, to have trouble with the law—to do worse, in short, by most definitions of well-being. Despite such evidence, the author writes, any discussion of the consequences of changes in family structure provokes angry protest.

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The author, a distinguished economist, sees important and ominous parallels between our present economic situation and that of the 1930s. His analysis leads to this conclusion: The federal budget deficit must not—and need not—impede a surge of public capital investment.

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for more than thirty years, until his death in 1989. This July the festival begins its second season in the hands of a very different kind of artistic director, Gérard Mortier.

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Friuli, which lies just below the Alps, is a scenic but little-frequented

region whose many charms include some of the best wine in Italy and some of the most warm-hearted people anywhere.

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Cover illustration by
Bruce Sharp



*“These hair-trigger pistols
once saved the owner of The Glenlivet®
from a band of cutthroats.”*

*— Sandy Milne,
our Resident Sage.*



Sandy Milne holding forth on the pistols.

The men, a brutish lot, were clearly intent on dirty doings.

The scene was the desolate inn at Cock Bridge, in the Highlands. George Smith, maker of The Glenlivet single malt Scotch, was on his way home from a sale of his much prized whisky, his money belt stuffed with gold sovereigns.

Also at George's belt, fortunately, were a pair of hair-trigger pistols, given him by the laird of Aberlour. Before the men could jump him, he cocked one of the pistols and fired into the peat fire. A cloud of white ash filled the room. By the time it had cleared, George was on his horse and well away.

“If that pistol had misfired,” says our Sandy Milne, “there might not be such a thing today as The Glenlivet. A thought horrible to contemplate.”



What is a single malt Scotch?

A single malt is Scotch the way it was originally: one single whisky, from one single distillery. Not, like most Scotch today, a blend of many whiskies. The Glenlivet single malt Scotch whisky should therefore be compared to a château-bottled wine.

Blended Scotch is more like a mixture of wines from different vineyards.

**The Glenlivet.
The Father of All Scotch.**

745 BOYLSTON STREET



AS THE OLDEST of eight children, Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, the author of this month's cover article, could not help developing expertise in the small civilization that is the family. Since both her parents worked, Barbara had to look after her numerous younger siblings. That management challenge might have prepared her to run one of the busier railroads in the upper Midwest; instead, she chose to pursue academic degrees, to marry, and to raise three children of her own.

Whitehead majored in history at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. She was there in the early 1960s, which she remembers as an Edenic era of intense political activity surrounding issues like the Vietnam War and civil rights. Her younger brothers and sisters came to Madison later, after the counterculture had hit, and they had a vastly different time of it. The demons of what R. D. Laing called "the politics of experience"—the anxious search for personal fulfillment as the goal of life—had been loosed, eclipsing the civic orientation of her class of 1966. America was changing in many ways, not all of them apparent at the time. "Dan Quayle Was Right," her article in this issue, deals with one phenomenon whose roots lie in that time: rates of family breakup unprecedented in our



history. The demons live, and threaten to eat our children.

Whitehead merits a footnote in any history of the 1992 presidential campaign. A research associate at the Institute for American Values, a nonpartisan Manhattan-based research organization devoted to issues of family and civic

well-being, Whitehead last May—on Mother's Day—published a provocative article in the Outlook section of *The Washington Post* about a celebrated unwed mother. Among its readers was Marilyn Quayle. The article was passed on to one of her husband's speechwriters, and the *Murphy Brown* controversy was born.

The Republicans, of course, went on to use "family values" as a code for anti-feminist and anti-gay positions. Bill Clinton in his campaign spoke in favor of both greater family responsibility and welfare reform, though during her confirmation hearing Donna Shalala, Clinton's choice to head the Department of Health and Human Services, sounded a jarringly different note. Yet the crisis of America's families demands some kind of governmental response, even as it eludes a purely governmental solution. Whitehead strongly hopes that Clinton will keep his campaign promise to move—to lead—on the issue.

—THE EDITORS

CONTRIBUTORS

PHILIP BOOTH ("Pairs") is the author of numerous books of poetry, including *Relations: Selected Poems 1950–1985* (1986) and *Selves* (1991).

KENNETH BROWER ("Tusk, Tusk") specializes in ecological issues and is a frequent contributor to *The Atlantic*. He is the author of numerous books, including *A Song for Satawal* (1983), *One Earth* (1990), and *Realms of the Sea* (1991).

PETER DAVISON ("A Companionship of Poets") is *The Atlantic's* poetry editor and an editor at Houghton Mifflin.

JAMES FALLOWS ("Vietnam: Low-Class Conclusions") is *The Atlantic's* Washington editor and the author of *National Defense* (1981) and *More Like Us* (1989).

BRENDAN GALVIN ("Rained Out") teaches literature and creative writing at Central Connecticut State University. He is the author of *Great Blue: New and Selected Poems* (1990) and *Saints in Their Oxhide Boat* (1992).

MATTHEW GUREWITSCH ("Salzburg Speculation") has written on cultural sub-

jects for *The New York Times*, *Mirabella*, the *Yale Review*, and other publications.

ROBERT HEILBRONER ("Anti-Depression Economics") is the Norman Thomas Professor Emeritus at the New School for Social Research, in New York City. His books include *The Worldly Philosophers* (1953), *An Inquiry Into the Human Prospect* (1974), and *Behind the Veil of Economics* (1988). His book *Twenty-first Century Capitalism* will be published this summer.

LYNNE McMAHON ("Deference") is an associate professor of English at the University of Missouri. She is the author of *Faith* (1988) and *Devolution of the Nude*, to be published this spring.

JAMES McMANUS ("Twelfth Night") teaches literature and writing at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is the author of *Ghost Waves* (1988) and two other novels. His collection of poems, *Great America*, will be published in July.

ROXANA ROBINSON ("Mr. Sumarsono") received a National Endowment for the Arts writing fellowship in 1987. She is the author of *Georgia O'Keeffe: A Life* (1989) and *A Glimpse of Scarlet and Other Stories* (1991).

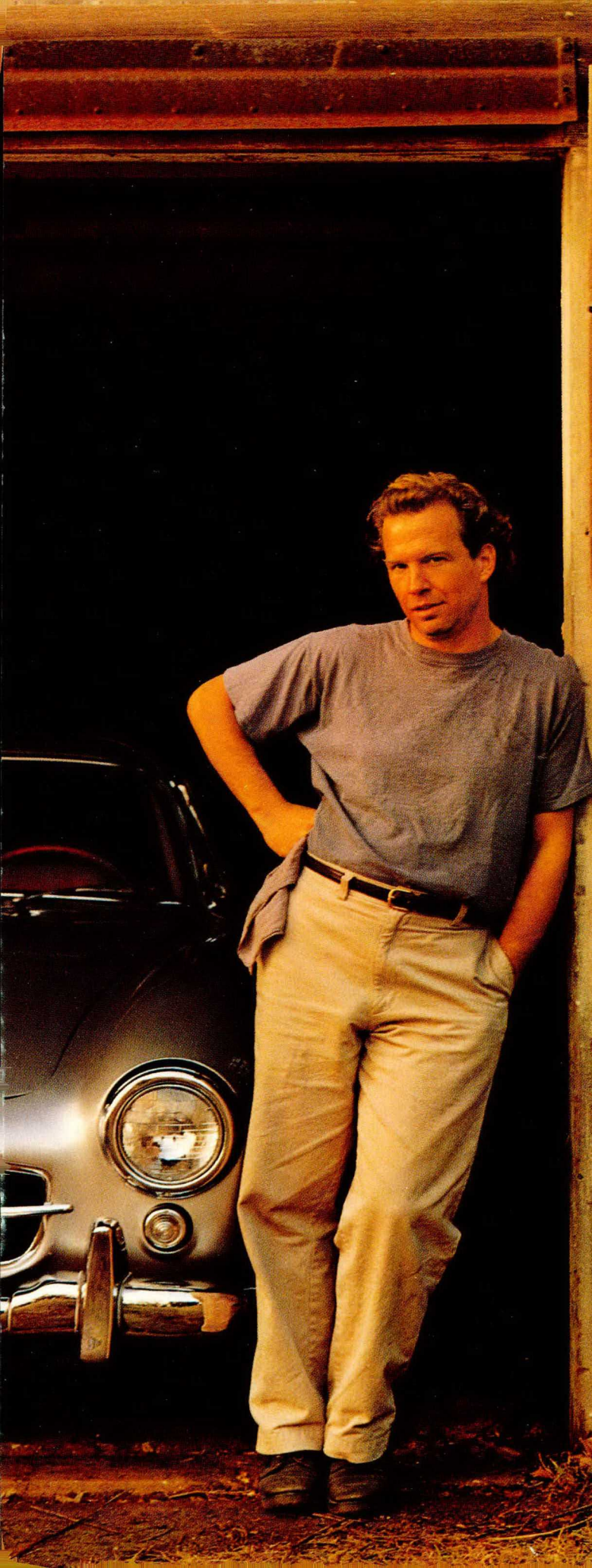
KAY RYAN ("This Life") is the author of *Strangely Marked Metal* (1985). She has recently completed a collection of poems titled *Flamingo Watching*.

BRUCE SHARP (cover art) is an illustrator who also teaches at the Art Institute of Seattle. In 1985 Sharp received a Starr Foundation Award from the Society of Illustrators.

STEVEN STARK ("Washington: The First Postmodern Presidency") writes frequently about politics and popular culture. Stark is a commentator for National Public Radio and a columnist for *The Boston Globe*. He is at work on a book about television.

JEAN VALENTINE ("To the Black Madonna of Chartres") won the Yale Series of Younger Poets Award in 1965 for her first book, *Dream Barker and Other Poems*. She is the author of *Home Deep Blue* (1989) and *The River at Wolf* (1992). Valentine lives in County Sligo, Ireland.

BARBARA DAFOE WHITEHEAD ("Dan Quayle Was Right") is a research associate at the Institute for American Values, in New York City. She is working on a book about fatherhood in America.



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And we figured out how I should be putting something away now.

I know I'm not going to need that money for a long time. But it sure feels good—dealing with a company that'll be there when I'm ready...and knowing I'll have the kind of retirement I want. Because I have a broker who asked.”

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



STORY OF A GUN

Erik Larson ("The Story of a Gun," January *Atlantic*) is correct in his statement that firearms kill approximately 30,000 people each year, but that statistic alone doesn't tell the full story. The majority of these deaths, approximately 55 percent, are suicides, not criminal homicides; 37 percent (or 11,000) are homicides; 5 percent are fatal gun accidents; and 1.5 percent are due to legal intervention. But even these numbers are not totally accurate, because many homicides ultimately ruled noncriminal by prosecutors or judges are reported to the FBI as criminal homicides because that is how the initial police report treated them. For FBI Uniform Crime Reporting purposes homicides are classified solely on the basis of the initial police investigation.

Larson's statement that firearms dealers know that their products are likely to be used to kill adults and children, or to serve as terrorist tools in robberies, rapes, and violent assaults, is hyperbole, and simply not supported by facts. There are some 200 million guns in America, of which 65 million are handguns. Relative to the number of guns, the number of gun crimes is small. Professor Gary Kleck, of Florida State University, estimates that under the most plausible set of assumptions less than two percent of guns sold in a given year will ever be involved in even one crime.

Larson's comparison of international homicide statistics is specious. One of the least productive analyses in the gun-control debate has been to compare the United States with other nations. Out of any large number of pairings, at least a few pairs can be found to appear to support either side of the issue. For example, some countries, such as Switzerland, which has a high rate of gun ownership and a low rate of violence, and Mexico, which has a low rate of gun ownership and a high rate of violence, differ from the Japanese

and Canadian examples that Larson presented.

Comparing homicide rates in Japan and the United States and then attributing the difference to gun-owner-ship levels borders on the absurd. The two nations differ enormously in almost all determinants of homicide rates, including degree of social solidarity, cultural and ethnic homogeneity, history of racial conflict, hierarchical rigidity, and obedience to authority. A more interesting and statistically significant comparison is that Japan's homicide rate is 2.3 times the homicide rate among Japanese-Americans living where guns are available.

A better comparison might be with Canada, but the absurdity of the logic becomes evident once it is applied to homicides without guns. Although Larson is correct that Canada's gun-murder rate is 2.9 per 100,000, he neglects to mention that before Canada enacted stringent gun restrictions, in 1977, its gun-murder rate was 1.98 per 100,000. Canada's rates of homicide with weapons other than guns, including knives, hands, and feet, are also far lower than the corresponding rates in the United States, but no one would be foolish enough to infer from these facts that Canadians have proportionately fewer knives—or fewer hands and feet—than Americans.

STEVEN J. CANALE
Herndon, Va.

Erik Larson notes the irony of persons' being able to obtain gun permits or dealer permits much more easily than driver's licenses. He fails to mention, however, that operating a motor vehicle constitutes a privilege granted by the state and subject to revocation by the state, whereas owning a gun is a right conferred by the Constitution. The Second Amendment states: "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." Operating a

AS LONG AS THE ENJOYMENT OF
OYSTERS IS NOT RESTRICTED TO THE
DINING ROOM TABLE ...

There will always be a
CHIVAS REGAL.





motor vehicle finds no such protection. Whereas a state may stringently regulate motor-vehicle operation, it's not clear that a similar scheme regulating gun ownership and operation would pass constitutional muster. While we may question the Founding Fathers' wisdom in drafting the Second Amendment, we must acknowledge its status as the supreme law of the land.

The Second Amendment takes practical form only through interpretation by the Supreme Court. Whether through "original intent" or "plain meaning" jurisprudence, the Supreme Court outlines the ultimate contours of every constitutional provision. Although recent history richly chronicles the raging polemics surrounding gun control, the high court, ironically, has directly addressed the relationship between gun control and the Second Amendment only in a 1939 decision (in *United States v. Miller*, 307 U.S. 174). Court battles occur more frequently at the intermediary or lower levels. This surprising fact suggests that gun-control advocates ought either to lobby their state governments to adopt a series of progressively restrictive regulations or to take more cases on appeal to the Supreme Court. (The dusty 1939 case, incidentally, upheld the federal government's regulation against sawed-off shotguns.)

Gun-control advocates could also chip away at the gun lobby's constitutional footing by proposing an alternative amendment or an outright repeal of the Second Amendment. Judging from the failed efforts of the ERA activists, however, amending or repealing the Second Amendment would require Herculean struggles.

RICHARD K. CHANG
Newton, Mass.

As a staunch supporter of the Second Amendment, I will not permit your propaganda in my house. Cancel my subscription immediately.

THOMAS KIELBOWICZ
Portland, Oreg.

Erik Larson accuses me of being insensitive because I paraphrased a judge's scolding dismissal of the Brady lawsuit against RG Industries (manufacturers of John Hinkley's gun). That judge pointed out that proscribing inaccurate, unreliable guns makes no sense. "The definition [of Saturday-night spe-

cial] clearly excludes the more expensive handguns on the market, but it is just as obvious that such weapons, being more accurate and more reliable, are more dangerous and more likely to cause greater injury and harm" (686 F.Supp 920,928).

Larson dances around the real issue without ever acknowledging it. Many gun-control laws are disguised racism, attempts to disarm minorities. "Your blacks are real impressed with [Cobray M-11/9s]," he quotes a gun dealer as saying. So, Larson appears to be saying, "let's ban the kinds of guns that those people prefer." Compare the argument advanced in *Kelley v. RG Industries*, and adopted in the Brady lawsuit: Saturday-night specials are "ghetto guns" (686 F.Supp at 928; 497 A.2nd 1153. 1158). Proposals to keep guns out of the "wrong hands" are too often merely attempts to keep guns out of dark-skinned hands.

Sadly, much of the U.S. homicide rate is attributable to blacks and Hispanics. Blacks and Hispanics not only shoot one another at an appalling rate but also account for a disproportionate number of stabbing, strangulation, and beating deaths. We do not have a "gun crisis," as Larson alleges; we have something much larger and more complex: a cultural crisis, the result of centuries of robbing blacks and Hispanics of their dignity. Disarming them may make closet racists feel better, but it will do nothing to cure the injustice that has led to despair and sociocultural violence.

MARK A. MORITZ
Tempe, Ariz.

Erik Larson's enemies list includes the designer, the manufacturer, and retail dealers of the Cobray M-11/9, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, the National Rifle Association, the weapon's "promoters" at *Guns and Ammo* and *American Handgunner*, its glorifiers and apologists in the media (John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, and, by implication, Oliver Stone), and, of course, at the sociological base, at the ground zero of political economy, the homicidal Amerikan Zeitgeist. With these tidal forces of historical inevitability collectively at work, it is understandable that there is not one word in the article about the teenage murderer's parents or guardians. Only his second cousin, the thirty-seven-year-old

"straw man" who actually bought the Cobray, is mentioned, and he did serve time. Elliot's parents or guardians bear the legal and moral responsibility for the consequences of his behavior. They are the ones who needed to search his backpack. No one else need share guilt or blame in this sordid case history of a marginal type.

DAVID GALE
Venice, Calif.

Instead of demonizing the "gun culture," Erik Larson could perform a real service by showing everyone how to help the lonely and alienated become more a part of their community. Until then the gun lobby will have to be as "cantankerous" as ever, given the apparent willingness of the media to blame the many for the sins of the few.

TIMOTHY SEKERAK
*Citizens Committee for the
Right to Keep and Bear Arms
Bellevue, Wash.*

Erik Larson mentions that it is a felony to own an "unregistered" silencer. What legitimate purpose can a silencer be registered for?

PHILIP RUHLE
Los Gatos, Calif.

Erik Larson mistakenly lumps "target" shooters with "practical" (mock-combat) shooters as "firing into human silhouettes." In fact target competitions use only traditional bull's-eye targets with concentric scoring rings.

Prior to 1985, international rapid fire, a pistol event, used a highly stylized human-silhouette target. Running game target, a rifle event, used a drawing of a boar. After the 1984 Olympics both competitions switched to bull's-eye targets.

Target shooters enjoy the precision construction of target arms; the slow, methodical development of traditional marksmanship skills; and the total concentration demanded by the events. We are safety conscious and have compiled an outstanding safety record. We are not, as Larson suggests, driven by "the homicide fantasy."

NEIL D. FRIEDMAN
Boulder, Colo.

Erik Larson's excellent article makes a few passing references to the Second Amendment, the much-vaunted



"right to bear arms," which seem to suggest that the amendment does or may pose an obstacle to tougher gun laws. One gun dealer whom Larson quoted in the article referred repeatedly to his reluctance to "trample on somebody's individual rights" by not selling someone a weapon. Yet this much-misunderstood amendment provides no such right—nor was it designed to do so, as the courts have repeatedly noted.

On four occasions (*U.S. v. Cruikshank*, 1876; *Presser v. Illinois*, 1886; *Miller v. Texas*, 1894; *U.S. v. Miller*, 1939) the Supreme Court made clear that 1) the right to bear arms, so often quoted out of context, refers to instances when individuals are called into service in a state or national militia by their government (remembering that in the early days of the republic people were often obliged to bring their own weapons rather than rely on government issue); 2) possession of arms for this or any other purpose does not mitigate the ability of the government to regulate weapons possession as it sees fit; and 3) unlike most of the rest of the Bill of Rights, the Second Amendment has never been "incorporated" (applied to the states through the Fourteenth Amendment), because it is essentially an archaic vestige of the eighteenth century, as is the Third Amendment, pertaining to the quartering of troops in people's homes. As recently as 1980 the Court reaffirmed these judgments in *Lewis v. U.S.* In 1982 the Court refused to hear an appeal of a lower-court ruling which upheld a local ordinance banning the possession of handguns in the town of Morton Grove, Illinois.

The Court has left no doubt that the Second Amendment bears no legal relationship to the ownership of guns for personal uses such as hunting, target shooting, and self-protection. The persistence of arguments over this constitutional question is attributable to the symbolic advantages that accompany claims to constitutional rights, and the ease with which evidence-based explanations are avoided in the popular press.

ROBERT J. SPITZER
Cortland, N.Y.

nonfatal but serious and permanent injuries in shootings, or are otherwise terrorized by gun-wielding assailants. A recent study from the University of Texas estimated the total annual number of nonfatal firearms injuries to be 140,000. From 1979 through 1987, according to the Department of Justice, Americans found themselves the victims of 629,700 nonfatal handgun crimes *per year*. That's for crimes involving handguns alone—not rifles or shotguns. The victims were shot or otherwise injured in more than 91,000 of

these cases. When homicides are added to the Justice Department's handgun-crime figures, the annual total of handgun crimes comes to 638,900. If Canale were to break this figure down into its components, he'd find 12,100 women raped at gunpoint, 210,000 people robbed, and another 407,800 assaulted. To me, at least, this seems to add up to a crisis worthy of immediate attention.

Finally, Canale claims that the homicide total reported by the FBI is inflated, arguing that the Uniform Crime Reports include homicides later ruled noncriminal. He neglects to note, however, that the FBI's reporting system misses 10

percent of all homicides to begin with.

Mark Moritz seems to be accusing me of being a closet racist. His response is an example of the kind of shrill, polarizing rhetoric that serves only to force moderates of both pro and anti-gun camps into their trenches. I find his remark that he was merely paraphrasing a judicial decision to be laughable.

Neil Friedman says that he, like his peers in rapid-fire pistol-shooting competitions, fires only at bull's-eye targets. I stand by my belief, however,

Because she believes
dogs have souls
and angels have wings.
Because she gave
nine months of her life
to watching someone grow.
Because she named him
after me.

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Erik Larson replies:

Any writer who examines America's gun culture can expect two things: a passionate response from shooters and nonshooters alike, and a barrage of statistics chosen to debunk his claims.

Steven Canale seems to be arguing that by breaking down total firearms deaths into components, he can somehow paint our gun crisis in a rosier hue. If anything, the problem is far worse than I described in my story.

Canale fails, for example, to note the many Americans each year who suffer

You shouldn't have to s own to own a car i

Who says that only really expensive luxury cars should offer sophisticated engine technology, a driver's side airbag and anti-lock brakes?

After all, they're all standard on the Honda Civic EX Sedan. It's a car that built its reputation on being economical. And that now does a beautiful job of bringing both economy and luxury together under one roof. Or, to be more precise, under one moonroof.

This car's interior has been very thoughtfully designed. Actually, it is intuitive. Controls for air conditioning, AM/FM stereo cassette and power windows and door locks are exactly where you think they should be. You'll feel right at home as soon as you get behind the wheel.

Seats are fully supportive. You will appreciate this the more you drive. You will also appreciate the convenient fold down rear seatback. It's lockable.

A cleverly placed beverage holder

is easy to reach. There's plush carpeting everywhere. (Even in the trunk.)

Steering is power-assisted to make driving decidedly more pleasant. It will come in handy if you tend to do a lot of parallel



parking. The power moonroof glides open or tilts up for a breath of fresh air. And cruise control lets you do exactly that on longer trips.

Also contributing to your fun is an enthusiastic 1.6 liter engine with variable valve timing. An advanced design that

sacrifice everything you that has everything.

lets the engine breathe more efficiently
at every speed. Basically, this is the way
it works: At higher RPMs, the engine's
computer instructs the intake

valves in each
one of the
four

cylinders to open farther and stay open
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that a homicide fantasy, fed by frontier mythology, Hollywood, the gun press, gun manufacturers, and the gun "after-market," informs gun ownership in America. Why else would guns used in famous mass slayings suddenly double, even triple, in value? I wonder if a single gun owner exists who has not at some point fantasized about using his or her weapon to shoot or threaten an assailant, boss, spouse, neighbor, IRS auditor, or fellow driver. I am willing, of course, to concede exceptions, and wish Friedman well in his chosen sport. Shooting, in the context of a safe, well-managed target range, is indeed a compelling and engaging pursuit.

As for the Second Amendment: Its meaning, clearly, remains open to debate by legal authorities and historians far more knowledgeable than I. It is a shame that the amendment has been reduced to a handy slogan serving only to short-circuit rational debate.

NEW GENERATION GAP

Neil Howe and William Strauss's article "The New Generation Gap" (December *Atlantic*) was a remarkably meanspirited depiction both of the generations portrayed and of their supposed conflict. The good news is that what the authors described was in fact a conflict of cartoons—one-dimensional caricatures that actually represent nobody. In twenty years as a university psychologist and teacher I have met no one at all who resembles the young adults Howe and Strauss describe, though such images have been a staple in pop sociodramas—wishful and fearful fantasies—about American "youth culture" across several generations. As for the actual lives of contemporary young people, virtually none of whom were quoted directly, these images teach us zilcho.

HANK GREENSPAN
*University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Mich.*

Thanks to the authors of the intelligent and enlightening article on the growing generation gap between twentysomethings and fortysomethings. As a "Thirteen" myself, I am increasingly frustrated by cynical attempts to pander to people my age as an easily pigeonholed marketing niche. I am equally turned off by naive proposi-

tions from my peers that our generation is somehow unique in history. Your article struck a nice balance, provided well-needed historical perspective, and poked holes in some fairly tidy clichés about my so-called Generation X.

NEAL POLLACK
Chicago, Ill.

Neil Howe and William Strauss reply:

Mr. Greenspan, meet Mr. Pollack.

Having spoken with hundreds of members of Mr. Pollack's Thirteenth Generation over the past few years, we've encountered widespread agreement with our core argument. With few exceptions, Thirteeners know they've been shaped young by life-cycle experiences very different from (and, as most of them see it, far bleaker than) those that shaped the Woodstock crowd. Many Thirteeners deeply resent Boomers, as a generation, for having converted a once-verdant youth landscape into a wasteland for those who came next.

If some fortysomethings are astonished that their generation could be perceived so negatively by twentysomethings, the reason may be that Boomers still look at the 1990s through the hazy memory of their own 1960s trip. Hey, Beaver Cleaver: Back when you were graduating from college, Americans reaching middle age strained eagerly, even enviously, to find out what you were thinking and feeling. Now it's your turn to look at your successors in youth with a bit more generosity. Sure, you've got a lot to teach. But you still might have a lot to learn.

BLACK NATIONALISM

I think that the African-Americans who live in the West Philadelphia neighborhoods of University City, the area surrounding the University of Pennsylvania campus, would be quite surprised—along with the Asians, whites, Indians, Europeans, and all of the other cosmopolitan residents of University City—to hear that the area "is generally thought of as a black ghetto," to quote Nicholas Lemann ("Black Nationalism on Campus," January *Atlantic*).

You should have checked your facts better. University City has long been proud to be a successfully integrated



community—racially, culturally, and economically. Neighbors of different backgrounds work side by side for local causes in community organizations. They renovate homes next door to one another. They send their children to the same school, and socialize together at the University City Swim Club, the University Arts League, the Community Education Center, and other local organizations. In many ways University City is a model community. Perhaps the black nationalists on the Penn campus don't want to recognize it as such, but *The Atlantic* ought to, and when such a basic statement by the author, Nicholas Lemann, is so blatantly incorrect, it certainly detracts from the credibility of everything else in his article.

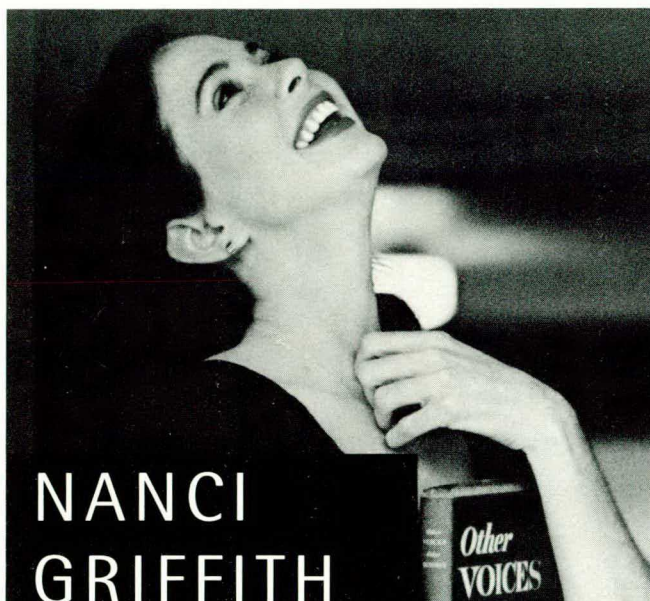
MELANI LAMOND
Philadelphia, Pa.

I enjoy *The Atlantic's* generally excellent reporting and writing. However, one omission in Nicholas Lemann's recent article "Black Nationalism on Campus" seems particularly noteworthy and troubling. In seeking to gauge the strength of black nationalism, Lemann reports speaking to a number of male students but no female students (unless Treasrea Cornelius, the only student not given a sort of photographic introduction, is a woman). Just as the black community in this country is not monolithic—which is, in fact, the point of Lemann's article—so the opinions of black women and black men are not homogeneous. The failure to recognize this diversity is especially unfortunate in an article in which Lemann strives for liberal tolerance and writes, "Maybe the day will come when the country seems to blacks to be as outstandingly fair as it does to many whites." Indeed. Would that the same were true for women, too—so that such an article would portray women not just as victims of rape and sexual abuse, and as drug addicts and alcoholics, but as people oppressed by both blacks and whites who are nevertheless able to articulate their experience, as do the young men in the article.

KETURA PERSELLIN
Los Angeles, Calif.

Nicholas Lemann replies:

Melani Lamond makes it sound as if I said that University City "is generally thought of as a black ghetto." The full



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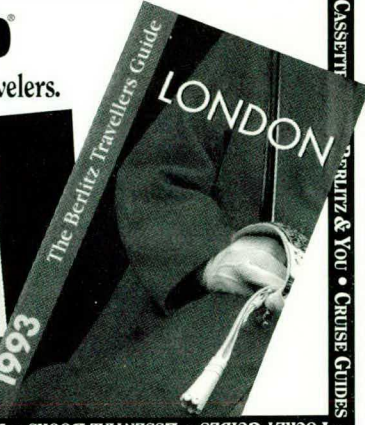
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sentence that appeared in the article is: "Its campus is on the edge of West Philadelphia, which is generally thought of as a black ghetto." I stand by the statement that West Philadelphia (as opposed to University City) is generally thought of (not entirely accurately) as a black ghetto.

I'm sorry about the lack of women's voices in the article. The group interview at Temple that I quoted from most copiously was set up by a woman on the faculty (the poet Sonia Sanchez) who invited a mixed group—but none of the women showed up. I did another interview at Temple with a group that was about half men and half women, but the material from the all-male group was richer.

WOMEN AGAINST PORNOGRAPHY

Wendy Kaminer's article "Feminists Against the First Amendment" (December *Atlantic*) portrays feminists fighting pornography as militant censors whose efforts will reduce the availability of birth-control information, diminish the effort to distribute AIDS literature and condoms in public schools, and, finally, destroy the First Amendment.

Women Against Pornography does not support censorship. Censorship, which Kaminer never defines, is something a government does for reasons of "national security" or to combat "obscenity." It is an act of prior restraint.

Furthermore, we believe that the United States Constitution deserves to be taken as a whole. Holding individuals accountable for their abuse of free speech is not tantamount to censorship. A case in point is that of sexual harassment, where speech is often the vehicle of harassment and where laws to redress this have been upheld. While we recognize the importance of the First Amendment, we also demand an analysis of the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the law.

We do not advocate censorship; we do endorse a civil-rights approach to pornography. This approach would allow women, children, and men hurt by pornography to seek redress in civil court. It is important to note that in civil-court proceedings a jury must decide the reasonableness of a plaintiff's claims.

We are also horrified at Kaminer's dismissive attitude toward the testimony of women who have been hurt by pornography. Such an attitude is reminiscent of the obstacles women face in rape trials, where, imperfect as these trials are, at least women's voices can be heard. No such legal forum is provided to women who have been abused in the production or consumption of pornography. The Dworkin-MacKinnon model of legislation (there is no bill, as Kaminer inaccurately asserts) is meant to provide women, along with men and children, with the means to seek such a forum.

CECILIA BLEWER

ANNE CONNERS

Women Against Pornography
New York, N.Y.

Wendy Kaminer replies:

In claiming that they're opposed to censorship, Cecilia Blewer and Anne Connors remind me of people who march in Klan rallies and claim they're not racists.

BRIEF REVIEWS

Phoebe-Lou Adams, in her brief review of my novel *Memories of the Ford Administration* (January *Atlantic*), writes of "the pre-Civil War United States, which in Mr. Updike's view contained neither brothels nor abused female slaves." Yet on page 272 of my novel, in a scene taking place between male Americans in 1885, it is said of a character that "he was not one of those . . . lusty Southerners given easy initiations in slave shacks and river-town brothels." So what did Ms. Adams mean? Or was she simply, in her haste to arrive at one of her peremptory opinions, skimming?

JOHN UPDIKE

Beverly Farms, Mass.

Phoebe-Lou Adams replies:

One line does not a novel make, nor adequately describe a society.

Phoebe-Lou Adams's review of Günter Grass's *The Call of the Toad* (November *Atlantic*) refers to "people . . . whose conversations about refugee relatives buried abroad lead them to the notion that internment in one's native soil is a basic human right." That confusion between "internment" and "interment" is surprisingly common: *The New York Times* once headlined that

Irish groups were protesting the British policy of "interment without trial"—as well they might!

IVAN BERGER
New York, N.Y.

Ms. Adams was not confused; the misspelling was a typographical error.

THE EDITORS

ADVICE & CONSENT

James S. Gordon's thoughtful review of my book *Imbroglia: Rising to the Challenges of Borderline Personality Disorder* ("On Borderlines," January *Atlantic*) calls to mind the show-business maxim "Always leave 'em wanting more." In other words, I take as a compliment Dr. Gordon's complaint that this 400-page book did not detail the quality of interaction between borderline patients and their therapists.

The simplest explanation is that a book like *Imbroglia* arises out of the information provided by its sources. My introduction notes the obstacles I encountered from the psychiatric profession in writing the book—and especially in interviewing borderline patients. The "capable summary" to which Dr. Gordon refers cost more time and effort than is perhaps apparent.

None of the experts or patients I interviewed had much to say about the quality of their therapy. Other matters that I do discuss in *Imbroglia* were more important to them. The borderlines, moreover, apparently were not capable of "significantly deepen[ing] our appreciation of the complexity of [their] thoughts, feelings, and actions," as Dr. Gordon would prefer, in the course of describing themselves. My apologies on their behalf for their failure to articulate to his satisfaction.

The resulting omission raises an important question: To whom would descriptions of patient-therapist interactions be most valuable? Although *Imbroglia* is a dual main selection of the professional Behavioral Sciences Book Club, and many therapists recommend it enthusiastically to their colleagues, I wrote it primarily for borderlines and their loved ones. The latter are interested in therapeutic results, not processes. And borderlines themselves would justifiably resent secondhand emotional details from an author who is neither therapist nor patient.



Dr. Gordon's desire for such descriptions arises naturally from his awareness of the unique gratifications borderlines offer therapists. He understands the ability of borderlines to entice, fascinate, satisfy, sustain, mirror, and teach therapists as no other patients can. Although such appreciation appropriately counteracts the stigma carried by borderlines (and the refusal of some therapists to treat them), it also illustrates the inappropriate tendency of borderlines to take care of their therapists (and the willingness of some therapists to let them).

In this context—and in view of the information *Imbroglia* provides instead—perhaps Dr. Gordon ought to consider more carefully whose interest such descriptions would serve. In any case, his expertise, eloquence, and compassion imply that the book he yearns for really should be written by *him*.

JANICE M. CAUWELS
Maywood, N.J.

"Slatland," by Rebecca Lee (December *Atlantic*), was the best fiction I have read in a long time. Young writers should read this one carefully to get a feel for detail and simplicity, tension and relief. It's a brilliantly faceted jewel. Thanks for printing it.

JEAN MANION
Sweetwater, Texas

As a graduate of Amherst College (1985), I was amused by Richard Todd's piece about touring the expensive collegiate "hotels" of New England ("Let Them Call Room Service," December *Atlantic*). I remember quite well my own tour with my father in the fall of 1980. Although mine was his third father-daughter college escapade in as many years, he still seemed bewildered by the whole experience—especially the cost.

But my nostalgia lost all sweetness when I began reading Todd's description of living conditions on campus. In his discussion of dorm rooms, Todd says they have become "cozier, because the average American male is 8.4 inches taller than a generation ago and is powered by 1,100 pounds of electronic equipment." Worse, Todd goes on to inform the reader parenthetically—in what I found a frighteningly male-male nudge—that the average male "also has a live-in girlfriend."

Suddenly I remembered some of my

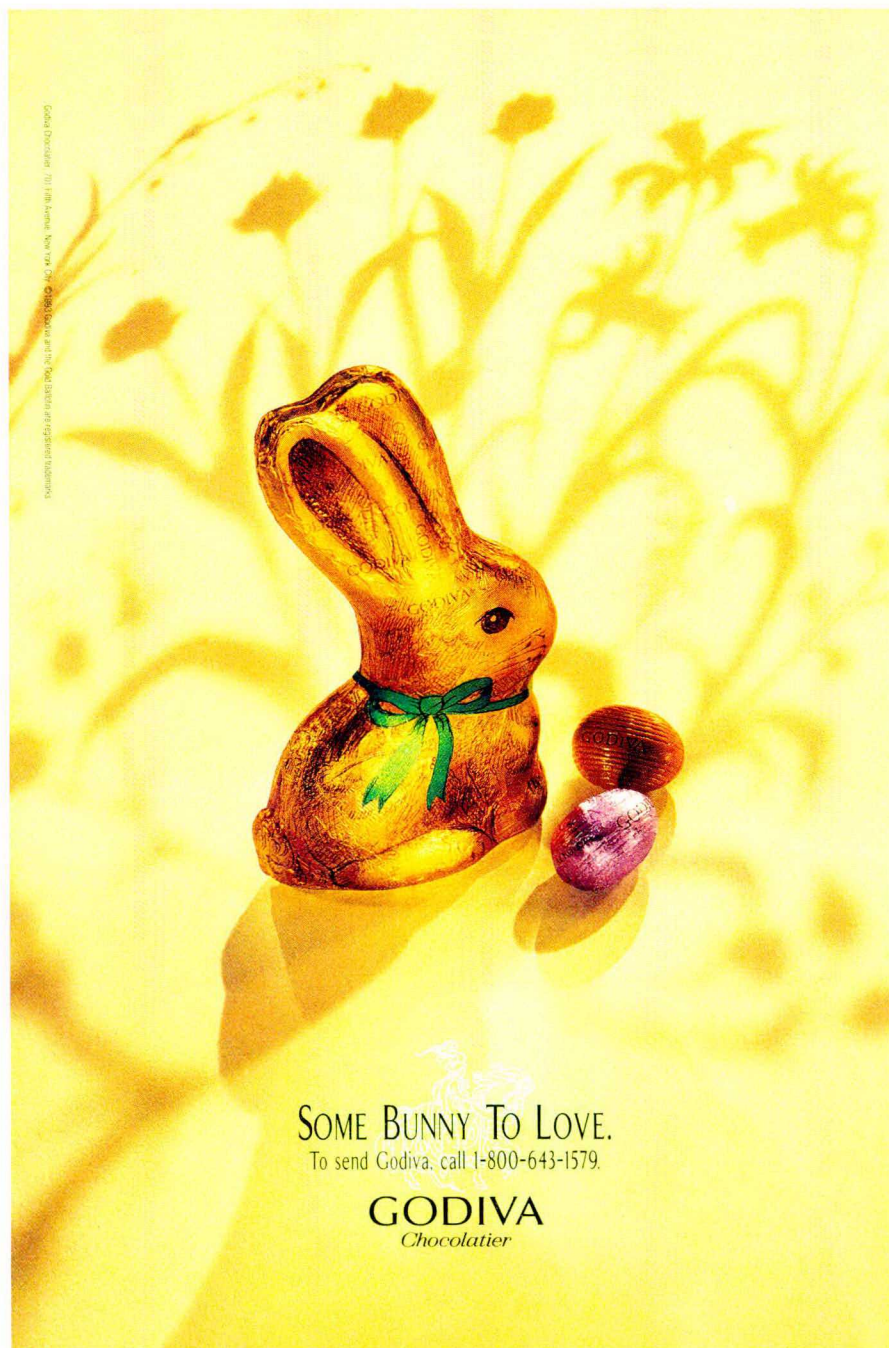
less happy days at Amherst, when I and many of my female classmates felt overwhelmed by a relentlessly all-male ambiance on campus. Amherst began accepting women only in 1975, and many of us found that the old-boy feeling still pervaded the atmosphere.

Todd's dorm-room description reinforced the all-male image by referring to women essentially as property. As far as I know, Amherst is still coed, as are all the other New England colleges Todd visited. And the women who inhabit dorm rooms are full-fledged stu-

dents, not merely "live-ins" akin to electronic equipment. Most disturbing about Todd's indulgence in maleness is the fact that he was taking his daughter—not his son—on the college tour.

CLAUDIA KALB
New York, N.Y.

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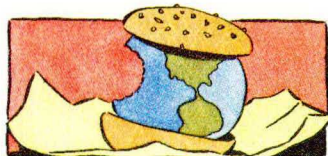
DEMOGRAPHICS

Potential parents most often cite April as the time in which they would prefer to give birth, but in this country the month usually ushers in fewer new-borns than any other. Conversely, the major and minor annual birth peaks fall in summer and winter—the least desired seasons in which to give birth. Dr. Joseph Rodgers, a psychologist at the University of Oklahoma, has dubbed this the “season-of-birth paradox.” Many biological factors may affect the seasonality of births, including variations in male hormone production and the effect of heat on fetal mortality patterns. Rodgers adds another explanation: the misinformed-reproducer hypothesis. By underestimating the lag time involved in getting pregnant—two to three months on average—many couples achieve exactly what they meant to avoid: the woman’s being hugely pregnant and delivering during hot sticky weather.



GOVERNMENT

Deliberations end this month on some 2,000 Army majors up for active-duty promotion to lieutenant colonel. About 70 percent will advance—a proportion determined by the number of officer slots available. With the Army downsizing in the aftermath of the Cold War, this number is on the decline: current plans call for only about 80,000 officers in 1995, as compared with 103,000 in 1991. Accordingly, the Army is making a concerted effort to reduce its existing officer corps. Last year more than 13,000 officers were winnowed from the ranks, including some 7,500 who opted for early retirement, others who accepted bonuses to leave the service in mid-career, and still others who were, in essence, fired.

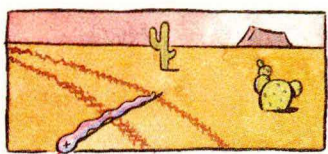


FOOD

April 17, beginning today fast-food lovers may get something extra with their Big Macs. In its first public project, the Beyond Beef Campaign will distribute leaflets outside as many as one in eight McDonald’s restaurants in the United States and nearly every one in Canada. The leaflets will argue that the overconsumption of beef has hidden social, environmental, and health costs, citing problems like world hunger, desertification, and heart disease. The campaign hopes to reach at least a million consumers and to inspire McDonald’s—the nation’s largest fast-food burger chain—to carry meatless meals and devote 25 percent of its advertising budget to promoting them. Fast-food chains, including McDonald’s, have a record of responding to consumers’ health concerns, offering and heavily promoting lower-fat items from beef to salad dressings. But even though McDonald’s has recently added a vegetarian burger to its menu in the Netherlands, it has not announced plans to try the item in this country.

ENVIRONMENT

April 3–11, the 27th annual Easter Jeep Safari in Moab, Utah. Four-wheel-drive enthusiasts form caravans and tour roadless backcountry on public lands. Local environmentalists have tried without success to stop the safari on the grounds that the vehicles damage sensitive desert areas. Such attempts to protect undeveloped land in the future may be



thwarted by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management’s application of Revised Statute 2477, which—somewhat vaguely—reads in full: “The right-of-way for the construction of highways over public lands, not reserved for public uses, is hereby granted.” The law, passed in 1866 to give miners access to their claims and ranchers routes on which to drive their cattle, was repealed in 1976, but was allowed to stand for any road already extant. Twelve years later Interior Secretary Donald Hodel widened that loophole considerably, to environmentalists’ eventual dismay. His interpretation has allowed state and local governments in several western states to label virtually any path a pre-existing road (and then expand or even pave it), thus preventing hitherto roadless areas from enjoying protection as wilderness.



ARTS & LETTERS

April 3, in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, opening day of the new Norman Rockwell Museum, which houses the largest collection anywhere of the artist’s paintings, as well as his last studio (moved from its original site in Stockbridge and reassembled on the new museum’s grounds in 1986). 26, on this fiftieth anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the country’s only national memorial to the victims of Nazi persecution, opens in Washington, D.C. Also, this month heralds the end of the “long box”: almost all newly released CDs will henceforward be packaged in wrappers the same size as the plastic case inside, rather than twice as large. The United States thus joins the rest of the world in reducing this particular form of needless trash.



THE SKIES

April 6, Daylight Savings Time begins; at 2:00 A.M. clocks should be turned ahead one hour. Full Moon, also known this month as the Grass, Planter’s, or Egg Moon. 19, the Moon and Venus rise close together in the predawn hours, and later today the Moon “occults” the planet, or hides it from view. Although the event occurs in daylight, astronomers will be watching, because observations of lunar occultations help refine our knowledge of the Moon’s orbit and topography. 22, the Lyrid meteor shower peaks just before dawn. Coming as it does today at the new Moon, this shower promises one of the year’s best meteor displays.

75 YEARS AGO

Henry Seidel Canby, writing in the April, 1918, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: “American idealism is in its own nature sound, as is proved in a hundred directions where it has had full play. Suppressed idealism, like any other suppressed desire, becomes unsound. One does not have to follow Freud and his school into their sex-pathology in order to believe that. And here lies the ultimate cause of the taste for sentimentalism in the American *bourgeoisie*. An undue insistence upon happy endings, regardless of the premises of the story, and a craving for optimism everywhere, anyhow, are sure signs of a ‘morbid complex,’ and to be compared with some justice to the craving for drugs in a ‘dry’ town.”





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The computer, appropriately enough, is called CLASS.

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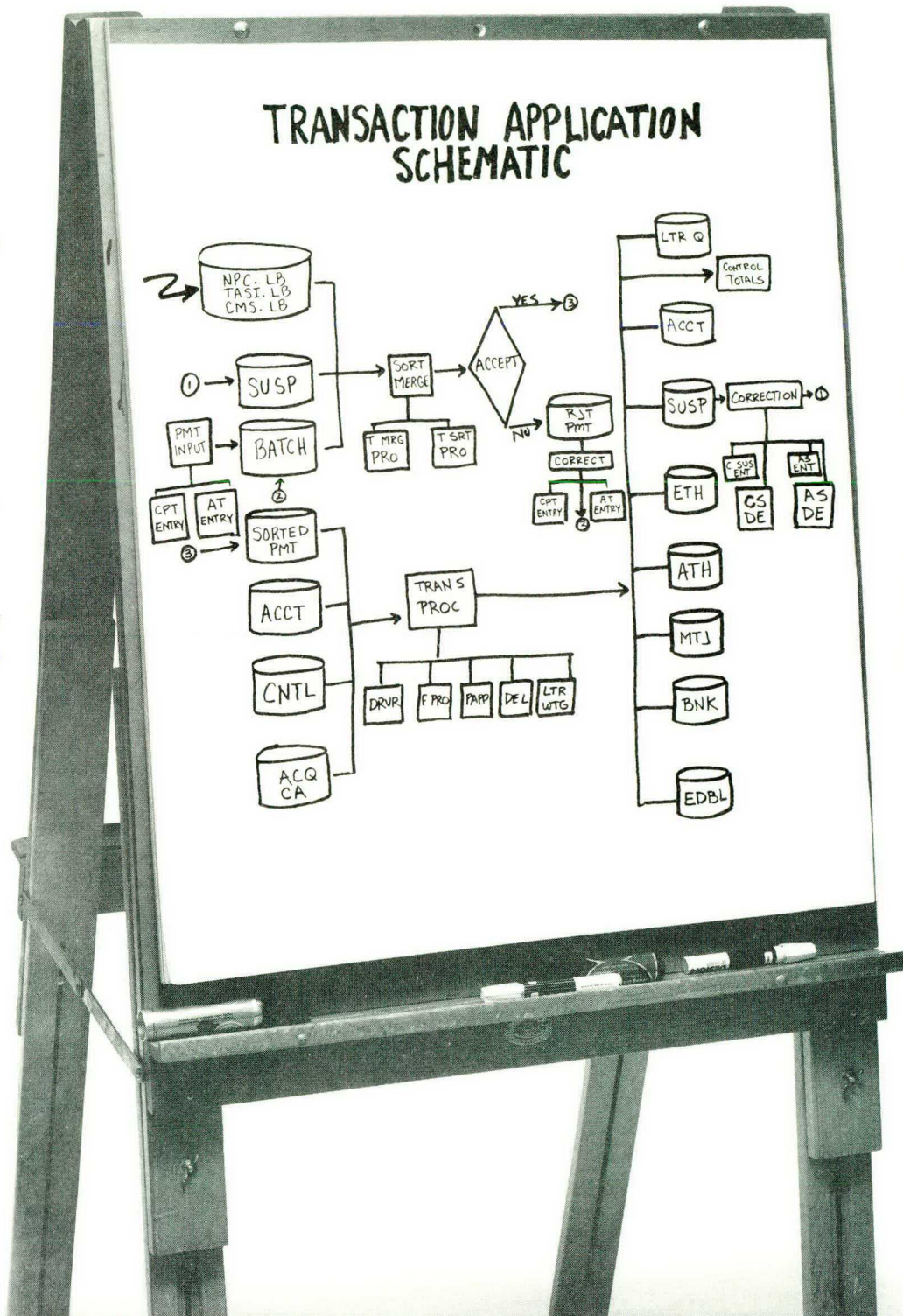
And what CLASS demonstrates is how Sallie Mae uses modern technology to provide something that isn't modern or technological at all:

Excellent customer service.

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Strictly speaking, CLASS is not a computer. It's a highly integrated mainframe system that automates virtually every aspect of servicing student loans.

Every night it runs through our portfolio of 3.5 million student loan accounts looking for expiring deferments, loans entering repayment, past due balances, and loans nearing payoff. This nightly protocol tells us who to contact, and helps us spot situations that need our attention.



in customer service, minute of the first class of a four-year degree.

For example, if a borrower has missed a payment, CLASS will identify that borrower, dial his or her number, then route the call to a service representative who will help straighten the matter out.

CLASS frees our people from mundane tasks like looking up numbers and dialing phones, so they can concentrate on what they do best:

Talking to borrowers, answering their questions, and resolving their problems.

**"THANK YOU FOR
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With over half a million calls coming in each month, providing excellent customer service in an efficient manner is obviously a high priority.

Our philosophy here is simple. People don't want to be told someone will call them back. Or be asked to hold while someone looks up their file.

So when our phone rings, we answer it promptly, usually within ten seconds.

We can have a customer's complete borrowing history on the screen instantly.

And the people who are taking the calls know what they're doing.

Before they get on the phones our loan servicing personnel go through six weeks of training in which they learn the ins and outs of student loans.

Even then the training never stops. Once on the job they will spend 15% of their time back in the classroom, refining their skills, catching up on the latest round of regulatory changes, and learning even better ways to serve people.

Borrowers can also get instant access to simple account information by using our automated customer inquiry system. Day or night.

And let's not forget the mail. If you think our phone volume is heavy, you should see our mailbag.

We send out over four million pieces of mail a month, each piece addressing a particular borrower's situation. And when a customer sends a letter to us, we're usually able to respond within five days of receipt.

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RESPONSIBILITY.**

Arguably, the most important service we provide, besides answering phones or questions, is called "debt management."

Many of our customers are students who are borrowing for the first time. With this loan they'll start building their credit history, so we want them to get off to a good start.

That's why we provide school financial aid officers with a wide variety of debt counseling materials which they

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And that's why we've developed a number of innovative loan packages designed to make repayment easier, especially in the years immediately after graduation.

In fact, last year we introduced the Great RewardsSM program, a new concept in student lending that lowers the interest rate for borrowers who make their payments on time.

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When it comes to education finance, no institution invests more in technology than Sallie Mae.

And that is just one of the ways we meet the expectations of the customers we serve and the private capital investors who invest in us.

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REPORTS & COMMENT

NOTES

The People's Business

Government writ small

EVERY YEAR at about this time I find myself making a trip down to the John Fitzgerald Kennedy Federal Building, in Boston, to obtain the form for an automatic extension of the deadline for filing an income-tax return—a form that the administrators of the Internal Revenue Service don't see fit to include (and I can hardly blame them) in the standard packet that arrives at residences every January. I am always surprised at how much I end up enjoying this trip, despite the inconvenience it involves and the financial hemorrhage it sometimes portends.

The truth is, there is a certain grandeur in these federal buildings, which have by now arisen in the downtowns of every large and medium-sized and subcompact city in the land. The grandeur is almost never architectural. It derives from the fact that here, in one building, are offices and officials representing virtually every distinct function of the government of the United States—a homuncular version of the entire federal bureaucracy. I once took the elevator to the top of the Kennedy Building and then made my way down, floor by floor, walking the hallways just to read the signs. FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION. ARMY

LIAISON OFFICE. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE. BLINDED VETERANS ASSOCIATION. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE. OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS. On any given day families of various hues and from various points of origin can be seen fidgeting as they wait in line outside the Immigration and Naturalization Service. In other corridors military officers crisply stride by. Agency seals enliven walls and doors.

The Public Buildings Act of 1959 supplied the legislative underpinning for the federal office buildings we have today. Lyndon Johnson's push for urban renewal and the federal government's growing domestic activism in other areas provided further impetus. Federal offices that had once been scattered throughout a city were now consolidated in a large federal complex whose erection was frequently intended to anchor the

redevelopment of a decaying downtown. There were about sixty of these new federal office buildings in 1965. There are now several hundred.

However maddening the federal government may sometimes be, the ubiquity of federal buildings brings a certain reassurance. When I arrive these days in an unfamiliar city and happen upon one of these outposts, I experience, momentarily, the odd sense of being . . . well, a Roman citizen during the second century A.D., shortly after Hadrian's building spree. As different as one city may have been from another, the public core of major population centers bore the unmistakable imprint of Roman rule: the temples of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, the imposing basilica, the public latrines. One would have felt somehow grounded whether wandering about in Trier or Cyrene or Leptis Magna; would

have felt, as Gibbon noted, that imperial authority was being exercised "with the same facility on the banks of the Thames, or of the Nile, as on those of the Tiber."

Wander about inside the federal office building in Raleigh or St. Louis or Tucson and a similar sensation may catch up with you.

IF THE WORLD inside the federal office building seems to represent the government in microcosm, an obscure publication that one can order at any government bookstore (the major federal office buildings usually have one) shows the government in a very different way: with the magnification turned up a few thousand percent. The publication, to which I have grown mildly addicted, is called *Commerce Busi-*

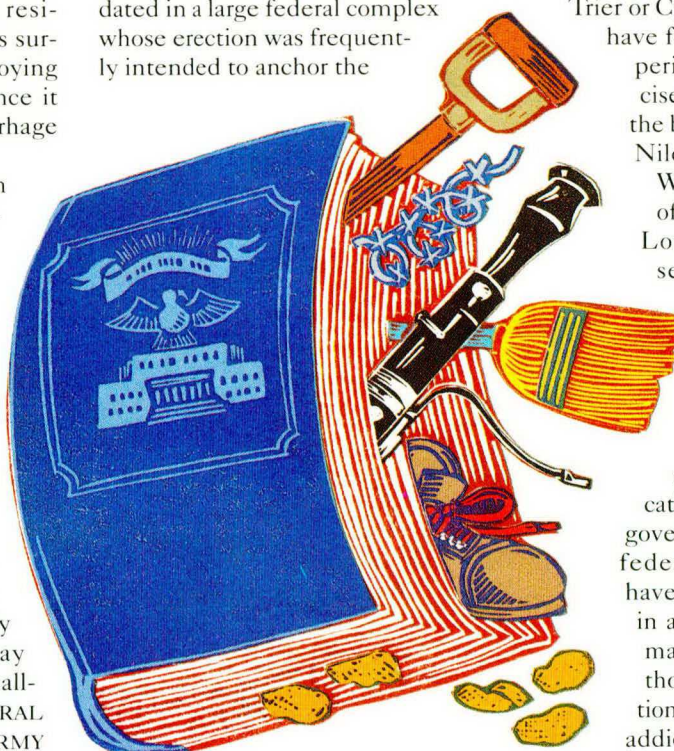


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EASTERN
SUMMER

ness Daily, and it owes its existence to the fact that whenever the federal government needs to procure goods or services valued at \$25,000 or more—which it does continually—it must publicly solicit bids. *Commerce Business Daily* is the public record of all this activity (and also of many smaller transactions). In tiny type on cheap newsprint it announces bids that are being accepted and contracts that have been awarded—bids and contracts for the lease of helicopters by the Interior Department in Anchorage and of washers and dryers by the Air Force in Plattsburgh; for the purchase of graph paper by the National Institutes of Health, of new bassoons by the Air Force Band, of steel-toed shoes for the Job Corps; for tree clearing and snow removal and garbage collection; for software maintenance and offset printing; for demolition; for everything. A friend of mine once came across a solicitation for “red tape.” A typical entry reads like this:

Bureau of Prisons, Federal Correctional Institution, Marianna, FL 32446

Installation of Razor Wire. . . Provide labor and equipment necessary to attach 610 rolls of non-reinforced and 30 rolls of reinforced wire to the fences and grounds along the perimeter. . .

As one might expect, many of the U.S. government's needs involve the military. “Potato Chips and Corn Chips”: a dozen lines give precise specifications for the 132,000 packages of the former and 55,000 of the latter needed by Fort Campbell, Kentucky. “Shell Eggs”: the Defense Personnel Support Center, in Philadelphia, is looking to buy 394,360 dozen of them. “Various Football Equipment”: a supplier is sought by West Point. “Set, Reset and Realign Headstones at Arlington National Cemetery.” “Drydock & Repair, USCGC Wyaconda.” “Loose Mine Restraint System.” “Insignia, Embroidered.” “TV Surveillance and Monitoring System.” “Guided Missiles.”

Reading *Commerce Business Daily* even for a few weeks (each issue contains 500 to 1,000 notices) gives one an appreciation for how vast and all-permeating an enterprise is the federal government—helps one see it from the point of view, one might say, of someone appointed to be the janitor of the whole thing. And small signs here and

there give hints of wider national problems. The Bureau of Land Management one day makes known its need for people to conduct a population survey of the desert tortoise, a threatened species. The U.S. Customs Service puts out the word that it is looking for a company to provide “Laboratory Urinalysis Drug Testing Services.” The U.S. Justice Department asks to hear from organizations with experience in computer-games technology, because “the department wishes to use role-playing/simulation gaming techniques” to train employees in the “rules and regulations on ethics in the federal government.” From time to time there is also cause for modest celebration—for example, the recent cancellation of an order for this item: “Pouch, Human Remains.”

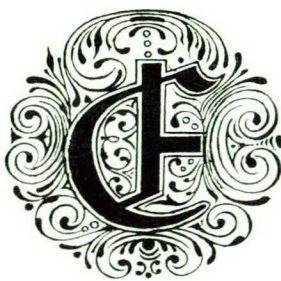
Mostly, however, *Commerce Business Daily* pulls one in not by means of what is exceptional but through the sheer scope and volume of what is normal—the mundane immensity of the people's business.

NOT LONG after I became a reader of *Commerce Business Daily*, I began to entertain the possibility of a sister publication, similar in format but devoted exclusively to the management and provisioning of my own household. I am still of two minds about this.

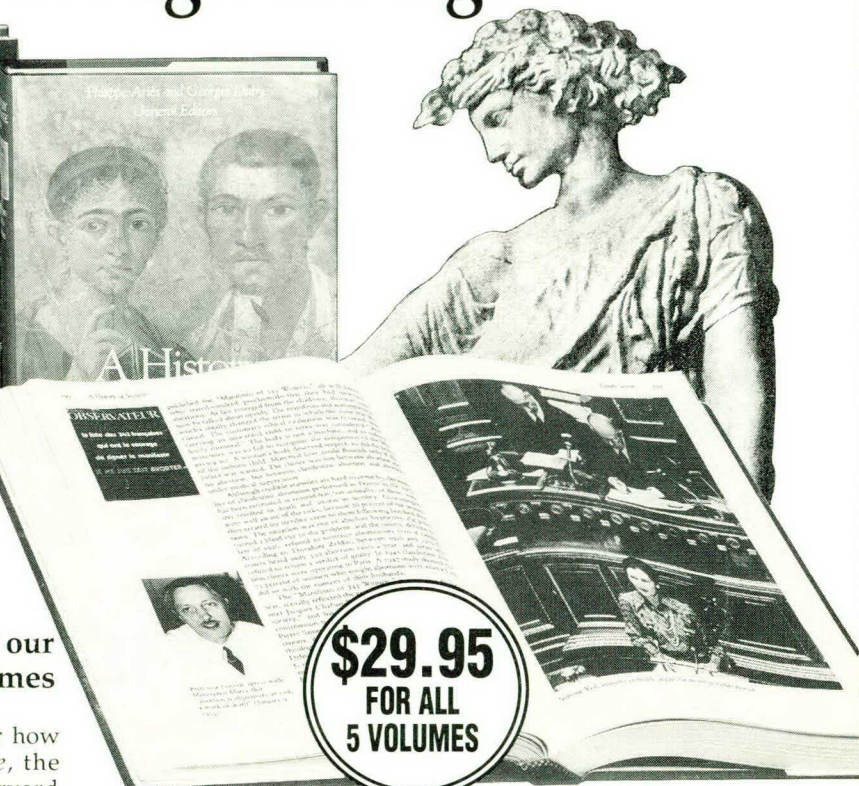
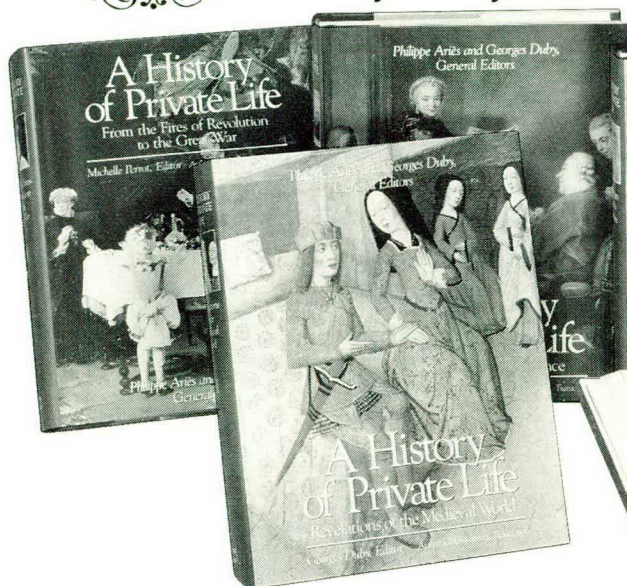
On the one hand, *Murphy Household Daily* could lend a sense of grandeur (“Drydock & Repair, Ford Taurus Wag-on”) to activities that otherwise might be deemed little more than chores. The publication would also act to reduce impulse buying. The occasional planting of items like “TV Surveillance and Monitoring System” and “Installation of Razor Wire” would also be an ideal way to send subtle social cues to the younger members of the family. So there would be clear advantages.

On the other hand, a record of every item bought and every service used by a typical family during the course of a year could turn out to be, on balance, an oppressive document, its validation of unimaginably vast and varied accomplishments undermined by the knowledge that, most probably, the exact same things will have to be done again and again—like filing tax returns. Knowing what you're getting into has its uses in government. Not knowing what you're getting into has its uses in life.

—Cullen Murphy



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Franklin Roosevelt speaking to the nation, 1938. What changes await the presidency as mass communication becomes fragmented?

WASHINGTON

The First Postmodern Presidency

The office Bill Clinton has assumed is smaller than it has ever before been in the modern era

EVERYONE AGREES that Bill Clinton faces Herculean tasks in trying to reduce the deficit and improve the nation's health-care system. According to several prominent presidential scholars and corporate theorists, however, the toughest job of all for Clinton—and the one that could determine to what degree his term is a success—will be to redefine the very office of the presidency. Because of the end of the Cold War and recent changes in mass communication, the role Clinton assumes in the government and culture is far different from that played by Franklin Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, or even Ronald Reagan. Though politicians, the media, and the public continue to treat the presi-

dency as the cynosure of American life, in important ways Clinton has inherited a diminished office.

Abroad, the President's role as a foreign-policy leader has receded. From the end of the Second World War until roughly the middle of the Bush presidency, the threat of communism and nuclear war created a sense of continuing crisis, fueling demand for a strong presidency. Just as other wars led to increases in executive power throughout our history, so did the Cold War.

Moreover, because foreign policy is the one area in which a President can act with relatively little interference from Congress and the press, chief executives have tended to be absorbed by it. Even Jimmy Carter, a candidate elected without much of an international agenda, found himself spending

an increasing amount of his presidency on foreign-policy issues, where it was easier to get things done. This ease of action in foreign affairs was aided by the fact that the Cold War coincided with a period of almost total American dominance of the international scene. Since Franklin Roosevelt's third term our Presidents have been primarily foreign-policy Presidents.

Those days are now fading. The world may still be a dangerous place, and foreign policy remains a presidential dominion. But if the end of the Cold War did nothing else, it reduced the public's fear of nuclear annihilation and thus its interest in foreign policy. The recent presidential campaign was the first since 1936 in which foreign-policy issues played virtually no role. What's more, the President's ability to shape the world has been greatly curtailed by the rise of the global economy. Richard Rose, a presidential scholar at the University of Strathclyde, in Scotland, describes a postmodern chief executive as one who, among other things, not only can no longer dominate the world but also finds that what happens abroad, in trade or monetary policy, often dictates what happens in the United States. As Rose puts it in his book *The Postmodern President* (1988), Presidents used to face



WHAT MAKES A MOMENT



A MEMORY





stalemate and interference only at home. Now, as part of a so-called new world order, they can look forward to them abroad as well.

At the same time that these shifts have occurred, Presidents have learned dramatic new ways of using their office as a bully pulpit. Since the Administrations of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, Presidents have increasingly used the media to "go over the heads" of Congress on domestic matters, creating a cult of presidential personality and power—a "rhetorical presidency," in the words of the presidential scholar Jeffrey Tulis. In *The Decline of American Political Parties* (1990), Martin Wattenberg documents how the role of political parties has diminished in the past few decades, in large part because Presidents and other politicians have learned to communicate directly with voters through the mass media. Candidates increasingly run campaigns stressing their personal qualities rather than their party ties. That development inevitably has given the President increased visibility as the most powerful individual on the national scene.

Meanwhile, the rise of national mass media—first network radio and then three-network television—has allowed the President to speak in unmediated fashion to virtually the whole nation at once. Many recent presidential scholars have been writing about a similar phenomenon, as Samuel Kernell's "going public" and Theodore Lowi's "the personal president" to-

That era may be drawing to a close. The ability of a President to draw the mass audience that broadcasting once afforded has been dramatically diminished by the rise of cable television. The political conventions draw roughly two thirds of the audience they did twelve years ago; many presidential news conferences are no longer covered by the three major networks. As Samuel Kernell has documented, when the major networks do cover a presidential appearance, it tends to get lower ratings than in the past because of cable competition. Sixty percent or more of all households with television watched the first televised addresses of Presidents Nixon, Carter, and Reagan, in the days before cable's ascendancy. George Bush never even broke 40 percent except with one speech—during the Gulf War. In this environment it becomes far more difficult for a President to mobilize the nation. The once all-powerful national megaphone of the presidency competes with many amplified voices in a diverse, atomized culture.

SO WHAT'S Bill Clinton to do? One idea Clinton seems likely to pursue, as he did in the campaign, is that of a cable-TV-style marketing strategy. Instead of appearing ten or fifteen times a year on prime-time network television, where he would give a traditional formal speech or hold a press conference, Clinton may well appear far more often in a variety of different forums before smaller audiences—on the morning shows, C-SPAN, local television, talk radio, and even MTV. Marketers have found that generic mass-market advertising no longer works as effectively as targeted communication—so President Clinton would deliver his message, to borrow a phrase

from his predecessor, as a thousand points of light. Occasional Clinton advisers such as Doug Ross, the former Michigan secretary of commerce, and David Osborne, a co-author of *Reinventing Government*, spent time between Election Day and the Inauguration designing a presidential communication strategy

that, if adopted, could eventually include extensive use of such direct-marketing expedients as video and audio cassettes, direct mail, and 800 numbers.

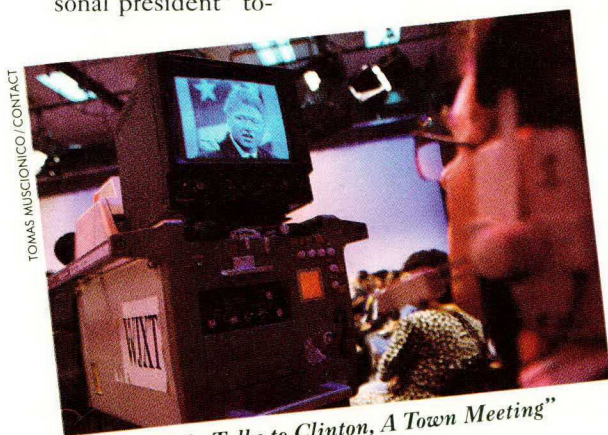
Ross sees this "direct relationship" as the key part of a broader effort to redefine the presidency. "If Clinton acts like just another FDR or JFK,"



"Larry King Live"

Ross says, "he will at best end up making only marginal improvements that are unable to transport America successfully into the future." Describing Clinton's new mission, Ross cites not the scholars whom Presidents have often sought out in the past but popular business theorists, such as Max De Pree, the author of two highly impressionistic books on corporate leadership, *Leadership Jazz* and *Leadership Is an Art*, and the management guru Tom Peters. According to Ross, the world has entered an era of decentralization, in which large bureaucracies—whether General Motors or the federal government—are increasingly incapable of dealing in broad, programmatic ways with individual customer or constituent demands. Ross describes, in almost evangelical terms, a "new paradigm"—as applicable to Clinton as it is to CEOs—in which consumers and voters are looking to leaders to provide them with "broad visions and values rather than top-down commands and elaborate rule books." Borrowing a metaphor from De Pree, Ross says that a President is no longer like an autocratic symphony conductor, leading everyone together. Instead, he's more like a jazz musician, setting the tempo for each player to do his own thing. Evidently there was more to that picture of Clinton the saxophone player than met the eye.

For example, Ross foresees that Clinton might announce a new initiative
(Continued on page 37)



"Florida Talks to Clinton, A Town Meeting"

gether suggest: from Franklin Roosevelt to John Kennedy to Ronald Reagan, the history of the past sixty years has often been the story of how Presidents used the mass media to become our prime political movers, appropriating roles once held by Congress or the parties.

arts & ENTERTAINMENT

PREVIEW

APRIL 1993
THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

INSIDE:

**BUDDY GUY'S ELECTRIC
BLUES**

**THE ORIGINAL BARBER OF
SEVILLE**

**BRECHT'S COURAGE IN THE
CAPITAL**

**FILM ROUGE: A NEW GENRE
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CLASSICAL MUSIC

by Austin Baer

ZIMERMAN UNBOUND

It stood to reason that when the Polish-born Krystian Zimerman, then 19, won the Warsaw Chopin Competition in 1975, the music world would link his name with that of his melodious compatriot. Sublime as Zimerman remains in that repertoire, it by no means defines his limits. The intervening years have brought fiery excursions into the bristling thickets of Bartók, the hypnotic world premiere of a new concerto written for him by Witold Lutosławski, and majestic accounts of the towering concertos of Brahms and Beethoven, not to mention his masterly traversal of Liszt's Michelangesque Sonata in B minor. Devoted to family and a broad range of intellectual study, Zimerman gives few public appearances and makes no extended tours. On this side of the Atlantic, we experience his artistry mostly through his short, distinguished discography on Deutsche Grammophon (all pure gold), but this month, he is coming in person to Carnegie Hall (April 23) and to Philadelphia (April 13), Brookfield, New York (April 16), Cleveland (April 18), Boston (April 25), and Toronto (April 27). The chance to hear him live should not be missed.



Krystian Zimerman

TO VERDI'S RESCUE

Two seasons ago, Milan's fabled opera house, La Scala, mounted a new production of *La Traviata*. Should it have been any more momentous an occasion than, say, the latest Royal Shakespeare *Hamlet*? No, but it was. For a quarter of a century, this most loved of Verdi's masterpieces had been absent from the house that by rights should serve him best. The Milanese had not much liked Maria Callas's consumptive courtesan, but she got off easy. Next they hooted Mirella Freni's off the stage. And after that, who had the nerve? When Riccardo Muti decided to bring the opera back, he could have turned to any number of Violettas of proven track record in opera capitals around the world. There is no shortage. Instead, he picked the young unknown Tiziana Fabbricini, surrounded her with an ensemble similarly untried, rehearsed for 40 days, and presented them in a traditional but meticulous production by the filmmaker Liliana Cavani (best known internationally for her dark fable



Tiziana Fabbricini

of politico-sexual obsession, *The Night Porter*). Together they all gave Verdi the triumph he deserves. The note of bitterness in Fabbricini's soprano and the delicacy of her phrasing lend Violetta's gathering tragedy a special pathos. Set off by dark ringlets, her heart-shaped face and lustrous eyes make a picture both sensuous and old-fashioned, constantly visited by lively thought. Cavani has captured the subtleties of Fabbricini's performance faithfully in a live video from La Scala, due in July from Sony Classical (as is the soundtrack, on compact disc). And in her New York debut, the soprano revisits her part at the Metropolitan Opera on March 18, 20, 26, 31, and April 3 and 6.

THE OTHER BARBER

In its day, Giovanni Paisiello's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* was accounted well-nigh irresistible. After its premiere, at the imperial court of Catherine the Great, in 1784, the opera swept like wildfire across the stages of Naples, Venice, Amsterdam, London, Lisbon, and Madrid. Vienna soon saw competing productions in two languages in no fewer than five theaters; the piece also played Versailles. When Rossini's version appeared, in 1816, in Rome, followers of Paisiello and mischance conspired to produce a truly monumental fiasco. But the Supreme Court of

KALEIDOSCOPE IN SOUND

"A composer writing in our time is very fortunate. There are so many ways of writing music available to us, styles that have been developed and polished by our teachers' generation. Our challenge as composers is not to find a system, form a school, and find a lot of followers, the way Schoenberg did when he invented 12-tone music. The challenge in this time is to take advantage of many styles. What is important is the message. What do you want to say? How clearly is it carried through? If you describe different stories, you'd use different styles." So says the Chinese-American composer Bright Sheng, whose jagged memorial to the Cultural Revolution, *H'un (Lacerations): In Memoriam 1966-1976*, has been haunting symphony audiences throughout America and beyond. Other colors from his palette will figure on several programs of Wet Ink 1993, the San Francisco Symphony's eight-concert festival of new music, for which Sheng is also serving as artistic director (April 9 to 30). True to his eclectic convictions, Sheng has also scheduled works new to San Francisco from all over the Pacific Rim, Australia to Canada, Mexico to Malaysia, plus a few entries from other parts of the globe. A single program may showcase



Bright Sheng

a half-dozen composers. "Variety," says Sheng, "is very important—within concerts and between concerts." Might the works still have something in common? "Good pieces," says Sheng, "are self-confident pieces."

Time has overturned those judgments. Who remembers the earlier opera now? Yet on the soundtrack of Stanley Kubrick's sumptuous 18th-century epic *Barry Lyndon*, the gentle cavatina of Paisiello's Count Almaviva ("Saper bramate") is a real heartbreaker. Illinois Opera Theatre puts this jewel in its setting with a rare revival of Paisiello's forgotten smash at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), April 15 to 18.

Austin Baer is a writer living in New York.

POPULAR MUSIC AND JAZZ

by Charles M. Young and Francis Davis

CHARGING UP THIS GUY'S ELECTRIC BLUES



Buddy Guy

A disciple of John Lee Hooker and Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy has been playing electric blues for more than 30 years, ever since leaving his sharecropper parents in Louisiana for Chicago. After going into an extended career eclipse, he's been enjoying a revival since Eric Clapton invited him to duet during a concert series in London in 1990. What sets Guy apart from many of the elder statesmen who play to mostly white, mostly ecstatic audiences who hunger for authenticity on the blues circuit is his tremendous energy. Beyond guitar chops, his great gift is enthusiasm. On *Feels Like Rain* (Silvertone) he is joined by Bonnie Raitt on the title cut, by Paul Rodgers on "Some Kind of Wonderful," by Travis Tritt on "Change in the Weather," and by John Mayall on "I Could Cry." This all-star revival format worked for John Lee Hooker and for Guy himself on *Damn Right I've Got the Blues*, in 1991. He apparently believes that if it ain't broke—which it ain't—why fix it? Nine of the 11 songs are covers, but Guy performs with such energy that they all sound fresh. And they'll still sound fresh when you see him on tour this spring and summer. —C.M.Y.

IT'S 1957, AND YOU ARE THERE

The place to be in New York in the summer and fall of 1957 was the Five Spot Cafe, a hangout for painters and writers that had only recently started booking jazz. The attraction was a quartet led by the pianist and composer Thelonious Monk (then on the verge of public recognition, after a decade of being considered a fringe eccentric), featuring the tenor saxophonist John Coltrane (then fresh from a few years with Miles Davis, and on the verge of some pretty big things himself).

This was a band that entered the studio only long enough to record half an album, before passing into legend. But *The Thelonious Monk Quartet Live at the Five Spot, featuring John Coltrane*—a new Blue Note release of an on-the-spot tape made

by Naima Coltrane, the saxophonist's first wife—finally lets the rest of us hear what Monk and Coltrane were up to. There is uncertainty about who the bassist and drummer are, although Blue Note lists Ahmad Abdul-Malik and Roy Haynes. The recording is marred by crowd noises, electronic crackle, and a frustrating dropout during Monk's rhythmically criss-crossed choruses on "Epistrophe." But all of this ceases to matter whenever Coltrane works up a full head of steam to Haynes's drumming, or whenever Monk engages in his trademark harmonic semaphore to send Coltrane on his way. Such moments are plentiful, and they are electrifying.

Besides, how often are we given an opportunity to eavesdrop on history? —F.D.

MICK STOPS GATHERING MOSS

After releasing two solo albums in the eighties—*She's the Boss* and *Primitive Cool*—that convinced neither fans nor critics that he didn't need the Rolling Stones, Mick Jagger returns with *Wandering Spirit* (Atlantic), which he apparently views as a warmup for the next Stones album. If so, it bodes well for the future of the World's Greatest Rock and Roll Band. Working with an impressive array of session musicians and producer Rick Rubin, Jagger has created by far his finest album, one that can rank with the best of his band's work in the last 20 years. Indulging his taste for variety, he ranges from primitive rock ("Wired All Night") to steamy post-disco dance music ("Sweet Thing"), from coun-



Mick Jagger

try/western ("Hang On to Me Tonight") to starkly sad folk-song ("Handsome Molly"). Most compelling are his ventures into gospel/blues—"Out of Focus" and the title cut—which adopt the conventions of the spiritual to advance the cause of agnosticism, hymns sung from the standpoint of Doubting Thomas. Jagger has addressed disbelief before—"I Just Want to See His Face" was a brilliant moment on the

Stones' highwater-mark *Exile on Main Street*, in 1972—but here the two songs seem to anchor the album, setting a theme of deep ambivalence: longing and desire ever crippled by skepticism. Given up on Jagger as an overexposed rich celebrity? This one may win you back. —C.M.Y.

BRAD'S A PEARL

Stone Gossard's experiments in "drop-D" tuning (that is, tuning the low E string down to D on his guitar) are a major cause of the ferment of odd tunings now sweeping rock and roll. Playing rhythm in Pearl Jam, he created most of the riffs that have kept the band's presciently titled first album, *Ten*, in *Billboard's* Top Ten more than a year after its release. Having toured the world with Pearl Jam and having some time to kill before recording another album with them, he has formed another group



Brad's debut album

called Brad and released *Shame* (Epic). The dark, obsessive intensity evident in Pearl Jam also powers Brad, but without the volume. With a couple of exceptions, this isn't mu-

sic for headbangers. It's more for head imploders, people who want to travel inward on a meditative journey guided by a musical imagination that shows no sign of reaching its limits. Whenever you think you've heard something before, Gossard throws in a twist, making it new. Lyrically, *Shame* follows the Seattle tradition of throwing lots of indirection at the subject matter, so you don't know what the subject matter is, except that something is terribly wrong with it and therefore the world is bleak. The music, however, isn't. —C.M.Y.

Charles M. Young is the executive editor of *Musician* magazine.

Francis Davis is the author of a forthcoming biography of John Coltrane.

DANCE AND THEATER

by Laura Jacobs and Austin Baer

SINATRA IN THE TWYLA ZONE

Twyyla Tharp's *Nine Sinatra Songs* is the kind of work critics call "danceproof," meaning it's difficult to ruin. This ode to urban love and lust is a series of duets—funny, grave, aggressive, drop-dead elegant—that look great on both classical and contemporary dancers. Though it's set to the Sinatra of the sixties, the dance is eighties, too. "My Way," the showstopping reprise, is a way of slipping a large cliché—the



A duet in *Nine Sinatra Songs*

eighties "me" generation—into a stacked deck of smaller, romantic clichés. The shining mirror ball twirling above the stage is the dot on the unblinking "I." For its 15th-anniversary season, at Chicago's Civic Opera House, April 28 to May 9, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago offers the company's home-city premiere of *Nine Sinatra Songs*—a good choice for a company that has always done things its way. —L.J.

NEVER-ENDING TUNE

Tommy Tune has taken home Tonys for Best Actor, Best Director, and Best Choreographer, sometimes more than one in a year. They don't give a separate award for best dancer, or no doubt they would have thrown in that one, too. Unlike most big boys on the dance floor, Tune turns his length of limb into extra elegance. (Harry Groener, now in his second year in the blissful Broadway smash *Crazy for You*, does, too.) Tune's latest outing in the Big Apple was the Christmas-week special *Tommy Tune Tonite!*—a thumbnail sam-

ple of his art, lent glamour by his presence. This month, the show hits the road for 20 weeks, with stops from coast to coast. His imagination as a choreographer and director is splashed across a suitably grander canvas in *The Will Rogers Follies*, which is still lighting up Broadway's Palace Theatre in its original production even as its original Will, Keith Carradine, heads up the road show, coming this month to Chicago (through April 17) and New Haven (April 20 to May 2) before continuing on to six other cities. —A.B.

THE GOOD MOTHER?



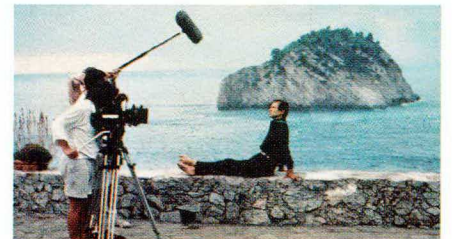
Pat Carroll in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Who dares judge a survivor? Bertolt Brecht, who masked a mind of great subtlety with a sloganeering facade. Consider Mother Courage, in *Mother Courage and Her Children*, who pulls her cart across the battlefields of the Thirty Years' War, dispensing brandy and cutting deals. When the story begins, she has two sons, a daughter, suitors she keeps at bay, and a flourishing trade. At the end, 12 years later, her children are dead, her hangers-on are

gone, and she is dragging the cart alone. Is this woman the personification of capitalism, living off war? Some have thought so. Brecht's ruthless scrutiny neither celebrates nor condemns her disdain of sentimentality and the futile beau geste. Mother Courage shows only the love she can afford. Her gift to her daughter of a pair of red shoes—a gift of hope when the young woman's hopes have been shattered—bespeaks calculation no less than tenderness. She is a fierce protector, but her children perish; one son is undone by his own violence, another by his honesty, the daughter by compassion for the suffering innocent. Mother Courage survives, and who is to reckon the cost? Starring in a new production at the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington, D.C., is (Ms.) Pat Carroll, who created a minor sensation as Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* there not long ago. Appearances notwithstanding, the fat knight in love is a feather-light assignment. Back in skirts, Carroll has a part of substance. —A.B.

A LEGEND LIVES

The video *Nureyev* begins and ends on the late ballet dancer's Italian island, where Rudi truly seems to be the only one there. In telling the story of his remarkable life, isolation and locomotion loom as twin stars. Rudolf Nureyev was born on a Russian train; as a teen he escaped Ufa clickety-clac to Leningrad; in 1961 he stepped six paces to freedom in a Paris airport. "My nationality is Dancer," he once said, and indeed he was always moving. Home Vision's new video biography (800-262-8600)—complete with re-enactments of early turning points, interviews with colleagues, and precious performance clips—delivers the legend intact. Nureyev himself is frank and poignant. The next-to-last image is of the barefoot, bunioned man doing *tendus* in an empty room. The last image: the century's most famous classical dancer diving naked into the sea. —L.J.



Shooting Nureyev's video

SWAN SONGS

Is a satisfying *Swan Lake* still possible in the 1990s? I wonder. The Romantic ballets remain fascinating because of their extreme metaphors (of which *Swan Lake* may have the most extreme: a heroine who's half swan, half princess). Unfortunately, today's ballerinas are increasingly less interesting than the roles themselves. The necessary psychic embrace, the majestic masochism, is rare. San Francisco Ballet goes to New York State Theatre with four performances of its painterly production (March 30 to April 4) and several Odettes to choose from—among them the willowy Muriel Maffre, and the straight-laced Elizabeth Loscavio. Meanwhile, the San Jose Cleveland Ballet, in artistic collaboration with the Atlanta Ballet, offers the classic March 31 to April 4 in San Jose and April 14 to 25 in Atlanta. —L.J.

Laura Jacobs is the editor-in-chief of Stagebill.
Austin Baer is a writer living in New York.

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FILM

by Ella Taylor

VANISHING DIRECTOR REAPPEARS

Dutch filmmaker George Sluizer's adaptation of the late Bruce Chatwin's 1988 novel *Utz* is a revelation. A director of enormous (and, in his quietly terrifying film *The Vanishing*, ghoulish) wit, Sluizer skates breezily between beauty and perversity, low comedy and discreet satire in this portrait of an aging Czech baron (played by a puckishly urbane Armin Mueller-Stahl) who has spent his life collecting priceless porcelain figures and overweight opera divas (live ones). In conversations with his eccentric friend Dr. Orlik (Paul Scofield) and Marius Fischer, an American art dealer (the gloriously granite-faced Peter Riegert), the enigmatic Baron von Utz hints at a devil's pact with the Czech Communist authorities that allows him, though at an intolerable price, to keep his private collection. When the Baron dies and the porcelain disappears along with his devoted wife and housekeeper Marta (Brenda Fricker), Fischer goes in search of the collection, and the mysteries of *Utz*. A film of unhurried grace and wistful passion, *Utz* is a joint tribute by Chatwin and Sluizer to the boundless varieties of human obsession.



Utz with collectibles

OBSCURE OBJECTS OF DESIRE



Modine and Lara Flynn Boyle in *Equinox*

Alan Rudolph (*The Moderns*) is such an elliptical filmmaker that I never quite know what he's up to, but who cares—his movies are a joy to watch. His latest, the surreally oddball *Equinox*, stars Matthew Modine in an astonishingly elastic performance as twin brothers, a nerdy mechanic and a ladykilling gangster who were separated at birth and whose lives slowly converge until a writer (Tyra Ferrell) accidentally uncovers a secret that

brings them face to face. The droll comedy and dreamy loveliness of Rudolph's film rise above its obscurity. I wish I could say the same for Philip Haas's conscientious but snoozifying reconstruction of Paul Auster's novel *The Music of Chance*, which appears to have been made into a film in order to give two stars the opportunity to play against type. Mandy Patinkin has toned every last muscle (his trainer even gets a credit) to play an ex-fireman who, trying to drown the pain of loss by driving across America, picks up a brash young gambler (played in a shameless Ratso Rizzo ripoff by a black-haired James Spader) and ends up working off a massive debt by building a wall across a meadow. To get to the lofty insights about the intersection of chance and destiny, you have to trudge through acres of dull footage and willful mystification. Or maybe you have to be a Paul Auster fan.



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BLOODY GOOD?

Friends and readers yell at me for including five brutally violent films among my top 10 films of 1992. My defense is that all offer a sharp commentary on violence even as they glory in its shock tactics. Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven* suggests that the values of the Western may be as much about kicking a man when he's down as about a man doing what he's gotta do. Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* sets off the jokey violence of Michael Madsen's torture scene against the realistic torture of Tim Roth bleeding to death from a gunshot wound. In Abel Ferrara's *Bad Lieutenant* and Nick Gomez's *Laws of Gravity*, violence is plausibly woven into the fabric of New York life. And the blood-fest in Francis Ford Coppola's adaptation of *Bram Stoker's Dracula* is a prankish metaphor for Victorian sexual repression. I stand (uneasily) by my choices, but a quick scan of upcoming Hollywood movies makes me wonder whether violence is



The Reservoir Dog

taking over the cinema aesthetic. Some, like Ferrara's *Body Snatchers*, a remake of the 1956 sci-fi classic, or *Menace II Society*, a first feature about a fatherless inner-city boy from 21-year-old filmmakers Allen and Albert Hughes, promise to match the self-critical wit of my top five. But after the dreary banality of *Basic Instinct*, what can we expect from *Sliver*, in which Sharon Stone and screenwriter Joe Eszterhas team up for Phillip Noyce's psychotriller about a woman enmeshed with a voyeur who may be murdering her neighbors? Or John Badham's *Point of No Return*, a remake of the elegantly vacuous *La Femme Nikita*, starring Bridget Fonda as a professional assassin who grows a conscience? Doubtless the year's most thoughtful action pic will come from that titan of social criticism, Sylvester Stallone, who in Renny Harlin's *Cliffhanger* hangs onto the Rocky Mountains with one hand while saving America from gangster John Lithgow with the other.



Stone in *Sliver*

Ella Taylor is a film critic for L.A. Weekly.

(Continued from page 28)

dealing with educational standards after holding a public meeting with education experts, much like the December economic summit in Little Rock. Or he might give a speech to discuss the issue, using videotapes to provide viewers with a clear picture

lems would arise in trying to implement such a vision of the presidency in other than peripheral ways. Using an innovative communication strategy to deal with a few creative aspects of education policy is one thing; using the same method to come up with defense or trade proposals is quite another. Some question the relevance of "CEO models" to the presidency at all—with respect to communication or anything else. A CEO typically has the power to move workers around and even lay them off; a President has very little control over the federal work force. "What's the incentive for anyone who's not on the White House staff to do anything?" asks James

Pinkerton, who was a counselor to President Bush and

was known for trying to get his boss to think about the "new paradigm." Jeffrey Tulis, the acting chair of the Department of Government at the University of Texas at Austin, sees another problem. "Political leadership and business leadership are not the same," he says. "In business, the bottom line is money. In politics, the whole point is to figure out what the bottom line even is." In other words, without an initial firm agreement on the chord changes, the jazz is likely to turn into nothing more than loud noise.

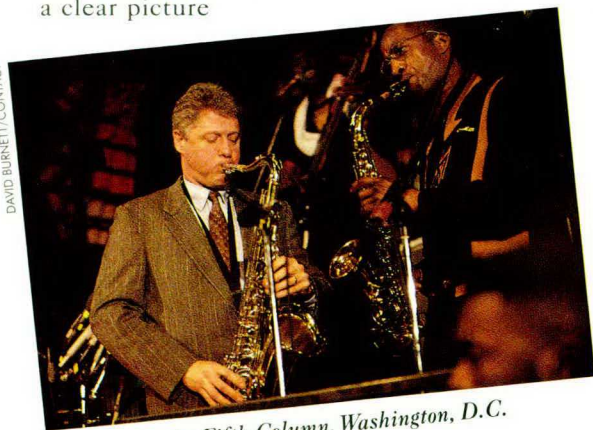
Others find fault with a model that has the President continually on the road, or running from studio to studio. Sixteen years ago Jimmy Carter developed a communication strategy similar to the one proposed for Clinton, albeit on a smaller scale, when he scheduled town meetings in distant places and joined Walter Cronkite in order to take questions by phone. This approach hardly helped him. Moreover, for a President—as for any public figure—there is a danger of overexposure. "If the Carter administration were a television show," Russell Baker wrote in December of 1977, "it would have been cancelled months ago." Franklin Roosevelt never averaged more than two Fireside Chats a year until the war. In contrast, even Bush—who was hardly known for a concerted communication strategy—made fifty-six

television appearances of various sorts during his first nineteen months in office.

Tulis is one of several presidential scholars who maintain that what Clinton needs to do with the presidency is something quite different from running a perpetual campaign, as he apparently intends to do. "Teledemocracy has weakened the presidency," Tulis says. "A President needs some distance from the people to reflect, to slow down passionate ideas, and to protect minority rights against the tyranny of the majority." If Presidents have often been more successful in the international arena than in the domestic one, he says, it is because the conduct of foreign policy doesn't lend itself to public campaigning.

Theodore Lowi, a professor of government at Cornell, says that Presidents inevitably create other problems for themselves when they establish a close relationship with the electorate by means of television. Such a "personal presidency" helps to set expectations so high that they cannot but be dashed when the President and the public find, inevitably, that the chief executive's powers to change the nation's domestic life are limited. "As visibility goes up," Lowi says, "so do expectations and vulnerability. There's more of a chance to make really big mistakes. It's a treadmill to oblivion. It's why modern history is filled with so many failed presidencies."

For that reason Lowi recommends that Clinton try to avoid a personal presidency. With the rise of "narrowcasting" and a diminishing media

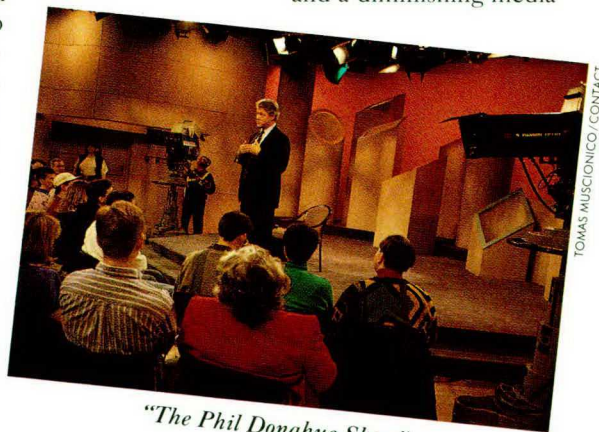


At the Fifth Column, Washington, D.C.

of the problem. Interested voters would be encouraged to respond to questionnaires; they might then be put on a list to receive an audio tape or a series of mailings, or to attend a town meeting. Afterward the Secretary of Education might announce a series of pilot projects to test new ideas. The eventual goal, Ross says, would be to provide local school districts with good information that they could apply individually, consistent with a national approach. It's a vision of customer-driven government which appears strangely similar to Ross Perot's concept of an electronic town hall.

Related ideas have been outlined by other corporate theorists, among them Peter Block, the author of *The Empowered Manager* (1987). "There's a new model for corporate leadership now," Block says. "The whole patriarchal concept of a charismatic leader to whose authority you submit so he will take care of you is disappearing, in favor of a model in which partnership and service are dominant ideas." If Clinton can redefine the presidency to be more consistent with that model, Block says, he won't have to worry much about his TV ratings. "You don't turn up the volume in response to the new age," he says. "You change the station."

IF THIS ALL sounds a bit ethereal and imbued with New Age spirituality, it is. Moreover, even if the goals of advisers like Ross and Osborne can be reduced to a blueprint, enormous prob-



"The Phil Donahue Show"

role for the President, Lowi sees a historic opportunity for Clinton to reduce the heroic expectations that have encumbered the office. He thinks that Clinton should reduce his visibility and resist efforts to accumulate presidential influence—getting rid of regulatory re-

forms that increase executive power and vetoing bills that impose conditions he can't meet.

Lowi's views have a correlate in the private sector. Many CEOs have successfully reformed their businesses by decentralizing power, giving far more authority and visibility to people who are closer to customers. The problem is that a CEO disperses power to other employees in his organization, whereas a President who gives up power along the lines Lowi suggests often gives it to another branch of government, Congress, which is considered more a competitor than part of the team.

Another problem, of course, is that Clinton probably didn't spend his life planning a run for the presidency so that he could diminish its importance. In the popular mind, and most likely in Clinton's own, the great Presidents were the strong and visible ones who accumulated power—the Abraham Lincolns, not the Calvin Coolidges. And in the end there is only so much that Clinton himself can do, even if he were to agree with Lowi and like-minded scholars. News coverage revolves around strong personas: in the *Weltanschauung* of the Washington press corps, the President must be the focus of events. The press would likely rebel against any moves that dictated otherwise. Moreover, if the rise of the Cold War and the age of broadcasting contributed to the growth of the executive branch, they were hardly the only factors. The rise of the regulatory and social-welfare state which began in the Roosevelt Administration has played a major role too.

Still, the presidency seems headed toward a different role in American life, though it may take years for that progress to be effected and assessed. Horace W. Busby, once an aide to Lyndon Johnson and now the publisher of a Washington newsletter, foresees an era in which the President will be a kind of "governor of the fifty states." "The President will become more of an irrelevancy," he says. "The old image of the powerful President wasn't due only to the Cold War. It was the product of a more primitive era. People today have far more education and exposure to the outside world. They don't need to attach that importance and responsibility to the office anymore." Indeed, in the new age of fragmentation, when it's tougher to assemble a mass following, virtually all colossal entities and authority figures of

the old age have seen their prestige and power recede. There are no centers of the universe anymore: if Dan Rather is no Walter Cronkite, and Jay Leno is no Johnny Carson, it's not necessarily because the people got smaller; it's because, metaphorically speaking, the pictures did too. It's no coincidence that George Bush was no Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton is no Jack Kennedy. Their successors won't be either.

—Steven Stark



VIETNAM

Low-Class Conclusions

A widely reported new study claiming that all classes shared the burden of the Vietnam War is preposterous

I'M WAITING for someone to ask me what "sophistry" means. I'll pull out my copy of *Operations Research* magazine and say, "See for yourself!"

I'll be carrying the September-October, 1992, issue, and I'll point to an article called "America's Vietnam Casualties: Victims of a Class War?" The article was written by Arnold Barnett, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Sloan School of Management, and two recent graduates of the school, Timothy Stanley and Mi-

chael Shore. *Operations Research* is not a mass-circulation journal, and I am sure that most of the journalists who have written about this article never bothered to read what it actually said, as I'll explain in a moment. Still, the article is surprisingly important, for the impact it has already had on public discourse and for what it shows about the corruption of educated thought.

A brief digest of the article's conclusions was sent to news organizations last fall, and it generated a lot of coverage. The interest was natural: according to the summary, the article disproved one of the major planks of the conventional wisdom about the Vietnam War. "Everybody knows that Vietnam was a class war, whose burden was borne disproportionately by the inner-city and rural poor and minorities," *Time* magazine said in its story about the report. "Well, it seems that everybody is wrong." *The Wall Street Journal* ran a story with the headline "CLASS WALLS BREACHED BY DEATH IN VIETNAM." William F. Buckley Jr. wrote a column about the study, saying it proved that the war in Vietnam was an "all-American effort." Most other stories were similarly respectful of the MIT study and its startling claims.

If true, the MIT findings would obviously be important, both in changing the standard version of Vietnam War history and in raising questions about how we know what we "know." If Vietnam really was an "equal opportunity war," as *Time* said in its report on the study, how could so many people have believed the opposite for so long?

Someday we may have to ask that question. But not now. The MIT study is preposterous. It raises questions, all right, but they concern the academics who conduct such scholarship and the journalists who pass it on without checking the details.

Now the necessary disclaimer: I have one large bias, but not the one the MIT authors might suspect. Their study is presented largely as a rebuttal to an article I wrote eighteen years ago called "What Did You Do in the Class War, Daddy?" It appeared in *The Washington Monthly*, and it argued that because the sons of the nation's economic, professional, and political elite were generally spared the costs of the Vietnam War, the war went on longer than it otherwise would have. The MIT authors say that I was wrong: "In terms of the be-

reavement it brought to America, Vietnam was not a class war."

I don't mind the disagreement. My real bias is more primitive: I would prefer never to raise this subject in public again. For me it involves the *Oprah*-like spectacle of rehashing the way that I and people like me dodged serving in the war. The subject is also becoming the Baby Boom's version of the Rosenberg case: when aging cranks start haggling over the fine points of their old arguments, everyone else tries to get out of the room. But the reaction to Bill Clinton's and Dan Quayle's draft histories suggests that the inequities of service in Vietnam, perceived or real, still matter to many Americans, which is why the MIT study matters too.

HERE IS HOW the study worked. Some 58,000 Americans died in Vietnam. From a list of the dead the MIT scholars made a random selection of 1,525 names, a sample easily large enough to achieve statistical significance. To determine whether any class bias was evident among the dead, the scholars decided to concentrate on income alone as an indicator of class. Money, after all, is a good rough measure of where people stand. But how could the scholars figure out the financial backgrounds of the casualties? These people died twenty to thirty years ago. America being what it is, their families have moved, dispersed, or died.

Facing huge obstacles, the MIT scholars came up with an approximation. From military records they determined each dead soldier's home town. From census data they determined the median income for each of those towns—or at least any town with a population of 2,500 or more, the smallest unit for which the census reports median income. The scholars then assumed that each soldier's family income was the median income of his home town. If Bill Clinton had been drafted from Oxford or Yale Law School, then, he would have counted as a poor boy rather than as a member of the educated elite. From other census data the scholars determined the income distribution for all men of military age during the Vietnam War. Then, with all the data in place, they moved through an increasingly elaborate set of correlations and "disparity" calculations to find whether there was a sharp economic difference be-

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tween the people who died and America as a whole. When all the computer runs were finished, the team discovered that the economic difference was surprisingly small.

What's wrong with this approach? The logical error is so grotesque that I'm almost embarrassed to point it out. The study assumes the very hypothesis that it is designed to test. That is, a study purporting to test *whether* casualties were representative rests on data that *defines* each casualty as representative. As a basic axiom of statistics, the variation between two large groups will almost always be smaller than the variation within either of the groups. The structure of the study limits the range of possible economic variation to the relatively small city-by-city differences across America, rather than to the much larger family-by-family inequalities within any city. The variations are limited more dramatically still by the assumption that each soldier who died came right from the middle of his home town's economic structure.

Let me make this specific: My home town, Redlands, California, had in those days a median income about 14 percent above the national average. The people I knew from Redlands who died in Vietnam included one Mexican-American who did not go to college, one white who went briefly to junior college, another who went into the army after high school, and a third who, anomalously for our town, went to an Eastern prep school and then to Harvard on an ROTC scholarship. Their stories illustrate both the chanciness of life—the ROTC student was one of only twelve from Harvard College to die in Vietnam—and certain larger sociological patterns. But for the purposes of the MIT study, these four people are all the same person, and each of them is 14 percent above the national average in income.

The MIT scholars would wave away this argument as “anecdotal,” the kiss-of-death term social scientists use to dismiss any evidence that can't be reduced to mathematical models. The question is, What violates reality more grossly: my memory of one high school in one small town, which other people can test against their own experience and information, or the MIT model, which purports to be scientifically accurate while systematically misclassifying people like the ones I knew?

The MIT article also writes off as anecdotal an episode I witnessed firsthand and described in my 1975 article: the draft physical held at the Boston Navy Yard in May of 1970, a few days after Richard Nixon ordered troops into Cambodia. Several hundred Harvard and MIT students, and several hundred locals from South Boston and Chelsea, were summoned to the same place at the same time. Virtually all the college boys were deferred, because of a weird assortment of “ailments.” Virtually all the local boys were approved to go to war.

It is of course possible for careful quantitative studies to reach conclusions that are not obvious from anecdotes. For instance, despite the impression that disproportionately many blacks died in Vietnam, surveys have determined that by the end of the war the proportion of total black casualties was almost exactly the proportion of blacks in the U.S. population. (Blacks did suffer disproportionate casualties in the early years of the war.) The question, therefore, is how carefully each study is set up. Researchers had direct means of figuring out whether dead soldiers were black or white; the MIT scholars had no way of determining just how rich or poor their dead soldiers were. So they simplified reality.

The three-page summary of the MIT study omitted several of the study's potential skews and limitations. For instance, on the researchers' first pass through the data, they had to wrestle with the fact that the census had no median-income figures for towns smaller than 2,500 people. They solved that problem by simply throwing out all the dead from towns smaller than that, even though such people represented a fifth of all soldiers killed in Vietnam and were almost certainly not from America's wealthiest class. On subsequent passes the authors reinstated those soldiers and used approximations based on the median incomes of their counties' rural populations—not a big step toward realism. They assessed and analyzed the data in countless other ways; they offset some of the most obvious distortions of their median-income approach in ways too complicated to go through here.

The most impressive part of the study—the only impressive part, to my mind—involved a separate sample of 467 dead. These were drawn from four

cities: Chicago, Baltimore, San Antonio, and Portland, Oregon. The researchers tried to find the exact home address of each dead soldier, and from that drew conclusions about his family's economic standing. This study found a relatively small skew in death rates—although it had limitations of its own. Each family's income was still defined as the median of a surrounding area, though in this case it was a census block containing about a thousand people rather than an entire town.

At the end of all their labors, every correction in place, the authors concluded that there was, in fact, a disparity in death rates. They broke the casualties into “deciles”—groups each containing 10 percent of the total—on the basis of family income, subject to all the doubts about how income was defined. They found that the wealthiest decile accounted for 7.8 percent of the casualties, or 22 percent less than its proportionate share. The second-poorest decile suffered 13.1 percent of the casualties, or 31 percent more than its share. (The very poorest had a lower-than-average death rate, for reasons I'll explain.) The poorer, therefore, were 68 percent more likely to die than the richer.

Leaping abruptly from statistical arcana to political and historical opinion, the authors concluded that this disparity rebuts the class-war hypothesis, since it is surprisingly small. “Most people instinctively think as many as three, four times more of the poor died than the rich, which is not true,” Arnold Barnett told an interviewer from the *Boston Herald*. (“Most people”? The stench of anecdote is in the air.) This mistaken impression, the authors say at the end of their study, “demeans the sacrifices of the wealthy by implying that such sacrifices were nonexistent.”

BY FORMING historical judgments, the authors guaranteed that their study would get more attention than a purely statistical exercise. But they also put themselves on terribly shaky ground, since questions about sacrifice and class war are not going to be resolved by bogus “disparity” studies.

Taken even at face value, the study's findings confirm, rather than challenge, part of the conventional assessment of Vietnam. No one I'm aware of contends that it was a “lowest decile,” poorest-of-the-poor war. Many of the poorest Americans were disqualified from ser-



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vice, as anyone who observed the process knows, because they couldn't meet medical, educational, or disciplinary standards.

Rather, the class-war concept asserts two things about the American Army that served in Vietnam: it was principally made up of men from working-class and lower-middle-class backgrounds, and the American elite was conspicuously absent. "Conspicuously" does not mean "totally." Service-

while other men, regardless of background, were going off to do their fair share, he was a scheming shirker. But according to the version of history available from every other source, he was typical of people with the same education at the same time. It is anecdotal but significant that sons of Franklin Roosevelt, Joseph P. Kennedy, and Prescott Bush were in combat during the Second World War. It is anecdotal but also significant that the next gener-

and asked each for two figures: the number of men who graduated from the undergraduate school from 1962 to 1972, and the number of those men who died in uniform. A total of 29,701 men graduated from the three schools; a total of twenty died in Vietnam, according to Webb. The classic study of who did and didn't serve in Vietnam, *Chance and Circumstance*, by Lawrence Baskir and William Strauss, found that men from disadvantaged backgrounds were more likely than average to be in the military, to serve in Vietnam, to be in combat units.

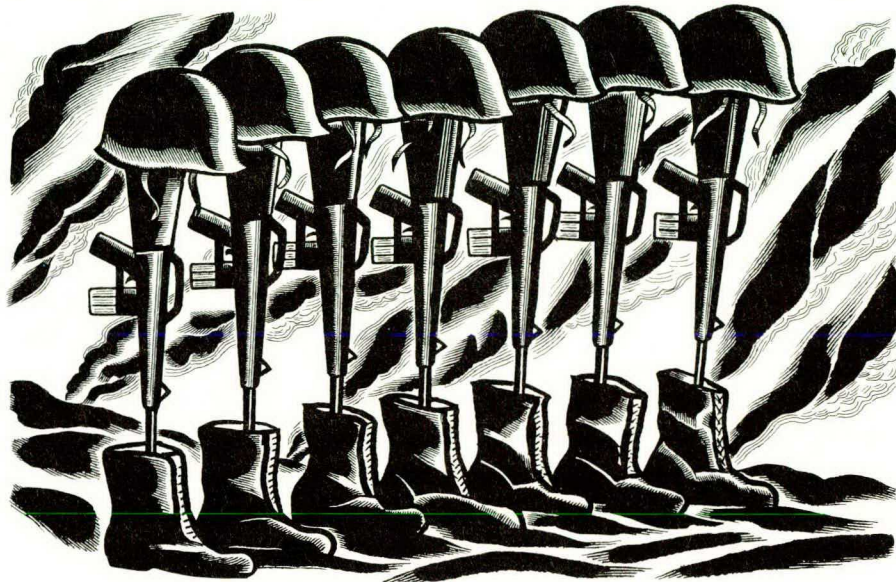
I asked Donald Rumsfeld, who was Secretary of Defense just after the fall of Saigon, whether the Army in Vietnam had been representative of America. "It was very clear what had happened with the draft," he said. "There was an accommodation between the government and the academic community. Students, teachers, and people who figured out how to work the system were exempted. It is inconceivable that a system designed and operating the way the draft did could have produced a true cross-section of America in the military."

Even William Buckley, who embraced the study's findings in his column, has implicitly rebutted them. I asked him whether his own experience squared with the assertion that the war had been "all-American." "I am lucky enough not to know anyone who died in Vietnam," he replied. "The only one I know who was wounded there is John Kerrey, who was in *Skull and Bones*." Buckley's own son, Christopher, has himself propounded the class-war thesis, on the basis of the way he and his Yale classmates avoided the draft.

"This is the same bogus scientific worship of 'hard data' that got us in so much trouble during the war," said William Broyles, the former editor of *Newsweek* and a creator of *China Beach*, who served as a Marine during the war. "I always wanted to grab those social-science nitwits and take them into the villages they insisted were safe because the computer said so."

Indeed, the problem with the MIT researchers may simply be that they missed their time. Thirty years ago they would have fit in perfectly. They could have worked with Robert McNamara on his studies proving that we were sure to win the war.

—James Fallows



academy graduates came from relatively privileged backgrounds and suffered heavy casualties in Vietnam. Two of the most dangerous specialties in Vietnam were those of pilots (especially helicopter) and infantry lieutenants. Because of the educational requirements for those jobs and the role of ROTC in providing lieutenants, they drew many men from affluent backgrounds, many of whom died. It is possible that death rates in Vietnam were more evenly distributed across income groups than were other measures of hardship which created the impression of a class war. The most obvious of these is that draftees and draft-induced volunteers lost several years of their youth while their contemporaries were starting families and careers.

In political terms the real burden of the war—a family's sense that it was feeding its sons into a machine over which it had no control—was shunted away not just from the truly rich but from most of America's upper-middle class. According to the version of history offered by the MIT study, the Bill Clinton of the 1960s was an aberration:

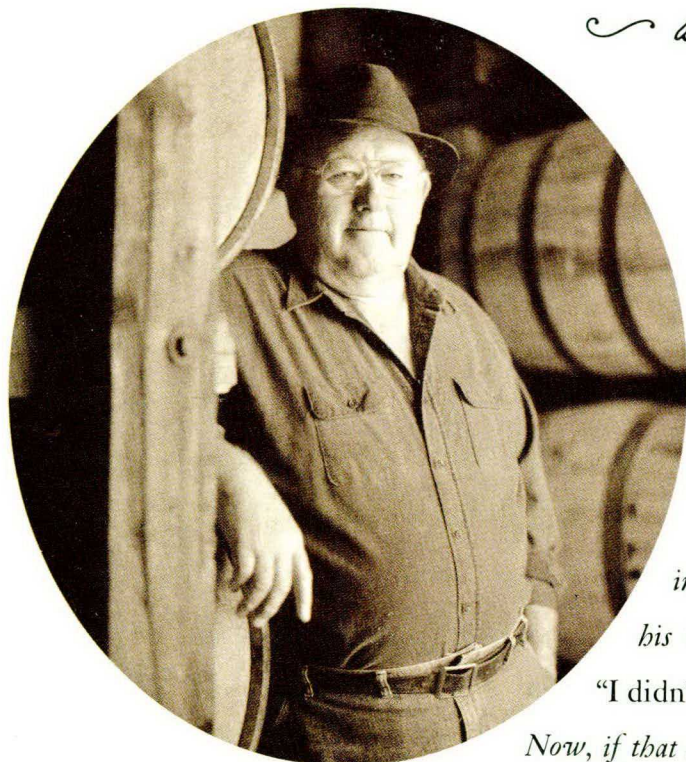
ation of those families was generally not involved in Vietnam.

If the political conclusions of the MIT study were accurate—if the burdens of the Vietnam War really were more or less fairly shared—you would think that someone would have mentioned it by now. At least one reporter watching troops in combat, one novelist re-creating the scene, one politician remembering the rise and fall of domestic support for the war—one of these people would have said what the MIT group does.

I mentioned the MIT conclusion to David Halberstam. "No!" he thundered. "All you had to do was *see* them to know that this was America's lower-middle class. Vietnam was a place where the elite went as reporters, not as soldiers. Almost as many people from Harvard won Pulitzer Prizes in Vietnam as died there." I asked James Webb, the novelist, Vietnam veteran, and former Secretary of the Navy, whether he had ever heard anyone involved with the war express a "shared burden" view. He said, "No." In the 1980s Webb called the registrars of Harvard, MIT, and Princeton,

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Booker Noe



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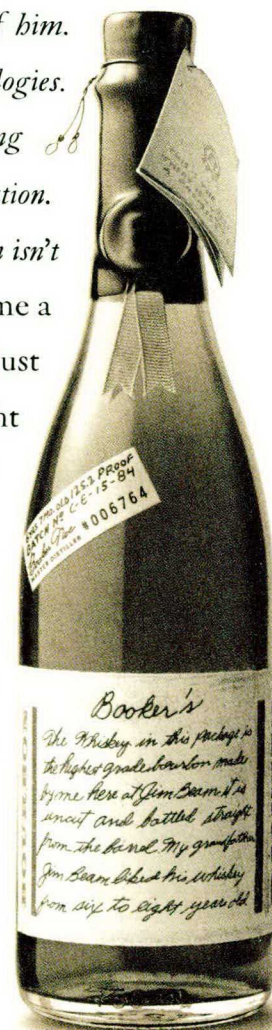
"I didn't like it at all," he says, without apologies.

Now, if that confession sounds a bit strange coming from a man who's devoted his life to making fine whiskey, there is a perfectly reasonable explanation.

Booker Noe, perhaps better than anyone else, understands that an appreciation for bourbon isn't something people are born with. "Like most people, learning to love fine bourbon took me a certain amount of time," he says, "But as the years have gone by, I've decided there's just nothing better than whiskey aged in charred white oak, uncut, unfiltered and straight from the barrel." Which is why Booker Noe recently began bottling his unique bourbon and making it available to the few connoisseurs of fine spirits who can appreciate it.

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The social-science evidence is in: though it may benefit the adults involved, the dissolution of intact two-parent families is harmful to large numbers of children. Moreover, the author argues, family diversity in the form of increasing numbers of single-parent and stepparent families does not strengthen the social fabric but, rather, dramatically weakens and undermines society

DAN QUAYLE WAS RIGHT

BY BARBARA DAFOE WHITEHEAD

DIVORCE AND OUT-OF-WEDLOCK CHILDBIRTH ARE TRANSFORMING THE LIVES of American children. In the postwar generation more than 80 percent of children grew up in a family with two biological parents who were married to each other. By 1980 only 50 percent could expect to spend their entire childhood in an intact family. If current trends continue, less than half of all children born today will live continuously with their own mother and father throughout childhood. Most American children will spend several years in a single-mother family. Some will eventually live in stepparent families, but because step-

families are more likely to break up than intact (by which I mean two-biological-parent) families, an increasing number of children will experience family breakup two or even three times during childhood.

According to a growing body of social-scientific evidence, children in families disrupted by divorce and out-of-wedlock birth do worse than children in intact families on several measures of well-being. Children in single-parent families are six times as likely to be poor. They are also likely to stay poor longer. Twenty-two percent of children in one-parent families will experience poverty during childhood for seven years or more, as compared with only two percent of children in two-parent families. A 1988 survey by the National Center for Health Statistics found that children in single-parent families are two to three times as likely as children in two-parent families to have emotional and behavioral problems. They are also more likely to drop out of high school, to get pregnant as teenagers, to abuse drugs, and to be in trouble with the law. Compared with children in intact families, children from disrupted families are at a much higher risk for physical or sexual abuse.

Contrary to popular belief, many children do not "bounce back" after divorce or remarriage. Difficulties that are associated with family breakup often persist into adulthood. Children who grow up in single-parent or stepparent families are less successful as adults, particularly in the two domains of life—love and work—that are most essential to happiness. Needless to say, not all

children experience such negative effects. However, research shows that many children from disrupted families have a harder time achieving intimacy in a relationship, forming a stable marriage, or even holding a steady job.

Despite this growing body of evidence, it is nearly impossible to discuss changes in family structure without provoking angry protest. Many people see the discussion as no more than an attack on struggling single mothers and their children: Why blame single mothers when they are doing the very best they can? After all, the decision to end a marriage or a relationship is wrenching, and few parents are indifferent to the painful burden this decision imposes on their children. Many take the perilous step toward single parenthood as a last resort, after their best efforts to hold a marriage together have failed. Consequently, it can seem particularly cruel and unfeeling to remind parents of the hardships their children might suffer as a result of family breakup. Other people believe that the dramatic changes in family structure, though regrettable, are impossible to reverse. Family breakup is an inevitable feature of American life, and anyone who thinks otherwise is indulging in nostalgia or trying to turn back the clock. Since these new family forms are here to stay, the reasoning goes, we must accord respect to single parents, not criticize them. Typical is the view expressed by a Brooklyn woman in a recent letter to *The New York Times*: "Let's stop moralizing or blaming single parents

and unwed mothers, and give them the respect they have earned and the support they deserve.”

Such views are not to be dismissed. Indeed, they help to explain why family structure is such an explosive issue for Americans. The debate about it is not simply about the social-scientific evidence, although that is surely an important part of the discussion. It is also a debate over deeply held and often conflicting values. How do we begin to reconcile our long-standing belief in equality and diversity with an impressive body of evidence that suggests that not all family structures produce equal outcomes for children? How can we square traditional notions of public support for dependent women and children with a belief in women’s right to pursue autonomy and independence in childbearing and child-rearing? How do we uphold the freedom of adults to pursue individual happiness in their private relationships and at the same time respond to the needs of children for stability, security, and permanence in their family lives? What do we do when the interests of adults and children conflict? These are the difficult issues at stake in the debate over family structure.

In the past these issues have turned out to be too difficult and too politically risky for debate. In the mid-1960s Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then an assistant secretary of labor, was denounced as a racist for calling attention to the relationship between the prevalence of black single-mother families and the lower socioeconomic standing of black children. For nearly twenty years the policy and research communities backed away from the entire issue. In 1980 the Carter Administration convened a historic White House Conference on Families, designed to address the growing problems of children and families in America. The result was a prolonged, publicly subsidized quarrel over the definition of “family.” No President since has tried to hold a national family conference. Last year, at a time when the rate of out-of-wedlock births had reached a historic high, Vice President Dan Quayle was ridiculed for criticizing Murphy Brown. In short, every time the issue of family structure has been raised, the response has been first controversy, then retreat, and finally silence.

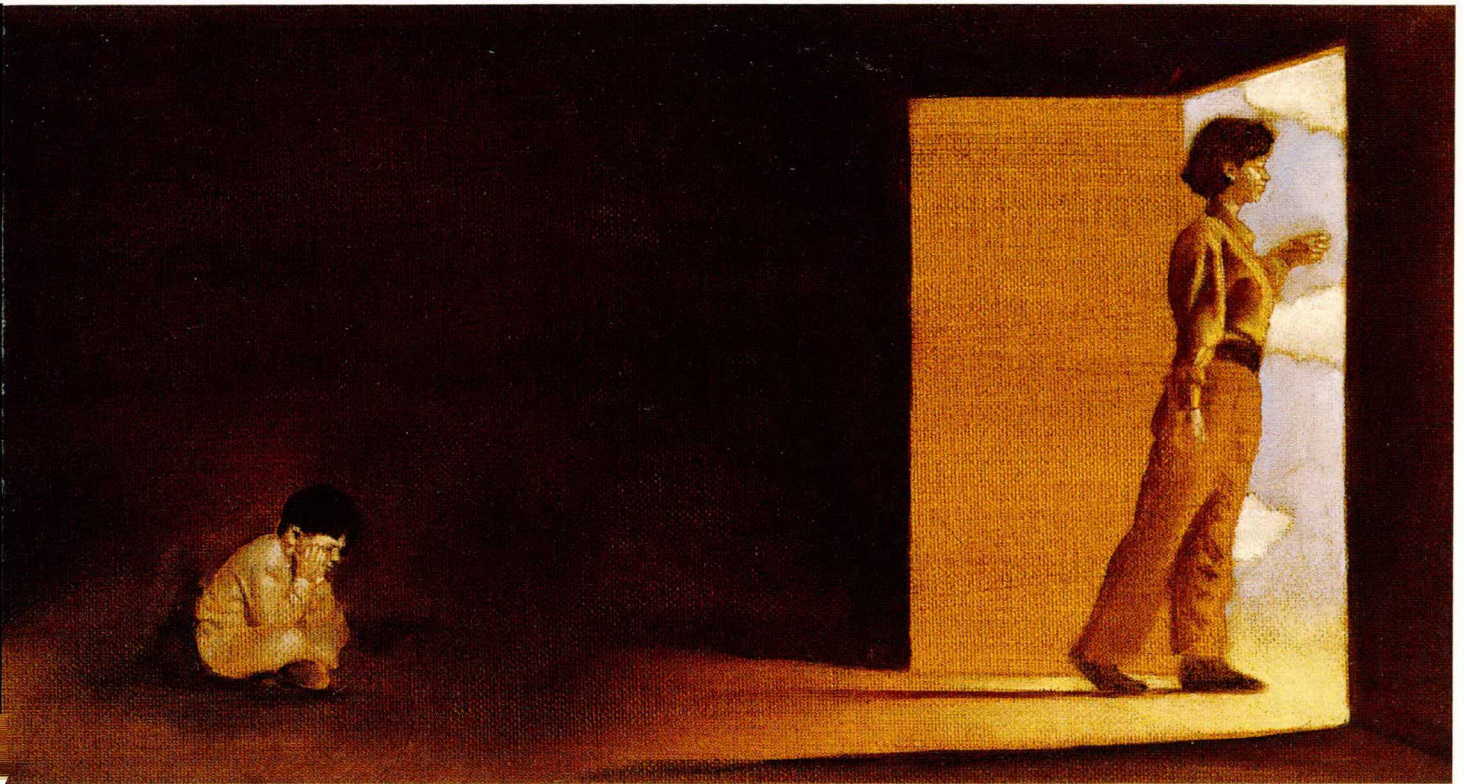
Yet it is also risky to ignore the issue of changing family structure. In recent years the problems associated with family disruption have grown. Overall child well-being has declined, despite a decrease in the number of children per family, an increase in the educational level of parents, and historically high levels of public spending. After dropping in the 1960s and 1970s, the proportion of children in poverty has increased dramatically, from 15 percent in 1970 to 20 percent in 1990, while the percentage of adult Americans in poverty has remained roughly constant. The teen suicide rate has more than tripled. Juvenile crime has increased and become more violent. School performance has continued to decline. There are no signs that these trends are about to reverse themselves.



If we fail to come to terms with the relationship between family structure and declining child well-being, then it will be increasingly difficult to improve children’s life prospects, no matter how many new programs the federal government funds. Nor will we be able to make progress in bettering school performance or reducing crime or improving the quality of the nation’s future work force—all domestic problems closely connected to family breakup. Worse, we may contribute to the problem by pursuing policies that actually increase family instability and breakup.

From Death to Divorce

ACROSS TIME AND ACROSS CULTURES, FAMILY DISRUPTION has been regarded as an event that threatens a child’s well-being and even survival. This view is rooted in a fundamental biological fact: unlike the young of almost any other species, the human child is born in an abjectly helpless and immature state. Years of nurture and protection are needed before the child can achieve physical independence. Similarly, it takes years of interaction with at least one but ideally two or more adults for a child to develop into a socially competent adult. Children raised in virtual isolation from human beings, though physically intact, display few recognizably human behaviors. The social arrangement that has proved most successful in ensuring the physical survival and promoting the social development of the child is the family unit of the biological mother and father. Consequently,



any event that permanently denies a child the presence and protection of a parent jeopardizes the life of the child.

The classic form of family disruption is the death of a parent. Throughout history this has been one of the risks of childhood. Mothers frequently died in childbirth, and it was not unusual for both parents to die before the child was grown. As recently as the early decades of this century children commonly suffered the death of at least one parent. Almost a quarter of the children born in this country in 1900 lost one parent by the time they were fifteen years old. Many of these children lived with their widowed parent, often in a household with other close relatives. Others grew up in orphanages and foster homes.

The meaning of parental death, as it has been transmitted over time and faithfully recorded in world literature and lore, is unambiguous and essentially unchanging. It is universally regarded as an untimely and tragic event. Death permanently severs the parent-child bond, disrupting forever one of the child's earliest and deepest human attachments. It also deprives a child of the presence and protection of an adult who has a biological stake in, as well as an emotional commitment to, the child's survival and well-being. In short, the death of a parent is the most extreme and severe loss a child can suffer.

Because a child is so vulnerable in a parent's absence, there has been a common cultural response to the death of a parent: an outpouring of support from family, friends, and strangers alike. The surviving parent and child are united in their grief as well as their loss. Relatives and friends share in the loss and provide valuable emotional

and financial assistance to the bereaved family. Other members of the community show sympathy for the child, and public assistance is available for those who need it. This cultural understanding of parental death has formed the basis for a tradition of public support to widows and their children. Indeed, as recently as the beginning of this century widows were the only mothers eligible for pensions in many states, and today widows with children receive more-generous welfare benefits from Survivors Insurance than do other single mothers with children who depend on Aid to Families With Dependent Children.

It has taken thousands upon thousands of years to reduce the threat of parental death. Not until the middle of the twentieth century did parental death cease to be a commonplace event for children in the United States. By then advances in medicine had dramatically reduced mortality rates for men and women.

At the same time, other forms of family disruption—separation, divorce, out-of-wedlock birth—were held in check by powerful religious, social, and legal sanctions. Divorce was widely regarded both as a deviant behavior, especially threatening to mothers and children, and as a personal lapse: "Divorce is the public acknowledgment of failure," a 1940s sociology textbook noted. Out-of-wedlock birth was stigmatized, and stigmatization is a powerful means of regulating behavior, as any smoker or overeater will testify. Sanctions against nonmarital child-birth discouraged behavior that hurt children and exacted compensatory behavior that helped them. Shotgun marriages and adoption, two common responses to nonmari-

tal birth, carried a strong message about the risks of premarital sex and created an intact family for the child.

Consequently, children did not have to worry much about losing a parent through divorce or never having had one because of nonmarital birth. After a surge in divorces following the Second World War, the rate leveled off. Only 11 percent of children born in the 1950s would by the time they turned eighteen see their parents separate or divorce. Out-of-wedlock childbirth barely figured as a cause of family disruption. In the 1950s and early 1960s, five percent of the nation's births were out of wedlock. Blacks were more likely than whites to bear children outside marriage, but the majority of black children born in the twenty years after the Second World War were born to married couples. The rate of family disruption reached a historic low point during those years.

A new standard of family security and stability was established in postwar America. For the first time in history the vast majority of the nation's children could expect to live with married biological parents throughout childhood. Children might still suffer other forms of adversity—poverty, racial discrimination, lack of educational opportunity—but only a few would be deprived of the nurture and protection of a mother and a father. No longer did children have to be haunted by the classic fears vividly dramatized in folklore and fable—that their parents would die, that they would have to live with a stepparent and stepsiblings, or that they would be abandoned. These were the years when the nation confidently boarded up orphanages and closed foundling hospitals, certain that such institutions would never again be needed. In movie theaters across the country parents and children could watch the drama of parental separation and death in the great Disney classics, secure in the knowledge that such nightmare visions as the death of Bambi's mother and the wrenching separation of Dumbo from his mother were only make-believe.

In the 1960s the rate of family disruption suddenly began to rise. After inching up over the course of a century, the divorce rate soared. Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s the divorce rate held steady at fewer than ten divorces a year per 1,000 married couples. Then, beginning in about 1965, the rate increased sharply, peaking at twenty-three divorces per 1,000 marriages by 1979. (In 1974 divorce passed death as the leading cause of family breakup.) The rate has leveled off at about twenty-one divorces per 1,000 marriages—the figure for 1991. The out-of-wedlock birth rate also jumped. It went from five percent in 1960 to 27 percent in 1990. In 1990 close to 57 percent of births among black mothers were nonmarital, and about 17 percent among white mothers. Altogether, about one out of every four women who had a child in 1990 was not married. With rates of divorce and nonmarital birth so high, family disruption is at its peak. Never before have so many children experienced family breakup caused by events other than death. Each year a million

children go through divorce or separation and almost as many more are born out of wedlock.

Half of all marriages now end in divorce. Following divorce, many people enter new relationships. Some begin living together. Nearly half of all cohabiting couples have children in the household. Fifteen percent have new children together. Many cohabiting couples eventually get married. However, both cohabiting and remarried couples are more likely to break up than couples in first marriages. Even social scientists find it hard to keep pace with the complexity and velocity of such patterns. In the revised edition (1992) of his book *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage*, the sociologist Andrew Cherlin ruefully comments: "If there were a truth-in-labeling law for books, the title of this edition should be something long and unwieldy like *Cohabitation, Marriage, Divorce, More Cohabitation, and Probably Remarriage*."

Under such conditions growing up can be a turbulent experience. In many single-parent families children must come to terms with the parent's love life and romantic partners. Some children live with cohabiting couples, either their own unmarried parents or a biological parent and a live-in partner. Some children born to cohabiting parents see their parents break up. Others see their parents marry, but 56 percent of them (as compared with 31 percent of the children born to married parents) later see their parents' marriages fall apart. All told, about three quarters of children born to cohabiting couples will live in a single-parent home at least briefly. One of every four children growing up in the 1990s will eventually enter a stepfamily. According to one survey, nearly half of all children in stepparent families will see their parents divorce again by the time they reach their late teens. Since 80 percent of divorced fathers remarry, things get even more complicated when the romantic or marital history of the noncustodial parent, usually the father, is taken into account. Consequently, as it affects a significant number of children, family disruption is best understood not as a single event but as a string of disruptive events: separation, divorce, life in a single-parent family, life with a parent and live-in lover, the remarriage of one or both parents, life in one stepparent family combined with visits to another stepparent family; the breakup of one or both stepparent families. And so on. This is one reason why public schools have a hard time knowing whom to call in an emergency.

Given its dramatic impact on children's lives, one might reasonably expect that this historic level of family disruption would be viewed with alarm, even regarded as a national crisis. Yet this has not been the case. In recent years some people have argued that these trends pose a serious threat to children and to the nation as a whole, but they are dismissed as declinists, pessimists, or nostalgists, unwilling or unable to accept the new facts of life. The dominant view is that the changes in family structure are, on balance, positive.



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A Shift in the Social Metric

THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS WHY THIS IS SO, but the fundamental reason is that at some point in the 1970s Americans changed their minds about the meaning of these disruptive behaviors. What had once been regarded as hostile to children's best interests was now considered essential to adults' happiness. In the 1950s most Americans believed that parents should stay in an unhappy marriage for the sake of the children. The assumption was that a divorce would damage the children, and the prospect of such damage gave divorce its meaning. By the mid-1970s a majority of Americans rejected that view. Popular advice literature reflected the shift. A book on divorce published in the mid-1940s tersely asserted: "Children are entitled to the affection and *association* of two parents, not one." Thirty years later another popular divorce book proclaimed just the opposite: "A two-parent home is not the only emotional structure within which a child can be happy and healthy. . . . The parents who take care of themselves will be best able to take care of their children." At about the same time, the long-standing taboo against out-of-wedlock childbirth also collapsed. By the mid-1970s three fourths of Americans said that it was not morally wrong for a woman to have a child outside marriage.

Once the social metric shifts from child well-being to adult well-being, it is hard to see divorce and nonmarital birth in anything but a positive light. However distressing and difficult they may be, both of these behaviors can hold out the promise of greater adult choice, freedom, and happiness. For unhappy spouses, divorce offers a way to escape a troubled or even abusive relationship and make a fresh start. For single parents, remarriage is a second try at marital happiness as well as a chance for relief from the stress, loneliness, and economic hardship of raising a child alone. For some unmarried women, nonmarital birth is a way to beat the biological clock, avoid marrying the wrong man, and experience the pleasures of motherhood. Moreover, divorce and out-of-wedlock birth involve a measure of agency and choice; they are man- and woman-made events. To be sure, not everyone exercises choice in divorce or nonmarital birth. Men leave wives for younger women, teenage girls get pregnant accidentally—yet even these unhappy events reflect the expansion of the boundaries of freedom and choice.

This cultural shift helps explain what otherwise would be inexplicable: the failure to see the rise in family disruption as a severe and troubling national problem. It explains why there is virtually no widespread public sentiment for restigmatizing either of these classically disruptive behaviors and no sense—no public consensus—that they can or should be avoided in the future. On the contrary, the prevailing opinion is that we should accept the changes in family structure as inevitable and devise new forms of public and private support for single-parent families.

The View From Hollywood

WITH ITS AFFIRMATION OF THE LIBERATING effects of divorce and nonmarital childbirth, this opinion is a fixture of American popular culture today. Madison Avenue and Hollywood did not invent these behaviors, as their highly paid publicists are quick to point out, but they have played an influential role in defending and even celebrating divorce and unwed motherhood. More precisely, they have taken the raw material of demography and fashioned it into a powerful fantasy of individual renewal and rebirth. Consider, for example, the teaser for *People* magazine's cover story on Joan Lunden's divorce: "After the painful end of her 13-year marriage, the *Good Morning America* cohost is discovering a new life as a single mother—and as her own woman." *People* does not dwell on the anguish Lunden and her children might have experienced over the breakup of their family, or the difficulties of single motherhood, even for celebrity mothers. Instead, it celebrates Joan Lunden's steps toward independence and a better life. *People*, characteristically, focuses on her shopping: in the first weeks after her breakup Lunden leased "a brand-new six-bedroom, 8,000 square foot" house and then went to Bloomingdale's, where she scooped up sheets, pillows, a toaster, dishes, seven televisions, and roomfuls of fun furniture that was "totally unlike the serious traditional pieces she was giving up."

This is not just the view taken in supermarket magazines. Even the conservative bastion of the greeting-card industry, Hallmark, offers a line of cards commemorating divorce as liberation. "Think of your former marriage as a record album," says one Contemporary card. "It was full of music—both happy and sad. But what's important now is . . . YOU! the recently released HOT, NEW, SINGLE! You're going to be at the TOP OF THE CHARTS!" Another card reads: "Getting divorced can be very healthy! Watch how it improves your circulation! Best of luck! . . ." Hallmark's hip Shoebox Greetings division depicts two female praying mantises. Mantis One: "It's tough being a single parent." Mantis Two: "Yeah . . . Maybe we shouldn't have eaten our husbands."

Divorce is a tired convention in Hollywood, but unwed parenthood is very much in fashion: in the past year or so babies were born to Warren Beatty and Annette Bening, Jack Nicholson and Rebecca Broussard, and Eddie Murphy and Nicole Mitchell. *Vanity Fair* celebrated Jack Nicholson's fatherhood with a cover story (April, 1992) called "Happy Jack." What made Jack happy, it turned out, was no-fault fatherhood. He and Broussard, the twenty-nine-year-old mother of his children, lived in separate houses. Nicholson said, "It's an unusual arrangement, but the last twenty-five years or so have shown me that I'm not good at cohabitation. . . . I see Rebecca as much as any other person who is cohabiting. And *she* prefers it. I think

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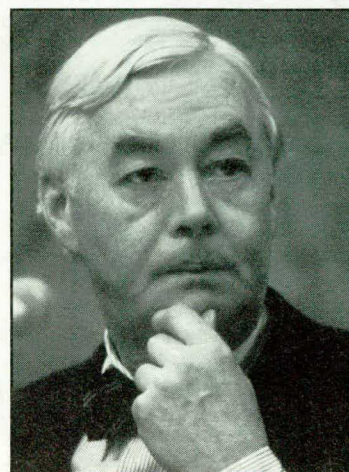
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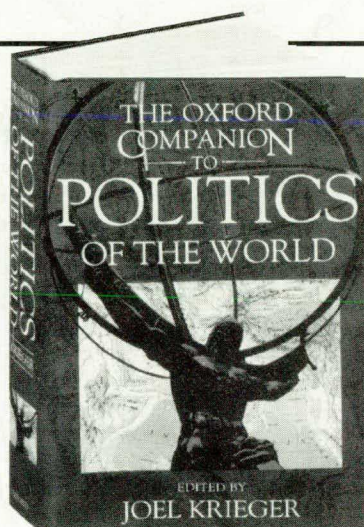
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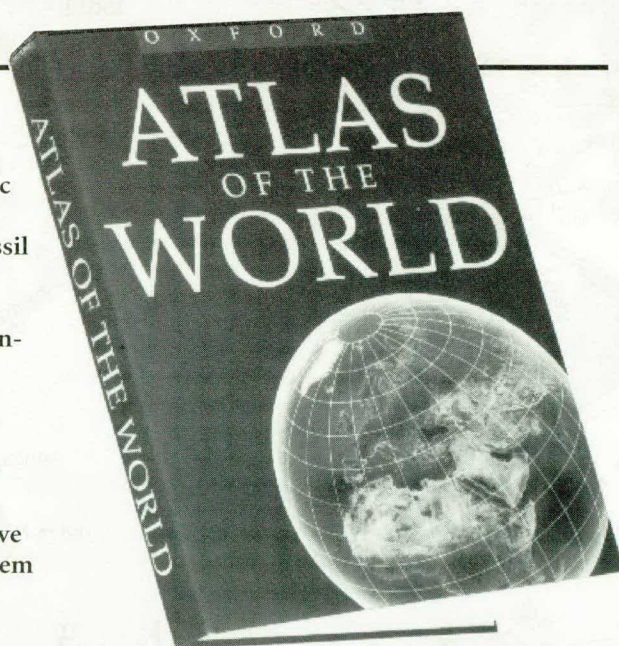
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most people would in a more honest and truthful world.” As for more-permanent commitments, the man who is not good at cohabitation said: “I don’t discuss marriage much with Rebecca. Those discussions are the very thing I’m trying to avoid. I’m after this immediate real thing. That’s all I believe in.” (Perhaps Nicholson should have had the discussion. Not long after the story appeared, Broussard broke off the relationship.)

As this story shows, unwed parenthood is thought of not only as a way to find happiness but also as a way to exhibit such virtues as honesty and courage. A similar argument was offered in defense of Murphy Brown’s unwed motherhood. Many of Murphy’s fans were quick to point out that Murphy suffered over her decision to bear a child out of wedlock. Faced with an accidental pregnancy and a faithless lover, she agonized over her plight and, after much mental anguish, bravely decided to go ahead. In short, having a baby without a husband represented a higher level of maternal devotion and sacrifice than having a baby with a husband. Murphy was not just exercising her rights as a woman; she was exhibiting true moral heroism.

On the night Murphy Brown became an unwed mother, 34 million Americans tuned in, and CBS posted a 35 percent share of the audience. The show did not stir significant protest at the grass roots and lost none of its advertisers. The actress Candice Bergen subsequently appeared on the cover of nearly every women’s and news maga-

zine in the country and received an honorary degree at the University of Pennsylvania as well as an Emmy award. The show’s creator, Diane English, popped up in Hanes stocking ads. Judged by conventional measures of approval, Murphy Brown’s motherhood was a hit at the box office.

Increasingly, the media depicts the married two-parent family as a source of pathology. According to a spate of celebrity memoirs and interviews, the married-parent family harbors terrible secrets of abuse, violence, and incest. A bumper sticker I saw in Amherst, Massachusetts, read UNSPOKEN TRADITIONAL FAMILY VALUES: ABUSE, ALCOHOLISM, INCEST. The pop therapist John Bradshaw explains away this generation’s problems with the dictum that 96 percent of families are dysfunctional, made that way by the addicted society we live in. David Lynch creates a new aesthetic of creepiness by juxtaposing scenes of traditional family life with images of seduction and perversion. A Boston-area museum puts on an exhibit called “Goodbye to Apple Pie,” featuring several artists’

visions of child abuse, including one mixed-media piece with knives poking through a little girl’s skirt. The piece is titled *Father Knows Best*.

No one would claim that two-parent families are free from conflict, violence, or abuse. However, the attempt to discredit the two-parent family can be understood as part of what Daniel Patrick Moynihan has described as a larger effort to accommodate higher levels of social deviance. “The amount of deviant behavior in American society has increased beyond the levels the community can ‘afford to recognize,’” Moynihan argues. One response has been to normalize what was once considered deviant behavior, such as out-of-wedlock birth. An accompanying response has been to detect deviance in what once stood as a social norm, such as the married-couple family. Together these responses reduce the acknowledged levels of deviance by eroding earlier distinctions between the normal and the deviant.

Several recent studies describe family life in its postwar heyday as the seedbed of alcoholism and abuse. Ac-

Research shows that many children from disrupted families have a harder time achieving intimacy in a relationship, forming a stable marriage, or even holding a steady job ■

cording to Stephanie Coontz, the author of the book *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*, family life for married mothers in the 1950s consisted of “booze, bowling, bridge, and boredom.” Coontz writes: “Few would have guessed that radiant Marilyn Van Derbur, crowned Miss America in 1958, had been sexually violated by her wealthy, respectable father from the time she was five until she was eighteen, when she moved away to college.” Even the budget-stretching casserole comes under attack as a sign of culinary dysfunction. According to one food writer, this homely staple of postwar family life brings back images of “the good mother of the 50’s . . . locked in Ozzie and Harriet land, unable to move past the canvas of a Corning Ware dish, the palette of a can of Campbell’s soup, the mushy dominion of which she was queen.”

Nevertheless, the popular portrait of family life does not simply reflect the views of a cultural elite, as some have argued. There is strong support at the grass roots for much of this view of family change. Survey after survey



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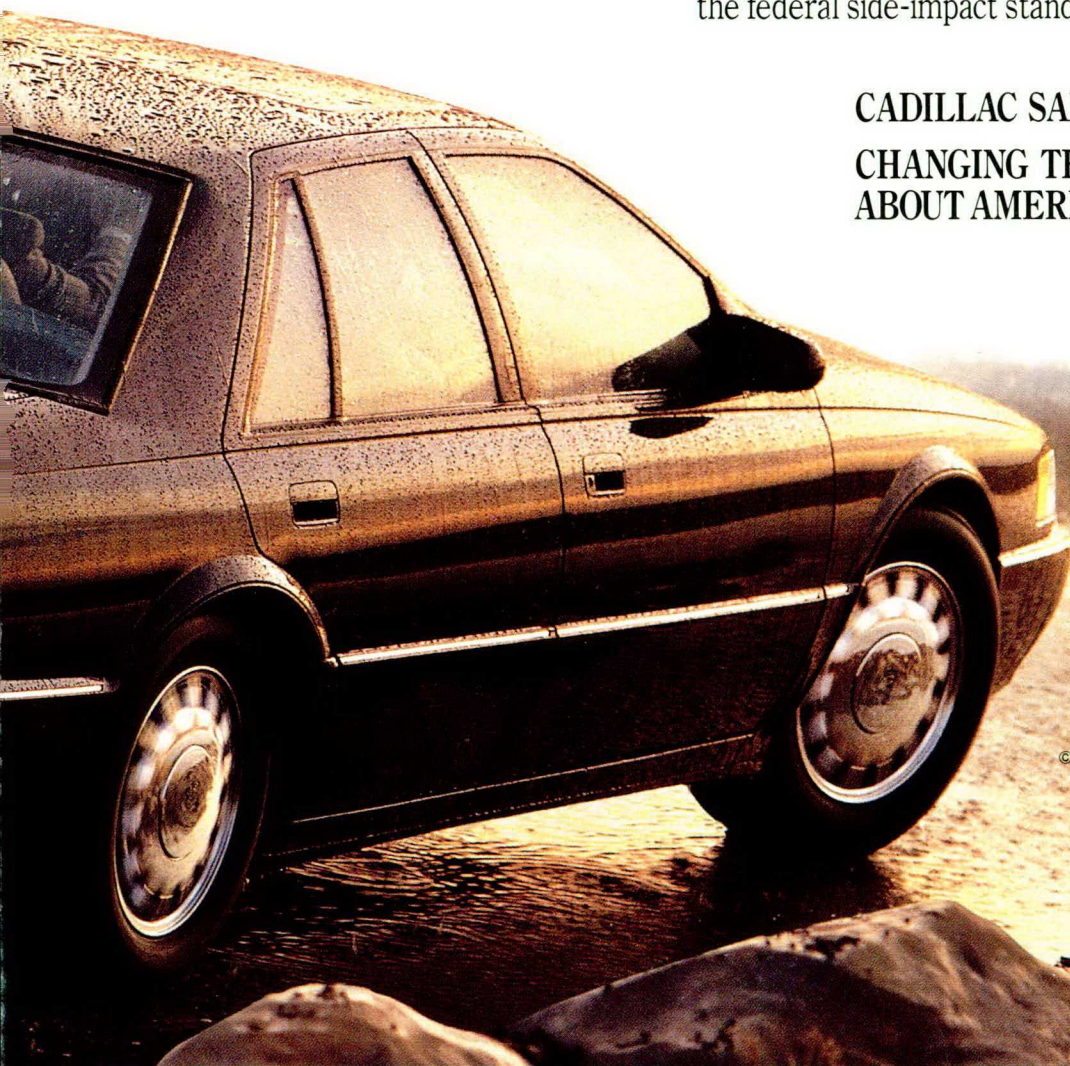
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shows that Americans are less inclined than they were a generation ago to value sexual fidelity, lifelong marriage, and parenthood as worthwhile personal goals. Motherhood no longer defines adult womanhood, as everyone knows; equally important is the fact that fatherhood has declined as a norm for men. In 1976 less than half as many fathers as in 1957 said that providing for children was a life goal. The proportion of working men who found marriage and children burdensome and restrictive more than doubled in the same period. Fewer than half of all adult Americans today regard the idea of sacrifice for others as a positive moral virtue.

Dinosaurs Divorce

IT IS TRUE THAT MANY ADULTS BENEFIT FROM divorce or remarriage. According to one study, nearly 80 percent of divorced women and 50 percent of divorced men say they are better off out of the marriage. Half of divorced adults in the same study report greater happiness. A competent self-help book called *Divorce and New Beginnings* notes the advantages of single parenthood: single parents can "develop their own interests, fulfill their own needs, choose their own friends and engage in social activities of their choice. Money, even if limited, can be spent as they see fit." Apparently, some women appreciate the opportunity to have children out of wedlock. "The real world, however, does not always allow women who are dedicated to their careers to devote the time and energy it takes to find—or be found by—the perfect husband and father wanna-be," one woman said in a letter to *The Washington Post*. A mother and chiropractor from Avon, Connecticut, explained her unwed maternity to an interviewer this way: "It is selfish, but this was something I needed to do for me."

There is very little in contemporary popular culture to contradict this optimistic view. But in a few small places another perspective may be found. Several racks down from its divorce cards, Hallmark offers a line of cards for children—To Kids With Love. These cards come six to a pack. Each card in the pack has a slightly different message. According to the package, the "thinking of you" messages will let a special kid "know how much you care." Though Hallmark doesn't quite say so, it's clear these cards are aimed at divorced parents. "I'm sorry I'm not always there when you need me but I hope you know I'm always just a phone call away." Another card reads: "Even though your dad and I don't live together anymore, I know he's still a very special part of your life. And as much as I miss you when you're not with me, I'm still happy that you two can spend time together."

Hallmark's messages are grounded in a substantial body of well-funded market research. Therefore it is worth reflecting on the divergence in sentiment between the divorce cards for adults and the divorce cards for kids. For grown-ups, divorce heralds new beginnings (A HOT NEW

SINGLE). For children, divorce brings separation and loss ("I'm sorry I'm not always there when you need me").

An even more telling glimpse into the meaning of family disruption can be found in the growing children's literature on family dissolution. Take, for example, the popular children's book *Dinosaurs Divorce: A Guide for Changing Families* (1986), by Laurene Krasny Brown and Marc Brown. This is a picture book, written for very young children. The book begins with a short glossary of "divorce words" and encourages children to "see if you can find them" in the story. The words include "family counselor," "separation agreement," "alimony," and "child custody." The book is illustrated with cartoonish drawings of green dinosaur parents who fight, drink too much, and break up. One panel shows the father dinosaur, suitcase in hand, getting into a yellow car.

The dinosaur children are offered simple, straightforward advice on what to do about the divorce. *On custody decisions*: "When parents can't agree, lawyers and judges decide. Try to be honest if they ask you questions; it will help them make better decisions." *On selling the house*: "If you move, you may have to say good-bye to friends and familiar places. But soon your new home will feel like the place you really belong." *On the economic impact of divorce*: "Living with one parent almost always means there will be less money. Be prepared to give up some things." *On holidays*: "Divorce may mean twice as much celebrating at holiday times, but you may feel pulled apart." *On parents' new lovers*: "You may sometimes feel jealous and want your parent to yourself. Be polite to your parents' new friends, even if you don't like them at first." *On parents' remarriage*: "Not everyone loves his or her stepparents, but showing them respect is important."

These cards and books point to an uncomfortable and generally unacknowledged fact: what contributes to a parent's happiness may detract from a child's happiness. All too often the adult quest for freedom, independence, and choice in family relationships conflicts with a child's developmental needs for stability, constancy, harmony, and permanence in family life. In short, family disruption creates a deep division between parents' interests and the interests of children.

One of the worst consequences of these divided interests is a withdrawal of parental investment in children's well-being. As the Stanford economist Victor Fuchs has pointed out, the main source of social investment in children is private. The investment comes from the children's parents. But parents in disrupted families have less time, attention, and money to devote to their children. The single most important source of disinvestment has been the widespread withdrawal of financial support and involvement by fathers. Maternal investment, too, has declined, as women try to raise families on their own and work outside the home. Moreover, both mothers and fathers commonly respond to family breakup by investing more heavily in themselves and in their own personal and romantic lives.

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Sometimes the tables are completely turned. Children are called upon to invest in the emotional well-being of their parents. Indeed, this seems to be the larger message of many of the children's books on divorce and remarriage. *Dinosaurs Divorce* asks children to be sympathetic, understanding, respectful, and polite to confused, unhappy parents. The sacrifice comes from the children: "Be prepared to give up some things." In the world of divorcing dinosaurs, the children rather than the grown-ups are the exemplars of patience, restraint, and good sense.

Three Seventies Assumptions

AS IT FIRST TOOK SHAPE IN THE 1970S, THE OPTIMISTIC view of family change rested on three bold new assumptions. At that time, because the emergence of the changes in family life was so recent, there was little hard evidence to confirm or dispute these assumptions. But this was an expansive moment in American life.

The first assumption was an economic one: that a woman could now afford to be a mother without also being a wife. There were ample grounds for believing this. Women's work-force participation had been gradually increasing in the postwar period, and by the beginning of the 1970s women were a strong presence in the workplace. What's more, even though there was still a substantial wage gap between men and women, women had made considerable progress in a relatively short time toward better-paying jobs and greater employment opportunities. More women than ever before could aspire to serious careers as business executives, doctors, lawyers, airline pilots, and politicians. This circumstance, combined with the increased availability of child care, meant that women could take on the responsibilities of a breadwinner, perhaps even a sole breadwinner. This was particularly true for middle-class women. According to a highly regarded 1977 study by the Carnegie Council on Children, "The greater availability of jobs for women means that more middle-class children today survive their parents' divorce without a catastrophic plunge into poverty."

Feminists, who had long argued that the path to greater equality for women lay in the world of work outside the home, endorsed this assumption. In fact, for many, economic independence was a stepping-stone toward freedom from both men and marriage. As women began to earn their own money, they were less dependent on men or marriage, and marriage diminished in importance. In Gloria Steinem's memorable words, "A woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle."

This assumption also gained momentum as the meaning of work changed for women. Increasingly, work had an expressive as well as an economic dimension: being a working mother not only gave you an income but also made you more interesting and fulfilled than a stay-at-home mother. Consequently, the optimistic economic

scenario was driven by a cultural imperative. Women would achieve financial independence because, culturally as well as economically, it was the right thing to do.

The second assumption was that family disruption would not cause lasting harm to children and could actually enrich their lives. *Creative Divorce: A New Opportunity for Personal Growth*, a popular book of the seventies, spoke confidently to this point: "Children can survive any family crisis without permanent damage—and grow as human beings in the process. . . ." Moreover, single-parent and stepparent families created a more extensive kinship network than the nuclear family. This network would envelop children in a web of warm and supportive relationships. "Belonging to a stepfamily means there are more people in your life," a children's book published in 1982 notes. "More sisters and brothers, including the step ones. More people you think of as grandparents and aunts and uncles. More cousins. More neighbors and friends. . . . Getting to know and like so many people (and having them like you) is one of the best parts of what being in a stepfamily . . . is all about."

The third assumption was that the new diversity in family structure would make America a better place. Just as the nation has been strengthened by the diversity of its ethnic and racial groups, so it would be strengthened by diverse family forms. The emergence of these brave new families was but the latest chapter in the saga of American pluralism.

Another version of the diversity argument stated that the real problem was not family disruption itself but the stigma still attached to these emergent family forms. This lingering stigma placed children at psychological risk, making them feel ashamed or different; as the ranks of single-parent and stepparent families grew, children would feel normal and good about themselves.

These assumptions continue to be appealing, because they accord with strongly held American beliefs in social progress. Americans see progress in the expansion of individual opportunities for choice, freedom, and self-expression. Moreover, Americans identify progress with growing tolerance of diversity. Over the past half century, the pollster Daniel Yankelovich writes, the United States has steadily grown more open-minded and accepting of groups that were previously perceived as alien, untrustworthy, or unsuitable for public leadership or social esteem. One such group is the burgeoning number of single-parent and stepparent families.

The Education of Sara McLanahan

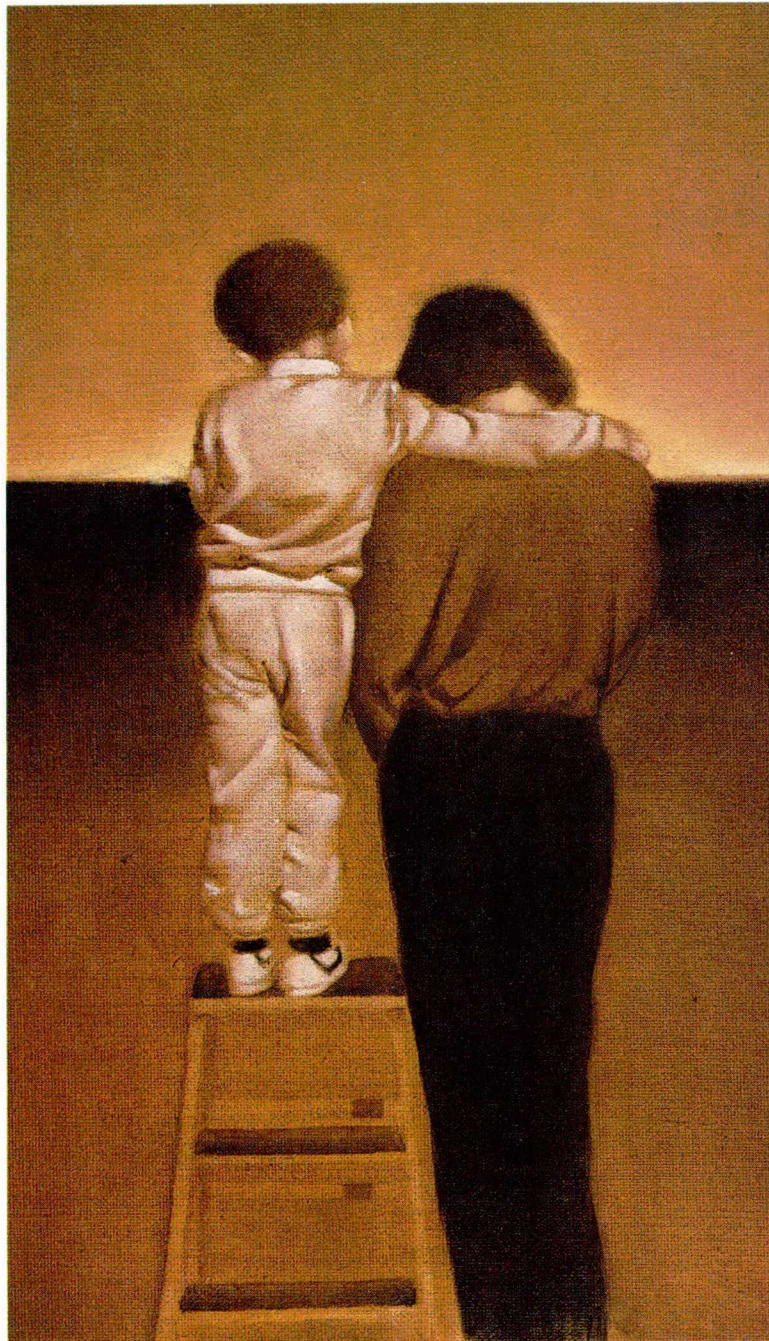
IN 1981 SARA MCLANAHAN, NOW A SOCIOLOGIST AT Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School, read a three-part series by Ken Auletta in *The New Yorker*. Later published as a book titled *The Underclass*, the series presented a vivid portrait of the drug addicts, welfare mothers, and school dropouts who took part

in an education-and-training program in New York City. Many were the children of single mothers, and it was Auletta's clear implication that single-mother families were contributing to the growth of an underclass. McLanahan was taken aback by this notion. "It struck me as strange that he would be viewing single mothers at that level of pathology."

"I'd gone to graduate school in the days when the politically correct argument was that single-parent families were just another alternative family form, and it was fine," McLanahan explains, as she recalls the state of social-scientific thinking in the 1970s. Several empirical studies that were then current supported an optimistic view of family change. (They used tiny samples, however, and did not track the well-being of children over time.)

One, *All Our Kin*, by Carol Stack, was required reading for thousands of university students. It said that single mothers had strengths that had gone undetected and unappreciated by earlier researchers. The single-mother family, it suggested, is an economically resourceful and socially embedded institution. In the late 1970s McLanahan wrote a similar study that looked at a small sample of white single mothers and how they coped. "So I was very much of that tradition."

By the early 1980s, however, nearly two decades had passed since the changes in family life had begun. During the intervening years a fuller body of empirical research had emerged: studies that used large samples, or followed families through time, or did both. Moreover, several of the studies offered a child's-eye view of family disruption. The



National Survey on Children, conducted by the psychologist Nicholas Zill, had set out in 1976 to track a large sample of children aged seven to eleven. It also interviewed the children's parents and teachers. It surveyed its subjects again in 1981 and 1987. By the time of its third round of interviews the eleven-year-olds of 1976 were the twenty-two-year-olds of 1987. The California Children of Divorce Study, directed by Judith Wallerstein, a clinical psychologist, had also been going on for a decade. E. Mavis Hetherington, of the University of Virginia, was conducting a similar study of children from both intact and divorced families. For the first time it was possible to test the optimistic view against a large and longitudinal body of evidence.

It was to this body of evidence that Sara McLanahan turned. When she did, she found little to support the optimistic view of single motherhood. On the contrary. When she published her findings with

Irwin Garfinkel in a 1986 book, *Single Mothers and Their Children*, her portrait of single motherhood proved to be as troubling in its own way as Auletta's.

One of the leading assumptions of the time was that single motherhood was economically viable. Even if single mothers did face economic trials, they wouldn't face them for long, it was argued, because they wouldn't remain single for long: single motherhood would be a brief phase of three to five years, followed by marriage. Single mothers would be economically resilient: if they experienced setbacks, they would recover quickly. It was also said that single mothers would be supported by informal networks of family, friends, neighbors, and other single

mothers. As McLanahan shows in her study, the evidence demolishes all these claims.

For the vast majority of single mothers, the economic spectrum turns out to be narrow, running between precarious and desperate. Half the single mothers in the United States live below the poverty line. (Currently, one out of ten married couples with children is poor.) Many others live on the edge of poverty. Even single mothers who are far from poor are likely to experience persistent economic insecurity. Divorce almost always brings a decline in the standard of living for the mother and children.

Moreover, the poverty experienced by single mothers is no more brief than it is mild. A significant number of all single mothers never marry or remarry. Those who do, do so only after spending roughly six years, on average, as single parents. For black mothers the duration is much longer. Only 33 percent of African-American mothers had remarried within ten years of separation. Consequently, single motherhood is hardly a fleeting event for the mother, and it is likely to occupy a third of the child's childhood. Even the notion that single mothers are knit together in economically supportive networks is not borne out by the evidence. On the contrary, single parenthood forces many women to be on the move, in search of cheaper housing and better jobs. This need-driven restless mobility makes it more difficult for them to sustain supportive ties to family and friends, let alone other single mothers.

Single-mother families are vulnerable not just to poverty but to a particularly debilitating form of poverty: welfare dependency. The dependency takes two forms: First, single mothers, particularly unwed mothers, stay on welfare longer than other welfare recipients. Of those never-married mothers who receive welfare benefits, almost 40 percent remain on the rolls for ten years or longer. Second, welfare dependency tends to be passed on from one generation to the next. McLanahan says, "Evidence on intergenerational poverty indicates that, indeed, offspring from [single-mother] families are far more likely to be poor and to form mother-only families than are offspring who live with two parents most of their pre-adult life." Nor is the intergenerational impact of single motherhood limited to African-Americans, as many people seem to believe. Among white families, daughters of single parents are 53 percent more likely to marry as teenagers, 111 percent more likely to have children as teenagers, 164 percent more likely to have a premarital birth, and 92 percent more likely to dissolve their own marriages. All these intergenerational consequences of single motherhood increase the likelihood of chronic welfare dependency.

McLanahan cites three reasons why single-mother families are so vulnerable economically. For one thing, their earnings are low. Second, unless the mothers are widowed, they don't receive public subsidies large

enough to lift them out of poverty. And finally, they do not get much support from family members—especially the fathers of their children. In 1982 single white mothers received an average of \$1,246 in alimony and child support, black mothers an average of \$322. Such payments accounted for about 10 percent of the income of single white mothers and for about 3.5 percent of the income of single black mothers. These amounts were dramatically smaller than the income of the father in a two-parent family and also smaller than the income from a second earner in a two-parent family. Roughly 60 percent of single white mothers and 80 percent of single black mothers received no support at all.

Until the mid-1980s, when stricter standards were put in place, child-support awards were only about half to two-thirds what the current guidelines require. Accordingly, there is often a big difference in the living standards of divorced fathers and of divorced mothers with children. After divorce the average annual income of mothers and children is \$13,500 for whites and \$9,000 for nonwhites, as compared with \$25,000 for white nonresident fathers and \$13,600 for nonwhite nonresident fathers. Moreover, since child-support awards account for a smaller portion of the income of a high-earning father, the drop in living standards can be especially sharp for mothers who were married to upper-level managers and professionals.

Unwed mothers are unlikely to be awarded any child support at all, partly because the paternity of their children may not have been established. According to one recent study, only 20 percent of unmarried mothers receive child support.

Even if single mothers escape poverty, economic uncertainty remains a condition of life. Divorce brings a reduction in income and standard of living for the vast majority of single mothers. One study, for example, found that income for mothers and children declines on average about 30 percent, while fathers experience a 10 to 15 percent increase in income in the year following a separation. Things get even more difficult when fathers fail to meet their child-support obligations. As a result, many divorced mothers experience a wearing uncertainty about the family budget: whether the check will come in or not; whether new sneakers can be bought this month or not; whether the electric bill will be paid on time or not. Uncertainty about money triggers other kinds of uncertainty. Mothers and children often have to move to cheaper housing after a divorce. One study shows that about 38 percent of divorced mothers and their children move during the first year after a divorce. Even several years later the rate of moves for single mothers is about a third higher than the rate for two-parent families. It is also common for a mother to change her job or increase her working hours or both following a divorce. Even the composition of the household is likely to change, with other adults, such as boyfriends or babysitters, moving in and out.

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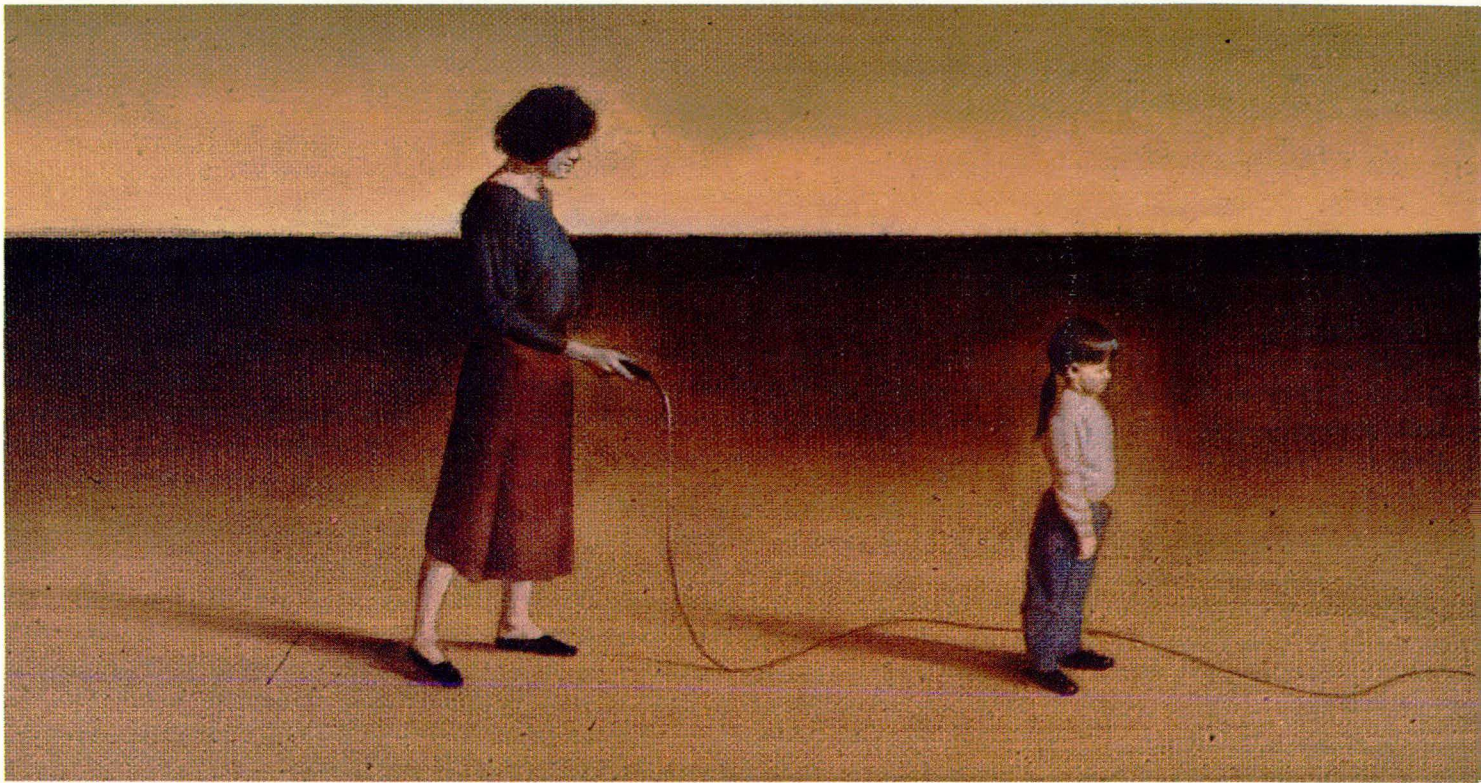
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All this uncertainty can be devastating to children. Anyone who knows children knows that they are deeply conservative creatures. They like things to stay the same. So pronounced is this tendency that certain children have been known to request the same peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich for lunch for years on end. Children are particularly set in their ways when it comes to family, friends, neighborhoods, and schools. Yet when a family breaks up, all these things may change. The novelist Pat Conroy has observed that "each divorce is the death of a small civilization." No one feels this more acutely than children.

Sara McLanahan's investigation and others like it have helped to establish a broad consensus on the economic impact of family disruption on children. Most social scientists now agree that single motherhood is an important and growing cause of poverty, and that children suffer as a result. (They continue to argue, however, about the relationship between family structure and such economic factors as income inequality, the loss of jobs in the inner city, and the growth of low-wage jobs.) By the mid-1980s, however, it was clear that the problem of family disruption was not confined to the urban underclass, nor was its sole impact economic. Divorce and out-of-wedlock childbirth were affecting middle- and upper-class children, and these more privileged children were suffering negative consequences as well. It appeared that the problems associated with family breakup were far deeper and far more widespread than anyone had previously imagined.

The Missing Father

JUDITH WALLERSTEIN IS ONE OF THE PIONEERS IN RESEARCH on the long-term psychological impact of family disruption on children. The California Children of Divorce Study, which she directs, remains the most enduring study of the long-term effects of divorce on children and their parents. Moreover, it represents the best-known effort to look at the impact of divorce on middle-class children. The California children entered the study without pathological family histories. Before divorce they lived in stable, protected homes. And although some of the children did experience economic insecurity as the result of divorce, they were generally free from the most severe forms of poverty associated with family breakup. Thus the study and the resulting book (which Wallerstein wrote with Sandra Blakeslee), *Second Chances: Men, Women, and Children a Decade After Divorce* (1989), provide new insight into the consequences of divorce which are not associated with extreme forms of economic or emotional deprivation.

When, in 1971, Wallerstein and her colleagues set out to conduct clinical interviews with 131 children from the San Francisco area, they thought they were embarking on a short-term study. Most experts believed that divorce was like a bad cold. There was a phase of acute discomfort, and then a short recovery phase. According to the conventional wisdom, kids would be back on their feet in no time at all. Yet when Wallerstein met these children for a second interview more than a year later, she was



amazed to discover that there had been no miraculous recovery. In fact, the children seemed to be doing worse.

The news that children did not “get over” divorce was not particularly welcome at the time. Wallerstein recalls, “We got angry letters from therapists, parents, and lawyers saying we were undoubtedly wrong. They said children are really much better off being released from an unhappy marriage. Divorce, they said, is a liberating experience.” One of the main results of the California study was to overturn this optimistic view. In Wallerstein’s cautionary words, “Divorce is deceptive. Legally it is a single event, but psychologically it is a chain—sometimes a never-ending chain—of events, relocations, and radically shifting relationships strung through time, a process that forever changes the lives of the people involved.”

Five years after divorce more than a third of the children experienced moderate or severe depression. At ten years a significant number of the now young men and women appeared to be troubled, drifting, and under-achieving. At fifteen years many of the thirtyish adults were struggling to establish strong love relationships of their own. In short, far from recovering from their parents’ divorce, a significant percentage of these grownups were still suffering from its effects. In fact, according to Wallerstein, the long-term effects of divorce emerge at a time when young adults are trying to make their own decisions about love, marriage, and family. Not all children in the study suffered negative consequences. But Wallerstein’s research presents a sobering picture of divorce.

“The child of divorce faces many additional psychological burdens in addition to the normative tasks of growing up,” she says.

Divorce not only makes it more difficult for young adults to establish new relationships. It also weakens the oldest primary relationship: that between parent and child. According to Wallerstein, “Parent-child relationships are permanently altered by divorce in ways that our society has not anticipated.” Not only do children experience a loss of parental attention at the onset of divorce, but they soon find that at every stage of their development their parents are not available in the same way they once were. “In a reasonably happy intact family,” Wallerstein observes, “the child gravitates first to one parent and then to the other, using skills and attributes from each in climbing the developmental ladder.” In a divorced family, children find it “harder to find the needed parent at needed times.” This may help explain why very young children suffer the most as the result of family disruption. Their opportunities to engage in this kind of ongoing process are the most truncated and compromised.

The father-child bond is severely, often irreparably, damaged in disrupted families. In a situation without historical precedent, an astonishing and disheartening number of American fathers are failing to provide financial support to their children. Often, more than the father’s support check is missing. Increasingly, children are bereft of any contact with their fathers. According to the National Survey of Children, in disrupted families only one child in six, on average, saw his or her father as often as once a week in the past year. Close to half did not see their father at all in the past year. As time goes on, contact becomes even more infrequent. Ten years after a marriage breaks up, more than two thirds of children report not having seen their father for a year. Not surprisingly, when asked to name the “adults you look up to and admire,” only 20 percent of children in single-parent families named their father, as compared with 52 percent of children in two-parent families. A favorite complaint among Baby Boom Americans is that their fathers were emotionally remote guys who worked hard, came home at night to eat supper, and didn’t have much to say to or do with the kids. But the current generation has a far worse father problem: many of their fathers are vanishing entirely.

Even for fathers who maintain regular contact, the pattern of father-child relationships changes. The sociologists Andrew Cherlin and Frank Furstenberg, who have studied broken families, write that the fathers behave more like other relatives than like parents. Rather than helping with homework or carrying out a project with their children, nonresidential fathers are likely to take the kids shopping, to the movies, or out to dinner. Instead of providing steady advice and guidance, divorced fathers become “treat” dads.

Apparently—and paradoxically—it is the visiting relationship itself, rather than the frequency of visits, that is the real source of the problem. According to Wallerstein, the few children in the California study who reported visiting with their fathers once or twice a week over a ten-year period still felt rejected. The need to schedule a special time to be with the child, the repeated leave-takings, and the lack of connection to the child's regular, daily schedule leaves many fathers adrift, frustrated, and confused. Wallerstein calls the visiting father a parent without portfolio.

The deterioration in father-child bonds is most severe among children who experience divorce at an early age, according to a recent study. Nearly three quarters of the respondents, now young men and women, report having poor relationships with their fathers. Close to half have received psychological help, nearly a third have dropped out of high school, and about a quarter report having experienced high levels of problem behavior or emotional distress by the time they became young adults.

therapeutic community. Young adults from disrupted families are nearly twice as likely as those from intact families to receive psychological help.

Some social scientists have criticized Judith Wallerstein's research because her study is based on a small clinical sample and does not include a control group of children from intact families. However, other studies generally support and strengthen her findings. Nicholas Zill has found similar long-term effects on children of divorce, reporting that "effects of marital discord and family disruption are visible twelve to twenty-two years later in poor relationships with parents, high levels of problem behavior, and an increased likelihood of dropping out of high school and receiving psychological help." Moreover, Zill's research also found signs of distress in young women who seemed relatively well adjusted in middle childhood and adolescence. Girls in single-parent families are also at much greater risk for precocious sexuality, teenage marriage, teenage pregnancy, nonmarital birth, and divorce than are girls in two-parent families.

Zill's research shows that family disruption strongly affects school achievement as well. Children in disrupted families are nearly twice as likely as those in intact families to drop out of high school; among children who do drop out, those from disrupted families are less likely eventually to earn a diploma or a GED. Boys are at greater risk for dropping out than girls, and are also more likely to exhibit aggressive, acting-out behaviors.

Other research confirms these findings. According to a study by the National Association of Elementary School Principals, 33 percent of two-parent elementary school students are ranked as high achievers, as compared with 17 percent of single-parent students. The children in single-parent families are also more likely to be truant or late or to have disciplinary action taken against them. Even after controlling for race, income, and religion, scholars find significant differences in educational attainment between children who grow up in intact families and children who do not. In his 1992 study *America's Smallest School: The Family*, Paul Barton shows that the proportion of two-parent families varies widely from state to state and is related to variations in academic achievement. North Dakota, for example, scores highest on the math-proficiency test and second highest on the two-parent-family scale. The District of Columbia is second lowest on the math test and lowest in the nation on the two-parent-family scale.

Zill notes that "while coming from a disrupted family

Survey after survey shows that Americans are less inclined than they were a generation ago to value sexual fidelity, lifelong marriage, and parenthood as worthwhile personal goals ■

Long-Term Effects

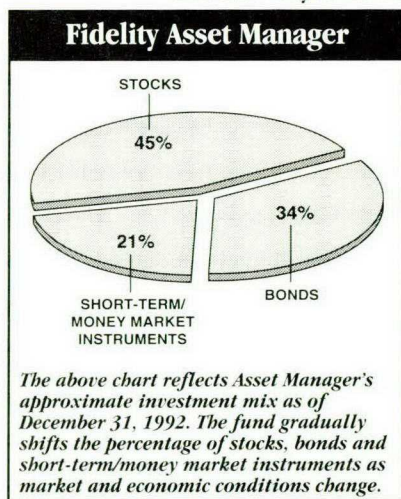
SINCE MOST CHILDREN LIVE WITH THEIR MOTHERS after divorce, one might expect that the mother-child bond would remain unaltered and might even be strengthened. Yet research shows that the mother-child bond is also weakened as the result of divorce. Only half of the children who were close to their mothers before a divorce remained equally close after the divorce. Boys, particularly, had difficulties with their mothers. Moreover, mother-child relationships deteriorated over time. Whereas teenagers in disrupted families were no more likely than teenagers in intact families to report poor relationships with their mothers, 30 percent of young adults from disrupted families have poor relationships with their mothers, as compared with 16 percent of young adults from intact families. Mother-daughter relationships often deteriorate as the daughter reaches young adulthood. The only group in society that derives any benefit from these weakened parent-child ties is the

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significantly increases a young adult's risks of experiencing social, emotional or academic difficulties, it does not foreordain such difficulties. The majority of young people from disrupted families have successfully completed high school, do *not* currently display high levels of emotional distress or problem behavior, and enjoy reasonable relationships with their mothers." Nevertheless, a majority of these young adults do show maladjustment in their relationships with their fathers.

These findings underscore the importance of both a mother and a father in fostering the emotional well-being of children. Obviously, not all children in two-parent families are free from emotional turmoil, but few are burdened with the troubles that accompany family breakup. Moreover, as the sociologist Amitai Etzioni explains in a new book, *The Spirit of Community*, two parents in an intact family make up what might be called a mutually supportive education coalition. When both parents are present, they can play different, even contradictory, roles. One parent may goad the child to achieve,

while the other may encourage the child to take time out to daydream or toss a football around. One may emphasize taking intellectual risks, while the other may insist on following the teacher's guidelines. At the same time, the parents regularly exchange information about the child's school problems and achievements, and have a sense of the overall educational mission. However, Etzioni writes,

The sequence of divorce followed by a succession of boy or girlfriends, a second marriage, and frequently another divorce and another turnover of partners often means a repeatedly disrupted educational coalition. Each change in participants involves a change in the educational agenda for the child. Each new partner cannot be expected to pick up the previous one's educational post and program. . . . As a result, changes in parenting partners mean, at best, a deep disruption in a child's education, though of course several disruptions cut deeper into the effectiveness of the educational coalition than just one.

The Family and Public Policy

A NUMBER OF NEW PROPOSALS ADDRESS the problem of family disruption. Generally speaking, they have a single objective: to ensure that children have the support and commitment of both biological parents.

- The Family Support Act of 1988, which represents the culmination of a fifteen-year trend toward stricter child-support enforcement, has enabled states to impose legal child-support obligations on a greater number of absent fathers and to increase the percentage of absent fathers who actually meet their obligations.

For example, the Family Support Act contains the strongest legislation to date on paternal identification, the essential first step toward making a legally binding child-support award. In the cases of about three out of every four children born to unwed mothers, fathers have not been legally identified. Similarly, in the cases of

the great majority of mothers receiving AFDC benefits, the father is never identified or known to public agencies or officials. In the past many people reasoned that it was better to ignore the father—he was probably unable to support the child anyway, and might cause more trouble if he were around than if he remained absent. The 1988 legislation requires states to get the Social Security numbers of both parents when a birth certificate is issued. If paternity is in doubt or contested, the federal government will pay for 90 percent of the cost of genetic testing. Irwin Garfinkel, who has written a study of child support, estimates that this approach will establish paternity for half of the nation's nonmarital births by the turn of the century.

- The most comprehensive and most controversial proposal is one for a child-support-assurance program—a universal, non-means-tested entitlement plan akin to Survivors Insurance for widows. Child-support assurance would guarantee a standard level of child support—some propose \$2,500 a year for the first child in a family, and \$1,000, \$1,000, and \$500 for the second, third, and fourth children—to all single parents whose children live with them. The federal government would

serve as a collection agency for the support payments, withholding income from the nonresidential parent and mailing a monthly check to the parent with the children. In cases where the parent failed to meet the full support obligation, taxpayers would make up the difference. According to its advocates, the child-support-assurance plan would reduce the welfare burden in three ways: it would prevent some mothers from going on welfare, since they would be assured of regular support; it would reduce AFDC benefits dollar for dollar as support was collected from the father; and it would provide various incentives for mothers on welfare to get off it. For example, unlike a mother receiving AFDC, a working mother would be able to keep the full child-support benefit in addition to her working income. Consequently, child-support-assurance benefits would boost a family's income only if the mother went out and got a job. Moreover, this plan would create incentives for establishing legal paternity, since doing so would be necessary to qualify for benefits. And, the plan's advocates say, it would provide a nonstigmatizing, regularized system of guaranteed child support for all single parents. However, critics say that a plan of guaran-

The Bad News About Stepparents

PERHAPS THE MOST STRIKING, AND POTENTIALLY disturbing, new research has to do with children in stepparent families. Until quite recently the optimistic assumption was that children saw their lives improve when they became part of a stepfamily. When Nicholas Zill and his colleagues began to study the effects of remarriage on children, their working hypothesis was that stepparent families would make up for the shortcomings of the single-parent family. Clearly, most children are better off economically when they are able to share in the income of two adults. When a second adult joins the household, there may be a reduction in the time and work pressures on the single parent.

The research overturns this optimistic assumption, however. In general the evidence suggests that remarriage neither reproduces nor restores the intact family structure, even when it brings more income and a second adult into the household. Quite the contrary. Indeed,

children living with stepparents appear to be even more disadvantaged than children living in a stable single-parent family. Other difficulties seem to offset the advantages of extra income and an extra pair of hands. However much our modern sympathies reject the fairy-tale portrait of stepparents, the latest research confirms that the old stories are anthropologically quite accurate. Stepfamilies disrupt established loyalties, create new uncertainties, provoke deep anxieties, and sometimes threaten a child's physical safety as well as emotional security.

Parents and children have dramatically different interests in and expectations for a new marriage. For a single parent, remarriage brings new commitments, the hope of enduring love and happiness, and relief from stress and loneliness. For a child, the same event often provokes confused feelings of sadness, anger, and rejection. Nearly half the children in Wallerstein's study said they felt left out in their stepfamilies. The National Commission on Children, a bipartisan group headed by Senator John D. Rockefeller, of West Virginia, reported that children

teed child support would do nothing to reduce nonmarital births or to reinforce the principle of ultimate parental responsibility.

- In the meantime, several states have revived stigma as part of a larger effort to improve child-support collection. Massachusetts, a state with some experience in the public shaming of criminals, has replaced stocks on the common with posters of "deadbeat dads" on the six o'clock news.

- Changes in divorce law, too, can help children. Mary Ann Glendon, a professor at Harvard Law School, has proposed a "children first" principle in divorce proceedings. Under this rule, judges in litigated divorce cases would determine the best possible package of benefits, income, and services for the children. Only then would the judge turn to other issues, such as the division of remaining marital assets.

- Policy experts offer several proposals to reduce the likelihood of divorce for parents in low-conflict situations. One is to introduce a two-tier system of divorce law. Marriages between adults without minor children would be easy to dissolve, but marriages between adults with children would not. Another idea is to reintroduce some measure of fault in divorce, or to allow no-fault

divorce but establish marital fault in awarding alimony or dividing marital property.

- Economic forces significantly affect marriage-related behavior. With the loss of high-paying jobs for high school graduates and the disappearance of good jobs from many inner-city neighborhoods, the ability of young men to provide for a family has been declining. Improving job opportunities for young men would enhance their ability and presumably their willingness to form lasting marriages. Expanding the earned-income tax credit would also strengthen many families economically. According to one recent estimate, an expanded tax credit would lift a million full-time working families out of poverty. Still other proposals include raising the personal exemption for young children in lower- and middle-income families and increasing the value of the marriage deduction in the tax code by allowing married couples to split their incomes.

- Changing the welfare system to eliminate its disincentives to marry would help reduce out-of-wedlock motherhood, many experts suggest. New Jersey, for example, has proposed a plan to encourage marriage by continuing AFDC benefits to children if

their natural parents marry and live together in the home, as long as their income does not exceed state eligibility standards. Another idea, not yet tried in any state, is to provide a large one-time bonus to any woman who marries, leaves the AFDC rolls, and stays off for an extended period. Many people, including President Clinton, have called for the imposition of strict two-year time limits for AFDC.

- At least as important as changes in the law and public policy are efforts to change the cultural climate, particularly the media's messages about divorce and nonmarital childbirth. Parents consistently cite television, with its increasing use of sex, violence, or the two combined, as one of their strongest adversaries. One way to improve television programming would be to fully implement the provisions of the 1990 Children's Television Act, including the establishment of the National Endowment for Children's Educational Television. It would also be valuable to enlist the support of leaders in the entertainment industry—particularly sports and movie stars—in conveying to children that making babies out of wedlock is as stupid as doing drugs or dropping out of school. This might, of course, await more exemplary behavior by some of those stars.

from stepfamilies were more likely to say they often felt lonely or blue than children from either single-parent or intact families. Children in stepfamilies were the most likely to report that they wanted more time with their mothers. When mothers remarry, daughters tend to have a harder time adjusting than sons. Evidently, boys often respond positively to a male presence in the household, while girls who have established close ties to their mother in a single-parent family often see the stepfather as a rival and an intruder. According to one study, boys in remarried families are less likely to drop out of school than boys in single-parent families, while the opposite is true for girls.

A large percentage of children do not even consider stepparents to be part of their families, according to the National Survey on Children. The NSC asked children, "When you think of your family, who do you include?" Only 10 percent of the children failed to mention a biological parent, but a third left out a stepparent. Even children who rarely saw their noncustodial parents almost always named them as family members. The weak sense of attachment is mutual. When parents were asked the same question, only one percent failed to mention a biological child, while 15 percent left out a stepchild. In the same study stepparents with both natural children and stepchildren said that it was harder for them to love their stepchildren than their biological children and that their children would have been better off if they had grown up with two biological parents.

One of the most severe risks associated with stepparent-child ties is the risk of sexual abuse. As Judith Wallerstein explains, "The presence of a stepfather can raise the difficult issue of a thinner incest barrier." The incest taboo is strongly reinforced, Wallerstein says, by knowledge of paternity and by the experience of caring for a child since birth. A stepfather enters the family without either credential and plays a sexual role as the mother's husband. As a result, stepfathers can pose a sexual risk to the children, especially to daughters. According to a study by the Canadian researchers Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, preschool children in stepfamilies are forty times as likely as children in intact families to suffer physical or sexual abuse. (Most of the sexual abuse was committed by a third party, such as a neighbor, a stepfather's male friend, or another nonrelative.) Stepfathers discriminate in their abuse: they are far more likely to assault nonbiological children than their own natural children.

Sexual abuse represents the most extreme threat to children's well-being. Stepfamilies also seem less likely to make the kind of ordinary investments in the children that other families do. Although it is true that the stepfamily household has a higher income than the single-parent household, it does not follow that the additional income is reliably available to the children. To begin with, children's claim on stepparents' resources is shaky. Stepparents are not legally required to support stepchild-

dren, so their financial support of these children is entirely voluntary. Moreover, since stepfamilies are far more likely to break up than intact families, particularly in the first five years, there is always the risk—far greater than the risk of unemployment in an intact family—that the second income will vanish with another divorce. The financial commitment to a child's education appears weaker in stepparent families, perhaps because the stepparent believes that the responsibility for educating the child rests with the biological parent.

Similarly, studies suggest that even though they may have the time, the parents in stepfamilies do not invest as much of it in their children as the parents in intact families or even single parents do. A 1991 survey by the National Commission on Children showed that the parents in stepfamilies were less likely to be involved in a child's school life, including involvement in extracurricular activities, than either intact-family parents or single parents. They were the least likely to report being involved in such time-consuming activities as coaching a child's team, accompanying class trips, or helping with school projects. According to McLanahan's research, children in stepparent families report lower educational aspirations on the part of their parents and lower levels of parental involvement with schoolwork. In short, it appears that family income and the number of adults in the household are not the only factors affecting children's well-being.

Diminishing Investments

THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS FOR THIS DIMINISHED interest and investment. In the law, as in the children's eyes, stepparents are shadowy figures. According to the legal scholar David Chambers, family law has pretty much ignored stepparents. Chambers writes, "In the substantial majority of states, stepparents, even when they live with a child, have no legal obligation to contribute to the child's support; nor does a stepparent's presence in the home alter the support obligations of a noncustodial parent. The stepparent also has . . . no authority to approve emergency medical treatment or even to sign a permission slip. . . ." When a marriage breaks up, the stepparent has no continuing obligation to provide for a stepchild, no matter how long or how much he or she has been contributing to the support of the child. In short, Chambers says, stepparent relationships are based wholly on consent, subject to the inclinations of the adult and the child. The only way a stepparent can acquire the legal status of a parent is through adoption. Some researchers also point to the cultural ambiguity of the stepparent's role as a source of diminished interest, while others insist that it is the absence of a blood tie that weakens the bond between stepparent and child.

Whatever its causes, the diminished investment in children in both single-parent and stepparent families has

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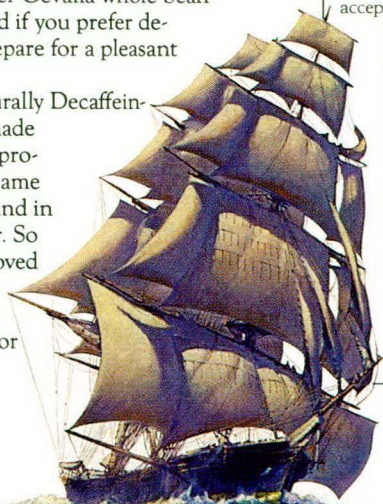
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a significant impact on their life chances. Take parental help with college costs. The parents in intact families are far more likely to contribute to children's college costs than are those in disrupted families. Moreover, they are usually able to arrive at a shared understanding of which children will go to college, where they will go, how much the parents will contribute, and how much the children will contribute. But when families break up, these informal understandings can vanish. The issue of college tuition remains one of the most contested areas of parental support, especially for higher-income parents.

The law does not step in even when familial understandings break down. In the 1980s many states lowered the age covered by child-support agreements from twenty-one to eighteen, thus eliminating college as a cost associated with support for a minor child. Consequently, the question of college tuition is typically not addressed in child-custody agreements. Even in states where the courts do require parents to contribute to college costs, the requirement may be in jeopardy. In a recent decision

man. Terry, twenty-one, who had been tested as a gifted student, was doing blue-collar work irregularly.

Sixty-seven percent of the college-age students from disrupted families attended college, as compared with 85 percent of other students who attended the same high schools. Of those attending college, several had fathers who were financially capable of contributing to college costs but did not.

The withdrawal of support for college suggests that other customary forms of parental help-giving, too, may decline as the result of family breakup. For example, nearly a quarter of first-home purchases since 1980 have involved help from relatives, usually parents. The median amount of help is \$5,000. It is hard to imagine that parents who refuse to contribute to college costs will offer help in buying first homes, or help in buying cars or health insurance for young adult family members. And although it is too soon to tell, family disruption may affect the generational transmission of wealth. Baby Boomers will inherit their parents' estates, some substantial, accumulated over a lifetime

by parents who lived and saved together. To be sure, the postwar generation benefited from an expanding economy and a rising standard of living, but its ability to accumulate wealth also owed something to family stability. The lifetime assets, like the marriage itself, remained intact. It is unlikely that the children of disrupted families will be in so favorable a position.

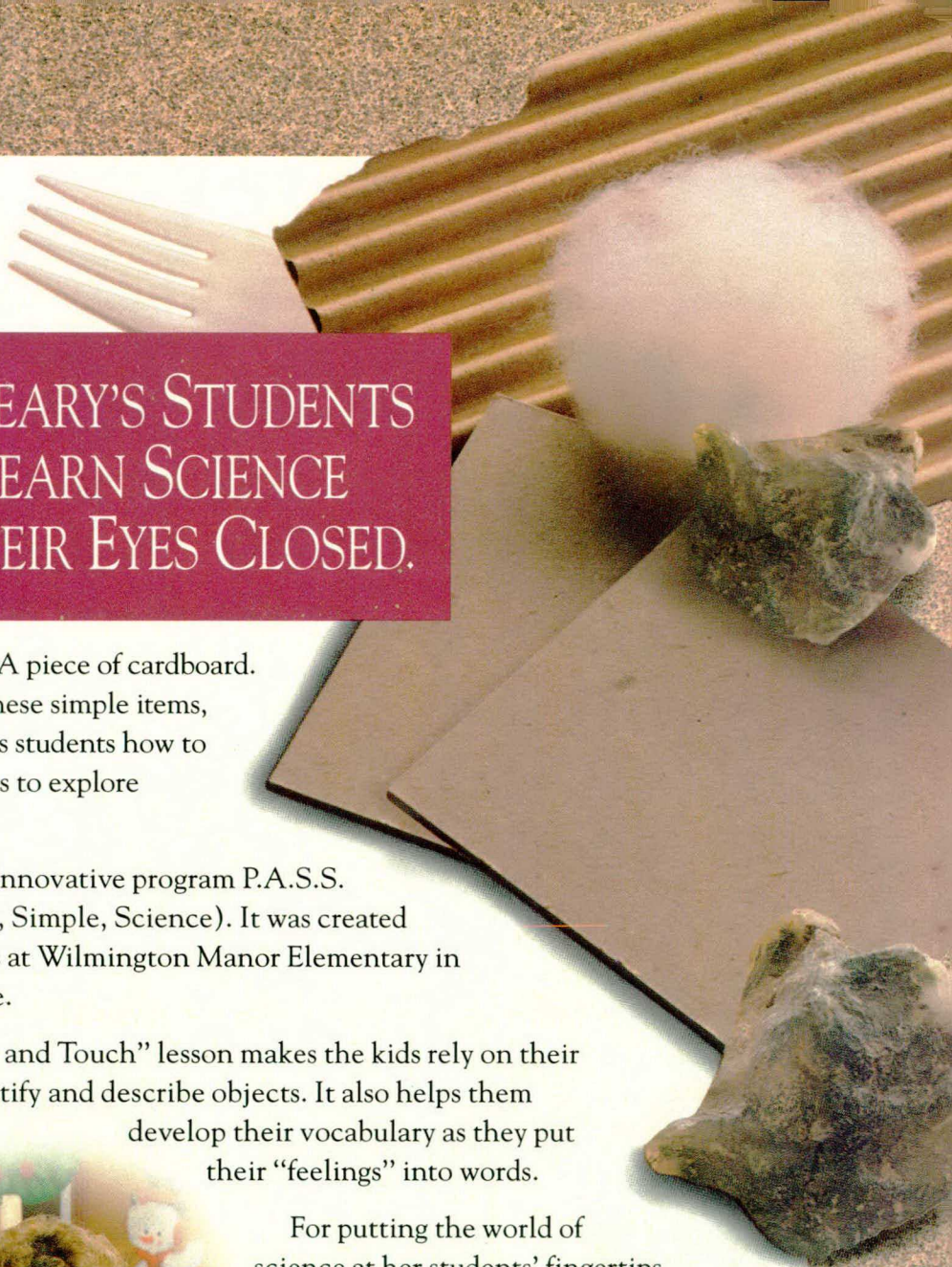
Moreover, children from disrupted families may be less likely to help their aging parents. The sociologist Alice Rossi, who has studied intergenerational patterns of help-giving, says that adult obligation has its roots in early-childhood experience. Children who grow up in intact families experience higher levels of obligation to kin than children from broken families. Children's sense of obligation to a nonresidential father is particularly weak. Among adults with both parents living, those separated from their father during childhood are less likely than others to see the father regularly. Half of them see their father more than once a year, as compared with nine out of ten of those whose parents are still married. Apparently a kind of bitter justice is at work here. Fathers who do not support or see their young children may not be able to count on their adult children's support when they are old and need money, love, and attention.

In short, as Andrew Cherlin and Frank Furstenburg put it, "Through divorce and remarriage, individuals are related to more and more people, to each of whom they

Even if single mothers escape poverty, economic uncertainty remains a defining condition of life. And uncertainty about money triggers other kinds of uncertainty ■

in Pennsylvania the court overturned an earlier decision ordering divorced parents to contribute to college tuition. This decision is likely to inspire challenges in other states where courts have required parents to pay for college. Increasingly, help in paying for college is entirely voluntary.

Judith Wallerstein has been analyzing the educational decisions of the college-age men and women in her study. She reports that "a full 42 percent of these men and women from middle class families appeared to have ended their educations without attempting college or had left college before achieving a degree at either the two-year or the four-year level." A significant percentage of these young people have the ability to attend college. Typical of this group are Nick and Terry, sons of a college professor. They had been close to their father before the divorce, but their father remarried soon after the divorce and saw his sons only occasionally, even though he lived nearby. At age nineteen Nick had completed a few junior-college courses and was earning a living as a sales-



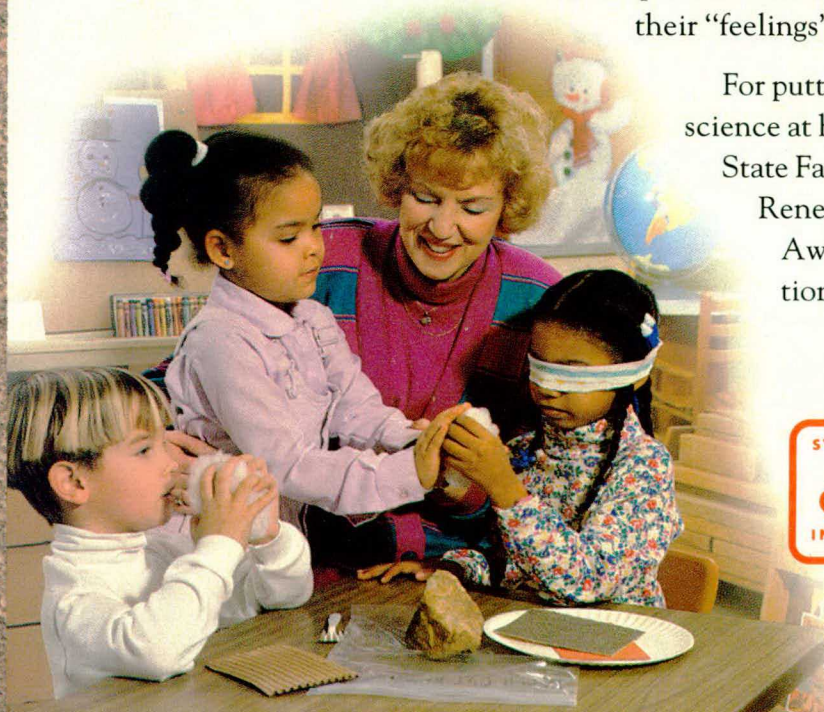
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owe less and less." Moreover, as Nicholas Zill argues, weaker parent-child attachments leave many children more strongly exposed to influences outside the family, such as peers, boyfriends or girlfriends, and the media. Although these outside forces can sometimes be helpful, common sense and research opinion argue against putting too much faith in peer groups or the media as surrogates for Mom and Dad.

Poverty, Crime, Education

FAMILY DISRUPTION WOULD BE A SERIOUS PROBLEM even if it affected only individual children and families. But its impact is far broader. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to characterize it as a central cause of many of our most vexing social problems. Consider three problems that most Americans believe rank among the nation's pressing concerns: poverty, crime, and declining school performance.

More than half of the increase in child poverty in the 1980s is attributable to changes in family structure, according to David Eggebeen and Daniel Lichter, of Pennsylvania State University. In fact, if family structure in the United States had remained relatively constant since 1960, the rate of child poverty would be a third lower than it is today. This does not bode well for the future. With more than half of today's children likely to live in single-parent families, poverty and associated welfare costs threaten to become even heavier burdens on the nation.

Crime in American cities has increased dramatically and grown more violent over recent decades. Much of this can be attributed to the rise in disrupted families. Nationally, more than 70 percent of all juveniles in state reform institutions come from fatherless homes. A number of scholarly studies find that even after the groups of subjects are controlled for income, boys from single-mother homes are significantly more likely than others to commit crimes and to wind up in the juvenile justice, court, and penitentiary systems. One such study summarizes the relationship between crime and one-parent families in this way: "The relationship is so strong that controlling for family configuration erases the relationship between race and crime and between low income and crime. This conclusion shows up time and again in the literature." The nation's mayors, as well as police officers, social workers, probation officers, and court officials, consistently point to family breakup as the most important source of rising rates of crime.

Terrible as poverty and crime are, they tend to be concentrated in inner cities and isolated from the everyday experience of many Americans. The same cannot be said of the problem of declining school performance. Nowhere has the impact of family breakup been more profound or widespread than in the nation's public schools. There is a strong consensus that the schools are failing in their historic mission to prepare every Ameri-

can child to be a good worker and a good citizen. And nearly everyone agrees that the schools must undergo dramatic reform in order to reach that goal. In pursuit of that goal, moreover, we have suffered no shortage of bright ideas or pilot projects or bold experiments in school reform. But there is little evidence that measures such as curricular reform, school-based management, and school choice will address, let alone solve, the biggest problem schools face: the rising number of children who come from disrupted families.

The great educational tragedy of our time is that many American children are failing in school not because they are intellectually or physically impaired but because they are emotionally incapacitated. In schools across the nation principals report a dramatic rise in the aggressive, acting-out behavior characteristic of children, especially boys, who are living in single-parent families. The discipline problems in today's suburban schools—assaults on teachers, unprovoked attacks on other students, screaming outbursts in class—outstrip the problems that were evident in the toughest city schools a generation ago. Moreover, teachers find many children emotionally distracted, so upset and preoccupied by the explosive drama of their own family lives that they are unable to concentrate on such mundane matters as multiplication tables.

In response, many schools have turned to therapeutic remediation. A growing proportion of many school budgets is devoted to counseling and other psychological services. The curriculum is becoming more therapeutic: children are taking courses in self-esteem, conflict resolution, and aggression management. Parental advisory groups are conscientiously debating alternative approaches to traditional school discipline, ranging from teacher training in mediation to the introduction of metal detectors and security guards in the schools. Schools are increasingly becoming emergency rooms of the emotions, devoted not only to developing minds but also to repairing hearts. As a result, the mission of the school, along with the culture of the classroom, is slowly changing. What we are seeing, largely as a result of the new burdens of family disruption, is the psychologization of American education.

Taken together, the research presents a powerful challenge to the prevailing view of family change as social progress. Not a single one of the assumptions underlying that view can be sustained against the empirical evidence. Single-parent families are not able to do well economically on a mother's income. In fact, most teeter on the economic brink, and many fall into poverty and welfare dependency. Growing up in a disrupted family does not enrich a child's life or expand the number of adults committed to the child's well-being. In fact, disrupted families threaten the psychological well-being of children and diminish the investment of adult time and money in them. Family diversity in the form of increasing numbers of single-parent and stepparent families

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does not strengthen the social fabric. It dramatically weakens and undermines society, placing new burdens on schools, courts, prisons, and the welfare system. These new families are not an improvement on the nuclear family, nor are they even just as good, whether you look at outcomes for children or outcomes for society as a whole. In short, far from representing social progress, family change represents a stunning example of social regress.

The Two-Parent Advantage

ALL THIS EVIDENCE GIVES RISE TO AN OBVIOUS CONCLUSION: growing up in an intact two-parent family is an important source of advantage for American children. Though far from perfect as a social institution, the intact family offers children greater security and better outcomes than its fast-growing alternatives: single-parent and stepparent families. Not only does the intact family protect the child from

ciated with family disruption. Others, including Judith Wallerstein, caution against treating children in divorced families and children in intact families as separate populations, because doing so tends to exaggerate the differences between the two groups. "We have to take this family by family," Wallerstein says.

Some of the caution among researchers can also be attributed to ideological pressures. Privately, social scientists worry that their research may serve ideological causes that they themselves do not support, or that their work may be misinterpreted as an attempt to "tell people what to do." Some are fearful that they will be attacked by feminist colleagues, or, more generally, that their comments will be regarded as an effort to turn back the clock to the 1950s—a goal that has almost no constituency in the academy. Even more fundamental, it has become risky for anyone—scholar, politician, religious leader—to make normative statements today. This reflects not only the persistent drive toward "value neutrality" in the professions but also a deep confusion about the purposes of

public discourse. The dominant view appears to be that social criticism, like criticism of individuals, is psychologically damaging. The worst thing you can do is to make people feel guilty or bad about themselves.

When one sets aside these constraints, however, the case against the two-parent family is remarkably weak. It is true that disaggregating data can make family structure less significant as a factor, just as dis-

The debate about family structure is not simply about the social-scientific evidence, although that is important. It is also a debate over deeply held and often conflicting values ■

poverty and economic insecurity; it also provides greater noneconomic investments of parental time, attention, and emotional support over the entire life course. This does not mean that all two-parent families are better for children than all single-parent families. But in the face of the evidence it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain the proposition that all family structures produce equally good outcomes for children.

Curiously, many in the research community are hesitant to say that two-parent families generally promote better outcomes for children than single-parent families. Some argue that we need finer measures of the extent of the family-structure effect. As one scholar has noted, it is possible, by disaggregating the data in certain ways, to make family structure "go away" as an independent variable. Other researchers point to studies that show that children suffer psychological effects as a result of family conflict preceding family breakup. Consequently, they reason, it is the conflict rather than the structure of the family that is responsible for many of the problems asso-

aggregating Hurricane Andrew into wind, rain, and tides can make it disappear as a meteorological phenomenon. Nonetheless, research opinion as well as common sense suggests that the effects of changes in family structure are great enough to cause concern. Nicholas Zill argues that many of the risk factors for children are doubled or more than doubled as the result of family disruption. "In epidemiological terms," he writes, "the doubling of a hazard is a substantial increase. . . . the increase in risk that dietary cholesterol poses for cardiovascular disease, for example, is far less than double, yet millions of Americans have altered their diets because of the perceived hazard."

The argument that family conflict, rather than the breakup of parents, is the cause of children's psychological distress is persuasive on its face. Children who grow up in high-conflict families, whether the families stay together or eventually split up, are undoubtedly at great psychological risk. And surely no one would dispute that there must be societal measures available, including divorce, to remove children from families where they are in

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danger. Yet only a minority of divorces grow out of pathological situations; much more common are divorces in families unscarred by physical assault. Moreover, an equally compelling hypothesis is that family breakup generates its own conflict. Certainly, many families exhibit more conflictual and even violent behavior as a consequence of divorce than they did before divorce.

Finally, it is important to note that clinical insights are different from sociological findings. Clinicians work with individual families, who cannot and should not be defined by statistical aggregates. Appropriate to a clinical approach, moreover, is a focus on the internal dynamics of family functioning and on the immense variability in human behavior. Nevertheless, there is enough empirical evidence to justify sociological statements about the causes of declining child well-being and to demonstrate that despite the plasticity of human response, there are some useful rules of thumb to guide our thinking about and policies affecting the family.

For example, Sara McLanahan says, three structural constants are commonly associated with intact families, even intact families who would not win any "Family of the Year" awards. The first is economic. In intact families, children share in the income of two adults. Indeed, as a number of analysts have pointed out, the two-parent family is becoming more rather than less necessary, because more and more families need two incomes to sustain a middle-class standard of living.

McLanahan believes that most intact families also provide a stable authority structure. Family breakup commonly upsets the established boundaries of authority in a family. Children are often required to make decisions or accept responsibilities once considered the province of parents. Moreover, children, even very young children, are often expected to behave like mature adults, so that the grown-ups in the family can be free to deal with the emotional fallout of the failed relationship. In some instances family disruption creates a complete vacuum in authority; everyone invents his or her own rules. With lines of authority disrupted or absent, children find it much more difficult to engage in the normal kinds of testing behavior, the trial and error, the failing and succeeding, that define the developmental pathway toward character and competence. McLanahan says, "Children need to be the ones to challenge the rules. The parents need to set the boundaries and let the kids push the boundaries. The children shouldn't have to walk the straight and narrow at all times."

Finally, McLanahan holds that children in intact families benefit from stability in what she neutrally terms "household personnel." Family disruption frequently brings new adults into the family, including stepparents, live-in boyfriends or girlfriends, and casual sexual partners. Like stepfathers, boyfriends can present a real threat to children's, particularly to daughters', security and well-being. But physical or sexual abuse represents

only the most extreme such threat. Even the very best of boyfriends can disrupt and undermine a child's sense of peace and security, McLanahan says. "It's not as though you're going from an unhappy marriage to peacefulness. There can be a constant changing until the mother finds a suitable partner."

McLanahan's argument helps explain why children of widows tend to do better than children of divorced or unmarried mothers. Widows differ from other single mothers in all three respects. They are economically more secure, because they receive more public assistance through Survivors Insurance, and possibly private insurance or other kinds of support from family members. Thus widows are less likely to leave the neighborhood in search of a new or better job and a cheaper house or apartment. Moreover, the death of a father is not likely to disrupt the authority structure radically. When a father dies, he is no longer physically present, but his death does not dethrone him as an authority figure in the child's life. On the contrary, his authority may be magnified through death. The mother can draw on the powerful memory of the departed father as a way of intensifying her parental authority: "Your father would have wanted it this way." Finally, since widows tend to be older than divorced mothers, their love life may be less distracting.

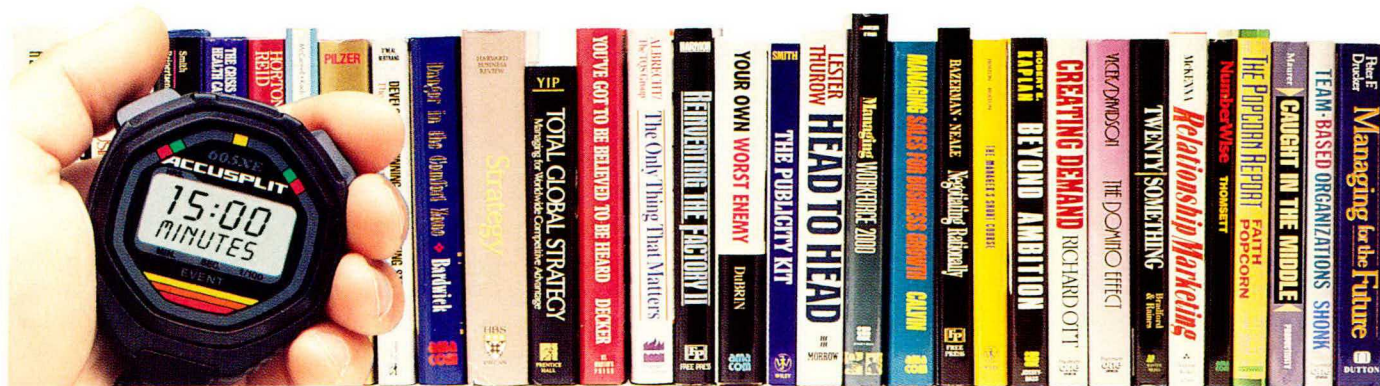
Regarding the two-parent family, the sociologist David Popenoe, who has devoted much of his career to the study of families, both in the United States and in Scandinavia, makes this straightforward assertion:

Social science research is almost never conclusive. There are always methodological difficulties and stones left unturned. Yet in three decades of work as a social scientist, I know of few other bodies of data in which the weight of evidence is so decisively on one side of the issue: on the whole, for children, two-parent families are preferable to single-parent and stepfamilies.

The Regime Effect

THE RISE IN FAMILY DISRUPTION IS NOT UNIQUE to American society. It is evident in virtually all advanced nations, including Japan, where it is also shaped by the growing participation of women in the work force. Yet the United States has made divorce easier and quicker than in any other Western nation with the sole exception of Sweden—and the trend toward solo motherhood has also been more pronounced in America. (Sweden has an equally high rate of out-of-wedlock birth, but the majority of such births are to cohabiting couples, a long-established pattern in Swedish society.) More to the point, nowhere has family breakup been greeted by a more triumphant rhetoric of renewal than in America.

What is striking about this rhetoric is how deeply it reflects classic themes in American public life. It draws its language and imagery from the nation's founding myth.



It depicts family breakup as a drama of revolution and rebirth. The nuclear family represents the corrupt past, an institution guilty of the abuse of power and the suppression of individual freedom. Breaking up the family is like breaking away from Old World tyranny. Liberated from the bonds of the family, the individual can achieve independence and experience a new beginning, a fresh start, a new birth of freedom. In short, family breakup recapitulates the American experience.

This rhetoric is an example of what the University of Maryland political philosopher William Galston has called the "regime effect." The founding of the United States set in motion a new political order based to an unprecedented degree on individual rights, personal choice, and egalitarian relationships. Since then these values have spread beyond their original domain of political relationships to define social relationships as well. During the past twenty-five years these values have had a particularly profound impact on the family.

Increasingly, political principles of individual rights and choice shape our understanding of family commitment and solidarity. Family relationships are viewed not as permanent or binding but as voluntary and easily terminable. Moreover, under the sway of the regime effect the family loses its central importance as an institution in the civil society, accomplishing certain social goals such as raising children and caring for its members, and becomes a means to achieving greater individual happiness—a lifestyle choice. Thus, Galston says, what is happening to the American family reflects the "unfolding logic of authoritative, deeply American moral-political principles."

One benefit of the regime effect is to create greater equality in adult family relationships. Husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, enjoy relationships far more egalitarian than past relationships were, and most Americans prefer it that way. But the political principles of the regime effect can threaten another kind of family relationship—that between parent and child. Owing to their biological and developmental immaturity, children are needy dependents. They are not able to express their choices according to limited, easily terminable, voluntary agreements. They are not able to act as negotiators in family decisions, even those that most affect their own interests. As one writer has put it, "a newborn does not make a good 'partner.'" Correspondingly, the parental role is antithetical to the spirit of the regime. Parental investment in children involves a diminished investment in self, a willing deference to the needs and claims of the dependent child. Perhaps more than any other family relationship, the parent-child relationship—shaped as it is

by patterns of dependency and deference—can be undermined and weakened by the principles of the regime.

More than a century and a half ago Alexis de Tocqueville made the striking observation that an individualistic society depends on a communitarian institution like the family for its continued existence. The family cannot be constituted like the liberal state, nor can it be governed entirely by that state's principles. Yet the family serves as the seedbed for the virtues required by a liberal state. The family is responsible for teaching lessons of independence, self-restraint, responsibility, and right conduct, which are essential to a free, democratic society. If the family fails in these tasks, then the entire experiment in democratic self-rule is jeopardized.

To take one example: independence is basic to successful functioning in American life. We assume that most people in America will be able to work, care for themselves and their families, think for themselves, and inculcate the same traits of independence and initiative in their children. We depend on families to teach people to do these things. The erosion of the two-parent family undermines the capacity of families to impart this knowledge; children of long-term welfare-dependent single parents are far more likely than others to be dependent themselves. Similarly, the children in disrupted families have a harder time forging bonds of trust with others and giving and getting help across the generations. This, too, may lead to greater dependency on the resources of the state.

Over the past two and a half decades Americans have been conducting what is tantamount to a vast natural experiment in family life. Many would argue that this experiment was necessary, worthwhile, and long overdue. The results of the experiment are coming in, and they are clear. Adults have benefited from the changes in family life in important ways, but the same cannot be said for children. Indeed, this is the first generation in the nation's history to do worse psychologically, socially, and economically than its parents. Most poignantly, in survey after survey the children of broken families confess deep longings for an intact family.

Nonetheless, as Galston is quick to point out, the regime effect is not an irresistible undertow that will carry away the family. It is more like a swift current, against which it is possible to swim. People learn; societies can change, particularly when it becomes apparent that certain behaviors damage the social ecology, threaten the public order, and impose new burdens on core institutions. Whether Americans will act to overcome the legacy of family disruption is a crucial but as yet unanswered question. □

MANTLE

BY GUY BILLOUT





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SEASON PREVIEW

Celebrating America's cultural diversity

CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

San Francisco, California
April 16-18, 23-25

Nihonmachi, San Francisco's Japanese quarter, has hosted its annual Cherry Blossom Festival for the past 25 years. Held over two weekends in the quarter's five-acre Japan Center and adjacent blocks, the festival celebrates the cultural heritage of Japanese-Americans. Cherry blossoms, which last for only a few days before they are carried away by the breeze, represent the coming of spring. The celebration will include martial-arts demonstrations, a traditional tea ceremony, sumo matches featuring high-school and college champions from Japan, classical and folk dances, and a food bazaar. The festival concludes on Sunday the 25th with a 15-block parade featuring hundreds of dancers and musicians, armor-clad samurai, Akita dogs, and floats. Admission to most events is free. For more information: Cherry Blossom Festival, Box 15147, San Francisco, CA 94115; (415) 563-2313.

FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL DE LOUISIANE

Lafayette, Louisiana
April 20-25

The largest Francophone festival in the United States, the Festival International de Louisiane was started in 1986 to promote the French cultural heritage of southern Louisiana. The festival attracts acclaimed musical acts from French-speaking countries all over the world. Multiple outdoor stages will feature such diverse sounds as Breton music, French-Canadian fiddling, modern jazz from France and Belgium, and



carnival and dance music from Martinique. A huge circus tent is the venue for a Cajun/Creole dance party featuring Louisiana Cajun and zydeco bands. Food is also a focal point of the celebration—food courts will present Cajun, Creole, and international cuisine. Visitors may even pick up a few recipes from the chefs who will demonstrate their skills. Other events include street-theater performances, a film screening and a crafts exhibit. All events are free. For more information: Festival International de Louisiane, Box 4008, Lafayette, LA 70502; (318) 232-8086.

KENTUCKY SCOTTISH WEEKEND

Carrollton, Kentucky
May 7-9

Held on the grounds of the General Butler State Resort Park, this festival harks back to the centuries-old tradition of Scottish clans gathering to compete in athletics, dancing, and bagpipe contests. More than 30 clans are officially represented at this festival, now in its 11th year. Music and dancing always play a large part in the celebration; this year's enter-

tainment will feature more than eight pipe bands, competitions in Highland dances including the Highland Fling and the Sword Dance, Scottish country dancing, dancing lessons, and ballads by Alex Beaton. Traditional athletic contests such as the hammer toss and sheaf toss will be held. Also appearing will be Alan Miller's Border collies, who will demonstrate their remarkable herding skills. Other highlights include a golf tournament, a "Wee Scots Day" for children, and a British car show. Admission for the entire weekend is \$6 for adults, \$1 for children. For more information: Kentucky Scottish Weekend, Box 91674, Louisville, KY 40291; (502) 732-4384.

MIAMI/BAHAMAS GOOMBAY FESTIVAL

Miami, Florida
May 29-30, June 4-6

Bahamians were the first black settlers of the Coconut Grove area of Miami, in the 1800s. This festival, which celebrates the history and culture of the Bahamas, is the largest black-heritage festival in the United States, attracting more than half a mil-

lion people each year. Activities over the two weekends include a golf tournament, a sailing regatta, a beauty pageant, and a dance featuring island music. The highlight of the celebration is a two-day street festival along Miami's Grand Avenue, featuring the Royal Bahamas Police Band, Junkanoo dancers, Bahamian cuisine, and an arts-and-crafts display. Visitors with acrobatic skills will surely want to join in the continuous limbo line. Most events are free. For more information: Susan Neuman, Inc., Plazas Venetia, Suite K, 555 Northeast 15th Street, Miami, FL 33132; (305) 372-9967.

STROMSBURG SWEDISH FESTIVAL

Stromsburg, Nebraska
June 18-19

This town of 1,241 people hosts up to 6,000 visitors each June when it presents a tribute to its Swedish heritage. Stromsburg's Swedish Festival is a true community event in which everyone gets involved: the children have their own parade on Friday, the men prepare and serve a chicken barbecue later that evening, and the women prepare and serve an authentic Swedish smorgasbord on Saturday afternoon. Visitors who can drag themselves away from the legendary array of baked goods and snacks will see authentic ethnic costumes, concerts in the city square, a native arts festival, and a crafts display. Other events include a two-mile run, a 10,000-meter run, horseshoe tournaments, softball, volleyball, Swedish dancing, and a float parade. All events are free. For more information: State of Nebraska, Division of Travel and Tourism, Box 94666, Lincoln, NE 68509; (800) 228-4307.

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**HAVE YOU DRIVEN
A FORD LATELY?**



A Short Story



Mr. Sumarsono

by Roxana Robinson

OH, MR. SUMARSONO, MR. SUMARSONO. WE REMEMBER YOU SO WELL. I wonder how you remember us.

The three of us met Mr. Sumarsono at the Trenton train station. The platform stretched down the tracks in both directions, long, half-roofed, and dirty. Beyond the tracks on either side were high corrugated-metal sidings, battered and patched. Above the sidings were the tops of weeds and the backs of ramshackle buildings, grimy and desolate. Stretching out above the tracks was an aerial grid of electrical-power lines, their knotted, uneven rectangles connecting every city on the Eastern corridor in a dismal, industrial way.

My mother, my sister, Kate, and I stood waiting for Mr. Sumarsono at the foot of the escalator, which did not work. The escalator had worked once; I could remember it working, though Kate, who was younger, could not. Now the metal staircase towered over the platform, silent and immobile, giving the station a surreal air. If you used it as a staircase, which people often did, setting your foot on each movable, motionless step, you had an odd feeling of sensory dislocation, like watching a color movie in black-and-white. You knew something was wrong, though you didn't know just what.

Mr. Sumarsono got off his train at the other end of the platform from us. He stood still for a moment and looked hesitantly up and down. He didn't know which way to look, or for whom he was looking. My mother lifted her arm and waved: we knew who he was, though we had never seen him before. It was 1959, and Mr. Sumarsono was the only Indonesian who got off the train in Trenton, New Jersey.

Mr. Sumarsono was wearing a neat suit and leather shoes, like an American businessman, but he did not look like an American. The suit was brown, not gray, and it had a slight sheen. And Mr. Sumarsono was built in a different way from Americans: he was slight and graceful, with narrow shoulders and an absence of strut. His movements were diffident, and they seemed to have extra curves. This was true even of simple movements, like picking up

his suitcase and starting down the platform toward the three of us, standing by the escalator that didn't work.

Kate and I stood next to my mother as she waved and smiled. Kate and I did not wave and smile: this was all my mother's idea. Kate was seven and I was ten. We were not entirely sure what a diplomat was, and we were not at all sure that we wanted to be nice to one all weekend. I wondered why he didn't have friends his own age.

"Hoo-hoo," my mother called, mortifyingly, even though Mr. Sumarsono had already seen us and was making his graceful way toward us. His steps were small and his movements modest. He smiled in a nonspecific way, to show that he had seen us, but my mother kept on waving and calling. It took a long time, this interlude: encouraging shouts and gestures from my mother, Mr. Sumarsono's unhurried approach. I wondered if he, too, was embarrassed by my mother; once, he glanced swiftly around, as though he were looking for an alternate family to spend the weekend with. He had reason to be uneasy: the grimy Trenton platform did not suggest a rural retreat. And when he saw us standing by the stationary escalator, my mother waving and calling, Kate and I sullenly silent, he may have felt that things were off to a poor start.

My mother is short, with big bones and a square face.

She has thick dark hair and a wide, mobile mouth. She is a powerful woman. She used to be on the stage, and she still delivers to the back row. When she calls "Hoo-hoo" at a train station, ev-

everyone at that station knows it.

"Mr. Sumarsono," she called out, as he came up to us. The accent is on the second syllable. That's what the people at the UN told her, and she made us practice, sighing and complaining, until we said it the way she wanted: *Sumarsono*.

Mr. Sumarsono gave a formal nod and a small smile. His face was oval, and his eyes were long. His skin was very pale brown, and smooth. His hair was shiny and black, and it also was very smooth. Everything about him seemed polished and smooth.

"Hello!" my mother said, seizing his hand and shaking

*Though she was only ten, she was
expected to make this stranger, who spoke
no English, feel at home*

it. "I'm Mrs. Riordan. And this is Kate, and this is Susan." Kate and I cautiously put out our hands, and Mr. Sumarsono took them limply, bowing at each of us.

My mother put out her hand again. "Shall I take your bag?" But Mr. Sumarsono defended his suitcase. "We're just up here," my mother said, giving up on the bag and leading the way to the escalator.

We all began to climb, but after a few steps my mother looked back.

"This is an *escalator*," she said loudly.

Mr. Sumarsono gave a short nod.

"It takes you *up*," my mother called, and pointed to the roof overhead. Mr. Sumarsono, holding his suitcase with both hands, looked at the ceiling.

"It doesn't work *right now*," my mother said illuminatingly, and turned back to her climb.

"No," I heard Mr. Sumarsono say. He glanced cautiously again at the ceiling.

Exactly parallel to the escalator was a broad concrete staircase, with another group of people climbing it. We were separated only by the hand rail, so for a disorienting second you felt you were looking at a mirror from which you were missing. This intensified the feeling received from climbing the stopped escalator—dislocation, bewilderment, doubt at your own senses.

A woman on the real staircase looked over at us, and I could tell that my mother gave her a brilliant smile: the woman looked away at once. We were the only people on the escalator.

On the way home Kate and I sat in the back seat and watched our mother keep turning to speak to Mr. Sumarsono. She asked him long, complicated, cheerful questions. "Well, Mr. Sumarsono, had you been in this country at all before you came to the UN, or is this your first visit? I know you've been working at the UN for only a short time."

Mr. Sumarsono answered everything with a polite unfinished nod. Then he would turn back and look out the window again. I wondered if he was thinking about jumping out of the car. I wondered what Mr. Sumarsono was expecting from a weekend in the country. I hoped it was not a walk to the pond: Kate and I had planned one for

that afternoon. We were going to watch the mallards nesting, and I hoped we didn't have to include a middle-aged Indonesian in leather shoes.

WHEN WE GOT HOME, MY MOTHER LOOKED at me meaningfully. "Susan, will you and Kate show Mr. Sumarsono to his room?" Mr. Sumarsono looked politely at us, his head tilted slightly sideways.

Gracelessly I leaned over to pick up Mr. Sumarsono's suitcase, as I had been told. He stopped me by putting his hand out, palm front, in a traffic policeman's gesture.

"No, no," he said with a small smile, and he took hold of the suitcase himself. I fell back, pleased not to do as I'd been told, but also impressed, almost awed, by Mr. Sumarsono.

What struck me was the grace of his gesture. His hand extended easily out of its cuff and exposed a narrow brown wrist, as narrow as my own. When he put his hand up in the Stop! gesture, his hand curved backward from the wrist, and his fingers bent backward from the palm. Instead of the stern and flat-handed Stop! that an American hand would make, this was a polite, subtle, and yielding signal, quite beautiful and infinitely sophisticated, a gesture that suggested a thousand reasons for doing something, a thousand ways to go about it.

I let him take the suitcase and we climbed the front stairs, me first, Kate next, and then Mr. Sumarsono, as though we were playing a game. We marched solemnly, single file, through the second-floor hall and up the back stairs to the third floor. The guest room was small, with a bright hooked rug on the wide old floorboards, white ruffled curtains at the windows, and slanting eaves. In the room was a spool bed, a table next to it, a straight chair, and a chest of drawers. On the chest of drawers was a photograph of my great-grandmother, her austere face surrounded by faded embroidery. On the bedspread was a large tan smudge, where our cat liked to spend the afternoons.



Mr. Sumarsono put his suitcase down and looked around the room. I looked around with him, and suddenly the guest room, and in fact our whole house, took on a new aspect. Until that moment I had thought our house was numbingly ordinary, that it represented the decorating norm: patchwork quilts, steep narrow staircases, slanting ceilings, and spool beds. I assumed everyone had faded photographs of Victorian grandparents dotted mournfully around their rooms. Now I realized that this was not the case. I wondered what houses were like in Indonesia, or apartments in New York. Somehow I knew: They were low, sleek, modern, all on one floor, with hard, gleaming surfaces. They were full of right angles and empty of allusions. They were the exact opposite of our house. Silently and fiercely I blamed my mother for our environment, which was, I now saw, eccentric, totally abnormal.

Mr. Sumarsono looked at me and nodded precisely again.

"Thank you," he said.

"Don't hit your head," Kate said.

Mr. Sumarsono bowed, closing his eyes.

"On the ceiling," Kate said, pointing to it.

"The ceiling," he repeated, looking up at it too.

"Don't hit your head on the ceiling," she said loudly, and Mr. Sumarsono looked at her and smiled.

"The bathroom's in here," I said, showing him.

"Thank you," he said.

"Susan!" my mother called up the stairs, "tell Mr. Sumarsono to come downstairs when he's ready for lunch."

"Come-downstairs-when-you're-ready-for-lunch," I said, unnecessarily. I pointed graphically into my open mouth and then bolted, clattering rapidly down both sets of stairs. Kate was right behind me, and our knees and elbows collided as we rushed to get away.

Mother had set four places for lunch, which was on the screened-in porch overlooking the lawn. The four places meant a battle.

TO THE BLACK MADONNA OF CHARTRES

Friend or no friend,
darkness or light,
vowels or consonants,
water or dry land,

anything more from you now
is just gravy
—just send me down forgiveness, send me down
bearing myself a black cupful of light.

—Jean Valentine

"Mother," I said mutinously.

"What is it?" Mother said. "Would you fill a pitcher of water, Susan?"

"Kate and I are not *having* lunch," I said, running water into the big blue-and-white pottery pitcher.

"And get the butter dish. Of course you're having lunch," my mother said. She was standing at the old wooden kitchen table, making deviled eggs. She was messily filling the rubbery white hollows with dollops of yolk-and-mayonnaise. The slippery egg halves rocked unstably, and the mixture stuck to her spoon. She scraped it into the little boats with her finger. I watched with distaste. In a ranch house, I thought, or in New York, this would not happen. In New York food would be prepared on polished man-made surfaces. It would be brought to you on gleaming platters by silent waiters.

"I told you Kate and I are *not* having lunch," I said. "We're taking a picnic to the pond." I put the pitcher on the table.

Mother turned to me. "We have been through this already, Susan. We have a guest for the weekend, and I want you girls to be polite to him. He is a stranger in this country, and I expect you to *extend* yourselves. Think how *you* would feel if *you* were in a strange land."

"Extend myself," I said rudely, under my breath, but loud enough that my mother could hear. This was exactly the sort of idiotic thing she said. "I certainly wouldn't go around hoping people would *extend* themselves." I thought of people stretched out horribly, their arms yearning in one direction, their feet in another, all for my benefit. "If I were in a strange country, I'd like everyone to leave me alone."

"Ready for lunch?" my mother said brightly to Mr. Sumarsono, who stood diffidently in the doorway. "We're just about to sit down. Kate, will you bring out the butter?"

"I did already," I said virtuously, and folded my arms in a hostile manner.

"We're having deviled eggs," Mother announced as we sat down. She picked up the plate of them and smiled humorously. "We call them 'deviled.'"

"Dev-il," Kate said, speaking very loudly and slowly. She pointed at the eggs and then put two forked fingers behind her head, like horns. Mr. Sumarsono looked at her horns. He nodded pleasantly.

My mother talked all through lunch, asking Mr. Sumarsono mystifying questions and then answering them herself in case he couldn't. Mr. Sumarsono kept a polite half smile on his face, sometimes repeating the last few words of her sentences. Even while he was eating, he seemed to be listening attentively. He ate very neatly, taking small bites, and laying his fork and knife precisely side by side when he was through. Kate and I pointedly said nothing. We were boycotting lunch, though we smiled horribly at Mr. Sumarsono if we caught his eye.

After lunch my mother said she was going to take a



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nap. As she said this, she laid her head sideways on her folded hands and closed her eyes. Then she pointed upstairs. Mr. Sumarsono nodded. He rose from the table, pushed in his chair, and went meekly back to his room, his shoes creaking on the stairs.

Kate and I did the dishes in a slapdash way and took off for the pond. We spent the afternoon on a hill overlooking the marshy end, watching the mallards and arguing over the binoculars. We had only one pair. We had once had a second pair; I could remember this, though Kate could not. Our father had taken the other set with him.

MOTHER WAS ALREADY DOWNSTAIRS IN the kitchen when we got back. She was singing cheerfully and wearing a pink dress with puffy sleeves and a full skirt. The pink dress was a favorite of Kate's and mine. I was irritated to see that she had put it on as though she were at a party. This was not a party: she had merely gotten hold of a captive guest, a complete stranger who understood nothing she said. This was not a cause for celebration.

She gave us a big smile when we came in.

"Any luck with the mallards?" she asked.

"Not really," I said coolly. A lie.

Kate and I set the table, and Mother asked Kate to pick some flowers for the centerpiece. We were having dinner in the dining room, Mother said, using the white plates with gold rims from our grandmother. While we were setting the table, Mother called in from the kitchen, "Oh, Susan, put out some wineglasses, too, for me and Mr. Sumarsono."

Kate and I looked at each other.

Wineglasses? Kate mouthed silently.

"Wineglasses?" I called back, my voice sober for my mother, my face wild for Kate.

"That's right," Mother said cheerfully. "We're going to be festive."

Festive! I mouthed to Kate, and we doubled over, shaking our heads and rolling our eyes.

We put out the wineglasses, handling them gingerly, as though they gave off dangerous, unpredictable rays. The glasses, standing boldly at the knife tips, altered the landscape of the table. Kate and I felt as though we were in the presence of something powerful and alien. We looked warningly at each other, pointing at the glasses and frowning, nodding our heads meaningfully. We picked them up and mimed drinking from them. We wiped our mouths and began to stagger, crossing our eyes and hiccuping. When Mother appeared in the doorway, we froze, and Kate, who was in the process of lurching sideways, turned her movement into a pirouette, her face clear, her eyes uncrossed.

"Be careful with those glasses," my mother said.

"We are," Kate said, striking a classical pose, the wineglass held worshipfully aloft like a chalice.

When dinner was ready, Mother went to the foot of the stairs and called up, "Hoo-hoo!" several times. She heard no reply, and after a pause she called, "Mr. Sumarsono! Dinner. Come down for dinner!" We began to hear noises from overhead, as Mr. Sumarsono rose obediently from his nap.

When we sat down, I noticed that Mother was not only in the festive pink dress but also bathed and particularly fresh-looking. She had done her hair in a fancy way, smoothing it back from her forehead. She was smiling a lot. When she had served the plates, my mother picked up the bottle of wine and offered Mr. Sumarsono a glass.

"Would you like a little *wine*, Mr. Sumarsono?" she asked, leaning forward, her head cocked. We were having the dish she always made for guests: baked chicken pieces in a sauce made of Campbell's cream of mushroom soup.

"Thank you." Mr. Sumarsono nodded, and pushed forward his glass. My mother beamed, and filled his glass. Kate and I watched her as we cut up our chicken. We watched her as we drank from our milk glasses, our eyes round and unblinking over the rims.

We ate in silence, a silence broken only by my mother. "Mr. Sumarsono," she said, having finished most of her chicken and most of her wine. "Do you have a *wife*? A *family*?" She gestured first at herself, then at us. Mr. Sumarsono looked searchingly across the table at Kate and me. We were chewing, and stared solemnly back.

Mr. Sumarsono nodded his half nod, his head stopping at the bottom of the movement.

"A wife?" my mother said, gratified. She pointed again at herself. She was not a wife, and hadn't been for five years, but Mr. Sumarsono wouldn't know that. I wondered what he did know. I wondered if he wondered where my father was. Perhaps he thought that it was an American custom for the father to live in another house, spending his day apart from his wife and children, eating his dinner alone. Perhaps Mr. Sumarsono was expecting my father to arrive ceremoniously after dinner, dressed in silken robes and carrying a carved wooden writing case, ready to entertain his guest with tales of the hill people. What did Mr. Sumarsono expect of us? It was unimaginable.

Whatever Mr. Sumarsono was expecting, my mother was determined to deliver what she could of it. In the pink dress, full of red wine, she was changing before our very eyes. She was warming up, turning larger and grander, rosier and powerful.

"Mr. Sumarsono," my mother said happily, "do you have photographs of your family?"

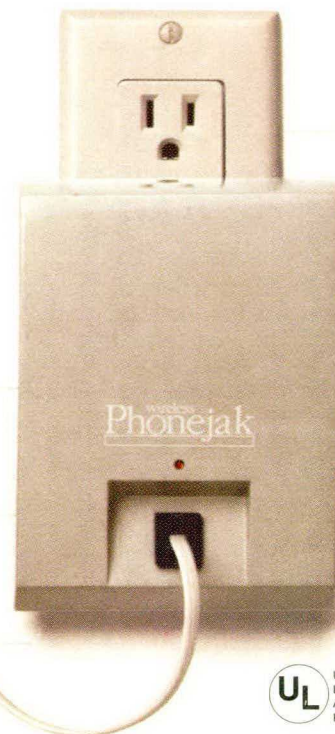
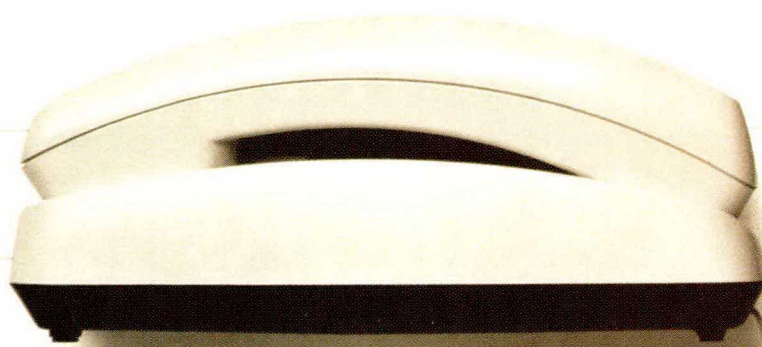
Silence. My mother pointed again to her chest, plump and rosy above the pink dress. Then she held up an invisible camera. She closed one eye and clicked loudly at Mr. Sumarsono. He watched her carefully.

"Photo of wife?" she said again, loudly, and again point-

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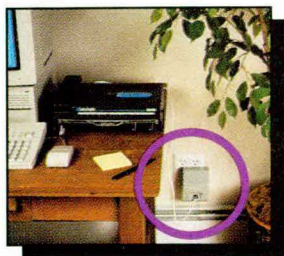


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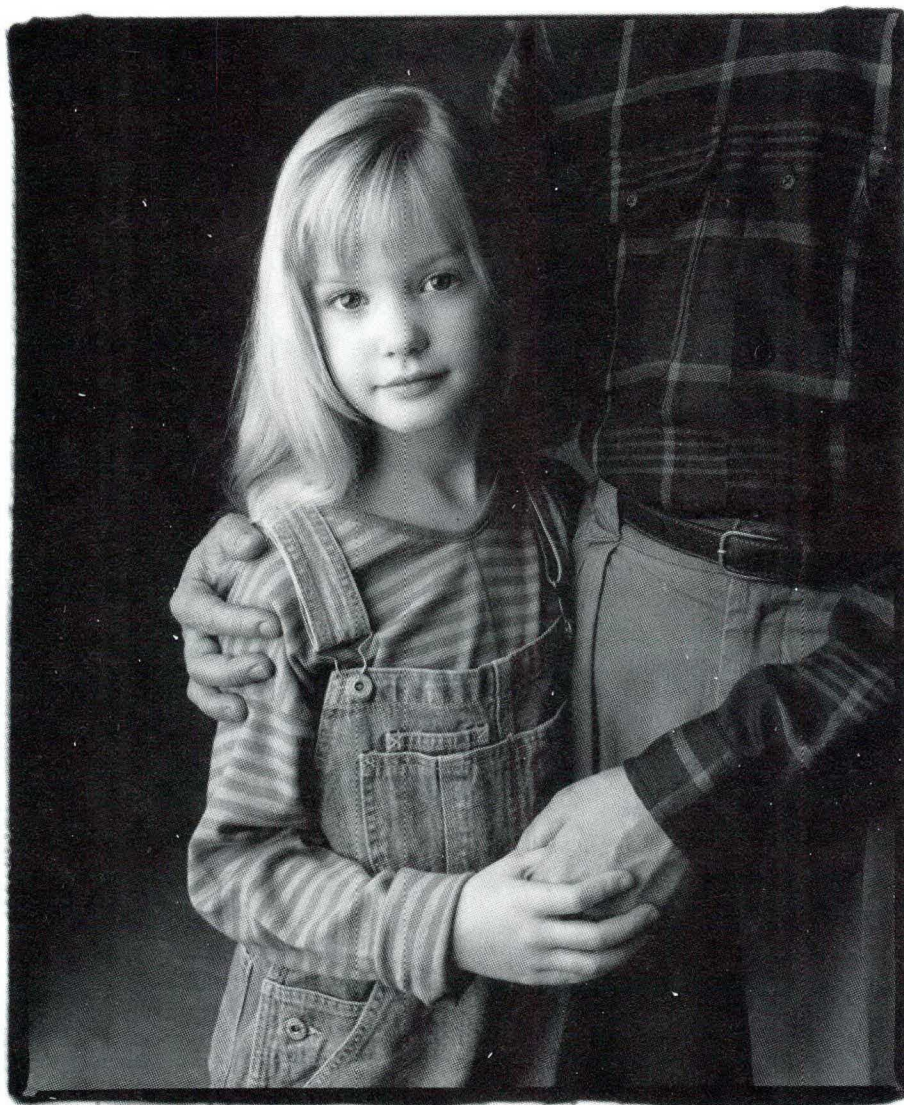


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ed at herself. Then she pointed at him. Mr. Sumarsono gave his truncated nod and stood up. He bowed again and pointed to the ceiling. Then, with a complicated and unfinished look, loaded with meaning, he left the room.

Kate and I looked accusingly at our mother. Dinner would now be prolonged indefinitely, her fault.

"He's gone to get his photographs," Mother said. "The poor man, he must miss his wife and children. Don't you feel sorry for him, thousands of miles away from his family? Oh, thousands. He's here for six months, all alone. They told me that at the UN. It's all very uncertain. He doesn't know when he gets leaves, how long after that he'll be here. Think of how his poor wife feels." She shook her head and took a long sip of her wine. She remembered us and added reprovingly, "And what about his poor children? Their father is thousands of miles away! They don't know when they'll see him!" Her voice was admonitory, suggesting that this was partly our fault.

Kate and I did not comment on Mr. Sumarsono's children. We ourselves did not know when we would see our father, and we did not want to discuss that either. We longed for all this to be over, this endless, messy meal, full of incomprehensible exchanges.

Kate sighed discreetly, her mouth slightly open for silence, and swung her legs under the table. I picked up a chicken thigh with my fingers and began to pick delicately at it with my teeth. This was forbidden, but I thought that the wine and excitement would distract my mother from my behavior. It did. She sighed deeply, shook her head, and picked up her fork. She began eating in a dreamy way.

"Oh, I'm glad we're having rice!" she said suddenly, pleased. "That must make Mr. Sumarsono feel at home." She looked at me. "You know that's all they have in Indonesia," she said in a teacherly sort of way. "Rice, bamboo, things like that. Lizard."

Another ridiculous statement. I knew such a place could not exist, but Kate was younger, and I pictured what she must imagine: thin stalks of rice struggling up through a dense and endless bamboo forest. People in

brown suits pushing their way among the limber stalks, looking around fruitlessly for houses, telephones, something to eat besides lizards.

MR. SUMARSONO APPEARED AGAIN IN THE doorway. He was holding a large leather camera case. He had already begun to unbuckle and unstrap, to extricate the camera from it. He took out a light meter and held it up. My mother raised her fork at him.

"Rice!" she said enthusiastically. "That's familiar, isn't it? Does it remind you of home?" She gestured expansively at our dining room. Mr. Sumarsono looked obediently around, at the mahogany sideboard with its crystal decanters, the glass-fronted cabinet full of family china, the big stern portrait of my grandfather in his pink hunting coat, holding his riding crop. Mr. Sumarsono looked back at my mother, who was still holding up her rice-heavy fork. He nodded.

"Yes?" my mother said, pleased.

"Yes," Mr. Sumarsono said.

My mother looked down again. Blinking in a satisfied way, she said, "I'm glad I thought of it." I knew she hadn't thought of it until that moment. She always made rice with the chicken-and-Campbell's-cream-of-mushroom-soup dish. Having an Indonesian turn up to eat it was just luck.

Mr. Sumarsono held up his camera. The light meter dangled from a strap, and the flash attachment projected from one corner. He put the camera up to his eye, and his face vanished altogether. My mother was looking down at her plate again, peaceful, absorbed, suffused with red wine and satisfaction.

I could see that my mother's view of all this—the meal, the visit, the weekend—was different from my own. I could see that she was pleased by everything about it. She was pleased by her polite and helpful daughters, she was pleased by her charming farmhouse with its stylish and original touches. She was pleased by her delicious and unusual meal, and, most important, she was pleased



by her own generosity, by being able to offer this poor stranger her lavish bounty.

She was wrong, she was always wrong, my mother. She was wrong about everything. I was resigned to it: at ten you have no control over your mother. The evening would go on like this, endless, excruciating. My mother would act foolish, Kate and I would be mortified, and Mr. Sumarsono would be mystified. It was no wonder my father had left: embarrassment.

Mr. Sumarsono was now ready, and he spoke. "Please!" he said, politely. My mother looked up again and realized this time what he was doing. She shook her head, raising her hands in deprecation.

"No, no," she said, smiling, "not me. Don't take a picture of me. I wanted to see a picture of your wife." She pointed at Mr. Sumarsono. "Your wife," she said, "your children."

I was embarrassed not only for my mother but also for poor Mr. Sumarsono. Whatever he had expected from a country weekend in America, it could not have been a cramped attic room, two sullen girls, a voluble and incomprehensible hostess. I felt we had failed him, we had betrayed his unruffled courtesy, with our bewildering commands, our waving forks, our irresponsible talk about lizards. I wanted to save him. I wanted to liberate poor Mr. Sumarsono from this aerial grid of misunderstandings. I wanted to cut the power lines, but I couldn't think of a way. I watched him despondently, waiting for him to subside at my mother's next order. Perhaps she would send him upstairs for another nap.

But things had changed. Mr. Sumarsono stood gracefully, firm and erect, in charge. Somehow he had performed a coup. He had seized power. The absence of strut did not mean an absence of command, and we now saw how an Indonesian diplomat behaved when he was in charge. Like the Stop! gesture, Mr. Sumarsono's reign was elegant and sophisticated, entirely convincing. We suddenly understood that telling Mr. Sumarsono what to do was no longer possible.

"No," Mr. Sumarsono said clearly. "You wife." He bowed firmly at my mother. "You children." He bowed at us.

Mr. Sumarsono stood over us, his courtesy exquisite and unyielding. "Please," he said. "Now photograph." He held up the camera. It covered his face entirely, a strange mechanical mask. "My photograph," he said in a decisive tone.

He aimed the camera first at me. I produced a taut and artificial smile, and at once he reappeared from behind the camera. "No smile," he said firmly, shaking his head. "No smile." He himself produced a hideous smile, and then shook his head and turned grave. "Ah!" he said, nodding, and pointed at me. Chastened, I sat solemn and

rigid while he disappeared behind the camera again. I didn't move even when he had finished, the flash over; I listened to the clicks of lenses and winding sprockets.

Mr. Sumarsono turned to Kate, who had learned from me and offered up a smooth and serious face. Mr. Sumarsono nodded, but stepped toward her. "Hand!" he said, motioning toward it, and he made the gesture that he wanted. Kate stared, but obediently did as he asked.

When Mr. Sumarsono turned to my mother, I worried that she would stage a last-ditch attempt to take over, that she would insist on mortifying us all.

"Now!" Mr. Sumarsono said, bowing peremptorily at her. "Please." I looked at her, and to my amazement, relief, and delight, my mother did exactly the right thing. She smiled at Mr. Sumarsono, in a normal and relaxed way, as though they were old friends. She leaned easily back in her chair, graceful—I could suddenly see—and poised. She smoothed the hair back from her forehead.

In Mr. Sumarsono's pictures, the images of us that he produced, this is how we look:

I am staring solemnly at the camera, dead serious, head-on. I look mystified, as though I am trying to understand something inexplicable: what the people around me mean when they speak, perhaps. I look as though I am in a foreign country where I do not speak the language.

Kate looks both radiant and ethereal, her eyes alight. Her mouth is puckered into a mirthful V: she is trying to suppress a smile. The V of her mouth is echoed above her face by her two forked fingers, poised airily behind her head.

But it was the picture of my mother that surprised me the most. Mr. Sumarsono's portrait was of someone entirely different from the person I knew, though the face was the same. Looking at it gave me the feeling that the stopped escalator did: a sense of dislocation, a sudden uncertainty about my own beliefs. In the photograph my mother leans back against her chair like a queen, all her power evident, and at rest. Her face is turned slightly away: she is guarding her privacy. Her nose, her cheeks, her eyes are bright with wine and excitement, but she is calm and amused. A mother cannot be beautiful, because she is so much more a mother than a woman, but in this picture it struck me that my mother looked, in an odd way, beautiful. I could see for the first time that other people might think she actually was beautiful.

Mr. Sumarsono's view of my mother was of a glowing, self-assured, generous woman. And Mr. Sumarsono himself was a real person, despite his meekness. I knew that; I had seen him take control. His view meant something. I could not ignore it. And I began to wonder.

We still have the pictures. Mr. Sumarsono brought them with him the next time he came out for the weekend. □

LEINWAY & S

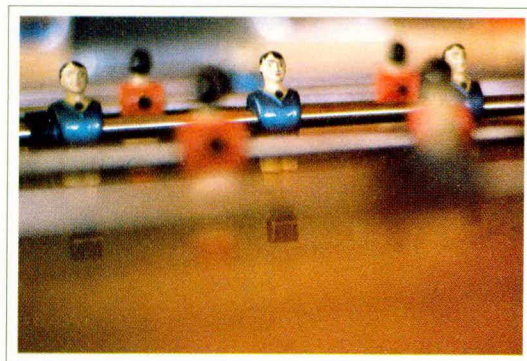


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SPORTS AND GAMES



a poetry anthology

DEFERENCE

Suppose the game could be unplayed,
 rewound to that brief strobe before the cleated
 toe rose to slide over the soccer ball
 and fold your legs beneath you—No lift,
 the coach mutters, you have to *lift* the ball—
 before the heap and whistle,
 or back even before that, to the lope
 down field. It's Spring, isn't it?
 And the unmown clover near the stands
 is in flower. How much of the Greater Romantic
 Lyric, as my teacher used to call it, is given
 over to the single moment, and that
 one rinsed
 in sky and flung out like a picnic cloth.
 Soluble light in the day's solution,
 slow dissolve, and I have no ambitions for you
 at all. I give in to your inclination
 not to charge the ball but to pretend to,
 in deference to the sport that says you
 must advance
 and to the moment that floats away.

—Lynne McMahon

TWELFTH NIGHT

The skin on my legs itched and tingled as I draped my
 damp socks
 over the cross-country skiing machine Moira had got
 us for Christmas.
 About the only thing we'd used it for so far was a clothes rack
 and, once, as a not entirely successful marital aid. It was
 starting to remind me of a high-tech but lonely mechanical
 reindeer,
 cut from its herd of frisky girl reindeer, sold into exercise
 slavery
 and summarily UPSed from Lapland across the North Pole to
 Wilmette,
 only to be parked ignominiously, with sweatsocks and lingerie
 hung from its antlers, in the corner of some lazy slob's
 bedroom.
 Postmodern exercise guilt, I supposed, as I tossed my Gitanos
 onto the sawed-off teak skis—although from certain angles
 it did
 sort of look like a reindeer, at least about as much as Picasso's
 old bicycle saddle and handlebars looked like a bull's head.
 I stood there just holding my T-shirt and Jockeys, and
 shivered.

—James McManus

PAIRS

Years now, good days more than half the year,	than a mile from where they pull and feather.
they row late afternoons out through the harbor	All we hear is how, like sea ducks, they
to the bell, a couple with gray hair, an old	seem constantly to murmur. And even
green rowboat. Given sun, their four oars, stroke	after summer's gone, as they row out or
by stroke, glint wet, so far away that even	home, now and again we hear, we cannot help
in light air their upwind voices barely	but hear, their years of tidal laughter.
carry. No words translate to us on shore, more	

—Philip Booth

THIS LIFE

It's a pickle, this life.
Even shut down to a trickle
it carries every kind of particle
that causes strife on a grander scale:
to be miniature is to be swallowed
by a miniature whale. Zeno knew
the law that we know: no matter
how carefully diminished, a race
can only be *half* finished with success;
then comes the endless halving of the rest—
the ribbon's stalled approach, the helpless
red-faced urgings of the coach.

—Kay Ryan

RAINED OUT

That wide bay rippled with just
breeze enough, our tacking a mere tilted
luff of sails, and we circled
dolphins all afternoon, two in tandem,
or they circled us, always gone
just so long we'd seance-rap
the hull, and give up, then
five feet off the port side, fin-wheeling
or blowing in our wake, they'd show,
always in the least, last over-the-shoulder
place, eluding all suggestions
of a watery corral, tail-dancing
a half mile off, sea hams bringing
again and again the gift
of their curiosity, humoring our own
under slow clouds piled white toward
the sun and deepening blue
where they faced oncoming evening,
with clusters of flight here and there,
first August signs of pre-flocks
forming up, and that one broad
underbelly of cloud over
Great Island and the Gut, gray, hairy,
taking its time, looking like something
you might find on the floor beneath
a longstanding Frigidaire, then,
over us, letting go not rain
exactly, but fat, single,
ringing drops you could walk between
if you could walk on water,
each with its own pitch, fingerbells
on a delicate Asian hand,
grace notes on the tide, lasting only
the moment such things can, passing on
toward headlands and the world
of evening light falling into
the harbor's stand of masts,
and the dolphins: gone.

—Brendan Galvin

A distinguished economist argues that the basic cause of the recession haunting our economy today is the same as one of the chief causes of the Great Depression—the lack of an agent of “transformational growth.” Whereas the automobile served that function in the 1920s, there is today no technologically equivalent breakthrough for new private investment. Therefore, he argues, government investment must catalyze growth

ANTI-DEPRESSION ECONOMICS

BY ROBERT HEILBRONER

ALL THROUGH MY BOYHOOD DAYS, IN NEW YORK City, I was aware of a presence called the Depression. I remember an enormous headline in late October of 1929 in the evening newspaper *The Sun*, but at age ten I had no idea what the word “crash” meant. I found out in school, where the joke went around that hotel clerks were supposed to ask “For sleeping or jumping?” when someone inquired about rooms. That winter two fathers of school friends jumped.

Within a few months men were selling small pyramids of apples on upended crates on the avenue where we lived. A year later there were shantytowns in the city’s parks. Not long after, in the District of Columbia, a tent city built by the Bonus Expeditionary Force—veterans hoping to get help from Congress—was set upon by the Army with fixed bayonets, tanks, and tear gas. That raid was led by General Douglas MacArthur, who said afterward that “beyond a shadow of a doubt” its inhabitants were about to seize the government.

These are snapshots of the way the 1930s appeared to people in families like my own—the lucky half to two thirds of the nation which did not lose its jobs, its apartments or homesteads, its life savings. For us, the Depression was a series of frightening realities glimpsed in the newsreels or read about in the papers, behind which loomed something vast, oppressive, and incomprehensi-





ble. When I went to Harvard, in 1936, I took economics because I thought it would help me understand the nature of that mysterious presence.

I soon discovered, however, that the Depression was as great a mystery to my professors as it was to us students. I recently took down from my shelf the textbook we used, *Principles of Economics*, by Frederick Garver and Alvin Hansen. On page 16 it reads, "The total money income of the people of the United States was about \$80,000,000,000 in 1929. Owing to the fall in prices, output, wages and employment, it fell to about \$40,000,000,000 in 1932."

That catastrophic event is not mentioned again in the remaining 600-odd pages of the text, which explain how firms supposedly operate under conditions of competition and monopoly, how income is distributed in a market system, and other such matters. The book's highlight was a chapter on business cycles, but it taught little more than that what goes up must come down, and that there are a number of ways of explaining why things go up. There was certainly no notion that what went down might stay down—that a business slump could go on more or less indefinitely, as the Great Depression did.

It was not only in academic circles that the Depression was an incomprehensible presence. The Senate Banking Committee had begun holding hearings in 1932 to probe the causes of a disaster that was threatening the political as well as the economic stability of the nation. A parade of eminent businessmen confessed that they had no explanation for the Depression. It was equally clear that the nation's bankers had no inkling of what the trouble might be. At the Senate hearings the famous financier and presidential adviser Bernard Baruch spoke for many when he said, "Balance budgets, stop spending money we haven't got. Sacrifice for frugality and revenue. Cut government spending—cut it as rations are cut in a siege. Tax—tax everybody for everything."

Keynes Brings Clarity

WHAT WAS NEEDED, WE CAN SEE IN RETROSPECT, was some new way of conceptualizing the workings of the system. The new conception arrived on campus in late 1936, and immediately set the economics department on its ear—it was John Maynard Keynes's *General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*. I recall a debate organized by the economics faculty in which voices shook and faces became empurpled over Keynes's ideas about government spending—which according to some represented long-awaited salvation and according to others the final nail in the coffin. Oddly enough, Keynes's most persuasive proponent was none other than Alvin Hansen, who had by that time become his ardent disciple.

For all the furor about spending, what was ultimately new about the Keynes-Hansen view was not so much its policy proposals as the diagnosis that preceded them.

The argument that galvanized the economics world was that unemployment might not be just a temporary condition from which the system would naturally recover, as markets naturally recovered from unsustainably high or low prices. Keynes showed that unemployment could easily reflect a condition of "equilibrium"—a state of affairs that would continue indefinitely, unless something changed in the prevailing situation. Later Hansen argued convincingly that the prevailing situation would not change, because capitalism was entering a period of stagnation in which its propulsive momentum would be undermined by slower population growth and a lack of new investment frontiers.

A further clarification of Keynes's theory emerged some dozen years later in an enormously influential textbook written by Paul Samuelson, a brilliant young professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who had been a protégé of Hansen's. Samuelson's text presented the economy not just as the unified market system that was the organizing concept in the Garver and Hansen text but as two quite distinct systems at work within a single territory. The first of the two—the microeconomy—consisted of the mosaic of markets in which supply and demand established the prices that guided the activities of sellers and buyers. The second—the macroeconomy—comprised the flows of investment, spending, and saving which determined the level of overall employment and output.

This division made it possible for the first time to study "macroeconomics" independent of "microeconomics." For all the difficulties to which this bifocalism led, it gave to the understanding of depression a hitherto missing clarity. A depression was now seen as a condition of large and persisting unemployment brought about by a large and persisting insufficiency of spending. The remedy was therefore to increase spending, especially for investment purposes. In turn, the way to increase spending was to lower interest rates, making it easier for business to borrow and invest; or, if need be, to supplement private investment with public spending. In a typical sally, which brought delight to his friends and set the teeth of his enemies on edge, Keynes wrote,

If the Treasury were to fill old bottles with banknotes, bury them at suitable depths in disused coalmines which are then filled up to the surface with town rubbish, and leave it to private enterprise on well-tryed principles of *laissez-faire* to dig the notes up again (the right to do so being obtained, of course, by tendering for leases of the note-bearing territory), there need be no more unemployment. . . . It would, indeed, be more sensible to build houses and the like; but if there are political and practical difficulties in the way of this, the above would be better than nothing.

By the time I left Harvard, in 1940, the Depression no longer seemed an incomprehensible presence. The continuing high level of unemployment only reflected the

problems of applying Keynesian remedies on an adequate scale in a country that still regarded Bernard Baruch as the embodiment of political and economic wisdom. Proof of this heretical idea was shortly thereafter provided by America's entrance into the war. Prior to 1938, despite New Deal programs, total spending for public works did not equal pre-crash levels. Once war was declared, all considerations of prudence were set aside. Federal expenditures rose from \$16.9 billion in 1941 to \$51.9 billion a year later, and then to \$81.1 billion over the next year. Unemployment was cut in half the first year and in half again the year following. Gross national product, which had not yet quite regained 1929 levels in 1940, climbed 25 percent in 1941 and kept climbing, to almost double 1929 levels in 1943. Thus, whatever else it was, the war was an extraordinary vindication of Keynesian economics. The Depression had been banished not only in theory but in fact.

Our Recessionary Economy

AT FIRST GLANCE THE PROLONGED AND PAINFUL recession that is officially behind us—although one would not know it reading the grim announcements of mass layoffs—seems utterly different from the Great Depression. To begin with, it started not with a crash but with a stock-market boom that has gone on more or less steadily since 1983, despite one precipitous drop—from which it quickly recovered. For another difference, unemployment actually declined from 1982 until 1989, and although joblessness has grown by almost 50 percent in the early nineties, this must be compared with an 800 percent increase from 1929 to 1932. Not least, output did not fall sickeningly, as it did during the thirties, but rose more than 25 percent from 1982 to 1992, after allowance for inflation. In fact, over these years real output shrank in only one year, 1991, and the fall was barely more than one percent.

Yet despite all these differences, I think we have been going through a depression much like that of the 1930s—with one very important difference. It is that the economy in the thirties entered into a kind of free fall, whereas during more recent times its contractive momentum has been held in check. The crucial element in warding off another collapse has been the rise of government spending, led by Social Security, Medicare, and welfare programs generally. Even as late as 1941 federal, state, and local expenditures for such programs came to only eight percent of GNP; they had been half that in 1929. By the 1970s social spending as a percent of GNP had almost doubled from its 1941 level, and if we add in government spending for all other purposes, such as the military, the total contribution of public expenditure to GNP rises to about 35 percent. This is a good deal less than in Germany or the Netherlands or England, but it is enough to provide a floor under economic activity about

four times as large as that in the Great Depression days.

There are other important differences between then and now. Public regulation of key sectors has prevented a repetition of the worst disasters of the 1930s. The stock market collapsed on October 19, 1929, falling more sharply and deeply than in 1929, but there was no wholesale slaughter of brokerage firms or their customers, because the margin accounts and easygoing brokerage practices of that earlier day had been outlawed. Similarly, the savings-and-loan debacle was potentially as grave as the bank failures of the early 1930s, but whereas in the Great Depression nine million savings accounts were wiped out, in the 1980s scarcely a cent was lost, because the federal government insured all S&L accounts up to \$100,000. Incidentally, that government obligation is responsible for most of the current \$350 billion-odd bulge in the deficit—something to be borne in mind by those who see all deficits as pure profligacy.

Hence, in overall terms the performance of the economy since 1980 is to that of the Depression years as a tremor is to a quake. To be sure, statistics of overall performance can be deceiving. The slow rise in “average” incomes during the past dozen years is a statistical artifact that reflects unprecedented gains for families in the topmost bracket, with incomes over \$600,000 a year, and actual losses in income for the two thirds of all families with incomes under about \$45,000. If there are no visions of revolutionary takeover, such as General MacArthur had, there are many fears of social breakdown, epitomized by widespread homelessness, crime, and drug addiction. And notwithstanding the comparatively lower increases in unemployment, joblessness has hit very hard. The past decade has been one of shrinking employment for the middle class as well as for the unskilled worker, and the past two “recovery” years have seen tremendous cutbacks at IBM, at Sears, and in the aircraft industry generally. Unemployment today is higher, not lower, than it was in 1991, when the “all clear” bell was rung. To deepen the gloom, the decade ahead holds prospects of a further migration of jobs overseas.

For all these reasons the recession has felt like a depression, even if not one of earthshaking proportions. Nonetheless, these disturbing realities are not the basic reason that I see our present experience as a reflection of the past. That reason can be best understood if we turn once again to our understanding of what depressions are.

Transformational Growth

WHEN I WAS STUDYING ECONOMICS IN COLLEGE, depressions were seen as the “troughs” of business cycles, which implied that they would naturally be followed, sooner or later, by periods of revival and boom. Nowadays depressions are generally regarded instead as periods of slower-than-average growth. I remember Alvin Hansen tracing the upward-sloping wavy outline of a series of business cycles on the blackboard and remarking in a bemused way that the trough of the last cycle was often higher than the peak of a cycle two or three waves back. Hansen was stumbling on the idea of changes in the rate of growth—not the self-correcting mechanisms of credit squeezes and inventory pile-ups, or the pendulum swings of optimism and pessimism—as the basic force behind prosperity and depression.

Such changes in the rate of growth have long been a fact of economic life. Capitalism is by its very nature always in a condition of potential growth, as business seeks to expand its output or to create new kinds of goods and services, but potential growth is by no means always realized. Sometimes the decisive element is the social structure surrounding investment, such as the relative strength of labor unions, the web of government regulations, the climate of opinion. More striking is the appearance of what the economist Edward Nell has called periods of transformational growth. In such periods new technologies literally reshape the economic landscape, opening whole new territories to business investment.

From this perspective, the uncontained depression of the thirties and the much milder one of our own times have an important aspect in common. Both followed in the wake of periods of large transformational changes. The twenties saw the gradual exhaustion of the extraordinary economic stimulus of the automobile. America literally rode to its prosperity during the long boom following the First World War—a boom that made the automobile industry the largest in the United States by 1923, that made it possible for tens of thousands of communities to prosper without rail or water connections, that spawned the ubiquitous garage and gas station, and that gave an immense boost to the oil industry. By 1927 the

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boom in new car sales was over, and three quarters of auto sales were replacements. New investment possibilities arose in the 1930s—frozen foods were coming in, the electric light bulb was an exciting new product—but they were not enough to establish the basis for a transformational boom. Had the credit system not been so rickety, the mistrust between business and government so deep, the subservience to the gold standard so slavish, a quicker and stronger recovery could perhaps have been mounted. But a technological impetus comparable to that of past booms seems to have been lacking. It was not provided until the Second World War itself opened a huge new investment terrain and the much-needed spending to finance it.

The contained depression of the 1980s followed the great transformative period of the 1950s and 1960s, when the jet plane, the computer, and the final emplacement of the welfare state brought about deep and pervasive change. Tourism, with its air traffic, car rentals, hotels, restaurants, and just plain shopping, became the largest single industry in the world; the computer affected the productivity and organization of businesses ranging from the neighborhood cleaner to the multinational corporation; the growth of government spending provided an unprecedented basis for long-term investment planning. Yet here, too, by the 1970s there were signs of an impending end to the transformative impetus. Tourism was by then a vast industry, but it was no longer a growing one. The computer was a staple, not a novelty, and improving its speed did not have the same galvanizing effect as introducing it in the first place. Not least, the welfare state had settled down to a stable flow within the gross national product: from 1975 to 1980 government spending as a percent of GNP actually decreased in Australia, Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Once again, the underlying problem was the failure of another transformational boom to take the place of the fading one. As in the earlier period, the great boom of the postwar world came to an end when its investment terrain was finally settled; and once that happened, no equally transformative successor took its place. Marvelous breakthroughs in technology occurred during the 1980s, and no doubt others will occur during the 1990s, but as yet none has opened an investment Klondike. The consequence has been a long period of insufficient growth that is very different from its near-mythic predecessor in surface details but much like it in its causal basis.

The Catalyst of Public Investment

THE QUESTION IS, WHAT NEXT? I DO NOT MEAN What will the new Administration do?—I will come to that in a moment—but What will the economy do? What can we expect from the raw forces of the market, the energies of capitalism, the existing and prospective state of technology?

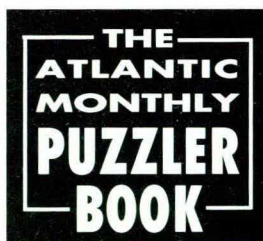
The only answer on which we can depend is that the economy will continue to do what it has been doing, helped along somewhat by an apparent recovery from the recession, and no doubt buoyed by expectations of growth which, however vague, will lift the spirits of the business community. An end to the recession is like a boat rocking back to a level position; brightened hopes are not a substitute for new economic territory to conquer. The underlying reality is that we move into the future as we have moved in the past—borne along in a system driven by a need for expansion, always on the alert for promising avenues for investment but never able to foresee whether or not their technological impact will generate strong growth. We do not know whether genetic engineering, ceramics, space technology, atomic physics, cellular telephones, or whatever comes next will open the gates to another great boom. Neither do we know whether the increasingly unified global patterns of production will spur growth or deter it, or whether increasingly automated production systems will open up new job horizons or simply condemn more working people to unemployment.

There is, however, a new possibility on the horizon—a possibility full of uncertainties but with the potential to serve as a transformational impetus. It is that the government itself can set in motion a bold and far-reaching improvement in our national public capital. This was, in fact, an important means by which the United States achieved its original takeoff into growth in the early nineteenth century, as the thriving business of barge transportation found its economic leverage vastly multiplied by the gradual emergence of a network of public improvements, capped by the opening, in 1825, of the audacious Erie Canal. That model of a boom led by public investment is what the Clinton campaign, in cautious language, was proposing; and hemmed about by a thousand difficulties, it is still what the Clinton Administration is hoping to achieve. Its purpose would be to set the stage for an invigoration of private enterprise by providing a public underpinning, like the canal boom, without which the boom could not get going in the first place.

The word for such a boom these days is “infrastructure.” In its narrowest meaning “infrastructure” refers to great physical works such as canals, roads, roadbeds, dams, sewer systems, and the like. But as the word is bandied about in Washington today, it refers to public reinforcement of our human as well as our physical capital. Education plays a central role, insofar as productive efficiency cannot be expected to flourish so long as the United States finishes last, or near last, in comparisons of its students’ test scores with those of its European or Japanese competitors. Research and development is another new salient for infrastructure, in such areas as more-gasoline-efficient engines, effective use of solar power, electric automobiles, advanced air-traffic control systems, and the much talked about but still nonexistent bullet or

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maglev trains needed to bind together urban centers. Not least is the immense challenge of reclaiming the economic vitality of the tenth of our population that today rots away in the urban slums we euphemistically call our inner cities.

The Stumbling Block of the Deficit

IS IT POLITICALLY IMAGINABLE THAT WE CAN LIFT ourselves by our bootstraps in such a fashion? Two great obstacles stand in the way. The first is the deficit. It is evident that a public-investment boom would cost—should cost—a great deal of money. The financier Felix Rohatyn has suggested that it would cost \$100 billion a year for ten years. The Nobel Prize-winning economist James Tobin has proposed \$60 billion a year, and during the campaign Bill Clinton spoke of a stimulus in the range of \$30–\$50 billion. After the election the Administration floated figures of \$15 billion to \$30 billion. These steadily diminishing numbers imply a jump-start rather than a full-scale boom in public investment, but the jump-start may make us think about using the government as a means of revitalizing the economy, not merely keeping it going.

That more ambitious aim will certainly not become part of the active public agenda until we have dealt with the deficit, a presence that hangs over the economy today much as the Depression did in the 1930s. What the deficit means, of course, is borrowing, and even the most modest infrastructure program will require something like \$150 billion of borrowing over the ten-year span that is normally projected for capital improvements. Yet I do not think that the obstacle is as formidable as it appears. The reason is that borrowing can be good as well as bad. Public borrowing to pay interest on the national debt or to meet the payroll of the armed forces would be an obvious waste of the public's savings and an abuse of the borrowing function, exactly as if a corporation borrowed to pay interest on its debt or the salaries of its employees. But public borrowing to build a new road system or to finance a major research-and-development program can be justified on precisely the same grounds as business borrowing to build a new plant. In both cases borrowing is expected to pay for itself over the long run—in the case of business, with revenues generated by the new plant; in the case of

government, with revenues that will result, without any increase in tax rates, from the growth in GNP generated by the new infrastructure.

Why is this basic similarity not widely recognized? The most important reason is that government does not keep its books the way business does. All corporations separate their capital borrowing and spending from their current revenues and costs. Only government—or, to be more precise, only the government of the United States—charges its borrowing against its regular income. The result is that Americans have no way of telling whether their government is borrowing for good purposes or bad. Suppose, for example, that we adopted Rohatyn's plan.

Because we do not distinguish capital expenditures from ordinary ones, this added spending would be set against our tax revenues, with the result that the \$100 billion borrowing would show up as an addition to our annual "deficit." If we had a "capital budget," the borrowing would be shown on a separate schedule that put only borrowing, not tax revenues, on one side, and only capital spending, not ordinary expenditures, on the other. We would then know that *that* much of our borrowing was being put to good use, and we could concentrate on bringing down the borrowing that was not.

Deficits might still be needed for a variety of peacetime purposes—to give a quick boost to general purchasing power if the economy should hit an air pocket, or to prevent catastrophes, such as allowing S&Ls to fail without honoring the insurance on their deposits. But a capital budget would be a first essential step to removing the incomprehension that today imperils even the most conservative and constructive use of the government's transformational economic powers.

In addition, to touch on a point of some political importance, a capital budget is likely to win the support of the business community. As I have said, every corporation, and every industrial nation except our own, separates its running expenses from its capital expenditures. Thus the Clinton Administration might well seek to defang the deficit by convening an unimpeachable committee of business executives to endorse an accounting system that would enable us to see whether we were squandering our national wealth by borrowing to pay for the ordinary expenses of government or enhancing it by borrowing to lay the basis for what we hope will become a transformational boom.

 *nderlying
the contained
depression of the
1980s was the failure
of another
transformational boom
to take the place of the
fading one. The question
is, What next?*



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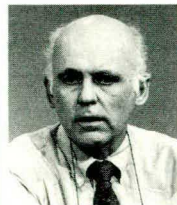
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The Liability to Inflation

THAT LEAVES THE SECOND, AND MUCH MORE OB-
 durate, problem of inflation. The Keynesian
 enthusiasm of the 1930s for public spending
 has dimmed before the awkward fact that cap-
 italism today is a great deal more inflation-prone than it
 was in the 1930s. Since the Second World War every cap-
 italist nation has been coping with pressures that did not
 exist when Alvin Hansen explained to congressional au-
 diences, as rapt as those at Harvard, how public spending
 could work its anti-depression magic. From 1935, when
 prices finally stopped falling, until 1940, consumer prices
 rose by only about two percent. Inflation was a word that
 frightened bankers but had no meaning for ordinary citi-
 zens until we got into the war in earnest, and quickly put
 on price controls. Once the war was over, price controls
 came off, but the cost of living did not soar; from 1947
 through 1967 the average yearly rise in consumer prices
 was around two percent.

The lurking inflationary menace with which we are fa-
 miliar did not arrive until the late 1960s, when the cost of
 living began to rise steadily each year, the percentage in-
 crease passing the double-digit mark in 1974. That alarm-
 ing breakthrough was an immediate consequence of the
 doubling of petroleum prices at the hands of the newly
 formed OPEC cartel, but "oil shock" was by no means the
 only reason for the advent of double-digit inflation
 throughout the Western world by the late 1970s. The cul-
 prit was more likely the strengthened position of labor in
 the welfare state, and insofar as the welfare state itself
 was built on Keynesian foundations, it is probably correct
 to call the inflationary propensity of modern capitalism
 an unwanted and unforeseen outcome of Keynesian
 economics.

This introduces an obstacle to starting up an infrastruc-
 ture boom which is of much greater substance than the
 deficit. Until the pressure for wage hikes can be prevent-
 ed from pushing up production costs, the likelihood is
 that at the first sign of the inflationary tendencies that
 would likely emerge from a public-investment boom, the
 Federal Reserve would raise interest rates to "cool down"
 the boom—which is to say, stop it in its tracks. The pres-
 sures generated by such a boom are not likely to be great
 if the scale of spending is as small as the numbers now
 being put forward by the Administration's spokesmen.
 But if, or when, a public boom of transformational poten-
 tial were to be launched, the pressures would very possi-

bly mount to levels that threatened economic, or even
 political, stability.

To those who see dire portents in the deliberate use of
 government as a transformational force in its own right,
 this would probably be regarded as a kind of divine retri-
 bution for having succumbed to the Keynesian entice-
 ment in the first place. But there is a more sobering side
 to the matter. It is that any major private boom would be
 cursed in the same way. The dollars that push prices up
 exert the same pressure whether they come from Feder-
 al Reserve accounts or from corporate ones. Inflation will
 accompany a business-led boom exactly as it would a
 publicly led one. Indeed, to the extent that public capital
 is today more productive than private, because it is in
 shorter supply, a public boom should be less inflationary
 than a private boom.

For that reason, a much talked about means of taming
 inflation is some kind of concordat among labor, manage-
 ment, and government, perhaps along the lines being
 tried out in Germany. It would work this way: labor
 agrees to hold the line on wages in exchange for some
 union voice in labor-related corporate policy and a strong
 program of unemployment insurance and job retraining;
 management is given the right to deploy labor efficient-
 ly, in exchange for full union recognition; and govern-
 ment becomes the coordinator of the economy but not
 its boss.

Some kind of "social contract" along these lines is now
 emerging in many parts of the industrial world, but there
 is no sign of one here, and there are deep-rooted forces in
 our political culture that militate strongly against its
 emergence. Some years ago the political scientist Sey-
 mour Martin Lipset compared the national ethos of two
 nations of strikingly similar historical backgrounds—the
 United States and Canada. Both countries in their early
 years went through the character-shaping experience of
 conquering and settling a vast wilderness to the west.
 From this experience, however, emerged two very differ-
 ent national heroes: for the Canadians it was the scarlet-
 jacketed North West Mounted Policeman, bringing law
 and order to the new territories; for the United States it
 was the cowboy. There is still a certain cowboy outlook
 deep in the American mentality which does not bode
 well for the creation of the kind of social contract that
 may be necessary if we are to find an effective anti-de-
 pression policy. I suspect that this is the single most diffi-
 cult, protracted, and important economic challenge that
 President Clinton will have to face. □

Can An Intelligent Person Be Religious?



Among the well-educated the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted, unlettered, and irrational, that the price of salvation is checking your mind at the Pearly Gates. Yet, from Harvard to Berkeley, and among inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely the result of the failure of secular substitutes for religion (such as positivism, rationalism, hedonism, consumerism, technological utopianism, Freudianism, and Marxism) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: evil, goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

Contrary to stereotypes, this religious renaissance does not imply a retreat from working for peace, justice, and human dignity; nor does it signify a hostility to science, only an appreciation of the limits of science and technology.

We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual engagement with the sacred. Among other things, we scrutinize the religious dimensions of the great events and issues of the past and present, and probe the wisdom offered not only by the Bible and Church fathers, but also by such giants as St. Francis, Aquinas, Dante, Kierkegaard, Newman, Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Bonhoeffer, Barth, Niebuhr, Gandhi, Buber, Auden, Eliot, Silone, Maritain, Merton, Schumacher,

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Salzburg Speculation

Bracing new life, and international controversy, for an old festival

by Matthew Gurewitsch

SALZBURG WAS HOT last summer, very hot. According to the Vienna newspapers, the temperatures in Austria were the highest since 1807. The Salzburg Festival was hot too, in more ways than one.

Three years after the death of Herbert von Karajan, the wizardly titan whose taste had shaped the festival since the late 1950s, a new artistic director was starting over. Salzburg seasons are like vintages, but Salzburg 1992 was a special case. Every item of the program came under scrutiny, not only for its own sake but also for what it might portend. With commercialism sweeping the landscape of the arts like Attila the Hun, the question arises, Can high culture survive? And if not in Salzburg, where?

The man of the hour was Gérard Mortier, the quotable Belgian aesthete, whose latest coup had been to turn the Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, in Brussels, into one of the world's most talked-about opera houses. Now Salzburg was his show, and days before it started, last July, the German news-magazine *Der Spiegel* quoted him in chipper tones: "Already the angel of death is hovering over the festival." The interested public was torn between two questions. Would Mortier stay? Would the festival let him?

NO ONE DENIES that the old Salzburg's bell had tolled. Under Karajan's icy gaze the festival had crystallized into an elitist celebration of personality—chiefly Karajan's

own. It attracted the darlings of the recording companies, paid them stratospheric fees, and presented them, at astronomical prices (last year up to \$360 for an opera ticket), to an audience theoretically as far off the scale in artistic discernment as it unquestionably was in net worth. By law the Austrian government would have covered any deficit. (So far it has not had to.)

While Karajan lived, his eminence went unchallenged. All the same, by the late eighties the Salzburg Festival looked out upon a rising tide of restlessness. Whoever came next was going to have to make it younger, fresher, more alive, and at least segments of it more affordable. To Mortier, educated by the Jesuits, it is not just a question of economic survival, though it is that also.

He complained, as others did, that marketing reigned supreme at Karajan's festival while the spirit went hungry.

In Mortier's view, the way forward is the way back. He invokes the principles of Salzburg's founding fathers, first and foremost the poet Hugo von Hofmannsthal and that poet of the stage Max Reinhardt, who banded together in the aftermath of the First World War to reaffirm the loftiest values of Central European civilization. Mozart they held to be the embodiment of those values, the baroque architecture of the city their lasting symbol. The founders' plan was innovation firmly grounded in tradition. So is Mortier's.

Last summer the chief points from a manifesto of Hofmannsthal's appeared on the façade of the Festspielhaus, declaring that at the highest level opera and drama are one; that the distinction between a learned audience and the mass audience is false; that a festival demands, on the part of the performers and the part of the audiences, a kind of concentration impossible in a metropolis; and that Salzburg, the place of Mozart's birth, in the heart of the heart of Europe, in touch with the continent's countless contrasting influences, is the very place for a festival to flourish.

Salzburg's programs have long been overwhelming. Last year's was demonstratively so: eight operas, some seventy concerts of every description, four evenings of theater, plus sundry poetry readings, all in five weeks. Yet the schedule was composed with thought and art, and that was a good sign. Woven through the concert programs were rich retrospectives of music in all conceivable genres by three seminal composers Salzburg had hitherto ignored: Leoš Janáček (1854-1928) and Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992), each also represented by a major opera production, and Pierre Boulez (born in 1925), who also conducted on several occasions. Classics of the twentieth century, it was promised, would continue to be a priority in years to come.

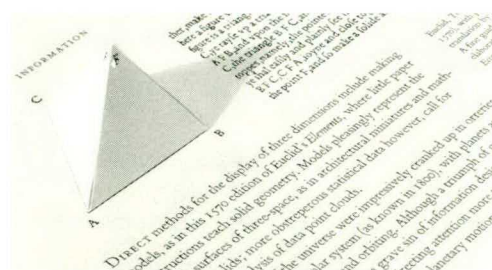
Stars of billboard magnitude were mostly excluded, but the doors were opened to important artists new to the festival though by no means all young: the radical Viennese conductor-musicologist Nikolaus Harnoncourt, for instance, whom Karajan had blackballed; the stylish French early-music ensemble Les Arts Florissants; the moody Russian baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky;

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and many more. Elder statesmen like Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, preeminent master of the lied, and the conductor Christoph von Dohnányi were brought back to the fold after long spells away. In addition, Mortier called in the cadre of fashionable directors—Peter Sellars, Luc Bondy, Karl-Ernst and Ursel Herrmann (husband and wife)—whose opera productions had won him a reputation for heady intellectual adventure in Brussels.

By no means as an afterthought, spoken drama regained coequal status with opera under the aegis of Peter Stein, the doyen of Germany's progressive stage directors. This, too, is in the spirit of the festival's founders. Site-specific dramatic presentations, whether plays or operas, are precisely what they set out to create, inspired above all by two of this supremely theatrical city's most stunning architectural spaces, both from the seventeenth century: the Domplatz, or Cathedral Square, and the Felsenreitschule, the triple-arcaded Riding School in the Cliff, hewn into sheer rock.

In its sixth decade as a festival venue, the Domplatz, alas, is perennially saddled with the now-decrepit *Jedermann*, Hofmannsthal's adaptation of the Middle English morality play *Everyman*, in a staging derived from that of Reinhardt. The new administration wants to retire it; whether something suitable can be found or made to replace it is not yet clear. That leaves the celebrated, intractable Felsenreitschule, which has also long suffered bad times. Last summer it was a halcyon space again—a happy portent.

THE FIRST production at the Felsenreitschule last year was Stein's German-language *Julius Caesar*, shown at three in the afternoon. Weather permitting, the daytime scenes were played as in Shakespeare's Globe Theater, under the open sky. For the night scenes, beginning with a meteor shower on the eve of the Ides of March, the roof rolled shut, and the action continued mostly by firelight from torches and braziers.

Under this honest, gorgeous illumination, the epic swept forward with the force of living history. During the funeral orations the extras, a terrifying 207 strong, pressed in close on Brutus and Mark Antony or drifted away, according to the magnetism of the speak-

er's rhetoric. Without forcing contemporary parallels, the play conveyed a timeless message as urgent as the latest headlines. It seemed no intrusion when an actor announced at intermission that he and his fellows would be standing in the halls to collect money for the victims of the fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, not 400 miles away.

As last summer's other major offering at the Felsenreitschule, Peter Sellars directed Messiaen's sprawling *Saint François d'Assise*, unstaged since its world premiere, at the Paris Opéra, in 1983. Unlike Stein, who had left the stage of the Felsenreitschule practically empty, Sellars filled it with stuff: at left, a wooden platform angled at a breakneck pitch; at right, the suggestion of a Gothic cathedral under construction, also of wood; in between, an immense grid of dimmable neon lights, four layers deep, in four colors; and a few dozen video monitors, some suspended in the air, the rest reconfigured on the stage from scene to scene.

None of this was by any conventional standard beautiful, and the visual overload from the videos and the blazing grid set the nerve ends jangling. Messiaen's ecstatic transformations of birdsong, his bejeweled timbres from an apparently infinite instrumental palette, and his (unfortunately) comparatively simplistic utterances for the human voice reached ears forced open to the miraculous by incipient migraine. Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic unfurled bolt after bolt of glittering, thunderous color, like the banners of the seraphim.

Messiaen's frankly static drama lies mostly in the interior quest for grace. Leaving the composer's literal-minded stage directions behind, Sellars invented imagery that had the force of true simplicity. In the "Sermon to the Birds," José van Dam wandered among TV monitors stretched across the width of the stage to form an emerald meadow dense with an alert winged congregation. For the scene of the stigmata, the beams of hand-held lanterns pinned the saint to the floor in a cross of light; an angel poured red paint on his hands and feet from a basin and watched it flow down the tilted platform in streams as straight as if drawn with a ruler. Such moments may be reproducible elsewhere. But what of the peak of Messiaen's spire? Saint Francis is dying; God appears to him in the person of the lep-

er the saint has earlier kissed and cured. When a spotlight picked out the leper in a distant arch in the cliff, it was as if the stone itself had begun to sing a silent song of time that passes and truth that abides. For *this* stroke of grace, no other space will do.

The work at the Felsenreitschule realized the festival ideal: not just to improve on routine but to transcend it. Whether last season's one operatic event of comparable impact similarly broke away is a matter of dispute. At the Small Festival Hall, a thoroughly ordinary theater, Richard Strauss's *Salome* received a performance that owed nothing to the tried and true. Rather than bewilder the mind with lush fabrics, jewels, and perfumed Orientalia, the director Luc Bondy brought the action forward into a harsh, black-on-black post-Brechtian here and now, ensnaring the audience not with atmosphere but with the close, lethal play of the principals. (In the infamous Dance of the Seven Veils the lissome Catherine Malfitano shed not one layer.) In the pit Christoph von Dohnányi and the Vienna Philharmonic coolly sheared away the bombast. Clinical as the playing was, at times the instrumental voices seemed almost human, and the score's edge-of-the-cliff waltz rhythms stole their way into the brain and set it reeling. It was very good; it was eye-opening; but it was still *Salome*.

Set these productions against those of the decadent *l'art pour l'art* team Karl-Ernst and Ursel Herrmann (the husband designs, the couple directs), whose fascination with pedantic academic conceits outstrips by miles their interest in the opera at hand. True, their stage carpentry is deluxe. But what of that when they interrupt the flow of a Mozart score with long silences so that characters may slowly peel off their socks and wash their feet in real water, or pick up, stem by stem, flowers flung to the floor scenes earlier? The distrust of the work such hollow theatrics betray, not to say the contempt, was everywhere apparent.

A single production of this sort might pass. Mortier's first Salzburg season featured the one with the feet (*La finta giardiniera*) and the one with the bouquet (*La clemenza di Tito*), a pair of Mozarts-by-the-Herrmanns that Mortier has shown and toured on many previous occasions. Alas for those who subscribe to the sovereignty of the ex-

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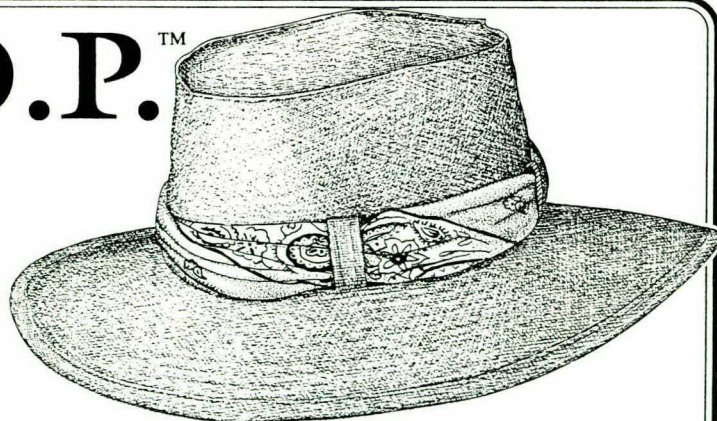
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pressive powers of words and music, these revivals bespeak an allegiance to imposed ideas.

SO WHAT DID Mortier's first Salzburg season add up to, and what did it foretell? The evidence is inconclusive. Alongside work of high seriousness Mortier also offered high chichi. A look forward to the coming season suggests both a determination to maintain the high ground and some prudent but regrettable retrenchment, along with a continuing susceptibility to the merely decorative.

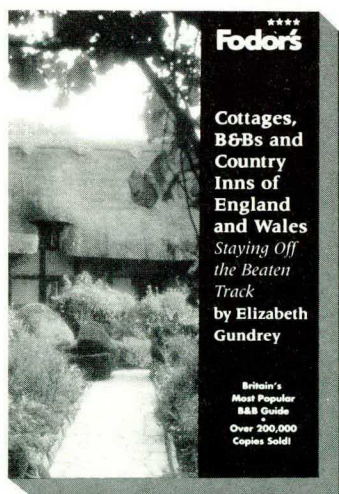
Consider, for instance, the difference between last year's twentieth-century retrospectives and this year's. Last year, as mentioned, the festival paid lavish tribute to three masters: Janáček, Messiaen, and Boulez. The prison opera *From the House of the Dead*, the Janáček centerpiece, received a superbly cast, incongruously soul-soothing, sky-blue production in the festival's largest hall. It seduced an audience itching to hate it and sold out every performance. This and the chief Messiaen contribution, *Saint François*, were in addition to numerous Janáček and Messiaen works spread through the concert schedule.

As for Boulez, his first concert, an all-Boulez program conducted by the composer, inaugurated a new concert venue called the Lehrbauhof, inconveniently located and consequently the object of intense curiosity. An all-star audience turned out for the occasion, and the old guard rubbed elbows with the new: Eliette von Karajan (the maestro's widow), Madame Pompidou, Peter Sellars, Daniel Barenboim, and the inevitable Count Walderdorff, proprietor of the Goldener Hirsch hotel, Salzburg's fanciest address.

Don't figure on any glittering reunions in this summer's lower-key Twentieth-Century Classics series, honoring the Hungarian composers György Ligeti and György Kurtág. The composers will share the bill in four modestly scaled concerts at the Mozarteum, a lovely Jugendstil hall on the side of the river that the high-culture vanguard tends to ignore. Ligeti gets an additional program at the Felsenreitschule, and that's about it.

Julius Caesar, which launched the Shakespearean initiative at the Felsenreitschule so brilliantly, is to be revived. In addition, Stein has hired the challenging young British director Deborah

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Warner to put on the bitter *Coriolanus*, which any Shakespearians on hand this year will regard as a must. But will the walk-up trade that materialized for last year's better-known attraction return?

As for opera, you will comb the schedule top to bottom for a prospective landmark on the order of *From the House of the Dead* or *Saint François*. One surprise is *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, but the surprise is less a matter of repertoire than of venue. For unfathomable reasons, Monteverdi's wicked history of love and politics in Nero's Rome will play in the Large Festival Hall, where its miraculous fabric of speech in music is all but certain to be tattered. The most it seems safe to hope for from the new Salzburg productions is work in the impressive class of *Salome*, additional performances of which the management has added to this year's schedule by popular demand.

Something has been struck from this year's schedule too: a visit by La Scala with the Verdi *Requiem* and a fully staged opera under the baton of La Scala's music director, Riccardo Muti. Many suspect that Muti, who has conducted opera at Salzburg for twenty consecutive seasons to deserved rapturous praise, covets Karajan's mantle.

Last year, slated to lead the Herrmanns' staging of *La clemenza di Tito*, Muti withdrew nine days before opening night, citing unbridgeable artistic differences and giving the new régime its first full-blown scandal. This year neither Muti nor Mortier has kept it to himself that the two locked horns over the choice of an opera. Cherubini's *Lo doiska* was under discussion, as was Rossini's *La donna del lago*—both rarities well worth the festival's notice. Muti was keen to bring Verdi's *Don Carlos*. No thanks, Mortier replied. Muti's cast included Luciano Pavarotti, for whom Mortier has no use; worse, Muti's director is Franco Zeffirelli, whose name has become a byword for showy escapism. Never mind Muti's well-established gift for awakening the full theatrical force of an opera by means of words and music alone. On Mortier's watch, concept is all. A Zeffirelli show would look old hat.

Old hat, new hat . . . Is the Salzburg Festival a fashion show? In Karajan's last days it often came to that. Under Mortier—with Hofmannsthal's manifesto posted by the door—one wishes it otherwise. This year might tell. □

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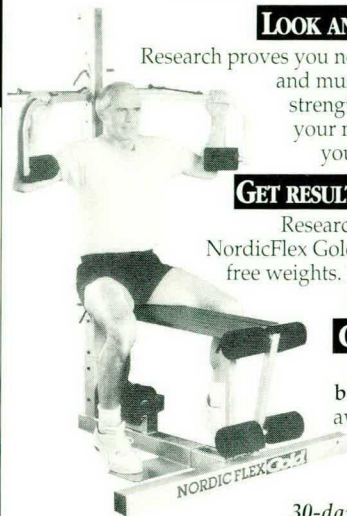
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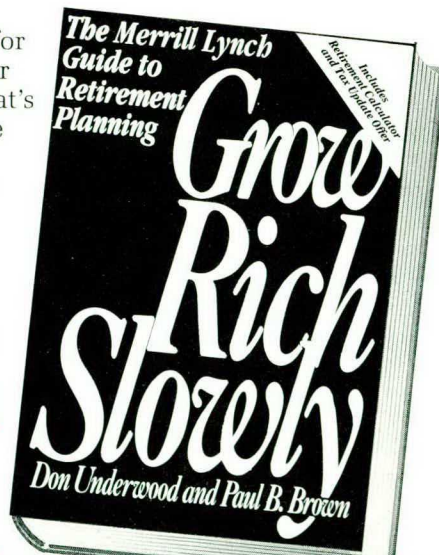
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Friuli is ancient, beautiful, big-hearted, and untouristed

by Corby Kummer

A FEW YEARS ago, after just four days of exploring Friuli, an overlooked region in the far northeastern corner of Italy, I knew I had to return—and return I have, often. What brings me back? Friuli is a place to experience the whole history of Italy, from the ancient classical and barbaric past to Middle European nationalism, while stopping frequently to sample wonderful wine and food. The region's soft vine-covered hills and plains produce the best white wine in Italy and some of the best red. The restaurants, of a nearly unrivaled quality and professionalism, are restaurants to dream of.

Friuli has, as well, the largest gathering of artifacts of the Lombards, the enigmatic people that for two centuries ruled northern Italy; the most pleasurable museum of Roman antiquities I know; the longest extant early-Christian mosaic floor in Western Europe, which besides its stupendous size is full of details both moving and lovely; and crucial First World War battlefields. In the fastidious city of Udine is a square that looks like a stage set from nearby Venice, and shops famous for their elegance. North of Udine the landscape changes to the imperious white Alps of the Carnia.

I admit that I enjoy knowing I will likely be the only American on what have become my Friuli rounds. All this

undiscovered territory little more than an hour from Venice, and occupied by people who are delighted to see you and wouldn't think of overcharging you—I wonder that so few people decide to escape the hordes at San Marco.

Most of all, what brings me back are the friends I have made. In a country where it is easy to make friends, especially if you speak the language, Friuli is uniquely warm, the people unexpectedly tender in a hardworking northern region. Friuli catches the heart.

EVEN IF present-day Friuli is relatively free of tourists, in the past uninvited visitors trampled it frequently. The region, with several easy passes across the Alps, was a natural gateway to the Italian peninsula from the east. At various times Celts, Greeks, Romans, Germanic tribes, Slovenes, and Austrians occupied parts of Friuli; the Friulian dialect, incomprehensible to an Italian-speaker, is made up of a base of medieval Latin with Celtic, Slavic, late Greek, German, and modern Italian elements.

Each group left traces. Among the most visible today are those of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which in the nineteenth century dominated much of Friuli in order to gain access to the Adriatic port of Trieste. The Austrian influence shows in snug hillside chalets,



Above, left, a relief carved by the enigmatic Lombards, the Germanic tribe who by the eighth century had conquered two thirds of the Italian peninsula; above, a view of Cividale, the Lombards' artistic capital

Baroque plaster ornament that dresses many small hill towns, and, on every dessert cart, flaky, raisin-studded pastries, strudels, and tortes.

After the Second World War, Yugoslavia absorbed much of Friuli. Trieste was ceded to Italy. The border cities of Gorizia, a section of which is actually in Yugoslavia, and Trieste are in the region called Venezia Giulia, now administratively joined to Friuli. The talk along the Yugoslavian border has naturally been political in the past few years. The action, though, remains economic: a strong work ethic has long made Friuli a notably industrious region.

Of the many invaders, the group that arouses the most local pride is the Lom-



ELIO CIOL (THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE PAGE)

bards, called Longobardi in Italian, and remembered now because they gave their name to the present-day Lombardy, the region around Milan. A Germanic tribe, the Lombards entered Italy in 568 from Pannonia, the Roman colony along the Danube, and by the eighth century occupied two thirds of the Italian peninsula. The duchy of Friuli was a crucial stronghold for the Lombards, and its center under them was Cividale, one of three cities that have been the capital of Friuli. (The other two are Aquileia, whose greatest glory was under Rome, and Udine, a capital of the Venetian Republic.) After two centuries of rule, sometimes harmonious and frequently not, the Lombards were defeated by the father of Charlemagne, Pepin the Short, who had come to the aid of a threatened Pope. Charlemagne, after another struggle, assumed the Lombard crown in 774, and Italy was not again so nearly unified for another thousand years.

The Archaeological Museum in Cividale, with its gold buckles and rings and elaborately worked Lombard crosses of beaten gold leaf, has just been transferred to a Palladian palace next to the Cividale Cathedral. Its clear installation is unusual for not being overloaded with ornamental and ceremonial objects that seem to merge into one big iron belt buckle. The tiny Tempietto Longobardo nearby shows the pinnacle of Lombard art; its majestic sculptured figures date from a time shortly after the tribe had converted to Christianity.

Any visit to Cividale must include a stop at the Pasticceria Gelateria Ducale, where you can taste fine examples of the local specialty gubana, a cake filled with cocoa, nuts, and candied fruit, and a surpassing fig ice cream.

Not far away, near Corno di Rosazzo, is a reminder of another invading Germanic tribe: a plaque commemorating the first rifle shot fired in the terrible

Isonzo battles of the First World War. Along the Isonzo, which flows through the area on its way to the Adriatic, Italians fought constant and futile battles as a holding action to prevent the Austrians from sending reinforcements to Verdun. Hemingway set much of *A Farewell to Arms* in Friuli, and anyone interested in the war should go to the small museum at Redipuglia, near the airport that serves Trieste and Udine. The monument to the more than 100,000 soldiers buried there, a giant staircase to nothing, is a forbidding example of Fascist architecture from 1938; the battlefields nearby cannot but be moving.

CIVIDALE IS in the heart of the most pleasant part of Friuli—the two adjacent wine-growing areas between Udine and Gorizia, the Collio and Colli Orientali. In the nineteenth century the territory around Cividale became a summer resort, favored for its

cool breezes. Many palatial turn-of-the-century villas survive, appearing suddenly on vine-covered hills as you round a curve.

In the Collio and Colli Orientali you can ramble all day visiting restaurants and wineries. The most opulent of the many superb restaurants is Aquila d'Oro ("Golden Eagle"), in the imposing thirteenth-century Castello di Trussio, near Cividale, whose two crenelated towers loom for miles. Giorgio Tuti, its engaging young proprietor, has assembled a wine cellar that is among the best in the country. The food, prepared by his sister, Anna, is sometimes too refined for my taste but is very good. Despite the elegance of the zucchini blossoms with scampi or tournedos with fresh porcini, what I won't forget is the bean-and-barley soup. Wines are also for sale in a museum-like shop; don't trip over the stacked jeroboams of Château d'Yquem and Château Lafite on your way to the Friulian bottles.

You might have to carry home a sampler of Friulian wines to taste all the memorable ones you won't have a chance to drink with a meal. The winemaker's winemaker is Josko Gravner, a laconic, tall, blond Slovenian who is the head of Gravner; his wines, particularly his Sauvignons and Chardonnays, and those of Mario Schiopetto (his Tocai is especially popular) are always in great demand and scarce supply. Other local godfathers are Livio Felluga (known for Terre Alte, a blend of several white grapes), Silvio Jermann (Vintage Tunina, another white blend), and Vittorio Puiatti (Sauvignon, Chardonnay), all of whom bottle wines under their own names, and the consultant Walter Filiputti, who with his wife, Patrizia, has built up Abbazia di Rosazzo (Ronco delle Acacie, a white) and has recently elevated Castello di Spessa (Sauvignon). Also not to be neglected are the delicious wines of Girolamo Dorigo (Montsclapade, a blend of reds, and Pi-

gnolo, a red grape the Dorigos have helped to revive), Volpe Pasini (Cabernet, Chardonnay), and Marina Danieli (Faralta, a red blend). For more on Friuli's wines, see the invaluable *Eating in Italy*, by Faith Heller Willinger, and Burton Anderson's *Wine Atlas of Italy*.

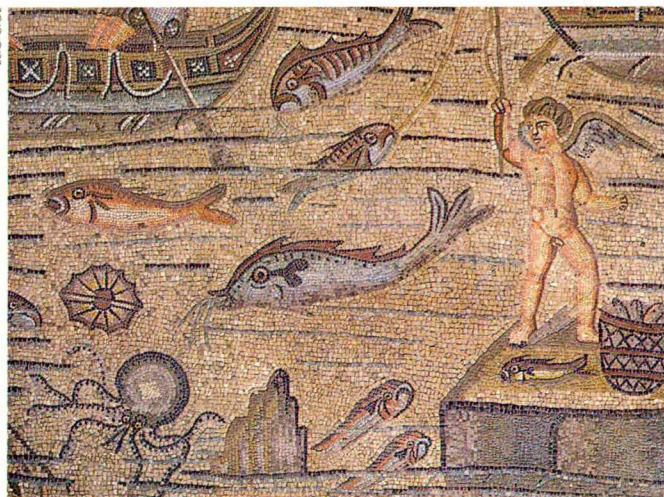
Many winemakers will be happy to show you around the cantina, or cellar, and let you take a ride around the vineyards; you'll almost certainly end up tasting a very good wine. Wineries, in fact, draw many visitors to Friuli. Call in advance to see if someone who speaks English is available to give you driving directions. Good bets for English-speakers and warm welcomes are the wineries of Livio Felluga, whose land is memorably beautiful, Girolamo Dorigo, Volpe Pasini, Silvio Jermann, and Vittorio Puiatti.

The proper way to end any occasion in Friuli is with grappa, made by distilling the remnants of the winemaking process. Quality grappa is synonymous with Nonino, a family distillery that has singlehandedly turned a harsh, bracing drink, frankly hard to get down, into a soothing, warming liqueur. In 1973 the Noninos launched a trend toward making single-grape grappas, many with traditional Friulian grapes such as Verduzzo, usually made into a dessert wine, and Refosco, with hints of wild berries; in 1984 they began making Ûe (dialect for "grapes"), distilled from whole grapes rather than crushed seeds and skin or aged wine. The Ûe from Picolit, a frail grape legendarily hard to grow (bottles of Picolit dessert wine are rare and expensive) is of an unforgettable refinement and intensity.

The woman behind the innovation is Giannola Nonino, who has been aptly described as a hurricane. She and her three daughters busy themselves with new ideas and image-building while the father, Benito, oversees production at the distillery, in Percoto, near Udine. A strikingly handsome family, they are fiercely devoted to Friuli, and they welcome visitors.

For all the splendid dining the Collio offers to go with its wines, my heart is with the homely Da Romea, in Manzano, an ugly modern town in Colli Orientali which lives on chairmaking. Until it was decorated (for the first time) a few months ago, Da Romea looked like an indifferent roadside restaurant, despite a cozy private dining room with pine paneling and a fireplace. Now its





At left, in the fastidious city of Udine, the "most beautiful Venetian square on terra firma"; above, at Aquileia, a scene from the story of Jonah and the whale, part of a stupendously large early-Christian mosaic

IF THE NAIVE, flat-patterned art of the Lombards is an acquired taste, the Roman and early-Christian art at Aquileia is simply beautiful. The Romans founded Aquileia, in 181 B.C., to protect their empire at the Alps, and it became an active port. Attila the Hun razed the city in 452, but the ruins of the port are still visible along a cypress-lined walk beside a now almost dry riverbed.

appearance is fancier, in powder blue, if not terribly warm or personal. The cook is about as warm as anyone could be, though: a shy woman named Leda della Rovere, with a funny, wide, loving face, who runs the restaurant with her mother and brother. The first time I dined at Da Romea, I was so entranced by the homemade potato and squash gnocchi and hand-rolled pastas and soufflé-like vegetable timbales, each lighter and better than the last, that I forgot to take notes. On other visits I have simply left myself in Della Rovere's hands (which all regular diners do; she is especially popular with winemakers) and waited to be transported.

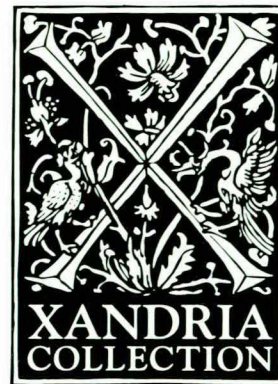
Recently I went into the kitchen and watched Della Rovere put together a simple flat pear cake to add to the dessert cart. I asked about the berries of a branch of calycanthus, which I had seen on a table. Her mother led me by the hand out the back door to the tree where she had just cut the branches, and held one to my nose so that I could smell its perfume. Standing in the corner of a parking lot, I felt the pleasure a child would with a devoted grandmother. Because I had to drive some distance and couldn't stay for lunch, Leda insisted on sending me off with a loaf of walnut bread, chunks of a grainy mountain Montasio that her cheese seller and no other procures, and half an apple strudel. Is it any wonder I keep going back to Friuli?

The Archaeological Museum is a neoclassical villa remodeled in the mid-1950s. The villa, with its abundance of natural light, is a congenial place to view a superb collection of Roman sculpture, glass, cameos, and other objects. As at Cividale, there isn't too much of anything, so museum fatigue never sets in. A series of covered walkways in the gardens are lined with architectural fragments so rich in Greek and Roman detail that renderings of them could make up a style book. They are a perfect place for a picnic.

Visitors come to Aquileia less for the museum than for the mosaic floor of the basilica, the longest Paleo-Christian mosaic floor known in Western Europe. It was laid in the fourth century, the epoch when Aquileia was at the height of its ecclesiastical powers—only Milan, which at the time housed the ruling court, rivaled it in power. The floor was covered over during reconstructions of the basilica, and was rediscovered only in 1909. The first sight of the mosaic makes you almost giddy—it covers more than 900 square yards. Then you slow down and look at the Old and New Testament scenes, with their wondrously observed aquatic and avian life.

The third capital of Friuli, Udine, has remained the financial and political center since Venice took over the region, in 1420. Venice ruled until 1797, and its artistic influence is everywhere apparent: the main square, which the city claims is the "most beautiful Venetian square on terra firma," has a Venetian Gothic colonnade and a clock tower.

ins of the port are still visible along a cypress-lined walk beside a now almost dry riverbed.



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er faced with a rampant lion; a winged lion sits atop a towering column.

Udine is the most worldly place in Friuli. Austrians come for regular Saturday-afternoon shopping sprees that locals call "the second invasion," and find very well-made clothing, at a price. People don't go to Udine to eat, but there are two excellent caf  s: that of Volpe Pasini, which also includes a wine bar and a gourmet shop, and the Caff   Contarena, which recently was restored to its high-ceilinged Vienna Secession glory, with mosaics of bunches of grapes and platter-bearing putti.

People do go to the environs of Udine, however, for some of the most memorable food in Friuli. A short drive away is Trattoria Blasut, in Lavariano, a restaurant that straddles the line between rustic and elegant with perfect ease. It serves excellent local products such as the sweet prosciutto di San Daniele, the most famous Italian prosciutto besides Parma. Everything with goose is

excellent, particularly tagliolini in goose sauce and goose broth with giblets. Faith Heller Willinger told me recently that Blasut gets better each time she visits.

Ristorante Boschetti, in Tricesimo, a half hour from Udine, is known for the warmth and high standards of its proprietors, the Trentin family (Rinaldo, who usually greets guests, speaks very good English and is especially kind), and for its Friulian dishes. Ask for such local specialties as pasta filled with bietina, a wild herb akin to mild nettles, and smoked ricotta.

Farther north are the Carnic mountains, the most foreign place in Friuli. The reason to go, aside from the green valleys, barns with quaint wooden roofs, and white mountains that rival Switzerland's, is to eat in Tolmezzo, a bit more than an hour by car from Udine. In that small city, where old men gather to play cards in smoky storefront clubs on the main street, the leading cook in Carnia

Above, a vineyard in the Collio, an area that produces many of Italy's best white wines; at right, local grappas on the sideboard at Trattoria Blasut, one of many restaurants in Friuli that straddle the line between rustic and elegant

and, I think, Friuli, Gianni Cosetti, improvises on traditional Carnic cooking at the Albergo Ristorante Roma with seemingly inexhaustible skill.

Cosetti makes liberal use of a special ricotta, this one

smoked with rosemary and other mountain herbs, both in pasta fillings and in what I consider the supreme polenta dish—a soft, creamy polenta with shavings of smoked ricotta and white truffle, gilded with browned specks of cornmeal in a brown butter. Polenta is the universal dish in Friuli: corn came into wide use there earlier than anywhere else in Italy, according to the historian Vincenzo Buonassisi. Cosetti also makes a silken, light "crazy" pasta using just flour, water, and melted butter. Corn-

meal shows up again in delicious, friable buttery cookies studded with pine nuts and raisins.

Cosetti is a one-man emissary of Carnic culture, and he can arrange for you to see the rich Museum of Folk Art a few blocks away, even if the custodian happens to be playing cards down the street. There you will discover the likely inspiration for the modern, colorful geometric and floral patterns of the Missonis, the family of designers, who have many friends in Friuli (the father grew up in Trieste); Missoni tablecloths cover Cosetti's seven tables. The chief industry of Carnia in the 1700s was linen, which was grown and spun in the mountains; the museum's samples of 200-year-old textiles are so fresh that they look like they could be put on sale tomorrow. There is still a source for these bold, finely worked linens—the Carnica Arte Tessile factory, a few minutes away by car, where huge jacquard looms now weave by computer. Be warned that the store does not take credit cards, and that the sumptuous linens are as expensive as they are desirable.

THE MOST comfortable inn in Friuli is the Golf Hotel, in San Floriano, in the wine-country hills near Gorizia. The golf course is nine holes that wind up and down the vine-covered hillside and orchards, where players are invited to pick a piece of fruit during a game; there are tennis courts and a large pool, too. The rooms, in two renovated villas, are decorated with handsome antiques and crammed with creature comforts. Many overlook the hills of Yugoslavia, and from others you can see the Adriatic on a clear day. The hotel is run by Isabella Formentini, the daughter of a noble family that has long made wine in San Floriano, a town it essentially owns. Her father has devoted his life to promoting "agritourism"; down the street from the inn is an exhibition of winemaking equipment. Each room in the hotel is named for a wine, and Formentini leaves a

bottle of it for each newly arrived guest.

In Udine there is the Astoria, a sort of mini-grand hotel, where mostly businessmen stay. For greater centrality and an acceptable level of comfort—qualities too rarely joined in the region—go to the three-star Locanda alle Officine, a two-year-old motel across from the Danieli steel factory in Buttrio, on the state road that runs between Udine and Gorizia, a road on which seemingly every trip begins. Unlike its three-star competitors (the Italian licensing board works on a five-star system; the Golf Hotel and the Astoria have four stars) along the same highway, the Campiello and the Wiener Hotel, the Locanda offers big rooms and a view of a green lawn rather than the road.

Also in the wine country is La Subida, a welcoming country inn and restaurant (the formal name of the restaurant is Al Cacciatore). As you enter, you see the centerpiece of many of the restaurants in the region, and of nearly every old Friulian house—a fogolar, or raised open fireplace below an onion-shaped chimney dome and sometimes curtained on three sides. The wine cellar is full of good local wines.

La Subida has six pleasant apartments with beamed ceilings, fogolars with benches around them, and stacks of firewood outside the door. There are horses, a tennis court, a pool, and a nearby nature preserve with well-marked hiking trails. The rooms are so popular that during the summer only bookings for stays of a week or more are accepted; shorter stays are allowed for the rest of the year. It seems worth waiting for a room there, if only to have your own fogolar, the perfect symbol of Friuli's warmth. □



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Books

Tusk, Tusk

by Kenneth Brower

AT THE HAND OF MAN:

Peril and Hope
for Africa's Wildlife
by Raymond Bonner.
Knopf, \$24.00.

A YEAR AGO, in Cameroon, I accompanied a French doctor, François Morel, on some of the occasional visits he paid to a pygmy encampment in the rain forest of Campo Reserve, near the border with Equatorial Guinea. Dr. Morel is sixty. An old Africa hand, he killed many elephants in his youth, when elephants were everywhere in Francophone Africa. Now, with elephants scarce, he is full of regrets. On the path to the pygmies, Morel walked briskly but noiselessly, hoping always to surprise the pygmy *ganga*, the sorcerer, before the man could slip away. The *ganga* was Morel's competition as healer, and the doctor hoped to work out a rapprochement. The sorcerer was never home.

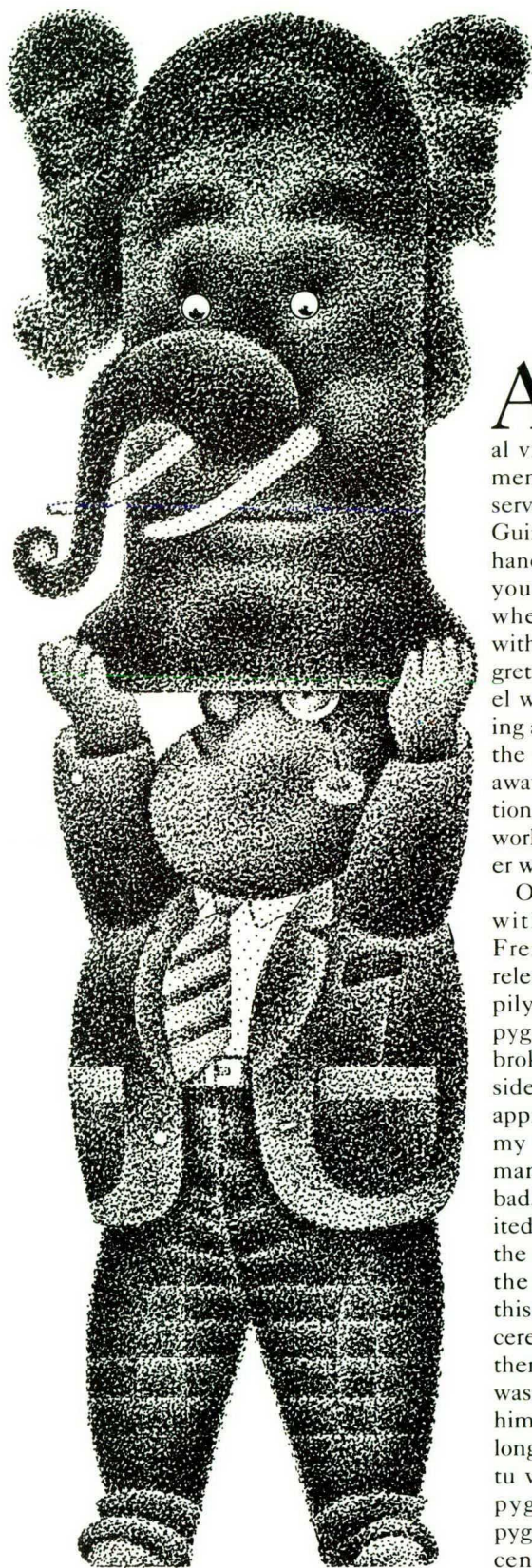
One day on the path we met a pygmy with a shotgun. The shotgun was French, an old engraved double-barreled Darne, and Morel exclaimed happily on seeing it. Taking it from the pygmy, he squinted down the barrel, broke the piece open, and peered inside the breech, all the while making appreciative clucking sounds. The pygmy watched unhappily. He was a big man for a pygmy, and his teeth were bad. We had seen him each time we visited the camp. Once we had asked him the whereabouts of the sorcerer. He *was* the sorcerer, but we would not learn this until later. Morel, hefting the sorcerer's shotgun, told me that his own father had owned a Darne just like it. It was a gun too expensive for the pygmy himself to own, the doctor said. It belonged to the mayor of the nearest Bantu village. The mayor would give the pygmy a cartridge or two, and the pygmy would hunt in return for a percentage of the meat. I smiled at this

theory. Morel was new to Campo Reserve. He had only just encountered this shotgun. How could he possibly know that it belonged to the mayor? *But it did! It belonged to the mayor!* And it was true about the two cartridges, as I would learn later from the mayor himself. It was a pattern so common in Francophone Africa, this poaching by proxy, that an old hand like Morel did not have to ask. He could read it as clearly as if it were engraved there in the scrollwork on the gun.

Another day, on a dirt road deeper in the reserve, Morel and I saw a Camerounais soldier standing with some pygmies beside his car at the side of the road. The soldier, a Bantu in a camouflage uniform, stood head, shoulders, and chest above his companions, and was several shades blacker. Morel stopped our battered Renault alongside. "*La chasse?*" the doctor asked. Hunting? "*Oui,*" the soldier said. "*Pièges?*" Morel asked. Traps? Yes, the soldier answered, looking slightly uneasy now. Ah, Morel said, but this was a reserve, *n'est-ce pas?* No, the soldier lied; this section lay outside the reserve. We bid the man adieu, and Morel drove on down the road. Rounding a turn, we saw a pygmy with a shotgun over his shoulder. "Weapon of soldier," Morel told me in English, and we waved at the pygmy as we passed.

This is the reality of wildlife preservation in postcolonial Africa, and in most of the rest of the Third World. Parks and preserves are scattered all across the Dark Continent, but most are just paper parks, shaded portions on the map—illusions. The worst poachers in Africa, more often than not, are the game wardens. Africa's wildlife is in its most precipitous decline since the biosphere's last big collision with an asteroid. This is the catastrophe that Raymond Bonner seeks to address in *At the Hand of Man*.

BONNER'S PARTICULAR concern is the elephant, and his argument is wonderfully counterintuitive. The problem with the elephant is not so much the poachers and ivory dealers, he says. The problem is the conservationists. The World Wildlife Fund,



the African Wildlife Foundation, and the other outfits concerned with the elephant have had their policies hijacked by the greed of their fundraisers. In contravention of sound conservation practice, oblivious of the wishes of the African people (or openly contemptuous), these rich white men have foisted a misguided ivory ban on Africa and the world. The elephant is, if anything, overprotected. The best way to save elephants, paradoxically, is to kill a percentage for their ivory.

Reporting on the environment is a departure for Bonner, who in the past has reported on politics. (His two previous books are on U.S. policy in El Salvador and the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos.) Departures of this sort are often advantageous: they permit a fresh eye, a freedom from dogma. Most books on the disappearance of African wildlife have been by people in the "religion," as environmentalists sometimes call their movement. Bonner cannot be called an apostate—he was never even baptized. These departures, of course, may also have disadvantages. The fresh eye can be too fresh. The newcomer can be insufficiently grounded in the facts, language, history, and arguments of the field. In this book disadvantages overwhelm advantages from the start. Bonner brings his own dogma to the writing, and his ignorance in environmental matters is profound.

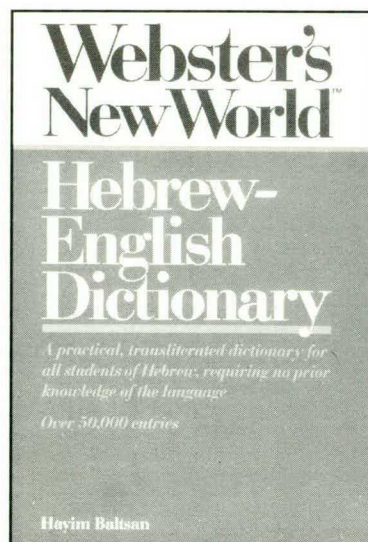
Bonner is much more a reporter than a writer. Some authors are both, but Bonner is not one of them. His is not a prose style designed to give much pleasure. His writing is, among other things, totally without humor. For an evocation of the Africa he is talking about—the landscapes, the animals, the people—you need to keep the old, dog-eared Dinesen, or the Hemingway, or the Beryl Markham around. Bonner has not composed a single African image or description that will stick with you.

The elephant, central figure in this book, is among the missing characters. The first elephant we meet lies in a pool of blood, her face hacked off for ivory. All Bonner's subsequent elephants are faceless too, in a figurative way. The elephants of Raymond Bonner are all destroyers of the *shambas* of African peasants, uprooters of whole forests. We learn nothing at all about elephant behavior, society, lore. The most wonderful of recent discoveries about elephants—that they communi-

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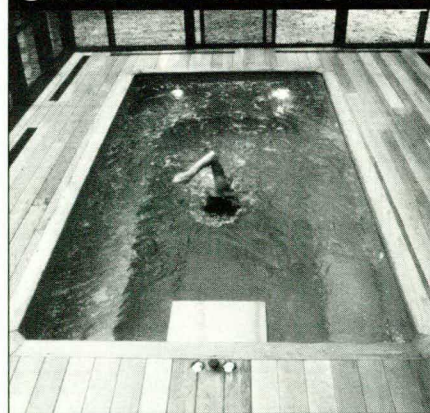
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cate over great distances by low-frequency sound—is never mentioned. Last year, on rain-forest paths in Cameroon, my French doctor, Morel, would drop to all fours occasionally to demonstrate the amble of the elephant. His performance was transforming. He *became* an elephant. Bonner never tries the equivalent thing in his prose, never drops to all fours to help us see and understand the elephant. This is partly because he is not equipped for it, as an observer or as a writer, and partly because undue sympathy for elephants would work against his thesis.

Bonner is an advocate of "culling" and of "sustainable utilization," as are, he claims, all conservationists with any sense. He seems to have no inkling of the history of abuses perpetrated in the name of those two concepts. Culling is often just killing. Sustained utilization has seldom been sustainable. The woods are full of calculated euphemisms—the "multiple-use" of our own U.S. Forest Service, for example—that sound wonderful but cannot be accepted at face value. Bonner writes of ecosystem "management" as if it were like managing a store. Human management of wild resources is a nearly unbroken history of hubris, miscalculation, and error. That nature manages ecosystems better than human beings do—an article of faith in the religion of the environmentalists, and a firm principle now of ecological science—Bonner seems not to have considered.

In one argument for culling he writes that "a herd of elephants goes through an area like a slow tornado, snapping off branches and uprooting trees, leaving devastation behind." That slow tornado of elephants—Bonner's finest elephant image—he uses to justify shooting elephants in order to save the forest. There exists, apparently unread by Bonner, a great and growing ecological literature documenting the importance of nature's various agencies of large-scale renovation—fire in forests of lodgepole pine, typhoons and crown-of-thorns starfish on the coral reef, herds of grazers on the grasslands, windfalls in the rain forest, elephants on the savanna. Has it not occurred to Bonner that his slow tornado of elephants might have a role? What does he make of all those hundreds of millennia in which Africa's elephants and Africa's trees co-existed somehow, before rifles arrived for culling? Bonner concludes his slow-

tornado paragraph by complaining of "the general public, understanding little about the complexities of ecosystems." The party vague on ecosystems is Bonner himself.

IN THE GREAT shuffling herd of conservationists, Bonner has found two or three heroes. One is Garth Owen-Smith, of Namibia. To Owen-Smith, Bonner suggests, goes credit for the idea that local people should be involved in parks, and that some of the benefits of wildlife preservation should accrue to them. "It is a principle few Westerners have absorbed," Bonner writes. On the contrary, I know of no Western student of Third World parks who does not recognize this principle. It is the watchword now. A big literature exists on the need for local participation, and on how to achieve it.

Bonner complains that animal-rights groups, in their campaign for an ivory ban, "indulged in hyperbole, incited passions with horror stories, and leveled ad hominem attacks on anyone who disagreed with them." This is a fine summary of Bonner's own approach. His book is an edifice of ad hominem attacks on anyone who favors the ban on ivory. When not guided by "emotion," of which Bonner disapproves, the pro-ban people are fuzzy thinkers, or sometimes clear thinkers who in their hearts know better, in which case they are cowards. Often, on top of this, they are well-heeled.

The term "patrician" seems to have for Bonner the damning force that "pedophile" might have for the rest of us. He feels the same way about "elitist." When the conservationists really irritate him, he squeezes off both barrels, "elitist and patrician," simultaneously. One of the patricians Bonner goes after in the chapter he calls "Patricians" is Russell Train, the first chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency under President Richard Nixon, and now the chairman of the World Wildlife Fund in the United States. Bonner lists Train's clubs, schools, and affiliations with a joyous, bloodthirsty pleasure, as if each one—St. Albans prep school, Princeton, marriage to a Bowdoin, the Long Point Hunt Club—were another nail in a tight coffin of Bonner's construction. Most of the "Patricians" chapter is an appeal to class prejudice, built on



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the assumption that we all share it.

That someone as new to the field as Bonner should even set out after Russell Train, a conservationist with more than thirty years of good work in Africa behind him, a principal architect of the World Heritage System, and the only bright light in what for environmentalists was the wasteland of the past three Republican Administrations, is hard to take.

Sometimes Bonner's ad hominem attacks are laughable. His attempt to smear—or perhaps "tar" is the word—Charles De Haes, the director-general of the World Wildlife Fund, is one such. Of the sinister background of the director-general, he writes,

De Haes's official résumé—that is, the one WWF distributes—makes a point of noting that he went to work for the tobacco company "although himself a non-smoker." It then says de Haes "helped establish companies" in Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. What it does not say is that these were companies that sold cigarettes. Maybe de Haes didn't smoke, but he made money by encouraging others to do so.

Bonner has forgotten, perhaps, something he told us earlier about his paragon, the conservationist Garth Owen-Smith. Owen-Smith's volunteer rangers, he writes, "were paid the equivalent of \$25 a month, and received rations of maize meal, sugar, tea, coffee, tobacco, soap, and milk powder." Bonner's hero, this is to say, did not stop at dealing tobacco to his African employees. He dealt them dental caries, jangled nerves, and probably—as many Africans are lactose-intolerant—curdled stomachs. In Owen-Smith the sins of Charles de Haes are virtues.

Sometimes the ad hominem is not so amusing. Throughout his book Bonner is very free with the accusation of racism. About Prince Philip, an important WWF figure, he reports, "At a meeting of the Commonwealth heads of state, most of them from the Third World and black, Philip said to an aide, 'You wouldn't think the peace of the world rested on this lot, would you?' On another occasion, he referred to the Chinese as 'slitty-eyed.'"

Bonner offers these items without citation. At which Commonwealth meeting did the first incident occur, and who was the aide, and who the fly on the wall? It seems an extraordinarily im-

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politic remark for Philip, the consort of the Commonwealth's Queen, to have uttered. And what is Bonner's source for the comment about Chinese eyes? Prince Philip has been a genuine small-prince of a fellow in his dedication to environmental causes. For a man in a hopelessly elitist position, he succeeds remarkably well—from all accounts I've heard—at being a regular chap. If his name is to be maligned, it should be with a little documentation.

Bonner is lightning quick with the bold generality. "Making contact with Owen-Smith was not easy," he writes. "He does not live in the city or hang out at conferences, like most Western conservationists working in Africa." And later: "Owen-Smith cares about Africans, is not condescending toward them, and knows the value of listening to them, which sets him distinctly apart from nearly all other Western conservationists in Africa."

Africa is a big continent. There are more than fifty nations there, and hundreds of conservationists at work. Does Bonner really know where most conservationists in Africa hang out, and how they feel about Africans?

Bonner is forever claiming that "most scientists" and "most conservationists" believe as he does about ivory. He arrives at these conclusions by a journalistic technique that I guess we might call "intuitive polling." All of us who write—even the gum-chewing authors of two-page term papers—know about, and often use, this technique. We stumbled upon it while struggling with our first deadline in third or fourth grade. Few of us, however, indulge in it as frequently as Bonner does.

Bonner takes Africa's conservationists to task for the whiteness of their organizations, the leadership in particular. This problem is not unique to Africa's conservation movement, of course. Reasons for it are plentiful, and Bonner himself discusses some—the fact, for example, that few Africans of previous generations trained in the field. But it is shameful indeed, and the conservationists should remedy it.

I can't help noticing, though, that Bonner himself is white. Until recently a staff writer for *The New Yorker*, he lived for several years in Nairobi with his wife, Jane Perlez, then the East Africa bureau chief for *The New York Times*. When was the last time a *New Yorker* report from Africa was written by a black African?

I'm drawing a blank. And "Jane Perlez" is not, I think, a Masai or Kikuyu name. Why wasn't an East African the *Times* bureau chief in East Africa? Shouldn't a black African be writing Raymond Bonner's dispatches from Africa—and writing this book, for that matter? Racial imbalances are always more galling and inexcusable in professions other than one's own.

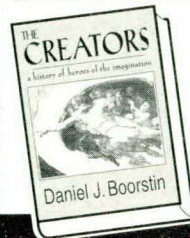
Bonner faults the conservationists in Africa for failing to consult Africans about their fate. Indeed, he calls the first section of his book "Listening to Africa," and his complaint is that white conservationists never do. The curious thing is that Bonner scarcely consults Africans himself. He briefly quotes Perez Olindo, Kenya's foremost black male conservationist, and a few black Namibian game wardens, and a few Masai, but 90 percent of his voices are white. This is partly inevitable, given his complaint that all the major players are white. Still, I wish he had found a way to work in more nonwhite opinion. What do the small-time ivory poachers think about their trade? How do big-time traffickers (often government officials) rationalize it? What was going through the heads of those Ugandan soldiers who decimated their country's wildlife with automatic weapons, mostly just for fun? These are the people, after all—these black people—who are squeezing the triggers, not a handful of pallid conservationists.

Perhaps someone will come forward with good arguments against the ivory ban. If so, I am eager to hear them. They are not to be found in this book. Errors in fact, flaws in logic, and an unmitigated tendentiousness mar Bonner's case throughout. The World Wildlife Fund, for all its good works, does have flaws: too much secrecy, too much coziness with the powers that be. Somewhere in all the smoke Bonner smells there is clearly a little fire. But the fact that conservation organizations have flaws is not much of a revelation.

Africa is a tragic continent. Great, sad stories are unfolding there: war, poverty, famine, AIDS, drought, desertification, deforestation, the decimation of game. Bonner's angle, his stroke of genius in approaching this vast story, is an indictment of the World Wildlife Fund. It is as if Shakespeare had written *Othello* as an exposé of irregularities in Iago's bookkeeping. Bonner has fingered the wrong villains, examined the wrong psyches, written the wrong book. □

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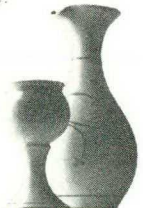
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A Companion- ship of Poets

by Peter Davison

THE HIDDEN LAW:
The Poetry of W. H. Auden
by Anthony Hecht.
Harvard University Press, \$35.00.

IT IS STRANGE to realize, for those who can remember, that it is just twenty years since W. H. Auden died. The words and phrases of his poems have been echoing in our heads for so much longer than two decades:

Time that is intolerant
Of the brave and innocent,
And indifferent in a week
To a beautiful physique,

Worships language and forgives
Everyone by whom it lives,

as he wrote in his great elegy for W. B. Yeats. Writing about the death of Sigmund Freud, he said that Freud "would give back to / the son the mother's richness of feeling," and concluded:

One rational voice is dumb. Over his
grave
the household of Impulse mourns
one dearly loved:
sad is Eros, builder of cities,
and weeping anarchic Aphrodite.

Or, in prophetic power at the outbreak of the Second World War ("September 1, 1939"):

I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.

Anthony Hecht claims for Auden, and makes good the claims, that "in his capacity for development and change, [Auden] resembles Picasso and Stravinsky more than any of his literary contemporaries," and that "[in] the reach and variety of Auden's language, and the pioneering breadth of his poetic vocabulary . . . he moves well beyond the confines of any of his great contemporaries or predecessors, including Yeats, Frost, Eliot, and Stevens." These are achievements, however, that are easiest to assess in retrospect. During his lifetime (which had two general phases: 1.

English and infamous; 2. American and celebrated) Auden's work was sometimes obscured by his personality. Shortsighted, untidy, flat-footed, "with egg-white skin and straight yellow hair," he evinced an early interest in science and technology, and then, after becoming Christopher Isherwood's schoolmate and a companion at Oxford of Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice, and C. Day Lewis, he announced to his tutor, "You don't understand. . . . I mean [to become] a great poet." After spending a year in Berlin, living in workers' quarters, he turned to teaching in boys' schools, and he poured out a spate of brilliant poetry, along with a number of plays in collaboration with Isherwood.

He went to Iceland with MacNeice; he broadcast in Spain for the Loyalists, but was troubled by the atrocities and their attitude toward religion; he went with "Issyvoo" to China to observe the Japanese war and write a joint travel book. "By 1937," Isherwood wrote, "Auden had become the most famous British writer of his generation." But they both determined to become American citizens, and in January of 1939 they emigrated, to the bemusement of their friends and the outrage of their ill-wishers, who excoriated them for cowardice in England's hour of need. Today we might suspect the Blimpish indignation of containing more than a hint of homophobia. Though Auden wrote reviews for a while in New York, traveled across the country, and taught at academies ranging from St. Mark's School to Swarthmore College, he haunted indiscreet places. In fact, his famous "September 1, 1939" ("I sit in one of the dives / On Fifty-Second Street / Uncertain and afraid / As the clever hopes expire / Of a low dishonest decade") was written at the back table of the Dizzy Club, a gay bar. Soon after his arrival in New York he met the love of his life, Chester Kallman, with whom he would collaborate on libretti for operas by Igor Stravinsky, Hans Werner Henze, and Nicolas Nabokov. He recovered his ancestral Anglican Christianity. After a tour of duty in the Strategic Bombing Survey at the end of the war, he eventually settled down into a "cosy" (a favorite word) middle age, wintering in New York, summering on Fire Island or on Ischia or in Austria, comforted by his friendships, sexual and otherwise (Reinhold Niebuhr, Lincoln Kirstein,

the Stravinskys, Wolfgang Köhler, Hannah Arendt, Benjamin Britten, E. M. Forster, finally Joseph Brodsky). He was not only one of the great poetic influences but also one of the most vivid, widely admired, and deliciously eccentric dinner guests of the postwar period.

In the fifties, in both Britain and America, Auden's master and publisher T. S. Eliot held the position of Supreme Pontiff of English poetry, and, though Dylan Thomas easily outdid Auden as the Bad Boy, Auden relished the role of Clever Chap, or, perhaps, Head of the School. The youngest of three brothers, he always regarded himself, even in middle age, as the youngest person in any gathering. His influence on younger poets was tremendous and nearly all-inclusive: during his prescient tenure as judge of the Yale Series of Younger Poets, he chose for publication the first volumes of some of our foremost contemporary poets: Adrienne Rich, W. S. Merwin, John Ashbery, James Wright, John Hollander, Daniel Hoffman.

SINCE AUDEN'S death his works (often revised and sometimes maimed by their author while he lived) have been cherished and sensitively edited by Edward Mendelson, Auden's executor and biographer, and his vivid, productive, pathetic life has been picked over by hawks, crows, and jackals alike. Now Anthony Hecht, one of our finest living poets, has dedicated himself to a penetrating and intensive survey of Auden's poetry—its meaning, its intention, the laws by which it operates. Hecht, beyond the age at which Auden died (sixty-six), himself much and deservedly laureled for his poetry, truly scrupulous, lyrical, formal, and impeccable of ear, has for the first time in his life written a huge book. His own books of poetry—polished, formal, compassionate—have been if anything too infrequent, too exiguous, but in *The Hidden Law* the dam has burst, and he has given us more about Auden's work than we could possibly have anticipated, and even more than most of us will be able to handle.

Reading this immense book (nearly

500 pages) is a strange adventure: I don't know another like it. Oh, didn't he ramble! In some ways it's a massive Rorschach blot, which, like many writings by one poet about another, tells as much about the reader as the rider. He dwells with awe, and sometimes nearly endless delight, on those poems he loves most. ("That will do extremely well, child," says Mr. Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*, when his daughter has played the piano after supper. "You have delighted us long enough.") And then Hecht entirely skips over those poems that seemingly do not interest him. You will search here in vain for explications of *The Age of Anxiety* (which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1948) and *Homage to Clio* and *About the House*, to name three of Auden's notable verse. But Hecht draws with easy aptitude on Auden's numerous prose writings, and evinces a profound understanding of Auden's literary and intellectual baggage in poetry, history, and theology, and even of his explorations of the dustiest corners of *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Though Hecht knows the contours of Auden's



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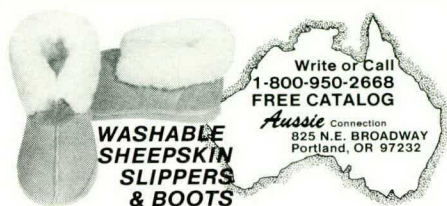
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life in daunting detail, and lived for a time as his neighbor on Ischia, around 1950, this is no biography, and my advice to the reader who needs to know the facts, ma'am, is to read Humphrey Carpenter's 1981 life or some of the posthumous essays by Auden's friends, like that of Louis Kronenberger describing Auden in his later years:

To be sure, much of what I thought of as his Englishness rested on habits, injunctions and values acquired very early in life. His own personal sense of what's done or is not done smacked much more of the nursery and the schoolroom than of later, worldlier origins. As for people, he seldom wasted time dissecting or passing judgment on them; someone, to him, was either a gent or not a gent—this a judgement in terms of character, not class.

This is a book about poetry, about a poet who was dedicated to the art like few others of our time, whose poetic technique only another poet as gifted as Hecht could gloss: a particularly delicious few pages is given to comparing Auden's song-writing skills with those of Cole Porter and Ben Jonson. The love poems are not slighted. Hecht can speak with complete authority about Auden's debts as a satirist to Pope, Dryden, and Byron, and his discussion of "Letter to Lord Byron," an enticingly elaborate long poem that Auden wrote in, of all places, Iceland, in 1936, is one of the most interesting chapters in the book. And while Hecht clearly and deeply admires Auden at large, he does not spare Auden when he falters — is perfectly willing to scold him for his eccentricities of punctuation, his lapses in logic, or his inconsistencies:

The Dance of Death is a genuinely unsatisfactory work, crude in its satiric thrusts, vulgar in its tasteless and undramatic music-hall theatricality and in much of its language. But it is of interest as a document that shows Auden mocking ideas that he seriously entertains elsewhere.

As Hecht meanders in a chronological direction through Auden's work, he finds himself marveling at poems like, for instance, "Voltaire," one of whose stanzas I quote:

Cajoling, scolding, scheming, cleverest of them all,
He'd led the other children in a holy war

PUZZLER CONTEST

Send your solved Puzzler "Guessing Game" (found on page 135) to: *The Atlantic Monthly*, April Puzzler Contest, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116. *The Atlantic* will randomly draw three names from among all correct entries received by April 12. The winners' names will be published in the June issue. In addition, each of the winners may choose two cryptic crossword books from The Crossword Bookstore.

Rules: Only one entry per person allowed. No purchase necessary. No entries can be returned. All decisions are final. *The Atlantic* is not responsible for late or lost mail. Contest open to residents of the U.S. and Canada, 18 years or older, except employees of *The Atlantic* and their immediate families. Winners will be notified by mail. Contest void where prohibited and subject to all state, federal, and local laws and regulations.

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Against the infamous grown-ups,
and, like a child, been sly
And humble when there was occasion for
The two-faced answer or the plain
protective lie,
But, patient like a peasant, waited
for their fall.

Hecht's commentary:

Almost everything in Auden's early career, starting very obviously with his youthful identification of the older generation as the enemy, but also his brilliance, his wit, his adoption of subversive figures like the spy and secret agent as his heroes and protagonists, his view of himself and of his generation as reformers, all this certainly went into the writing of that stanza.

Auden's early poems were given over to left-wing political pessimism ("Doom is dark and deeper than any sea-dingle"), which William Empson spanked in "Just a Smack at Auden," with its refrain "Waiting for the end, boys, waiting for the end." He shifted in the late thirties toward psychoanalytic concerns, when he began to transform "doom" into a more compassionate sense of poetic justice ("History to the defeated / May say Alas but cannot help or pardon"—"Spain 1937"). At last, during the war, separated from England by his emigration to the United States, he turned to outright Anglican Christianity in *For the Time Being: A Christmas Oratorio* (1944), and looked to the law of God as the Hidden Law of Hecht's title: "God will cheat no one, not even the world of its triumph."

THE RICHNESS of reference in this book to history, prosody, theology, poetry, punctuation, makes for a long swim in the heady liquor of poetry—not only Auden's poetry but that of the hundreds of authors whom Auden read. The better the poem, the better Hecht's commentary. It is a pleasure to read a book about poetry which is actually wholeheartedly concerned with poetry itself, though never losing touch with the life behind it. Hecht's account of Auden's sexual history leads from the gaudiness of the male brothels of Berlin in the twenties to the erotic loneliness of a betrayed old man in New York, famous and despairing, who was able to write, in an essay on J. R. Ackerley, that "few, if any, homosexuals can honestly boast

that their sex-life has been happy." Yet Hecht makes the best case I have seen for the richness of the American poems, which in recent years have been scorned for their pedantry and their Christian concerns. And though he cuts off his account rather abruptly about ten years before Auden's death, he seeks out every wonder that Auden left us, like the magical ending of a mid-century poem, "The Fall of Rome," which I will end with since no other words should follow it. When we hear the usual whining about "modern poetry," let those who complain recall these lines. The poem, having excoriated the brutality and banality of the modern city, concludes thus:

Altogether elsewhere, vast
Herds of reindeer move across
Miles and miles of golden moss,
Silently and very fast. □

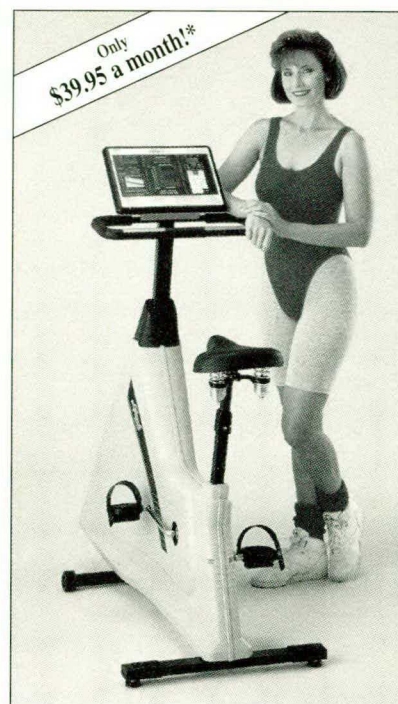
Brief Reviews



THE SHIPPING NEWS by E. Annie Proulx. Scribner's, \$20.00. The hero of Ms. Proulx's novel is Quoyile, a name that means "a coil of rope." One such, according to *The Ashley Book of Knots*, is "of one layer only. It is made on deck, so that it may be walked on if necessary." Quoyile, the son of immigrant parents from Newfoundland, has been walked on by everybody, including the nymphomaniac whom he married in an uncouth spasm of erotic euphoria. In his mid-thirties, he is an inefficient newspaperman with two small daughters and no hope. An aunt appears, a sharp-tongued *deus ex machina*, proposing that she, Quoyile, and the girls (the wife is well gone) return to the old family base and make—or try to make—a living on Quoyile's Point, Capsize Cove, about two miles across the water from Killick-Claw (population 2,000), where the weekly paper needs somebody to cover shipping news. Quoyile's qualifications: "My grandfather was a sealer." He finds a place that produces

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You deserve a factual look at...

Myths about Israel and the Middle East (I) Do the media feed us fiction, instead of facts?

We all know that, by dint of constant repetition, white can be made to appear black, good can get transformed into evil, and myth may take the place of reality. Israel, with roughly one-thousandth of the world's population and with a similar fraction of the territory of this planet, seems to engage the totally disproportionate attention of the print and broadcast media. Unfortunately, much of what the media tell us—in reporting, editorializing, and in analysis—are endlessly repeated myths.

What are the facts?

Myth: The "Palestinians" are a nation and therefore deserving of a homeland.

Reality: The concept of Palestinian nationhood is a new one and had not been heard of until after the Six-Day War, when Israel, by its victory, came into the administration of the territories of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza strip. The so-called "Palestinians" are no more different from the Arabs in the neighboring countries of Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, than Wisconsinites are from Iowans.

Myth: Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank"), and the Gaza Strip are "occupied Arab territory."

Reality: All of "Palestine"—east and west of the Jordan River—was part of the League of Nations mandate. Under the Balfour Declaration all of it was to be the "national home for the Jewish people." In violation of this mandate, Great Britain severed the entire area east of the Jordan—about 75% of Palestine, and gave it to the Arabs, who created on it the kingdom of Transjordan. When Israel declared its independence in 1948, four Arab armies invaded the new country in order to destroy it at its very birth. They were defeated by the Israelis. The Transjordanians, however, remained in occupation of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and East Jerusalem. They proceeded to drive all Jews from those territories and to systematically destroy all Jewish houses of worship and other institutions. The Transjordanians, now renamed "Jordanians" were the occupiers. Israel regained these territories following its victory in the Six-Day War and has administered them

ever since. They have not been annexed. Their final status will be decided if and when peace with the Arabs is finally attained.

Myth: Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") are the "greatest obstacle to peace."

Reality: This is a totally new formulation, which was put forward by James Baker, our former Secretary of State. He and former President Bush seemed obsessed by it. Fewer than 100,000 Jews are settled in these territories, living among about 1.4 million Arabs. How can Jews living there be an obstacle to peace? Why *shouldn't* they live there? About 700,000 Arabs live in Israel proper. They are not an obstacle to peace and nobody (including the Israelis), consider them as such.

Myth: Israel is unwilling to yield "land for peace."

Reality: The concept that to the loser, rather than to the victor, belong the spoils is a radically new one, never before thought of in world history. Israel has emerged victorious in the five wars imposed on it by the Arabs. In order to make peace, it has returned over 90% of the territory occupied by it, specifically the vast Sinai Peninsula, to Egypt. That territory contained some of the most advanced military installations in the world, prosperous cities and settlements, and oil fields developed entirely by Israel that made it independent of petroleum imports. In the Camp David Accords (1978), Israel agreed to autonomy for Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank"), with the permanent status to be determined after three years. But, until today, it has been "all or nothing" for the Arabs, and they have been unwilling to consider or to discuss autonomy.

The greatest myth of all is that Israel's administration of the Gaza Strip and of Judea/Samaria is the root cause of the conflict between Arabs and Jews. But that is nonsense and flies in the face of historical reality. The Arab desire to obliterate the Jewish presence in Palestine, and since 1948 the Jewish state, long predates that territorial administration. The root cause of the conflict is the total unwillingness of the Arabs to tolerate any "non-believers" to be in control of even one inch of what they consider "sacred Arab soil." And they don't just mean Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza strip. They mean Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, the whole state of Israel. No change in the Arabs' attitude seems to be in the offing. But until there is such a change, no peace can possibly come to this troubled area.

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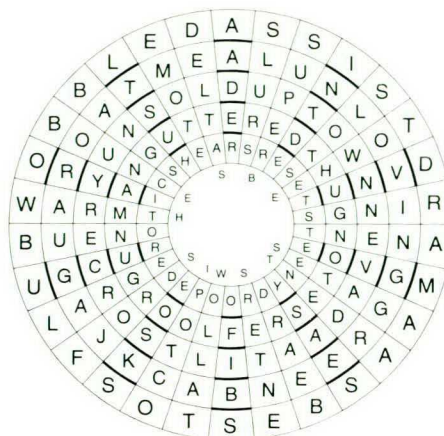
tough, dourly humorous eccentrics and attracts odd misfits from elsewhere. Quoyale, accepted as no worse than the average such freak, surprises himself by doing well at the *Gammy Bird*. As he learns the local ropes, patches up the house, and tries to control his convincingly unpredictable children, he learns things he never suspected about his forebears. They were a wild lot, gaudy even by the standards of Capsize Cove. Ms. Proulx blends Newfoundland argot, savage history, impressively diverse characters, fine descriptions of weather and scenery, and comic horseplay without ever lessening the reader's interest in Quoyale's progress from bumbling outsider to capable journalist. He will never advance to *The New York Times*, but why should he wish to? Killick-Claw may be a small world, but, thanks to Ms. Proulx, it is a real and fascinating one.

CHICKENHAWK: BACK IN THE WORLD

by Robert Mason. Viking, \$22.50. Mr. Mason's *Chickenhawk* (1983), describing his service as a helicopter pilot in Vietnam, was one of the earliest accounts of that war and remains one of the best. His new book covers his return to civilian life. It is a bluntly honest report of nightmares, insomnia, panic attacks, memory lapses, and mysterious ailments, punctuated by futile conferences with baffled doctors and leading to alcoholism and financial folly. In desperation at his inability to support his family, humiliated by dependence on his father's strained generosity and his wife's limited salary, doubting that *Chickenhawk* would ever reach publication, he joined an expedition to smuggle marijuana from Colombia to the Carolina coast—where U.S. Customs hailed the boat with "May we come aboard?" He got two years, and is probably the only author who ever headed the best-seller list while shuffling clothing in a prison supply room. The prison was a minimum-security facility where Mr. Mason gradually learned the idiotic rules designed to keep prisoners both busy and quietly miserable. He learned how to circumvent those rules, as did most of his fellow inmates. Outwitting the authorities was, in truth, the only worthwhile diversion available to well-behaved prisoners, and they pursued it with an ingenuity that is at once comic and reassuring evidence of the resilience of the human spirit.

TOUCHED WITH FIRE by Kay Redfield Jamison. Free Press, \$24.95. Dr. Jamison, an associate professor of psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, discusses "Manic Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament." Her list of artists in varied fields who were, in her opinion, manic-depressives is so long and so spangled with great names that one wonders whether any artists of merit escaped the condition. One also wonders whether art would progress, or even survive, if the alleged abnormality were to be eliminated in the future. This last question preoccupies the author as well. Dr. Jamison is frankly not certain that a cure preventing Van Gogh's painting or Byron's admission that "I should, many a good day, have blown my brains out, but for the recollection that it would have given pleasure to my mother-in-law; and even *then*, if I could have been certain to haunt her . . ." would be beneficial to society. Her position is disarmingly unpretentious.

Answers to the March Puzzler



“SHOOTING HOOPS”

Basket-scoring letters spell BEST SWISHES. Shots. RINGS (double def.); BAN-G'S; BOUNCE; A-GATES; TALL-O-W; S-LOTS; A-NE(N)T; BEAR-D; SLURS (*Russell* anag. – *el*); TO-WHEE(l); FJORDS (anag.); O-C-TOP-I (rev.); E-MOTE; L-ARGE (*gear* anag.); BU-ENO (*one* rev.); WAR(M)TH (*wrath* anag.); SU(PER)B; ARDENT (hidden); ENT(ER)S (*Nets* anag.); DELTAS (anag.) *Circles.* a. ASSIST (hidden); DRAM-A; A-S(S)B(T)OS; FLU-B; WOB-BLED (*bow* rev.) b. UNL(O)V-IN-G; GREE(NBA-CK); JA(zz)-GUAR(ding); OATMEAL (anag.) c. UPTOWN (anag.); N(EVAD)A (rev.); AT-(w)ILT; SOR(CE)RY; UNSOLD (*o* for *e* in *Unsold*) d. T-HUG; NOTES (anag.); REFLOOR (anag.); GUNMA-N (anag. + n); G-UTTERED e. RE-SETS; TEE-NY; DR-O-O-PE-D; ERO(TIC) (rev.); S-SHEARS

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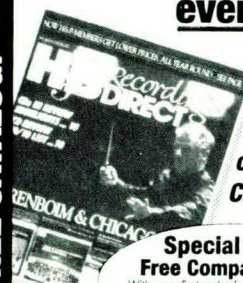
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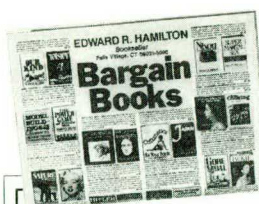
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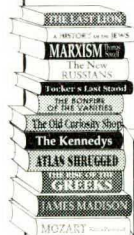
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A COYOTE READER by William Bright.
University of California, \$30.00/\$13.00.

The author, who is an emeritus professor of linguistics and anthropology at the University of California, has made a study of Native American Coyote tales and offers a large collection of them. Coyote is a divinity with, according to Professor Bright, no parallel anywhere—although the Norse Loki has a faint resemblance to him in some respects. Coyote seems to exemplify, and energetically practice, every major type of human misbehavior. He is a thief, a trickster, and a liar. His lechery extends to incest. He is obscenely greedy. His curiosity is insatiable. He makes trouble for trouble's sake at the risk of being, as he sometimes is, hoist with his own petard. Professor Bright cannot explain why Indians raised this scalawag anti-hero to divine status and does not claim to have done so. He has collected engaging myths and added an informative discussion of their probable significance and of the formidable problem of translating them adequately.

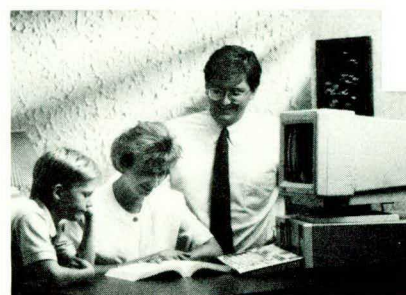
THE AYE-AYE AND I by Gerald Durrell.

Arcade, \$22.95. Mr. Durrell's admirers will not be disappointed by his latest venture in behalf of endangered animals. He went to Madagascar hunting for the aye-aye (which looks like a "Disney witch's black cat with a touch of E.T. thrown in"), along with the giant jumping rat, the flat-tailed tortoise, and the gentle lemur. All these improbable creatures, unique to the island, are being lumbered or eroded out of habitat by Madagascans in need of farmland or wood. Mr. Durrell is a writer who can make even the Aztec polka amusing in retrospect. He is also a shrewd judge of effective detail, illustrating the strength of a tropical downpour through the death of a butterfly. He is an endearingly fair-minded conservationist. For all his love of strange and beautiful animals, he likes people and acknowledges that they, too, are entitled to live. He just wishes they would do it with more forethought.

BALKAN GHOSTS: A Journey Through History by Robert D. Kaplan. *St. Martin's*, \$22.95. A portion of this book first appeared in *The Atlantic*.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

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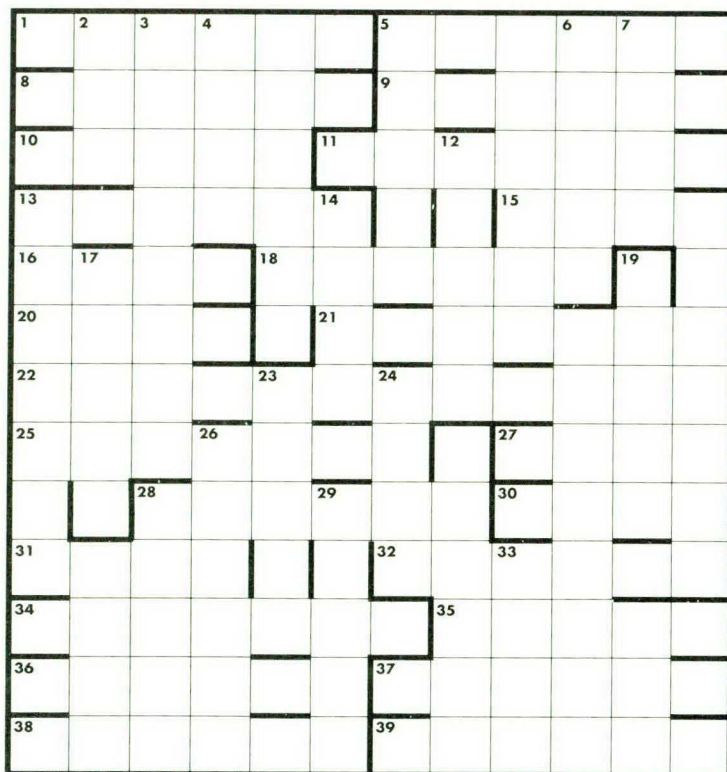
THE PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

GUESSING GAME

A game is being played with the ten unclued entries in the Down columns. The game is identified by the unclued three-word entry at 22 Across, and its outcome may be discovered by reading the top-most letters of the unclued vertical entries in order from left to right, column by column. A few of the unclued entries are a bit uncommon, so it may help to know that the unchecked letters in all 11 unclued entries could be PAID FOR. Clue answers include 11 proper terms.

See page 130 for Puzzler contest details. The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 133.



ACROSS

1. Fine game involving a card, materially? (6) (*two words*)
5. In Latin, you read Italian (6)
8. Card is about to set back dummies (6)
9. Gray stuff mined on land (6)
10. Poet finished reciting (5)
11. Navy's after \$1,000 so as to cover checks (7)
13. Swallow funnily when speaking (6)
15. In dungeon, you have to glance about (4)
16. Nothing at the head of English river (4)
18. Lesage novel scores below par (6)
20. A cozy room in an Arabian city (4)
21. Part of London trash leaches (7)
25. Strangle fish by mechanical method (7)

27. Departure, return times included in connection (4)
28. Pavement surrounding each marine research station (6)
30. Weapon carried by some peers (4)
31. Up on 8/13 of the alphabet (4)
32. Con artist's post office ruse failed (6)
34. Union ally, on being trounced, failing in allegiance (7)
35. At first, *Lost in America* evokes *Peanuts* character (5)
36. Intrinsically unbalanced rich man's name (6)
37. Law broken by sergeant, maybe, with birds (6)
38. In Southern church, place for resting spirits (6)
39. Evaluate jenny? (6)

DOWN

3. Play set left among family belongings (8) (*two words*)
4. Limits of trombone's musical quality (4)
6. Score playing hearts (5)
7. Englishman who wrote music in earnest (4)
12. Serve drink in overturned tube (5)
14. Pet flipped over bagel snack (4)
17. One traffic model (5)
19. Misrepresent faith, for the most part (5)
23. Melodramatic love affair's beginning with external agent (5)
24. Gain a penetrating reputation (4)
26. Account about sweet wine (6)
29. Arm of the sea containing a freshwater fish (5)
33. Misdeeds popular in Sunday school (4)

NOTE: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 745 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116.

WORD WATCH

BY ANNE H. SOUKHANOV

air epidemiology *noun*, study of the causes, distribution, and control of diseases in populations which relies on suspect data or interpretations: "Some epidemiologists say the risk of one infected heterosexual passing [HIV] to another in a single sexual encounter is between 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000. But others dismiss the data on which it is based as flimsy. 'You've heard the term air guitar?' asked [Andrew] Moss [an epidemiologist at the University of San Francisco]. 'That's *air epidemiology*. I don't know how you can use that number usefully'" (*Washington Post*).

BACKGROUND: The word *air* has been used to create numerous evocative, often jocular, expressions over the years, including the famous phrase penned by the English Congregationalist minister and journalist Edward Miall in an 1843 issue of his weekly, *Non-conformist*: "An *air-built castle*, which dissolves away before the gaze of reason." More-contemporary combinations include *air guitar* and *air piano* (used, of course, when one pretends to play an imaginary instrument); *air kiss* (in which no actual contact is made); *air hook* (the human nose); *air hose* (shoes worn without socks); and *air dance*, also called *air jig* and *air polka* (execution by hanging).

atomic mafia *noun*, a group that smuggles nuclear-weapons-grade material from stockpiles in countries formerly behind the Iron Curtain to interested parties elsewhere: "German justice officials, worried that their country is becoming the headquarters of an '*atomic mafia*' specializing in buying and stealing sensitive materials from stocks in the former East Bloc, are moving to give investigators and prosecutors new tools against the burgeoning crime" (*Washington Post*).

BACKGROUND: The word *mafia*

Here are a few of the words being tracked by the editors of The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition (Houghton Mifflin). A new word that exhibits sustained use may eventually make its way into a future edition of the dictionary. The information below represents preliminary research.

has three established meanings. One denotes the nineteenth-century secret terrorist organization in Sicily; another refers to the international criminal organization active especially in Italy and the United States since the late nineteenth century; the third and most general describes any tightly knit group of trusted associates. Longstanding examples of this last meaning include the *Irish Mafia* of John F. Kennedy, the *Arizona Mafia* of Barry Goldwater, the *Georgia Mafia*, or *Magnolia Mafia*, of Jimmy Carter, and the *Brezhnev Mafia* of the late Soviet leader. More recent, and more sinister, coinages include *Dixie Mafia* (criminal traffickers in narcotics and other goods operating in the urban South) and *organ mafia* (an illegal European kidney-brokering operation).

conversate *verb*, to engage in conversation: "He has made the tavern his regular watering hole since he moved to Dorchester from South Carolina last year. 'It's the only place where I can come and cool out. Everybody gets together and just *conversates*. Folks talk about sports, the news, general stuff'" (*Boston Globe*).

BACKGROUND: *Conversate* is generally barred from edited prose, but reports indicate that it is appearing with increasing frequency in speech. It belongs to a class of words called back-formations, which are created by removing an affix from an existing word. Other examples of back-formations include the similarly frowned-upon *commentate*, along with the unexceptionable *televise*, *edit*, *diagnose*, *burgle*, *vacuum clean*, and *pea* (this noun was formed when what was mistak-

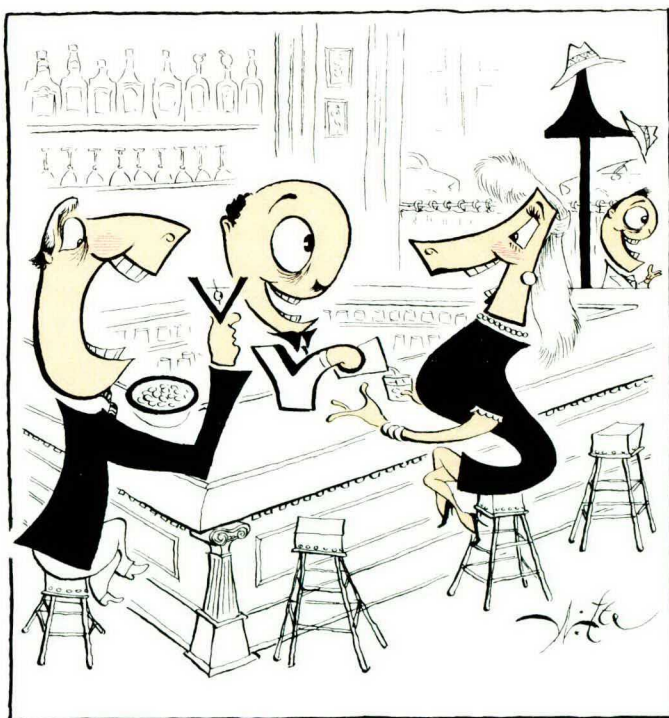
only thought to be an affix was stripped from the Middle English word *pease*).

Divorceware *trademark*, computer software for couples undertaking do-it-yourself divorces: "'Divorceware' provides forms and instructions for everything from a property settlement to custody arrangements" (Lynchburg, Va., *News & Daily Advance*).

BACKGROUND: *Divorceware* was developed by Howard Whetzel, an engineer and software-systems designer in Springfield, Virginia, who learned from experience that divorce is, by and large, a matter of reaching an agreement and filing the necessary court papers—steps that can be taken more economically without a lawyer (although Whetzel advises having an attorney review the completed documents). His company, Avenue Software Inc., began selling, for \$75, the IBM-compatible package last year. Whetzel says that *Divorceware* is not intended for "fractious" cases but "will work for any situation where the two parties can stay in the same room long enough to work it out." His primary customers to date: lawyers.

White Iraqi *noun*, a monarchist who fled Iraq after the 1958 revolution in Baghdad: "But if we joke today about being *White Iraqis*, the sadness will not go away. It has been a long time to watch a good country die" (Nameer Ali Jawdat in *The Washington Post*).

BACKGROUND: The term *White Iraqi* was coined by association with *White Russian*, a term denoting the czarist exiles from Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. Related terms include *White Army*, which refers to the counterrevolutionary force in Russia during its subsequent civil war, and *White Guardist*, a member of a force fighting for the Finnish government against leftist insurgents during that country's civil war of 1918.



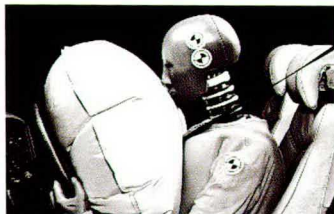


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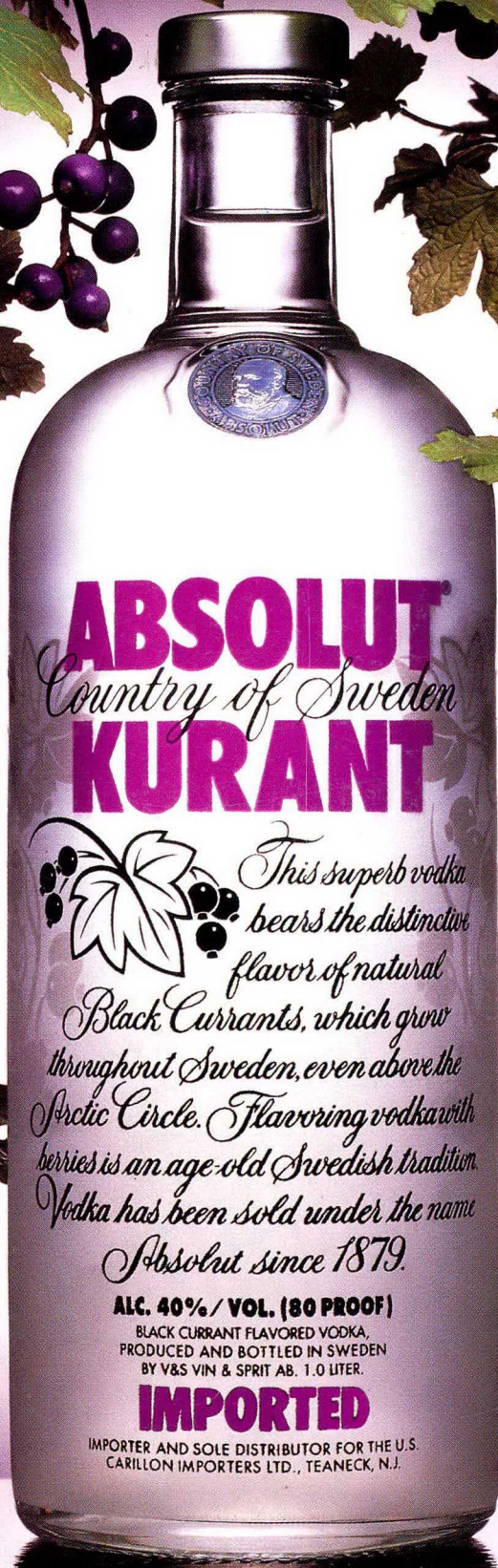
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