

Lecture Reading File

This large Fed Ex envelope, marked "Lecture Reading file," contains 12 files of excerpts from Mailer's works which he drew on for readings that he gave around the country, and overseas. It was not uncommon for Mailer to give a dozen to 20 lecture/readings a year, and many more when he had a new book was appearing.

Each 12 x 9 manila file contains an identification and some notes, some written by his assistant, Judith McNally, and some by him; on several the number of minutes it takes to read the selection is noted. Nos 1-4 and 6 are numbered.

The 12 folders are as follows:

- 1) Togetherness & Harbors of the Moon and Tough Guys Don't Dance—55 sec 40 sec 4 min. Refers to Two poems from *Deaths for the Ladies* (1962), and a brief excerpt describing the coming of fall to Provincetown, Massachusetts, from the novel, *Tough Guys Don't Dance* (1984).
- 2) TGDD: Cancer and Coincidence—5 minutes of 2 ½ minutes. Refers to an excerpt from *Tough Guys Don't Dance* (1984), dealing with Big Mac, the cancer-ridden father of the protagonist.
- 3) HG Creationist section—3 minutes short, 4 minutes long. Refers to an excerpt describing Harlot's theory about the way God might have created the universe from his novel, *Harlot's Ghost* (1991)
- 4) Responses and Reactions—6 minutes, second one [missing] 5 minutes. Refers to "Responses and Reactions V," first published in *Commentary*, August, 1963, a column

that discussed and quoted from *Tales of the Hasidim* (1933), by Martin Buber; reprinted in Mailer's collection, *Presidential Papers* (1963).

- 5) Excerpt from a 1962 interview with Paul Krassner on violence and censorship , reprinted from Krassner's magazine, *The Realist*, in Mailer's 1963 collection, *Presidential Papers*.
- 6) Ancient Evenings Burial Excerpt—10 minutes. Refers to an early chapter describing an embalming from the point of view of the embalmees, from Mailer's novel set in Egypt, *Ancient Evenings* (1983).
- 7) Two Buggers—8 minutes. Refers to "A Night at Occoquan," a chapter in *The Armies of the Night* (1968) that describes Mailer's bus ride to a Virginia jail after being arrested at the March on the Pentagon in October, 1967.
- 8) Why Are We in Vietnam—second item to be read. Refers to a section from Mailer's 1967 novel set in Alaska, *Why are We In Vietnam?* (1967). The excerpt deals with the burial of a wolf's head by an Indian guide.
- 9) Our Man at Harvard—9 minutes (the file is empty, but the title refers to a brief memoir narrative about Mailer's time as an editor at *Harvard Advocate*, first published in *Esquire*, April, 1977, and reprinted in *Pieces and Pontifications* (1982)
- 10) Of a Fire on the Moon. Refers to an excerpt , "A Burial by the Sea," the concluding section of *Of A Fire On the Moon* (1971), Mailer's nonfiction account of the Apollo 11 Mission.
- 11) Randy Huff & the Beer Can—7 minutes. Refers to an incident in *Harlot's Ghost* (1991), involving a minor woman character, Randy Huff, who has a fling with a major character, Dix Butler, in Berlin.

- 12) Oswald's Tale last part: Oswald and the Two Widows-6 minutes. Refers to a late section in *Oswald's Tale* (1995), that describes Jackie Kennedy and Marina Oswald.

Togetherness & 55 sec

Harbors of the Moon 40 sec

①

②

3 min?

Tough Guys 4 min

10 min

Politeis - 7 min

(55 sec)

Togetherness

My flesh must smell like an old tire
my sex is bitter and gone
my days are leafless and all sleep
 said the housewife
 going to the specialist
one knows what kind

but in the waiting room
she was racked by a plague
from the pots of the American
 miasma—our magazines,
 and so lady murmured
 too quietly
even for her mind to hear:

Reader's Digest, please save *your* soul
and leave mine free to contemplate
eternity which must be more
 than I glimpse for myself now
 an endless promenade
across a field of baked old beans
 a cataract of dishwater
 regurgitated by the memory
of champagne I never drank
and kings I never kissed

THE HARBORS
OF THE
MOON

I know
a town
with
sighs
of
sea
smiled
the
white
witch

I know
a town
~~which~~
sails
the
sun

I know
a town
where
light
is dry
and
boats
come
home
with
silver
in their
hold

where
boats
come
home
with
silver
in their
hold

(Do not
grieve
the
death
of
little
fish
They
are
lights
which
smell ~~that~~ *sniff*
the
deep)

I know
a town
with
sighs
of sea

white
with
the
tides
of me

white
as the
spine
of the
sea.

4 min

6 / Norman Mailer

In the midst of winter you could

have taken a bowling ball and rolled it down the long one-way lane of our narrow main street (a true New England alley) without striking a pedestrian or a car. The town withdrew into itself, and the cold, which was nothing remarkable when measured with a thermometer (since the seacoast off Massachusetts is, by Fahrenheit, less frigid than the stony hills west of Boston) was nonetheless a cold sea air filled with the bottomless chill that lies at the cloistered heart of ghost stories. Or, indeed, at many a séance. In truth, there had been a séance Patty and I attended at the end of September with disconcerting results: short and dreadful, it ended with a shriek. I suspect that part of the reason I was now bereft of Patty Lareine was that something intangible but indisputably repulsive had attached itself to our marriage in that moment.

After she left, there was a week when the weather never shifted. One chill morose November sky went into another. The place turned gray before one's eyes. Back in summer, the population had been thirty thousand and doubled on weekends. It seemed as if every vehicle on Cape Cod chose to drive down the four-lane state highway that ended at our beach. Provincetown was as colorful then as St. Tropez, and as dirty by Sunday evening as Coney Island. In the fall, however, with everyone gone, the town revealed its other presence. Now the population did not boil up daily from thirty thousand to sixty, but settled down to its honest sediment, three thousand souls, and on empty weekday afternoons you might have said the true number of inhabitants must be thirty men and women, all hiding.

There could be no other town like it. If you were sensitive to crowds, you might expire in summer from human propinquity. On the other hand, if you were unable to endure loneliness, the vessel of your person could fill with dread during the long winter. Martha's Vineyard, not fifty miles to the south and west, had lived through the upsurge of mountains and their erosion, through the rise and fall of oceans, the life and death of great forests and swamps. Dinosaurs had passed over Martha's Vineyard, and their bones were compacted into the bedrock. Glaciers had come and gone, sucking the island to the north, pushing it like a ferry to the south again. Martha's Vineyard had fossil deposits one million centuries old. The northern reach of Cape Cod, however, on which my house sat, the land I inhabited—that long curving spit of shrub and dune that curves in upon itself in a spiral at the tip of the

Cape—has years. Th

Perhaps (for one v sand flats of land ex artists car made to t the summ undergar mood, ca only ten t have old there was down the the bay lil

If this i Day, it is and haun hate and butt end I was smc

It seem again to bought o back thre ber whor and invit town, ou the Pilgr here that

I cont crossed t sight of waves ter can be d not the i

Tough Guys Don't Dance / 7

Cape—had only been formed by wind and sea over the last ten thousand years. That cannot amount to more than a night of geological time.

Perhaps this is why Provincetown is so beautiful. Conceived at night (for one would swear it was created in the course of one dark storm) its sand flats still glistened in the dawn with the moist primeval innocence of land exposing itself to the sun for the first time. Decade after decade, artists came to paint the light of Provincetown, and comparisons were made to the lagoons of Venice and the marshes of Holland, but then the summer ended and most of the painters left, and the long dingy undergarment of the gray New England winter, gray as the spirit of my mood, came down to visit. One remembered then that the land was only ten thousand years old, and one's ghosts had no roots. We did not have old Martha's Vineyard's fossil remains to subdue each spirit, no, there was nothing to domicile our specters who carned with the wind down the two long streets of our town which curved together around the bay like two spinsters on their promenade to church.

~~If this is a fair sample of how my mind worked on the Twenty-fourth~~
Day, it is obvious I was feeling introspective, long-moldering, mournful and haunted. Twenty-four days of being without a wife you love and hate and certainly fear is guaranteed to leave you cleaving to her like the butt end of addiction itself. How I hated the taste of cigarettes now that I was smoking again.

It seems to me that I walked the length of the town that day and back again to my house—her house—it was Patty Lareine's money that had bought our home. Three miles along Commercial Street I walked, and back through all the shank of that gray afternoon, but I do not remember whom I spoke to, nor how many or few might have passed in a car and invited me to ride. No, I remember I walked to the very end of town, out to where the last house meets the place on the beach where the Pilgrims first landed in America. Yes, it was not at Plymouth but *here* that they landed.

I contemplate the event on many a day. Those Pilgrims, having crossed the Atlantic, encountered the cliffs of Cape Cod as their first sight of land. On that back shore the surf, at its worst, can break in waves ten feet high. On windless days the peril is worse; a sailing vessel can be driven in by the relentless tides to founder on the shoals. It is not the rocks but the shifting sands that sink you off Cape Cod. What

TGDD

cause & coincidence

Peeling is a formal logic
Here is another
variety.

②

②

②

5 min or 2½ min

↓ Explain the
big + points.

5 min

where the players are sleeping and takes a reading. 'Pittsburgh is up for this game,' He says to Himself. 'The Jets are jangled.' Pittsburgh, He decides, is worth a lot more than three points. So He bets them. I'd say He's right four times out of five."

"But why four out of five?"

"Because footballs," said my father ominously, "take funny bounces. It is not practical to get better than four out of five. That's good enough. If He wanted to take account of the physics of every bounce, He'd have to do a million times more work in His calculations in order to get up from eighty to ninety-nine percent. That's not economical. He's got too many other things to work at."

"But why did you settle on four out of five?"

My father took this as a most serious question. "Sometimes," he told me, "a football handicapper can get a great streak going and hits up around seventy-five percent against the spread for a month or more. I figure that's because he's got a pipeline for a little while into higher places."

~~I thought of Harpo: "Can some keep it going longer?"~~

My father shrugged. "Dubious. These pipelines are hard to maintain." ~~He showed no concern at mixing his metaphor. "It's a high-wire act."~~

"What about a terrible losing streak?"

"Those guys are on the pipeline too. Only the flow is in reverse. Their hunches are one hundred and eighty degrees wrong."

"Maybe it's just the law of averages."

"The law of averages," he said with disgust, "has done more to mess up people's minds than any idea I know. It's horse manure. The pipeline is either feeding you or it's sucking you. Greedy people get sucked by the pipeline."

"What if your bets turn out fifty-fifty?"

"Then you're nowhere near the pipeline. You're a computer. Look in the papers. The computer predictions end up at .500."

~~"All right," I said, "but pipelines with I mean to talk about is coincidence."~~

He looked troubled. I got up and freshened our drinks. "Put a lot of water in mine," he said.

"Coincidence," I said. "What do you make of it?"

"I've been doing the talking," he said. "You tell me."

*drawing it all
sucking out of
on you*

and?

EVD

*3 lines
17 lines
8 lines*

spread

body goes crazy, or your mind. Cancer is the cure for schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is the cure for cancer. Most people don't know how tough it is out there. I was brought up to know. I got no excuse."

I was silent. I stopped arguing with him. It is not easy to sort out what effect his words were having. Was I coming to understand for the first time why the warmth he had for me always seemed to cross a glacial field? I may once have been a seed in Douglas Madden's body but only after that body was no longer held by him in high esteem. I was, to a degree, defective. ~~Agitation had to be stirring in all my old wounds, well-buried and long-resigned.~~ No wonder my father had taken no great joy in me. Intimations came how in years ahead—if I lived—the memory of this conversation might make me shake with rage.

~~Yet, I also felt compassion for my father. Damnable compassion. He had cast a long shadow across my understanding of him.~~

~~Next, I knew a considerable amount of fear. For now it seemed real to me again that I had murdered two women. How many times over these last few years had I come to the edge of battering Patty Larcine with my bare hands? And each time I resisted the impulse, had not a sense of oncoming illness settled more firmly into me? Yes, like my father I had been living in a harsh environment. I thought once more of the impulse that led me to climb the tower. Had that been the night when I hoped to keep the first switch from being thrown?~~

~~I knew then that I would confide in Big Mac. I had to talk about the two murders and the plastic bags in the damp cellar of this house. I could hold it no longer. Yet I could not bring myself to speak about it directly. Instead, I more or less sidled up to the topic.~~

"How much do you believe," I asked, "in predestination?"

"Oh, yeah," he answered, "what kind of predestination?" The shift in subject made him happy. Long years ~~behind a bar~~ had left my father adept at living with questions as wide as the heavenly gates.

"The football spreads," I said. "Can God pick the team that will cover?"

It was obviously a question Dougy had lived with. He revealed that glint in his eye which showed that he was debating whether to disclose useful knowledge. Then he nodded. "I figure if God bet the spread, He'd win eighty percent of the time."

"How do you come up with that number?"

"Well, let's say the night before the game He passes over the places

→ It was time
to
change
the
subject

Possible
start

of
working
as a
bookender

23 line

The Shooting episode on Growth House.

Norman Mailer / 158

"You're right, kid," he said. "I hope and pray Frankie never knew." He looked at the wall for an instant. "You get older and you begin to feel as if something is wrong. You're in a box, and the sides keep coming closer. So you do things you didn't do before."

Start

"How long have you known you were sick?"

"Ever since I went into St. Vincent's forty-five years ago."

"That's quite a while to have cancer and never show it."

"None of the doctors have a feel for the subject," he said. "The way I see the matter, it's a circuit of illness with two switches."

"What are you saying?"

"Two terrible things have to happen before the crud can get its start. The first cocks the trigger. The other fires it. I've been walking around with the trigger cocked for forty-five years."

"Because you couldn't recover from all those hits you took?"

"No. Cause I lost my balls."

"You? What are you talking about?"

"Tim, I stopped, and I felt the blood in my shoes, and there was St. Vincent's in front of me. I should have kept chasing the bastard who did the shooting. But I lost my nerve when I saw the hospital."

"Hell, you had already gone after him for six blocks."

"Not enough. I was built to be that good anyway. The test came when I stopped. I didn't have the nerve to go on and catch him. Cause I could have. Something in the scheme of things might have made him trip. I didn't push my luck. Instead, I stopped. Then I heard a voice clearly in my head. It's the only time I would say that God or someone highly superior was speaking to me. This voice said, 'You're out of gas, kid. It's your true test. Do it.' But I went into St. Vincent's and grabbed the orderly by the collar, and just at the moment when I got tough with that punk in the white jacket was when I felt the first switch get thrown in the cancer."

"What threw the second switch?"

"It never got thrown. It corroded. Cumulative effects. Forty-five years of living with no respect for myself."

"You're crazy."

He took a big belt of his watered bourbon. "I wish I was. Then I wouldn't have cancer. I've studied this, I tell you. There's buried statistics if you look for them. Schizophrenics in looney bins only get cancer half as often as the average population. I figure it this way: either your

6 blocks
standing
the shoot
quelling
the
orderly
was
engaged

1:12
1:14

now

"Well," I said, "I think it's not unlike the pipeline. Only it's a network. I believe we receive traces of everyone's thoughts. We're not aware of it usually, but we do."

"Wait a minute. You're saying people are able to send and receive wireless messages? Telepathy? Without knowing it?"

"Whatever you want to call it."

"Well," he said, "for the sake of argument, why not?"

"Once," I said, "I was up in Fairbanks, Alaska, and you could feel it. There was a network."

"Yes," he said, "near magnetic north. What were you doing in Fairbanks?"

"A scam. Nothing significant." Actually, I had gone up on a cocaine run after Madeleine and I had split. It was in the month before I got busted on a quick trip to Florida for the same deed. Selling two kilos of cocaine. Only the services of a lawyer well paid for his powers of plea bargaining got it down to three years (with parole).

"I had a ruckus one night with a guy in Fairbanks," I told him. "He was bad news. In the morning when I woke up, I saw his face in my thoughts. His expression was ugly. Then the phone rang. It was the same fellow. His voice sounded as ugly as his face. He wanted a meet with me late that afternoon. All day I kept running into people I had seen the night before, and not once was I surprised by their expression. They looked angry or happy in just the way I expected them to look. It was as precise as a dream. At the end of the day I met with the heavy. But now I was no longer uptight about it. Because, as the afternoon went on, I could see him clearly in my thoughts and he was looking wasted. Sure enough, when I met up with him, that's how he was, a bigger fellow than me."

My father chuckled.

"I tell you, Dougy," I said, "I think everybody in Alaska drinks so they can shut themselves out from living in everybody else's head."

He nodded. "Northern climes. Ireland. Scandinavia. Russia. Drunk like skunks." He shrugged. "I still don't see what this has to do with your argument."

"I'm saying people don't want to live in each other's heads. It's too scary. It's too animal. Coincidence is the sign that they're approaching such a state."

"What kicks it off?" Dougy asked.

"I'm not sure," I said. I took a breath. Everything considered, there were worse matters to contend with than my father's scorn. "I think that when something big and unexpected is about to happen, people come out of their daily static. Their thoughts start pulling toward one another. It's as if an impending event creates a vacuum, and we start to go toward it. Startling coincidences pile up at a crazy rate. It's like a natural phenomenon."

I could almost feel him brooding over his own past. Had he lived through experiences to compare with this on the morning he was shot? "What kind of impending events do you mean?" he asked.

"Evil events."

He was being cautious. "What kind of evil events?"

"Murder, for one."

He pondered what I said. Then he shook his head as if to say, "I do not like your input." He looked at me. "Tim," he said, "do you remember the bartender's guide?"

In my turn, I nodded. When I started my first job as a bartender, he had given me a schedule. "Son," he had said, "keep this in mind. In New York, on the streets, it's Peeping Toms from twelve A.M. to one A.M., fires from one to two, stickups two to three, bar fights three to four, suicides four to five, and auto accidents from five A.M. to six A.M." I had kept it in my head like a typed schedule. It had proved useful.

"Nothing special about murders," he now said.

"I'm not talking about New York," I said, "but here."

"You're saying a murder in this place is an extraordinary event?" I could see him all but measuring the cold damp of Cape Cod air against the blood and steam of the act. "Yeah," he said, "all right, I'll grant the point." He looked not altogether happy. "What's the purpose of this discussion?"

"I'm tangled up in coincidences," I said.

"Well, by your line of reasoning, you must be close to something bad," he said.

"I'm closer than that."

He took the pause.

"There was a suicide last week," I said, "although the man may have been killed. I believe I stole his woman the night it happened." The most curious thought came to me next: because my father had cancer, whatever I told him would never touch the air for others. That might

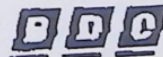
Tough Guys Don't Dance / 45

tree of all. A dwarf pine poked up from the crest of a small sandy ridge that had pushed through the loam of these woods, a fearfully, twisted little force of a tree, its roots clinging to the uncertain rise, its limbs all contorted together on one side and trammelled down before the wind like a man kneeling, only, at the last, to thrust up his arms to the sky in prayer. That was my tree, and at the foot of it, under the roots, was a small cave not large enough to hold a bear cub, and my door to this burrow was a rock with its moss many times raised and patted back into place. Now I saw it was much disturbed, the edges as raw as a dirty bandage pushed up on end by the swelling of the wound. I removed the stone and felt into the hole in front of the footlocker, my fingers scraping and searching into this soft loam like field mice at the edge of food, and I felt something—it could be flesh or hair or some moist sponge—I didn't know what, but my hands, fiercer than myself, cleared the debris to pull forward a plastic garbage bag through which I poked and saw enough at once to give one frightful moan, pure as the vertigo of a long fall itself. I was looking at the back of a head. The color of its hair, despite all the stains of earth, was blonde. Then I tried to see the face, but when to my horror the head rolled in the bag without resistance—severed!—I knew I could not go on to search the features, no, I pushed back the bag and then the rock with hardly an attempt to replace the moss, and flew from those woods to my car, driving down the humpbacked road with speed to compensate for the caution with which I came in. And it was only after I was back in my house and deep in a chair trying to calm my shivering with bourbon neat that the realization came over me in all the burning woe of one wall of flame falling upon another that I did not even know whether it was the head of Patty Lareine or Jessica Pond lying in that grave. Of course, I also did not know whether I should be afraid of myself, or of another, and that, so soon as night was on me and I tried to sleep, became a terror to pass beyond all notions of measure.

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ASFR FEATURES

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RADIO

FAX: Norman Mailer at 718 624 4348
c/o Judith McNally

Norman Mailer
c/o Judith McNally

BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION
ARTS, SCIENCE & FEATURES RADIO

78 Cannibals and Christians

London, February 1941

near insanity of most of us, and his need for action is America's need for action; not brave action, but action; any kind of action; any move to get the motors going. A future death of the spirit lies close and heavy upon American life, a cancerous emptiness at the center which calls for a circus. The country is in disease. It has been in disease for a long time. There has been nothing in our growth which was organic. We never solved our depression, we merely went to war back in 1941, and going to war never won it, not in our own minds, not as men, no, we won it but as sources of supply; we still do not know that we are equal to the Russians. We won a war but we did not really win it, not in the secret of our sleep.

So we have not really had a prosperity, we have had fever. We have grown rich because of one fact with two opposite interpretations: There has been a cold war. It has been a cold war which came because Communism was indeed a real threat to our freedom, or a cold war which came because capitalism could not survive without an economy geared to war; or is it both—who can know? Who can really know?

The center of our motive is an enigma—is this country extraordinary or accursed? And when we think of Communism, we have to wonder if we are accursed. For we have not even found our Communist threat. We have had a secret police organization and an invisible government large enough by now to occupy the moon, we have hunted Communists from the top of the Time-Life Building to the bottom of the Collier mine, we have not found that many, not that many, and we have looked like Keystone Cops.

We have even had a Negro Revolution in which we did not believe. We have had it, yes, we have had it, because (in the true penury of our motive) we could not afford to lose votes in Africa and India, South America and Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, name any impoverished place; we have been running in a world election against the collective image of the Russ, and so we have had to give the black man his civil rights or Africa was so much nearer to Marx. But there has not been much like love in the civil rights. We have never been too authentic. No.

We have had a hero. He was a young good-looking man with a beautiful wife, and he won the biggest poker game we ever played, the only real one—we lived for a week ready to die in a nuclear war. Whether we liked it or not. But he won. It was our one true victory in all these years, our moment; so the young man began to inspire a subtle kind of love. His strength proved stronger than we knew. Suddenly he was dead, and we were in grief.

But then came a trial which was worse. For the assassin, or the man who had been arrested but was not the assassin—we will never know, not really—was killed before our sight. In the middle of the funeral came an

Part One: Lambs 79

explosion on the porch. Now, we were going mad. It took more to make a nation go mad than any separate man, but we had taken miles too much. Certainties had shattered.

Our country was fearful, half-mad, inauthentic—it needed a war or it needed a purge. Bile was stirring in the pits of the national conscience and little to oppose it but a lard of guilt cold as the most mediocre of our needs. We took formal public steps toward a great society, that great society of computers and pills, of job aptitudes and bad architecture, of psychoanalysis, superhighways, astronauts, vaccinations, and a Peace Corps, that great society where nothing but frozen corn would be sold in the smallest towns of Iowa, where censorship would disappear but every image would be manipulated from birth to death.

Something in the buried animal of modern life grew bestial at the thought of this Great Society—the most advanced technological nation of the civilized world was the one now closest to blood, to shedding the blood and burning the flesh of Asian peasants it had never seen. The Pentagon had been kept on a leash for close to twenty years. Presidents so mediocre in their talents as Truman and Eisenhower had kept the military from dominating the nation.

But Johnson did not.

Out of the pusillanimities or the madnesses of his secret sleep he came to a decision to listen to the advice of his military machine, that congeries of Joint Forces, War Department and C.I.A. which had among other noteworthy achievements planned the Bay of Pigs. It was now planning its escalation in Vietnam. And Johnson was in accord. The body of a consummate politician took recognition as it slept that the nation was in disease and its only cure—out where the drums were beating and the fires would not cease—was to introduce us to the first andettes of a war whose end might be limitless. Miserable nation cursed with a computer for its commander-in-chief, a computer with an ego so vain it could not bear the memory of his predecessor and the power he had had for a week when the world was on the edge of nuclear war.

Yet, there still remains the largest question of them all. It is the question of fighting Communism. Look, you may say, is it not possible that with all our diseases admitted, we are still less malignant than the Communists, we are the defense of civilization and they, not us, are the barbarians who would destroy it? If that is true, then—as some of you may argue—the logic must be faced, ~~the Chinese must be stopped, we must bomb their bomb.~~ And I would argue in return that neither capitalism nor Communism is the defense of civilization but that they are rather each—in their own way—malignancies upon the spirit of honest adventure and open inquiry which developed across the centuries from primitive man

30 Cannibals and Christians

to the Renaissance, and that therefore there is no man alive who can say at this point which system will perpetrate the greater harm upon mankind.

But this I do know, existence alters the nature of essence. An unjust war, an unnatural war, an obscene war brutalizes what is best in a nation and encourages every horror to rise from its sewer.

The Communists could capture every nation on earth but our own and we would still be safe if our intention were clean. Yes. For in the vertiginous terrors of nuclear warfare rests one rock ledge of safety—in future no great power can ever be destroyed without destroying every other power which would attack it. As a corollary no philosophy of government can occupy nine-tenths of the globe without being altered to its roots. The health of Communism, its secret necessity, is an enemy external to itself; war is indeed the health of the totalitarian state, and peace is its disease. Communism would split and rupture and war upon itself if ever it occupied most of the world, for then it would have to solve the problems of most of the world and those problems are not soluble in the rigidity of a system. Like all top-heavy structures the greatest danger to Communism lies in its growth. Prosperity is its poison, for without a sense of crisis, Communism cannot discipline its future generations. Attack from capitalism is Communism's transfusion of blood. So our war against Communism, most particularly our war against Communism in Asia, is the death of our future. I am going to quote Senator Wayne Morse:

We shall win one military victory after another; we shall destroy cities, industrial installations, and nuclear installations; we shall kill by the millions.

That course of action will lay a foundation of hatred on the part of the colored races of the world against the American people. In due time, those installations will be rebuilt . . . on the foundation of intense hatred by Asians for the people of the United States. That hatred will even be inherited by generations of American boys and girls fifty, seventy-five, one hundred, yes, two hundred years from now.

I say: end the cold war. Pull back our boundaries to what we can defend and to what wishes to be defended. Let Communism come to those countries it will come to. Let us not use up our substance trying to hold onto nations which are poor, underdeveloped, and bound to us only by the depths of their hatred for us. We cannot equal the effort the Communists make in such places. We are not dedicated in that direction. We were not born to do that. We have had our frontier already. We cannot be excited to our core, our historic core, by the efforts of new underdeveloped nations to expand their frontiers.

Wetzel
White
The Red
Papa
O.S.

Dedicate this to Jerry Helmes.

identity) can put you together for a little while, and did while I was rereading these pages. As soon, however, as I concluded, I was bathed in an old woe. For I had made the mistake of showing the manuscript to Madeline years ago, and it helped to break us up. *Here it is!*

A piece of writing by another golden boy
~~and a piece of writing by another golden boy~~

The best description of a pussy I ever came across was in a short piece by John Updike called "One's Neighbor's Wife":

The neighbor's wife is the one who is speaking!

Each hair is precious and individual, serving a distinct rôle in the array: blonde to invisibility where the thigh and abdomen join, dark to opacity where the tender labia ask protection, heavy and ruddy as a forester's beard beneath the swell of belly, dark and sparse as the whiskers of a Machiavel where the perineum sneaks backward to the anus. My pussy alters by the time of day and according to the mesh of underpants. It has its satellites: the whimsical line of hairs that ascend to my navel and into my tan, the kisses of fur on the inside of my thighs, the lambent fuzz that ornaments the cleavage of my fundament. Amber, ebony, auburn, bay, chestnut, cinnamon, hazel, fawn, snuff, henna, bronze, platinum, peach, ash, flame, and field mouse; these are but a few of the colors my pussy is.

All right, that's for Updike. He gives

is a beautiful description of a forest, and makes you ponder the mysteries of scale. Somebody once wrote that Cézanne shifted our perception of magnitude until a white towel on a table was like the blue-shadowed snows in the ravines of a mountain, and the treatment of a patch of skin became a desert valley. An interesting idea. I always saw more in Cézanne after that, just as I realized I had never looked at a pussy properly until I read Updike. For that alone, John would be one of my favorite writers.

Even if

They say Updike used to be a painter, and you can see it in his style. Nobody studies surfaces so closely as he does, and he uses adjectives with more discrimination than anybody who's writing in the English language today. Hemingway said not to use them, and Hemingway was right. The adjective is the author's opinion of what's going on, no more. If I write, "A strong man came into the room," that only means he is strong in relation to me. Unless I've established myself for the reader, I might be the only fellow in the bar who is impressed by the guy who just came in. It is better to say: "A man entered. He was holding a walking stick, and for some reason, he now broke it in two like a twig." Of course, this takes more time to narrate. So adjectives being on quick tell you how to live writing. Advertising thrives on it. "A superefficient, silent, sensuous five-speed shift." Put twenty adjectives before the noun and no one will know you are describing a turd. The adjectives are the cruise.

Therefore, let me underline it. Updike is one of the few writers who can enhance his work with adjectives rather than abuse it. He has a rare talent. Yet he irks me. Even his description of a pussy. It could as easily be a tree.

8 / *Norman Mailer*

fear those Pilgrims must have known on hearing the dull eternal boom of the surf. Who would dare come near that shore with boats such as theirs? They turned south, and the white deserted coast remained unrelenting—no hint of a cove. Just the long straight beach. So they tried going to the north and in a day saw the shore bend west, then continue to curve until it even turned to the south. What trick of the land was this? Now they were sailing to the east, three quarters of the way around from the north. Were they circumnavigating an ear of the sea? They came around the point, and dropped anchor in the lee. It was a natural harbor, as protected, indeed, as the inside of one's ear. From there, they put down small boats and rowed to shore. A plaque commemorates the landing. It is by the beginning of the breakwater that now protects our marshes at the end of town from the final ravages of the sea. There is where you come to the end of the road, to the farthest place a tourist can ride out toward the tip of Cape Cod and encounter the landing place of the Pilgrims. It was only weeks later, after much bad weather and the recognition that there was little game to hunt and few fields to till in these sandy lands, that the Pilgrims sailed west across the bay to Plymouth.

Here, however, was where they first landed with all the terror and exaltation of encountering the new land. New land it was, not ten thousand years old. A strewn of sand. How many Indian ghosts must have howled through the first nights of their encampment.

I think of the Pilgrims whenever I walk to these emerald-green marshes at the end of town. Beyond, the coastal dunes are so low that one can see ships along the horizon even when the water is not visible. The flying bridges of sport-fishing boats seem to travel in caravans along the sand. If I have a drink in me, I begin to laugh, because across from the plaque to the Pilgrims, not fifty yards away, there where the United States began, stands the entrance to a huge motel. If it is no uglier than any other vast motel, it is certainly no prettier, and the only homage the Pilgrims get is that it is called an Inn. Its asphalt parking lot is as large as a football field. Pay homage to the Pilgrims.

No more than this, no matter how I press and force my mind, is what I remember of how I spent my Twenty-fourth afternoon. I went out, I walked across the town, I brooded on the geology of our shores, loaned my imagination to the Pilgrims, and laughed at the Provincetown Inn. Then I suppose I must have walked on home. The gloom in which I lay

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in the grasp of my sofa was timeless. I had spent many hours in these twenty-four days staring at the wall, but what I do recollect, what I cannot ignore, is that in the evening I got into my Porsche and drove up Commercial Street very slowly, as if afraid that this night I might run into a child—the evening was foggy—and I did not stop until I came to The Widow's Walk. There, not far from the Provincetown Inn, is a dark stained pine-paneled room whose foundations are gently slapped in the rising of the tide, for one of the charms of Provincetown I have neglected to pass along is that not only my house—her house!—but most of the buildings on the bay side of Commercial Street are kin to ships at high tide when the bulkheads on which they rest are half submerged by the sea.

It was such a tide tonight. The waters rose as languorously as if we were in the tropics, but I knew the sea was cold. Behind the good windows of this dark room, the fire on its wide hearth was worthy of a postcard, and my wooden chair was full of approaching winter, inasmuch as it had a shelf of the kind they used in study halls a hundred years ago: a large round platter of oak lifted on its hinges to enable you to sit down, after which it ensconced itself under your right elbow to serve as a table for your drink.

The Widow's Walk might as well have been created for me. On lonely fall evenings I liked to entertain the conceit that I was some modern tycoon-pirate of prodigious wealth who kept the place for his amusement. The large restaurant at the other end might be rarely entered by me, but the small bar of this paneled lounge equipped with its barmaid was all for myself. Secretly I must have believed that no one else had a right to enter. By November, the illusion was not difficult to protect. On quiet weekday nights most of the diners, good senior Wasps from Brewster and Dennis and Orleans, out for a smack of excitement, found their thrills in the sheer audacity of daring to drive all of thirty or forty miles to Provincetown itself. The echo of summer kept our evil reputation intact. Those fine Scotch studies in silver—which is to say, each Wasp professor emeritus and retired corporate executive—did not look to tarry in a bar. They headed for the Dining Room. Besides, one look at me in my dungaree jacket was enough to steer them to the food. "No, dear," their wives would say, "let's have our drinks at the table. We're starved!"

"Yeah, baby," I would murmur to myself, "starved."

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Can this explain why I acted with such reluctance to so generous a piece of advice from my Chief of Police?

While I did, so soon as I returned home, get into my car and drive out to the highway and there took the direction to Truro, I was still not at all certain that I would actually move my cache of Hurricane Head. I hated to disturb it. On the other hand, I most certainly did not want to be busted.

What a nose Regency had for my habits! I could not even say why I had chosen to keep the stash so near my marijuana field, but I had. Twenty glass coffee jars filled with carefully harvested crop were packed into a steel footlocker varnished and oiled against rust. That had all been placed in a hole in the ground beneath a most distinctive tree two hundred yards down an overgrown trail from a one-lane humped sandy road in the forest.

Yes, among all the hollows of the Truro woods to choose, I had nonetheless concealed my stash close to the stubble of my garden-size plot. That had to be the worst place to keep one's private store. Any hunter blundering through on the same trail (as they did a few times a year) might recognize the character of the agriculture practiced there, and so devote a little effort to examining the environs. I kept only an inch of soil and some much tamped-down moss over the rock that closed the burrow where I stowed the footlocker.

Yet this particular site was important to me. I wanted the product kept near its home. In prison, where the food we ate had been shipped to us out of the entrails of the largest food corporations in America, there was never a bite that did not come out of a plastic wrapping, cardboard package, or can. Taking into account the trip from the farm to the processing factory, and from there to us, I figure most of the food must have voyaged, on average, two thousand miles. So I saw a panacea to the world's ills: Let no one look to sup on food grown farther away from his home than the distance he can carry it on his back in a day's walk. An interesting idea. I soon ceased to look for ways to implement it. But it left me fierce about respecting the origins of my marijuana. Like wine that mellows in the shade of the vineyard where it grew, so would my Mary Jane be stored close to the earth out of which it sprouted.

I felt one good full dread, therefore, at shifting the stash, and it was close to the fear with which I had awakened this morning. Truth, I

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needed to leave everything as it was. Nonetheless, I took the turn off the highway to the country road that (by way of a crossroad or two) would lead eventually to my sandy lane in the middle of the forest. Driving slowly, I began to realize how much I had been calling upon gifts of balance through this day. How else account for one's aplomb—everything considered!—during the dialogue with Alvin Luther? After all, where *had* the tattoo come from?

At that moment I was obliged to pull the car over. Where *had* the tattoo come from? This thought might as well have come upon me for the first time. With no warning, I was near to being as ill as the dog.

I can tell you that by the time I was able to move forward again, it was with the absurd caution a poor driver brings to his wheel after a missed collision. I crawled.

That way I passed through the back roads of Truro on this chill afternoon—would the sun never appear again?—and I studied the lichen on tree trunks as if their yellow spores had much to tell me, and stared at blue mailboxes on the road as though they were security itself, even halted by a green-bronze sign at a crossroads to read the raised metal letters commemorating a local boy who died in an old war. I passed many a hedge in front of many a gray-shingled salt-box whose white crushed-shell walks were still offering their whiff of the sea. In the woods, the wind was strong on this afternoon, and whenever I stopped the car, a murmur came to me like a high surf washing over treetops. Then I was out of the woods again and drove up and down abrupt little hills and passed by moors and quaking bogs and kettle bowls. I came to a well I recognized by the side of the road, and stopped and peered into its bottom where a green moss I knew would gleam back at me. Soon I was in the woods again, and the paved road was gone. Now I had to drive in low gear down the sandy lane, scratching first one side of the Porsche, then the other, on thickets and briars, but the hump in the middle was so high that I did not dare to ride the ruts.

Then I was not certain I would get through. Rivulets crossed the road, and in several places I had to ford shallow pools where the trees grew together overhead and formed a tunnel of leaves. On sunless afternoons I had always liked to drive through the mournful, modest lay of these Truro hills and woods. Provincetown, even in winter, could seem active as a mining town in comparison with such sparse offerings. Up on any of these modest summits, if there was a high wind like today,

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one could watch the seawater in the distance thrash through a millrace of light and whitecaps, while the color of the ponds in the hollows remained a dark and dirty bronze. All the palette of the woods seemed to accommodate itself between. I liked the dull green of the dune grass and the pale gold of the weeds, and in that late autumn panorama when the beef's blood and burnt orange are out of the leaves, the colors came down to gray and green and brown, but with what a play between! My eye used to find a dance of hues still left here between the field grays and the dove gray, the lilac gray and the smoke gray, the bracken brown and the acorn brown, fox brown and dun, mouse gray and meadowlark gray, and the bottle green of the moss, and sphagnum moss and fir green, holly green and seawater green at the horizon. My eye used to dart from lichen on a tree to heather in a field, in and out of the pond weeds and red maples (no longer red but wet-bark brown) and the scent of pitch pine and twist of scrub oak were in the still of the forest with the wind in the leaves overhead coming again in the high sound of the surf: "All that has lived clamors to live again" was the sound of the surf.

So I parked my car where I could look from the pond to the sea and tried to calm myself with these soft and wistful colors, but my heart was pounding now. I drove on until I came to my trail off this sand road, and there I stopped and got out of the car and tried to recover that immaculate sense of being alone which these woods had given me before. But I could not. People had been here in the last few days.

As soon as I stepped onto my trail, half hidden by shrubs from the road, this sense became more keen. I did not halt to look for traces, but doubtless some could be found. There are subtleties to a stale presence that only the woods can reflect, and as I walked the hundred steps from the road to my stashing box, I was sweating again in the way I had before on that hot September afternoon when the advance of the hurricane hung over us all.

I went by the marijuana field and its stubble had been beaten to the ground by rain. Some shame at the haste with which I had cut the stems this September left me now as uneasy as one feels on encountering an ill-used friend, and so I came to a stop as if to pay my respects, and indeed my little plot had the air of a cemetery ground. Yet I could hardly pause, a panic was too much on me, and therefore I hurried farther down the trail past the clearing and in and out of thicker and stunted pine, and there, another few steps along, was the most curious

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ward lands, in order that the secret allegiance of those new mass men be exactly to us.

For there is one way in which the West is superior to the Communists, and without that superiority, mass man cannot live. Mass man is an insatiable man, a malignancy of directionless greed at the mercy of his secret addiction—which is art. No population ever on earth has loved art so much as mass man, for that is the only hope of his deliverance: that he may encounter some great art before he is dead. Only great art can penetrate into the tomb of the modern soul and bring a moment of cease to the backed-up murders of the modern heart. Here, on this violent spit, friends, is the place we are ahead in the Cold War. For our artists are better, our writers are better, our jazz musicians are better, our painters go further, our vision is more fierce, it explores more. It is relentless we almost dare to think. It may even prevail if we do not burn too many women and children fighting for Christ. Oh, Christ, what assholes be Americans.

Yet it may be too easy to end on this fine proud and strenuous moral note. For the sweet bloody truth is not so neat. If the Lord of the Snopes went to war in Vietnam because finally he didn't have the moral courage to try to solve an impossible mix of Camp, redneck, civil rights, street violence, playboy pornography and all the glut which bugs our works, if Lyndon Johnson finally decided in his fine brain that only a war was going to get America off the pot (we were that mercilessly screwed to the john by fifty years of smelling our national armpit every time the truth rose up to kiss us) well, what he didn't realize was that the war in Vietnam was not going to serve as cloaca for our worst emotions but instead was going to up the ante and give us more Camp, more redneck, more violence in the streets, more teen-age junkies, more polite society gone ape, more of everything else Lyndon was trying to ship overseas.

Still, with it all, confess it, Mailer, the country is now in good humor. A wild good humor—it has been the wildest summer in years from Watts to Easthampton; it has been wild. The truth is, maybe we need a war. It may be the last of the tonics. From Lydia Pinkham to Vietnam in sixty years, or bust. We're the greatest country ever lived for speeding up the time. So, let's do it right. Let's cease all serious war, kids. Let's leave Asia to the Asians. Let us, instead, have wars which are like happenings. Let us have them every summer. Let us buy a tract of land in the Amazon, two hundred million acres will do, and throw in Marines and Seabees and Air Force, Scuba divers for the river bottom, motorcyclists for the mud-races, carrier pilots landing on bounce-all decks in typhoons, invite them all, the Chinks and the Aussies, the Frogs and the

he spoke of an embodiment. Harlot, living in the shadow of Dzerzhinsky Square, was my embodiment.

I might never finish the book of Harry Hubbard and his years in Saigon, nor the stretch of service in the White House when one lived through Watergate, no, nor the commencement of my love affair with Kittredge, no, that was as removed as childhood. Unlike God, I had not been able to present all of my creation. I was out of the documents and on my own, and my life was more exposed than it had ever been, for I was taking the longest leap of my life. Could I be ready to find my godfather and ask him, along with everything else I would ask: "Whom? In the immortal words of Vladimir Ilich Lenin, 'Whom? Whom does this all benefit?'"

TO BE CONTINUED

~~San Juan Reef~~

⑧ Cheerlandes

Dramas

Unhappy Marriage

Summary — What the Gods
Mean

3/4 voice

Dramas

The Adventure

4 December Arkansas Tech Benefit lecture

2:30 pm arrive Witherspoon auditorium (Norris knows where)

Dean Earl Schrock will meet you at the main entrance,
take you to green room

3 pm lecture begins--can be between 60-90 min. including Q&A,
whatever you wish.

4:30 pm reception for all, including some potential donors to
the scholarship fund.

Note: After the lecture, the Student Activities Fund will
give you a check for \$6,000 which you endorse back as your
contribution to the fund. They are hopeful that some of those
they've invited to the lecture and reception will also be
moved to break out their checkbooks.

Your contact: Dean Earl Schrock: telephone 501-968-0274

Norris also has this number; Schrock has the Davis' # for
any possible last-minute stuff.

A REPORTER AT LARGE DOUBLE MYSTERY

Recent research into the nature of twins is reversing many of our most fundamental convictions about why we are who we are.

BY LAWRENCE WRIGHT

A SET of identical-twin girls were surrendered to an adoption agency in New York City in the nineteen-sixties. The twins, who are known in psychological literature as Amy and Beth, might have gone through life in obscurity had they not come to the attention of Dr. Peter Neubauer, a prominent psychiatrist at New York University's Psychiatric Institute. Neubauer, who was also an adviser to the adoption agency, believed at the time that twins posed such a burden to parents, and to themselves in the form of certain developmental hazards, that adopted twins were better off being reared apart from each other.

It was clear that such a separation would also offer Neubauer exceptional research possibilities. Studies of twins reared apart are the most powerful tool that scholars have for analyzing the relative contributions of heredity and environment to the makeup of individual human natures. Identical twins are rare, however, and twins who have been separated and brought up in different families are particularly unusual. Neubauer knew of only a handful of studies examining twins reared apart, and in many cases the twins being studied had been separated late in their childhood and reunited at some point long before the study began. Amy and Beth presented an opportunity to look at twins from the moment they were separated and to trace them through childhood, observing at each stage of development the parallel or diverging courses of their lives. Such a study might not lay to rest the ancient quarrel over the relative importance of nature and nurture, but one could imagine few other experiments that would be more relevant to understanding the mystery of the human condition.

By the time Amy and Beth were sent to their adoptive homes, an extensive team of psychologists, psychiatrists, pediatricians, and observers was waiting to follow them as they moved from infancy to adolescence. Every step of childhood would be documented through psychological tests, tests of skills and abilities, school records, parental and sibling interviews, films, and the minutes of several hundred weekly conferences. Because the twins had identical genetic constitutions, the team could evaluate the effects of the environment on their personalities, their behavior, their health, their intelligence. Broadly speaking, the differences between the girls as they grew older would be a measure of the validity of the most fundamental assumption of analytical psychology, which is that experience—and, in particular, our family background—shapes us into the people that we become.

The agency that placed the children shortly after their birth informed each set of potential adoptive parents that the girl they were adopting was already involved in a study of child development, and strongly urged the adoptive parents to continue it; however, neither the adoptive parents nor the girls themselves were ever told that the subject of the study was twins. The sisters were fair-skinned blondes with small oval faces, blue-gray eyes, and slightly snub noses. Amy was three ounces heavier and half an inch longer than Beth at birth, an advantage in height and weight that persisted throughout their childhood. The girls were adopted into families that were, in certain respects, quite similar—both were Jewish, and lived in New York State. The mothers stayed at home, and in each family there was a son almost exactly seven years older than the twin. (In

Beth's family, there was an older daughter as well.) In other respects, the environments were profoundly different; notably, Amy's family was lower middle class and Beth's was well off. Amy's mother was overweight, low key, and socially awkward. Although she had a compassionate side to her nature, she was an insecure mother, who felt threatened by her daughter's attractiveness. Beth's mother, on the other hand, doted on her daughter and spoke positively of Beth's personality and her place in the family. The team described Beth's mother as pleasant, youthful, slim, chic, poised, self-confident, dynamic, and cheerful. Whereas Amy's mother seemed to regard Amy as a problem, a stubborn outsider, Beth's mother treated her daughter as "the fun child." She went out of her way to minimize the differences between herself and Beth, to the extent of dyeing her own hair to emphasize their similarity. The girls' fathers were alike in many respects—confident, relaxed, at ease with themselves—but were as different as the mothers in their treatment of the girls. Amy's father came to agree with his wife that Amy was a disappointment, whereas Beth's father was more available and supportive.

All in all, the research team characterized Amy's family as a well-knit threesome—mother, father, and son—plus an alienated Amy. It was a family that placed a high value on academic success, simplicity, tradition, and emotional restraint. Beth's family, on the other hand, was sophisticated and full of energy—"frenetic" at times—and it tended to put more emphasis on material things than on education. Clearly, Beth was more in the center of her home than Amy was in hers.

And how did these identical twins in such contrasting environments turn out?

As might be expected, Amy's problems began early and progressed in a disturbing direction. As an infant, she was tense and demanding. She sucked her thumb; she bit her nails; she clung to her blanket; she cried when left alone; she wet her bed; she was prone to nightmares and full of fears. By the time she was ten, she had developed a kind of artificial quality that manifested itself in role-playing, made-up illnesses, and confusion over her sexual identity. Shy, socially indifferent, suffering from a serious learning disorder, pathologically immature, she was a stereotypical picture of a rejected child. If only Amy had had a mother who was more empathic, more tolerant of her limitations, more open and forthcoming (like Beth's mother), Amy's life might have turned out far better. If only her father had been more consistently available and affectionate (like Beth's father), she might have been better able to negotiate the Oedipal dramas of latency and might have achieved a clearer picture of her own sexual role. If only her brother had been less strongly favored (like Beth's brother), Amy would have been spared the mortifying comparisons that were openly drawn in her family. In theory, if Amy had grown up in Beth's family, the sources of her crippling immaturity would have been erased, and she would be another kind of person—happier, one presumes, and more nearly whole.

And yet in almost every respect Beth's personality followed in lockstep with Amy's dismal development. Thumb-sucking, nail-biting, blanket-clenching, and bed-wetting characterized her infancy and early childhood. She became a hypochondriac and, like Amy, was afraid of the dark and of being left alone. She, too, became lost in role-playing, and the artificial nature of her personality was even more pronounced than Amy's. She had similar problems in school and with her peers. On the surface, she had a far closer relationship with her mother than Amy had with hers, but on psychological tests she gave vent to a longing for maternal affection which was eerily the same as her identical sister's. Beth did seem to be more successful with her friends and less confused than Amy, but she was also less aware of her feelings.

The differences between the girls seemed merely stylistic; despite the differences in their environments, their pathology was fundamentally the same.

Did their family lives mean so little? Were they destined to become the people they turned out to be because of some genetic predisposition toward sadness and unreality? And what would psychologists have made of either girl if they did not know that she was a twin? Wouldn't they have laid the blame for the symptoms of her neurosis on the parents who raised her? Finally, what did all this say about the fundamental presumptions of psychology?

THE separated-twins story is a chestnut of American journalism—one that is guaranteed to gain national exposure, along with stories of pets that have trekked across the country to find their masters. The appeal of the separated-twins story is the implicit suggestion that it could happen to anyone. Babies actually do get lost or separated, and, however rare such an event may be, it feeds the common fantasy that any one of us might have a clone, a *doppelgänger*—someone who is not only a human mirror but also an ideal companion, someone who understands us perfectly. It is not just the similarity that excites us but the difference: the fantasy of an identical twin is a projection of ourselves living another life, finding other opportunities, choosing other careers, sleeping with other spouses; an identical twin can experience the world and come back to report about choices we might have made.

But the story has a darker and more threatening side, and this may be the real secret of its grip on our imagination. We think we know who we are. We struggle to build our characters through experience; we make ourselves unique by determining what we like, what we don't like, and what we stand for. The premise of free will is that we become the people we choose to be. Suppose, then, we meet an Other who is, in every outward respect, ourself. It is one thing to imagine an identical Other who, having lived a separate and distinct life, has been marked by it and become different from us. But what if, in spite of all the differences, we and the Other arrive at the same place? Isn't there a sense of loss? A loss not only of identity but of purpose? We are left wondering not only *who* we are but *why* we are who we are.

The Neubauer twin study is just one among thousands that have raised these questions. Over the last decade, there has

been a tidal wave of twin-based scholarship. There are now so many scientists seeking to study twins that every August researchers set up booths under a huge tent at the Twins Day Festival in Twinsburg, Ohio, where some three thousand browsing identicals and fraternal twins stop to take blood-pressure tests or fill out questionnaires. Recent studies of twinning have challenged our most entrenched views of human development and have capsized cherished beliefs about human nature—in particular, the bedrock notion that character is created by experience. But then twins have been confounding humanity from the earliest times—almost as if they were a divine prank designed to undermine our sense of individuality and specialness in the world. Twins are both an unsettling presence, because they sabotage our sense of personal uniqueness, and a score-settling presence, because their mere existence allows us to pose questions we might not have thought to ask if we lived in a world without them.

In the United States today, at least eleven births out of every thousand are twins, which is to say that about one person in fifty has a twin (about one-third of those are identical). That constitutes a virtual epidemic. Between 1973 and 1990, twin births shot up at twice the rate of singletons, and triplets and higher-multiple births increased at seven times the single-birth rate—partly because many women are waiting until later in life to have children, and multiple births are more frequent among older mothers. Last year, fully a third of all first births in this country were produced by women over the age of thirty-five. "But that's only part of it," says Dr. Louis Keith, a professor of obstetrics at Northwestern University Medical School, and the president of the Center for the Study of Multiple Birth. "The real increase in twins and triplets in the United States did not occur until 1985, when we learned how to superovulate women. Now doctors are prescribing ovulation-enhancing agents as if they were prescribing bubble gum at a children's birthday party."

If twins are important to science because they allow us to ask how much of our nature arises from our genes and how much from our circumstances, the answers have equally profound implications for social policy. The hallmark of

liberalism is that changes in the social environment produce corresponding changes in human development. But if people's destinies are written in their genes, why waste money on social programs? Much of the ferocious argument over individual and group differences in intelligence (which has recently been rekindled by Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray's "The Bell Curve") draws upon the fact that there is a closer correlation between I.Q.-test scores of identical twins than between those of fraternal twins—the difference being an indication of how much of what we call intelligence is inherited. Even matters that would seem to be entirely a reflection of one's personal experience, such as political orientation or depth of religious commitment, have been shown by various

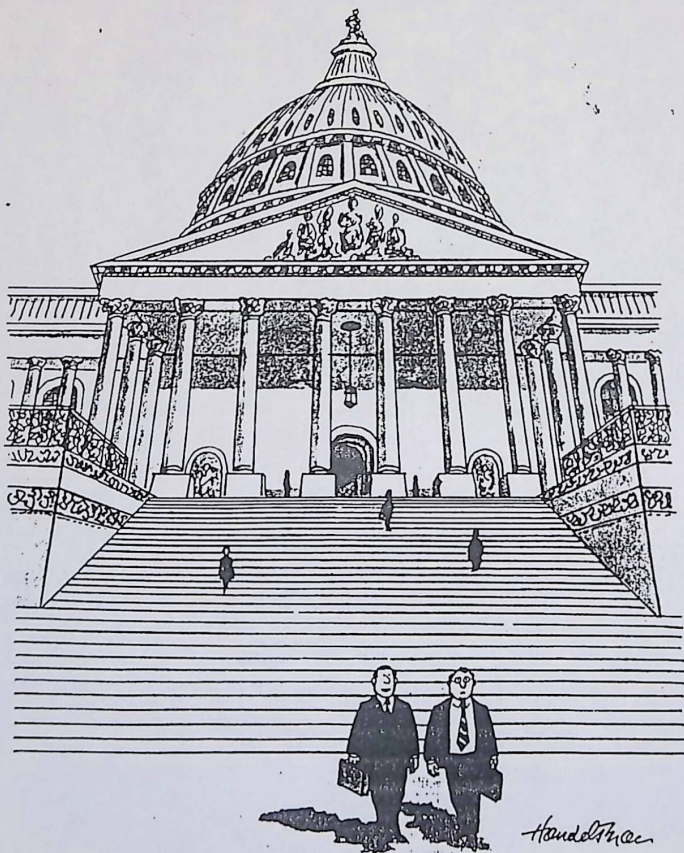
twin studies to be largely under genetic influence.

All this comes after several decades of heightened political struggle between those who believe that people are largely the same, with differences imposed upon them by their environment, and those who conclude that people differ mainly because of their genes, and that their environments are largely of their own making. Obviously, the roots of liberal and conservative views are buried in such contrary presumptions about human nature. The broad movement from environmental determinism to behavioral genetics which has transformed psychology over the last thirty years has also dramatically altered society's view of human development and become a part of the invisible substratum of American politics.

This can be demonstrated by comparing the climates of opinion that produced the Great Society, in 1965, and the Contract with America, in 1995.

These days, even the most dogmatic environmentalist is willing to admit that nature influences nurture. The debate has evolved into a statistical war over percentages—*how much* of our personality or behavior or intelligence or susceptibility to disease is attributable to our genes, as compared with such environmental factors as the family we grow up in or the neighborhood we live in or how long we attend school. (What the statistics measure is genetic differences in populations, not in individuals. We cannot infer from the statistics that, say, fifty per cent of any one individual's personality is genetically acquired.) The fulcrum upon which one side rises while the other falls is the concept of heritability. Heritability, decreed the animal geneticist J. L. Lush in 1940, is the fraction of the observed variation in a population that is caused by differences in heredity. For instance, laboratory rats that are bred for their intelligence in escaping mazes will grow smarter over the generations, just as maze-dumb rats will grow dumber when they are bred together. Since there is no difference in their environments, the difference between the two populations must be inherited. It is easy to demonstrate the transmission of traits in plant and animal populations; in fact, the manipulation of observable genetic traits is the basis of selective breeding.

In human beings, however, matters are more complex. Since selective breeding is morally out of the question, scientists must rely on the chance data that society sends their way. One of the principal sources of information about human heritability is twin studies. Theoretically, if a trait is highly heritable then it will approach a hundred per cent concordance in identical twins and fifty per cent in fraternal twins and other siblings. But environmental factors can also affect traits that are genetically transmitted. Height, for instance, is a heritable trait, and in well-nourished Western populations most of the variation in stature is an expression of the genes. But the genes require a supportive environment in order to be expressed in the first



"You've been around here longer than I have. What are 'congressional ethics'?"

place. A population that exists on the brink of starvation can have little variation in height, because growth is arrested; there is no way of telling who has tall genes and who has short ones. If one group within a population enjoys an abundant diet while the rest are starving, the variation in height is largely environmental.

Identical, or monozygotic (MZ), twins are thought to result from the splitting of a single fertilized egg—a zygote—in a form of asexual reproduction. Fraternal, or dizygotic (DZ), twins are thought to be the product of two separate eggs, independently fertilized. Thus, identical twins are clones, having identical genes, whereas fraternal twins share only fifty per cent of their genes on average. The existence of these two types of twins creates a statistical opportunity that has contributed to the expanding field of behavioral genetics, which is built on heritability estimates. Behaviors as diverse as smoking, insomnia, marriage and divorce, choice of careers and hobbies, use of contraceptives, consumption of coffee (but not, oddly enough, of tea), menstrual symptoms, and suicide have all been found to have far higher rates of concordance for identical than for fraternal twins—a finding that suggests these traits to be more influenced by genes than was previously suspected.

A survey of Australian twins in the early nineteen-eighties also found a surprisingly significant genetic component for attitudes toward such wide-ranging political and social issues as apartheid, the death penalty, divorce, working mothers, and some forty other subjects. Only on a motley assortment of topics—coeducation, the use of straitjackets, and pajama parties—was there no meaningful genetic influence on individual attitudes. An especially interesting, and ongoing, Swedish study of elderly twins, begun in 1984 by Professor Robert Plomin, a behavioral geneticist at the Institute of Psychiatry in London and at Pennsylvania State University, looked at life events such as divorce, retirement, illness, the death of a child, the mental illness of a spouse, and financial reverses—many of which might seem, almost by definition, to be accidents of the environment. The researchers concluded that, in many respects, identical twins who had been reared apart were even more alike in terms of their major life events than identical twins who had been reared together.

Underlying these startling findings is an insistent unanswered question: How? Is there a gene for neurosis or Alpine skiing or traditional values? Nothing in molecular biology suggests anything of the sort. It is more likely that configurations of genes shape behavior than that a single gene exercises autonomous control over certain kinds of actions. This is especially true of complex functions such as intelligence.

Because supporting molecular evidence has been slow in coming, in most cases the only proof of genetic influence on personality and behavior still comes from twin and adoption studies, which examine unrelated individuals reared together (thus complementing studies of twins reared apart). Numerous twin studies have shown that alcoholism is an inherited disorder; for example, identical twins are much more alike in their drinking patterns than fraternal, and if these patterns lead to alcoholism it's more likely that both twins will be alcoholics. But even if alcoholism is genetically rooted it is clear that environment plays a significant role in much of drinking behavior. Alcoholism is rarely a problem in religious cultures where drinking is forbidden.

Homosexuality appears to be moderately heritable among males and less so among females. A stretch of X chromosome has been implicated in some instances of male homosexuality, but it leaves open the question of what, exactly, is inherited. "The fairest thing to say is that nobody knows," Richard C. Pillard, a professor of psychiatry at the Boston University School of Medicine, says. "Is it a propensity to like somebody who is sort of the same as you versus somebody who's different, or to like a man versus a woman, or to be very sensitive, or what? To me that's the payoff question. What is that little brain up there doing that's making you different?"

One reason for the dearth of such knowledge is that research involving the genetic underpinnings of behavior has often been discouraged. When Dutch scientists announced, two years ago, that they had found a connection between a genetic defect and a form of familial aggression, they were denounced for even considering a genetic basis for violent behavior. In this country, the National Institutes of Health, facing charges of racism, pulled the rug out from under a

planned 1992 conference on "Genetic Factors in Crime" and scaled back research into the causes of violence. Again and again, when genetic research turns toward human nature, and away from simple biology, politics swamps the discussion, and often sinks the research efforts.

THE most powerful studies in behavioral genetics are of twins who have been reared apart, and the most influential of these studies have been conducted at the University of Minnesota by Professor Thomas J. Bouchard, Jr. A tall, shambling man of fifty-seven, Bouchard wears suspenders and looks as if he'd be more at home sharing a cup of coffee with the local dairy farmers than sorting through the computerized data bank in the university's Center for Twin and Adoption Research, which he founded. Largely because of Bouchard and his team, the University of Minnesota has been the epicenter of twin studies since 1979. It was then that Bouchard read a newspaper story about Jim Lewis and Jim Springer, identical twins who had been separated at birth and reunited thirty-nine years later.

Each of the Jim twins, as they were called, was six feet tall and weighed a hundred and eighty pounds; they looked as much alike as any other identical pair. At their reunion, they discovered that each had been married twice, first to a woman named Linda and then to a woman named Betty. Jim Lewis had named his firstborn child James Alan, and Jim Springer had named his James Allen. In childhood each twin had owned a dog named Toy. They had enjoyed family vacations on the same beach in Florida and had worked part time in law enforcement. They shared a taste for Miller Lite beer and Salem cigarettes.

At the time, only nineteen cases of reunited identical twins had been reported in the United States. Few had been reared by families who were not biologically related, and that made the Jims all the more exceptional—almost perfect for a behavioral geneticist who had spent his career trying to tease apart the influences of nature and nurture on the human personality. Bouchard excitedly persuaded university officials to provide grant money to initiate a study of the Jim twins. "It was just sheer scientific curios-



ity," Bouchard says now. "I thought we were going to do a single study of a set of twins reared apart. We might have a little monograph."

The morning the tests were to begin, Bouchard took the Jims to breakfast. He intended to brief them on the particulars of the study, but it was the first time he had ever worked with twins, and he found himself obsessing over little things about them—the way each one had bitten his nails, for example. Each of the Jims had a peculiar whorl in his eyebrow, and Bouchard started absently counting the number of hairs in their brows. "You're staring at us," one told him. Bouchard apologized. He had been staggered by the similarities of their gestures, their voices, and the morphology of their bodies. These two men had lived entirely separate lives, and yet if Bouchard closed his eyes he couldn't tell which Jim was talking.

Since the Jims' first visit, more than a hundred other reared-apart twins have come to the Twin Cities to spend a week in Bouchard's laboratories, in Elliott Hall. In the tests, which usually start on Sunday afternoon and go through the following Saturday, twins undergo a variety of personality assessments and medical examinations, including X-rays, cardiograms, and blood tests. They have their fingerprints taken and their allergies evaluated. They submit to a sexual-history questionnaire that is so intimate that some twins decline to finish it. By the end, Bouchard's team will know as much about each of the twins as it is possible to measure in fifty hours of testing. The researchers will know what both twins eat, the books they read, their sexual orientation and predilections, the television shows they watch, how much their hands quiver when they hold a stick in a hole, their musical tastes and talents, their fears and phobias, their childhood traumas, their pulse rates at rest and under stress, their hobbies, their values, the amount of decay in their teeth, the way they sit in a chair. Because of the Minnesota project, separated twins have become one of the most densely studied populations in the history of psychology.

Besides the Jims, many memorable personalities have passed through Elliott Hall. Among the early pairs were Daphne Goodship and Barbara Herbert, who, like the Jims, had been adopted separately as infants and lived apart for

UPON WINNING ONE'S FLIGHT IN THE SENIOR FOUR-BALL

Oh, where have they gone to—the eight-iron stiff to the pin, after two less fortunate shots, setting up a par; the calmly stroked putt that snatched a win away from the staggered opponents; the heroic long drive that cleared the brook on the fly by a foot or two; the bravely slashed wedge that lifted the plugged ball up in a sea-spray of sand to bobble blindly toward the hole?

How can these feats matter so little, so soon after they mattered so much? The blood thrumming in the temples, the rushes of love for one's doughty, erratic partner, the murderous concentration upon imaginary abstractions carved in the air by sheer sinew and bone—boiled down to a trinket of silver, a tame patter of applause in the tent, a pleasantry, a loss.

—JOHN UPDIKE

thirty-nine years. Barbara had gone to a modest home in Hammersmith, a borough of London, as the daughter of a city gardener. Daphne had a middle-class childhood north of London, in the town of Luton, where her father was a metallurgist. When they finally met, at King's Cross Station in London, in May of 1979, each was wearing a beige dress and a brown velvet jacket. Right away, they noticed they had identical crooked little fingers—a small defect that had kept both of them from ever learning to type or to play the piano. There were other commonalities that were harder to explain. Both had the eccentric habit of pushing up their noses, which they called "squidging." Both had fallen down the stairs at the age of fifteen and had weak ankles as a result. At sixteen, each had met at a local dance the man she was going to marry. The twins suffered miscarriages with their first children, then proceeded to have two boys followed by a girl. And both laughed more than anyone else they knew, prompting them to be nicknamed the Giggle Twins. Bouchard was interested in the fact that each fell silent whenever the conversation turned to provocative subjects, like politics. In fact, neither had ever voted, except once, when she was employed as a polling clerk.

Among other twins who came to Minnesota to be quizzed and probed and bled and recorded were Jack Yufe and

Oskar Stöhr. They were born in Trinidad in 1933 and were split apart a few months later by a bitter divorce, brought on by their father's violent behavior. Jack stayed in Trinidad with their father, a Jewish merchant in Port of Spain. Oskar went to live in the all-female household of their German maternal grandmother. While Oskar was preparing to become a member of the Hitler Youth, Jack was exploring his Jewish identity. At the age of sixteen, he was sent to Israel to work on a kibbutz. In 1954, he decided to emigrate to the United States, and stopped off in Germany to meet his brother for the first time since their separation. The reunion was chilly and brief. Then, twenty-five years later, Jack's wife read about the Jim twins and the Minnesota studies, and Jack decided that it might be a good idea to meet his twin again, this time on neutral ground. He got in touch with Bouchard, and the professor eagerly agreed to fly them both to Minneapolis.

Bouchard was standing with Jack at the Minneapolis airport when Oskar got off the plane. "I remember Jack pulling in his breath, because Oskar walked exactly the same way he did," Bouchard says. "They have a kind of swagger to their bodies." Each sported rectangular wire-rimmed glasses, a short, clipped mustache, and a blue two-pocket shirt with epaulets. They shook hands but did not embrace. Bouchard thought that they would be an ideal pair for detecting en-

vironmental influence. The contrasts in their upbringing, their cultures, and their family lives were overwhelming. Moreover, they didn't seem to like each other enough to mythologize their similarities, as critics of twin studies have suggested that twins tend to do.

As it turned out, Jack and Oskar were full of quirky habits in common, such as storing rubber bands on their wrists, reading magazines from back to front, flushing the toilet before using it, and dipping buttered toast in their coffee. They also enjoyed startling people by sneezing in crowded places. They differed in certain obvious respects; Oskar, for instance, was married, while Jack was divorced, but Jack noticed that Oskar expected his wife to take care of all his needs without question—much as he himself had done when he was married. Jack regarded himself as a liberal Californian, and he saw his brother as “very traditionalistic, typically German.” Oskar was a skier, Jack was a sailor. Oskar was a devoted union man, Jack a self-employed entrepreneur. Of course, they had lived profoundly different lives, so they differed completely in their memories, their experiences, their religious and political orientations—in other words, their interior worlds, the raw stuff of selfhood. And yet their personality profiles were strikingly similar. Bouchard observed that their tempos, their temperaments, their characteristic mannerisms were far more alike than different—similarities that were all the more surprising because Oskar had been reared entirely by women and Jack had grown up with their father.

The mountain of data compiled by the Minnesota team, along with ongoing twins research in Boulder, Stockholm, and Helsinki, has stunningly tipped the balance in the nature-versus-nurture debate. Bouchard and his team have assessed a variety of personality characteristics, such as sense of well-being, social dominance, alienation, aggression, and achievement, which they described in an important article in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* in 1988. They concluded that identicals reared apart were as

much alike as identicals reared together. Moreover, there was not a single one of those personality traits in which fraternal twins reared together were more alike than identicals reared apart. How could this be? Wouldn't twins who had grown up in the same family, gone to the same schools and churches, and been exposed to the same values and traditions have been similarly shaped by those influences? If, as the Minnesota team was claiming, half of the variance in personality in a population was genetic in origin and the other half was environmental, why wouldn't identical twins reared together be far more alike in their personalities than identicals reared apart?

The answer to this paradox had been suggested before, but not with the force of so much data. The Minnesota team asserted that almost none of the environmental variance was due to sharing a common family environment; rather, most of the differences that could be attributed to environmental causes arose from unshared experiences—in other words, the lives the twins led outside the home. Bouchard and his colleagues repeated this assertion in a disturbing 1990 article in *Science*. “The effect of being reared in the same home is negligible for many psychological traits,” the Minneso-

tans wrote. “We infer that the diverse cultural agents of our society, in particular most parents, are less effective in imprinting their distinctive stamp on the children developing within their spheres of influence—or are less inclined to do so—than has been supposed.”

CONSIDERING all that we've learned about human nature from studying twins, it's astonishing to realize how little we know about the twinning process itself. In spite of the burst of twin-based scholarship in recent years, much that is commonly believed to be true about twinning is either wrong or in dispute. It is not clear, for instance, whether twinning is a kind of birth defect or, contrarily, whether birth defects are caused by twinning (or if, indeed, either has anything to do with the other). We don't know what significance, if any, to attach to the elevated incidence of left-handedness among both kinds of twins. It is not even certain whether fraternal twins always come from two eggs or sometimes from one that has split before fertilization. We are just now learning that twins are different in particular ways from singletons (their teeth are more symmetrical, for example), but we don't know why or what that means. In sum, we don't know who twins are or how twins happen. We only



“Josephine, my man!”

presume to know what they tell us about who *we* are.

So much depends on a phenomenon about which we know so little. Even the prevalence of twins is a subject of puzzlement and controversy. With the increasing use of ultrasound to detect early pregnancies, we now know that twinning is a far more common occurrence than anyone had previously imagined. Although only about one out of eighty or ninety live births produces twins, at least one-eighth of all natural pregnancies begin as twins. Many of us singletons, in other words, began life as something more—as part of a pair.

Doctors equipped with color-Doppler and vaginal ultrasounds and high-speed scanners have been able to observe multiple pregnancies as early as five weeks after conception. "People are picking up twin pregnancies the size of garden peas," says Professor Charles E. Boklage, a developmental biologist at the East Carolina University School of Medicine and a well-known maverick in the world of twin biology. "They're seeing a lot more twins than they ever knew were there." Many doctors have undergone the unnerving experience of spotting twin embryos one month, only to find a singleton the next time they looked. What was happening? At the Third International Congress on Twin Studies, held in Jerusalem in 1980, this question was raised, and one of the participants cried out, "Vanishing twins!"—thus giving a name to a phenomenon that has caused as much confusion as excitement.

Boklage studied reports of three hundred and twenty-five twin pregnancies and found that sixty-one ended as twins, a hundred and twenty-five as singletons, and the remainder—a hundred and eighty-six—as a complete loss: a measure of how risky twin pregnancies are. Often the only external sign of a vanishing twin is vaginal bleeding. "The so-called phenomenon of the 'vanishing-twin syndrome' is neither phenomenal nor a syndrome," Boklage contends. "It is much too common to be considered phenomenal, and it occurs for too many reasons to be considered any kind of syndrome." He says that most pregnancies, whether multiple or single, fail anyway, so it is not as surprising as it seems that twins often disappear. "Somewhere in the vicinity of ten to fifteen per cent of us—and that's a *minimum* estimate—are walking around

thinking we're singletons when in fact we're only the big half," Boklage says. He estimates that for every set of twins born live there are at least six singletons who are survivors of twin conceptions.

Twins are far more susceptible to the birth defects, spontaneous mutations, and vascular problems that threaten early life. Simply being a twin is stressful and raises the odds against survival. Because all twins battle in the womb for space and nutrition, the experiences of twins before birth may be considerably different from those of singletons. "Twins compete physically," says Dr. Louis Keith, of Northwestern. Several years ago, one of the doctors on his staff observed twin fetuses fighting. "One punched the other and the other looked startled," Dr. Keith recalls. "On another occasion, a doctor was looking with the ultrasound at triplets, and two of them were kissing, as clear as day. Among multiples, there is intrauterine life. They do fight. They do kiss."

There is considerable evidence that when one twin dies the survivor can suffer lifelong feelings of guilt. "When someone loses a twin, the intensity of grief tends to be higher than with many other relatives," says Nancy L. Segal, a professor of developmental psychology and the director of the Twin Studies Center at California State University, Fullerton. "It's a loss that only another twin can understand." Six years ago, Dr. Elizabeth Bryan, who is the medical director of the Multiple Births Foundation, in London, helped set up the Lone Twin Network, to provide support for survivors coping with their grief. "I've met quite a number of people who only discovered their twin was stillborn—that is, they only discovered that they were a twin at all—at some adult occasion such as when they were about to get married, or their first child was on the way, and their mother suddenly said, 'Your twin died and I never told you,'" Dr. Bryan says. "Several of them said that the news came as a profound relief. For the first time, they understood the loss they'd felt all their lives."

Dr. David Teplica, a plastic surgeon in Chicago, has been photographing twins since 1988. "Since my early teens, I've been obsessed with the idea of twinning," the thirty-six-year-old Teplica says. "I read everything I could about twins." Five years ago, he got to know

Dr. Keith and his identical twin, Donald, who is a Pentagon defense contractor. At their urging, Dr. Teplica turned his hobby into a more formal project, and he has already compiled an archive of approximately six thousand twin portraits. "There have been fascinating things that have come up as part of the whole process of collecting these images," he says. "It's now clear to me that almost all secondary skin characteristics on the head and face, and probably elsewhere, are genetically predetermined. Freckle patterns, hair whorls, the first gray hairs, the first wrinkles on the human face, even the development of acne in the same location on the nose at exactly the same time—all these things seem to be in some way genetically predetermined. Why else would a set of identical twins from upstate New York get exactly the same three little crow's-feet at the corners of the eyes? Why would two women from Texas develop basal-cell carcinoma in exactly the same spot on their left ears within a year of each other? How can it be that two cells that were separated just after conception can carry enough genetic information to predetermine where your blackheads will develop when you are fifty or sixty years old? It's really very scary."

After a year or so of collaboration, Donald Keith asked Teplica, "David, why are you so fascinated with twins? Maybe you *are* one." Teplica laughed and replied, "Donald, I'm *not* a twin." But the next time his mother came to visit Teplica asked her if there was any chance that he was a twin. "She turned white," he recalls, "and proceeded to tell me how she had tried to get pregnant for many years, and when she finally became pregnant she was so large, put on so much weight so quickly, that her physician told her she would be delivering twins. But then in the fourth month she had some cramping, passed some tissue, had some bleeding. She spent the rest of her pregnancy in bed, and delivered only me. Now, that was before the days of ultrasound, but every indication was that she did have a twin pregnancy."

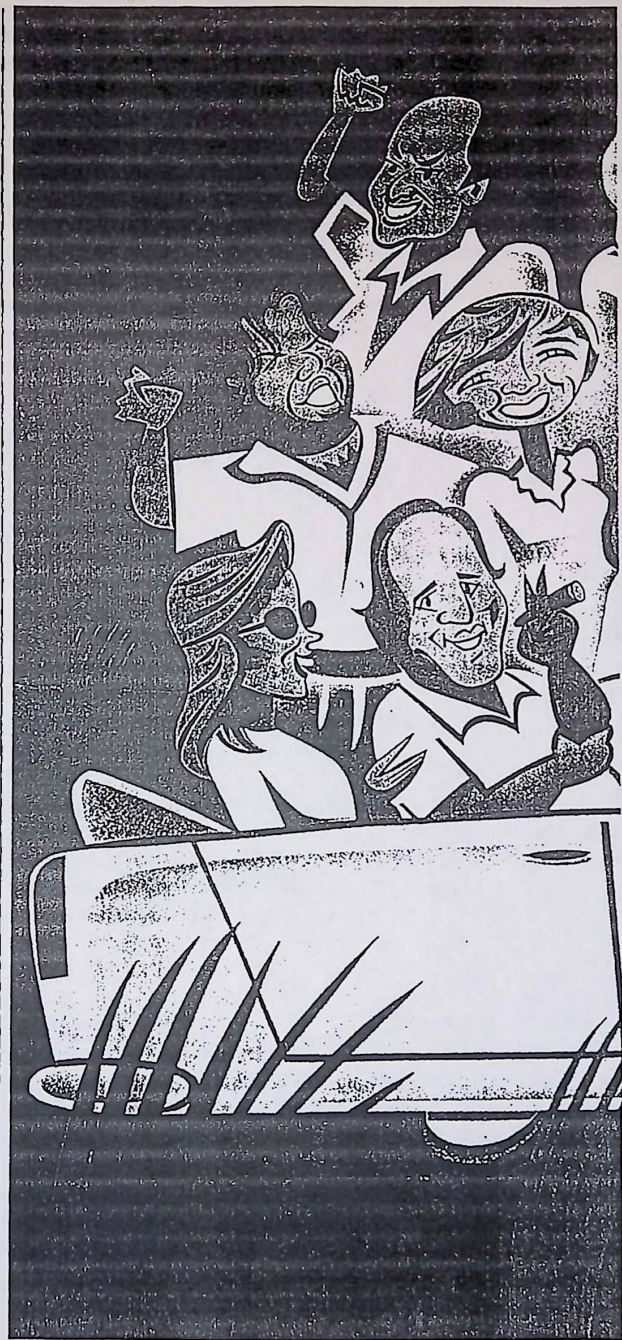
Charles Boklage cites another interesting phenomenon, which, though it has rarely been detected, may not be at all uncommon. "Possibly some of us are twins who are walking around in a single body," Boklage says. Such a creature is called a chimera, after the mythological

logical Greek monster that had the head of a lion, the body of a goat, and the tail of a serpent. Chimeras are easily produced in laboratory experiments with animals, and sometimes occur in nature within a single species when littermates fuse together early in their development in the uterus. Occasionally, blood donors are found to be carrying two different blood types: it could mean that fraternal twins merged in the womb. Of course, there is no way to determine whether identical twins have merged, since their genes and blood types are the same. In those cases, the twins don't vanish; they amalgamate.

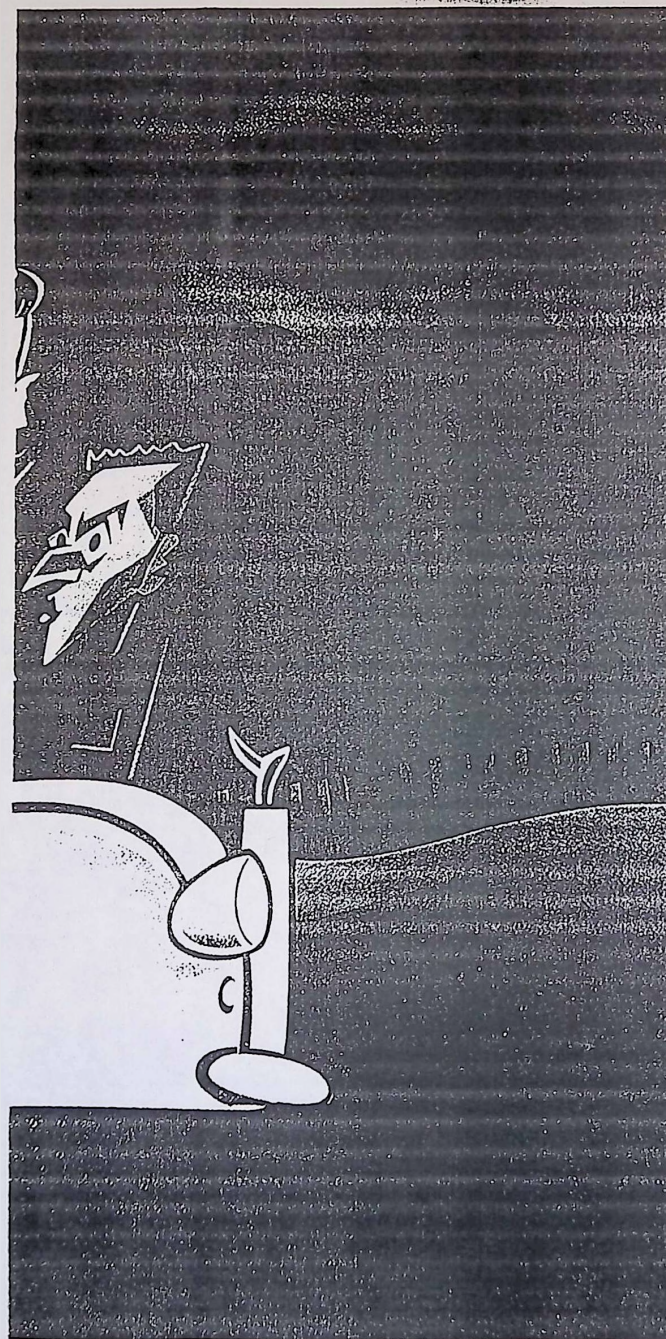
BEHAVIORAL geneticists have spent the last thirty years waging war on the environmentalist belief that people are fundamentally alike—that they are made different only by their families, their schooling, the traumas of life. Now, after decades of persuasive twin studies showing how similar identical twins are, even when they have been raised in separate families, behavioral geneticists must face the question of why identical twins differ *at all*.

In 1981, an unusual set of twin girls found their way to the office of John Burn, who was at the Hospital for Sick Children in London and is now a professor of clinical genetics at the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne. Katy and Jenny were friendly, easygoing eight-year-old girls, who both wore their dark hair in pigtails. Both had distinctive dark round eyes, slender lips, and long faces that finished in jutting chins. Katy, a gifted gymnast, had a lively expression and a bouncy, athletic gait. Jenny was notably shorter and weaker. Her calves were swollen, giving a false impression of muscularity; in fact, she had difficulty standing, and she walked with an obvious waddle. Her scores on verbal-intelligence tests were also significantly lower than Katy's, reflecting the duller expression in her eyes. Further tests demonstrated something that Professor Burn suspected but could scarcely believe: the shorter, weaker, less intelligent twin was suffering from muscular dystrophy; the other twin showed no sign of the disease. And yet, according to DNA tests, the twins were identical.

The twins presented, as it were, twin mysteries. Like hemophilia and red-green color blindness, muscular dystro-



THE HAMPTONS EXPRESS Top row: Mort Zuckerman, Kim Basinger, Alex Baldwin,



phy is carried on the X chromosome. Specifically, it is a flaw in the dystrophene gene, which gives integrity to the muscle membranes and allows them to contract and relax. The form of the disease manifested in Jenny, called Duchenne, is particularly savage, and what surprised Burn was that it is a genetic disorder normally seen only in boys. A progressive wasting illness, it almost always leads to death by the age of twenty. Since few males with Duchenne muscular dystrophy live long enough to reproduce, the flaw is carried through the maternal line. Yet here was a young girl with all the marks of full-bore Duchenne, which did in fact continue its remorseless progression over the next several years, confining her to a wheelchair by the age of eleven and killing her at sixteen. Why, Burn wondered, did this girl suffer from a disease that is supposed to be found only in boys? Even stranger, how was it that her identical-twin sister was spared this appalling destiny?

When Burn looked in the scientific literature, he discovered that this wasn't the first time that one of a set of identical-twin girls had exhibited signs of muscular dystrophy and the other had not. Because the disease is carried on the X chromosome, Burn reasoned, the discordance between the two girls must have something to do with X-chromosome inactivation. Females, of course, carry two X chromosomes, whereas males have an X and a Y. When a female zygote discovers that it has twice as many X chromosomes as it requires, an interesting process follows: half of its X chromosomes are turned off. One way of understanding this is by looking at calico cats, which are exclusively female. Genes for fur colors are carried on the X chromosome: there is one gene for black-and-white coat colors and another gene for the orange-marmalade color. A male cat may be either black-and-white or orange, but the female, through X inactivation, may choose one or the other X chromosome from each pair.

"If you took a normal girl and looked at a thousand cells, you'd expect five hundred of those cells to be using the mother's X and five hundred to be using the father's X—just like tossing coins," Burn reasoned. "Now and again, very rarely, a girl will toss heads in every cell, and not tails, and switch off all her good copies." As it turned out, Burn was right: the afflicted twin was using only the mother's X, whereas her unaffected sister was us-



"There's still something about a Yalie-Smithie wedding that gives me major goose bumps."

ing only the father's X. Could this difference in the two girls, which explained why one of them had muscular dystrophy, also be a cause of twinning? That might account for the excess of girls among identical twins in general.

Burn and a colleague, Judith Goodship, arranged to collect the placentas of all twin girls born in the Newcastle region over a period of two years. DNA tests of the umbilical cords determined whether the twins were MZ or DZ. Burn had predicted what the survey showed: that identical-twin girls were more likely to have skewed distribution patterns of the X chromosome. The rest of his theory, however, posited that if one twin had an excess of the mother's X, then the other would mirror her by having an excess of the father's—that it was something about the tug-of-war that had caused the zygote to break apart in the first place. What he and Goodship found was that if one twin had an excess of the mother's X, the other was just as likely to have only the father's, or some of the

mother's and some of the father's, or all of the mother's—it didn't seem to matter. Yet the MZ girls as a group showed more skewing than DZ girls. "Whatever causes identical twinning, these studies show that even though identical twins share the same genes, a genetic trait does not have to be shared," Burn says. "The English language is misleading in calling these twins identical—perhaps we should use the German term *eineiige*, 'one egg'."

"We still need to understand why monozygous twinning is so common in humans and so exceptionally rare in other species," he continues. "I now think that it has something to do with chronology. If you start messing around with the exact timing of ovulation, and fertilization, and implantation, then you may end up creating the conditions that allow MZ twinning to occur. No single magic bullet will explain everything. It may be a fundamental law of physics that the very things that hold cells together will every now and again just come apart. So maybe

we shouldn't try to explain everything at once."

Clearly, some identical twins are more identical than others. "Some of the differences are traceable to the very early prenatal stages—unequal nutrition, unequal blood supplies," Nancy Segal says. "Twins never have identical fingerprints. One twin may be right-handed, one left-handed. One may dominate in certain situations and one may be more submissive. There's a spectrum along which twins differ." Identicals can be dramatically discordant for facial and other physiological features, such as cleft lip or cleft palate. An MZ twin who is the product of a placenta that was only marginally attached to the womb may develop into a miniature version of his sibling—as in the Hollywood gag that brought together Danny DeVito and Arnold Schwarzenegger as long-lost twins. There have even been instances—at least three are known—of genetically identical twins who were of different gender. In each case, one of the pair was born with only one X chromosome and no Y. (It takes a Y chromosome to make an embryo male.) Somehow, possibly because of the twinning process, that twin grew from cells that didn't have the Y chromosome, and so had become a female by default. "None of the characteristics of identical twins correlate perfectly," Segal says. "Even among identicals, there are differences in virtually everything."

About twenty-five per cent of all identical twins show signs of mirror imaging—a reversal of laterality that is most commonly detected when twins have opposite-handedness. They may have opposite hair whorls, opposite dental patterns, and opposite birthmarks and moles. In its mildest form, mirror imaging can be a matter of, say, on which side of the mouth the first tooth appears, but it can also be more dramatic, as in rare instances of twins whose organs have been found on the wrong side of their bodies. This condition appears in Siamese twins—a circumstance that has led most researchers to conclude that mirror imaging is characteristic of MZ twins only, and especially those who have separated later in development. It became an article of faith that twins who had opposite-handedness must be identical—even when there were obvious differences in eye and hair color. "It turns out that there is no difference between identical and

fraternal twins in the frequency of left-handedness," Charles Boklage says. And he speculates that mirror imaging is just as common among fraternal twins as among identicals. "My own twin daughters—I used to think that they were monozygotic twins. I found out not long ago that they're not. They always looked practically identical, but there were impressionistic differences, and one day I discovered why. I held one child up in front of the mirror. Now, I'm used to seeing my face in a mirror, but I wasn't used to seeing hers. What it did, of course, was reverse the asymmetries in her face." Her eyes metamorphosed into the image of her sister's.

Twins of both kinds have a higher rate of left-handedness. Some scientists, like Luigi Gedda, the director of the Gregor Mendel Institute, in Rome, have suggested that all left-handed singletons may be survivors of a vanished-twin pair. Like twins, lefties are a puzzling minority whose origins have never been satisfactorily explained. Their brains develop differently from those of right-handers; for instance, right-handers tend to rely on the left hemisphere of their brain for language, whereas left-handers are more diffuse in their neurological organization. They are disproportionately likely to be alcoholics, psychotics, epileptics, and dyslexics, and to suffer from allergies and auto-immune disorders. Some evidence suggests that they are also more likely to be gifted and precocious, especially in mathematics, presumably because of their more enriched right hemisphere. Boklage believes that because "non-right-handedness" (a term he uses to include ambidexterity) is found at a higher rate not only in twins of both types but also in their family members, there must be a highly heritable factor that both forms of twinning have in common.

After infancy, most identical twins are sufficiently distinct that they can easily be told apart by their parents and close friends. A few identical twins are so different that they don't resemble each other any more closely than ordinary siblings. Some researchers suspect that certain differences, particularly in behavior, result from their separating early in embryogenesis, and therefore coming to term in separate placentas. "There is evidence now from four studies that placentaion does make a difference in twin resemblance," says Richard J. Rose, a professor

of psychology and medical genetics at Indiana University, in Bloomington. Rose was speaking of behavioral characteristics. "There's no genetic variation—they're all monozygotic—but our new data suggest that the early-separating twins are significantly less alike in many dimensions of personality. I don't know quite what that represents. It could be a consequence of differences in the in-utero environment, or it could simply be a consequence of the actual timing of the embryological splitting in the twinning process. We certainly do know that genetic differences are not the cause of these behavior differences, because they're all genetic replicas."

So environment does matter, after all. But what is it in the environment that affects us and makes us different from each other—and different from the selves we might have been if genes alone controlled who we are? The differences between identical twins may turn out to be more informative than the similarities.

ONE of the most provocative questions in the entire nature-versus-nurture debate concerns the influence of genes on criminal behavior. Twin studies in Nazi Germany confidently placed the heritability of criminality at between sixty and seventy per cent, and that became part of the rationale for sterilizing criminals. Although more recent American studies tell us that there is a genetic connection to the anti-social behavior of very young children, they also point out that from adolescence on the environment plays an increasingly important role. A Swedish adoption study in 1982 found that the rate of criminality in adopted children was 2.9 per cent when neither their biological nor their adoptive

parents had committed a crime; the figure rose to 6.7 per cent if their adoptive parents were criminals and to 12.1 per cent if their biological parents were criminals. That might seem to be a clear demonstration of the relative weight of environment and genetics in determining anti-social behavior. If both sets of parents were criminals, however, the chance of the child's being criminal as well was forty per cent. Together, genes and environment appear to be several times as powerful as either force acting alone.

Cancer also shows the effects of genes

and environment acting in concert. For more than ten years, Dr. Thomas Mack, an epidemiologist at the University of California in Los Angeles, has been amassing a registry of adult twins with chronic diseases, and he has now identified more than fifteen thousand sets of twins with cancer, multiple sclerosis, and Lou Gehrig's disease, among others. According to Mack's data, a twin whose identical twin has multiple sclerosis is more than ten times as likely to get the disease as a fraternal twin whose sibling is afflicted—a finding that demonstrates how powerfully genetic M.S. is. On the other hand, out of five hundred sets of twins in which melanoma occurred, there are only ten instances of both twins' having the disease, indicating that despite the genetic contribution of inherited traits such as light skin, an overwhelming environmental influence is at work. If you are an identical twin with breast cancer, which is known to be a familial disease, the chances that your twin will also get the disease is about five times as high as the average. Although the vast majority of the twins get the disease, the likelihood of getting breast cancer is affected by the age of first menstruation: the younger you are, the higher your chances for breast cancer in the future. Mack found that not all identical twins get their period at the same time, so there must be an environmental element triggering the hormones. Breast-cancer rates

also rise with a woman's age at her first pregnancy and with her age at menopause. In each case, environmental factors create differences between identical twins, and those differences influence the health of women who are equally susceptible to the disease.

One of the most puzzling features of identical twins is their love lives. When David Lykken and Matt McGue, colleagues in the University of Minnesota Psychology Department, conducted a study of fifteen hundred sets of twins, they found that if one identical twin had been divorced the chances that the other twin had also been divorced were forty-five per cent, which is twenty-five per cent above the average divorce rate among Minnesotans. Lykken postulates that genes influence divorce rates through personality characteristics that contribute to or detract from marital har-



mony. Identical twins tend to have their first dates at about the same time and to date with equal frequency. Their sexual dysfunctions also tend to be very similar. They marry and begin having children at roughly the same points in their lives. The only real difference between identical twins lies in whom they choose to marry.

When Louis Keith was in medical school, in Chicago, he had a friend named Phyllis Markuson. They dated a couple of times but were never more than friends. On New Year's Eve of 1960, Phyllis bumped into Louis's identical twin, Donald, at the ballet. Louis and Donald were as physically alike as identical twins can be—both of them dark-eyed, long-lashed, full-lipped Latin-lover types. Donald, who was home from the Army on leave, was wearing his dress blues. "There was just something different about him, like a spark," Phyllis recalls. "They were both very good-looking. I think Louis has softer features, especially around the mouth. Donald is more angular. His jaw is more set and refined, which reflects his personality. But who knows what one sees in another person—physically, emotionally, or intellectually—that makes him different from everybody else?" Phyllis was instantly smitten, and so was Donald. Immediately after the ballet, he called his brother and asked if he had any romantic inten-

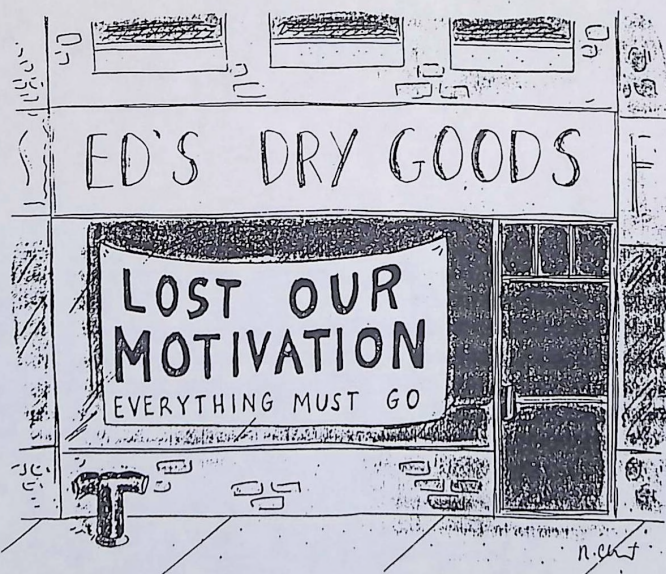
tions toward Phyllis. "Most twins know that this area is a big, fat hot potato," Donald says. Louis told his brother that he liked Phyllis a lot but wasn't romantically interested. "Are you sure?" Donald asked. "I don't want you to say ten years from now that I stole a girl you were interested in." Donald and Phyllis have now been married for thirty-two years. "It's lucky Louis and I don't have the same taste in women," Donald says. "It would be very difficult going through life wanting the same spouse."

Although twins competing for the same mate is a staple of television talk shows, the relationship between the Keiths and Phyllis is more typical. Two years ago, Lykken and Auke Tellegen, who is also a member of Minnesota's Psychology Department, reported the results of a study of a thousand middle-aged twins and their spouses, which examined various widely held assumptions about mate selection. One such assumption is that people tend to choose mates similar to themselves. When the researchers compared sets of twins with the people they had chosen to marry, they found that there was a strong correlation between twins and their spouses in regard to height, physical attractiveness, education, and traditionalism but over all the twins and their spouses had too little in common to explain their selection of

each other. A second assumption is that we are all looking for someone special, someone who has certain qualities that we admire. Presumably, identical twins who have been raised together will have the same criteria; after all, they do tend to make very similar choices about clothes and furniture and vacations. But, when Lykken and Tellegen compared the spouses of identical twins, they resembled each other even less than the spouses resembled the twins they were married to; they were hardly more alike than people who were married to unrelated individuals. Another surprise was the fact that when the twins were asked to evaluate their twin's spouse, in more than half the cases they expressed merely neutral feelings. The spouses, for their part, returned the favor—although one might have expected them to be at least somewhat attracted to the identical twin. And, while nearly twice as many husbands of identical twins approved of the other twin as did the wives of identical twins, even among the husbands twenty-five per cent were not attracted at all to the identical twin, and only thirteen per cent said that they "could have fallen for her myself." Among the wives, the figure was only seven per cent.

"We are left with a curious and disquieting conclusion," Lykken and Tellegen wrote. "Although most human choice behavior . . . reflects the characteristics of the chooser and of the choice, the most important choice of all—that of a mate—seems to be an exception. Although we do tend to choose from among people like ourselves, another person who is remarkably like ourselves (our MZ twin) is not likely to be drawn to the same choice we make." The authors concluded that human pairing is inherently random: "Romantic infatuation, we suggest, like imprinting, forms an initial bond almost adventitiously and then sustains it long enough, in most instances, for an enduring bond to be forged by the slower processes of learning and adaptation that result in compassionate love."

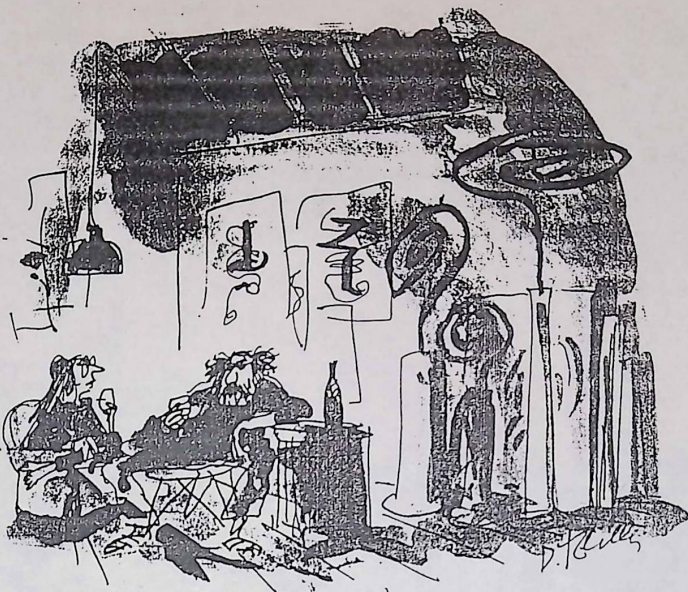
Several other recent twin studies have begun to look at what makes people happy. The findings so far point to two independent components of happiness—one called extraversion, or positive emotionality, and the other called neuroticism, or negative emotionality. Curiously, the two traits appear to operate



independently of each other—and not, as might be expected, like a seesaw, in which the rise of one marks the decline of the other. A person who is free of negative moods is not necessarily happy, just as a person who never experiences positive moods is not necessarily unhappy. Some researchers have proposed that both extraversion and neuroticism arise out of particular situations, with positive experiences leading to positive emotionality, and negative experiences to negative emotionality. This is a basic environmentalist position: that an accumulation of pleasant experiences will endow a person with a happy nature, while unpleasant experiences have the opposite effect. Other researchers assert that both extraversion and neuroticism are genetically driven.

To test these theories, in 1992 a team directed by Laura Baker, a professor of psychology at the University of Southern California, who heads the Southern California Twin Project, recruited some fifty sets of twins from the Los Angeles area, who ranged in age from sixteen to seventy-two. This twin study was done in conjunction with a family study comprising three generations of two hundred and twenty families. What the two studies found was that the more closely family members were related, the more similar they were in experiencing negative emotionality; that is, levels of this trait were more similar among DZ twins and siblings, who share, on the average, fifty per cent of their genes, than among grandparents and grandchildren, who share about twenty-five per cent of their genes. This finding suggests the presence of a marked genetic effect where neuroticism is concerned. Predictably, MZ twins were even more alike in this respect than DZ twins. But a different conclusion emerged when positive emotionality was measured. There the differences between MZ twins and DZ twins were not nearly so great, suggesting that shared experiences, instead of genetics, may influence levels of positive emotionality.

Unhappy natures, as we might well call those with negative emotionality, seem to pass through the generations in the genes of descendants. Yet happiness



"Rest assured, society will always prefer B-2 bombers."

seems to be largely a gift of the environment—including the family environment. Although countless twin studies have now documented the paucity of influence that ordinary families have on children, Baker's study suggests that one thing a good family can do is to make a child happy.

"O. K., Senator, we'll have lunch and talk about it," David Lykken said as he hung up the phone. The state legislator on the other end of the line wanted to talk about Lykken's proposal to require the licensing of parents. "We already have criteria for parents who adopt a child," Lykken told me as he sat in his office in Elliott Hall amid piles of books and research papers. Lykken, who is the head of the Minnesota twin registry, has gray hair and a Vandyke beard, and often talks in a quiet voice with his eyes closed, as if he were in a reverie. "Typically, the parents have to be mature," he continued. "There has to be a father and a mother, and they have to have means of support, and they can't be actively psychotic or seriously criminal. I say that our problems are not going to be

mitigated until we establish similar criteria for those who would produce children biologically."

Although even Lykken considers it very unlikely that his licensing plan will become law anytime soon, it is social engineering like that that causes people to be terrified of behavioral genetics. "A lot of social scientists are so scandalized by my proposals that they think I must be a Fascist," Lykken says. "But I consider myself a political atheist." Lykken is a well-respected researcher who is known for taking authoritarian positions on public policy. He has just published a new book, "The Antisocial Personalities," in which he contends that what turns children into sociopaths is not genes but environment, and particularly the environment of a fatherless home and an illiterate mother. "It has become part of the received knowledge from twin studies in recent years that being reared together in the same home does not make siblings more alike, and that puzzles people," Lykken said. "The one real exception to that is socialization—learning how to avoid breaking the rules that are necessary for living together. We know

that criminality runs in families. Thirty per cent of arrestees have a brother already in the slammer. There's no question that the small group of chronic criminals who are responsible for sixty per cent or more of crime in this country tend to come from the same areas, the same social classes, the same families. When you look at the sorts of environments in which the typical juvenile delinquent grows up, you don't need a study in order to be convinced that this is a pathogenic environment. It's mind-boggling, the kinds of homes in which several million American adolescents are currently developing into little sociopaths."

Lykken acknowledges that under his plan a disproportionate number of the unlicensed parents would be black, since he says that illegitimacy is some six times as high among blacks as among whites. "I think that this is the explanation for the difference between black and white crime," he said. "One-eighth of the population is responsible for about half the violent crime. That is because such a high proportion of black males are reared without fathers. So, if we could accomplish, by some magic, a reduction to a very low level of illegitimacy in both races, crime rates would plummet and would equalize between the races, and even I.Q. differences would be smaller than they are."

Race and I.Q. are the bugbears of behavioral genetics, because of historically lower I.Q. scores among blacks. At the center of the I.Q. controversy is Sandra Scarr, a former colleague of Lykken and Bouchard at the University of Minnesota, who is now a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia. Scarr was one of the first researchers to conduct twin studies in minority racial populations. Brilliant and dauntingly prolific, much praised and often damned, Scarr has divided the academy because she has insisted on applying the insights of behavioral genetics to developmental psychology.

Early in her career, Scarr began studying why so many black children did poorly on tests and in school achievement. She wondered whether it was a result of sociocultural disadvantage or genetically based racial differences. This was a forbidden question in 1967, when Scarr first started studying the records of black and white twins in the Philadelphia public schools. Two years later, the Berkeley psychologist Arthur Jensen stirred up a

LIZARD AND I

The early sun skins us. He's crept from beneath
an ivy cover to stretch beside me, a twig
in straw, rock wedge, sack of breath.

The sun hazes the ground straight across,
a trained spotlight casting all nearby
in silhouette: field, poplar, ridgeline.

I'm counting out days like coins, a hoard.
I'm presuming nothing but this bright effusion
outside the bicker and crush, the should and hurry.

Our airwaves play Disaster other hours.
I've raised him five. He's seen me. No one cares.
We're alive at the start. The lavender nods with bees.

—SANDY SOLOMON

nasty debate by airing his theory, based on I.Q.-test scores, that whites are genetically superior to blacks in intelligence. Two years later, Richard J. Herrnstein, a Harvard psychologist, followed with an article in *The Atlantic* on I.Q., in which he disowned his previous environmentalist stance. (That article was widely discussed and became the basis of "The Bell Curve," which was published last year, shortly after his death.) Having observed the public pillorying of Jensen and Herrnstein when their articles appeared, Scarr decided that if her data supported a substantial relationship between African ancestry and low intellectual skills she was prepared to leave the country. "There was no point in documenting yet again that on average blacks score lower than whites," Scarr says. "So I turned to testing black twins in order to look at the genetic and environmental variation within the black community."

One of the most striking findings of Scarr's early work on twins was that, while studies had shown a closer correlation between the I.Q. scores of white identical twins than between those of white fraternal twins, the scores of both identical and fraternal black twins were similar. A set of black fraternal twins was less likely to range widely in intelligence; there was less likely to be one clever and one slow twin. Scarr speculated that the differences were suppressed by the deprivations of the black children's environment. When she compared the I.Q.

scores for white children at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, it turned out that environmental differences were just as important for them. Scarr's findings suggested that inner-city black children (and white children in the same severely deprived circumstances) could have the genes for a higher intelligence than their environment permitted them to express. In 1972, soon after Scarr began teaching at the University of Minnesota (a move that seems almost inevitable for anyone interested in twin studies), she and one of her students, Andrew Pakstis, decided to test Jensen's theory that intelligence differences between blacks and whites were genetic in origin. Scarr and Pakstis reasoned that if Jensen was right children of mixed black and white ancestry (as is the case with most African-Americans) would score higher on intelligence tests according to their proportion of white ancestry. But subsequent tests of Philadelphia twins found no relation between intellectual-performance scores and degree of white genetic background.

Then Scarr, along with Richard A. Weinberg, a psychologist who worked with her at Minnesota's Institute of Child Development, went on to study a hundred and thirty black and mixed-race children, ranging in age from four to twelve, who had been adopted by well-off white families. The average I.Q. of these children was 106, which was higher than the average white I.Q. and well

above the average score of 90 for black children in the region. The earlier the children had been adopted, the better they fared. Scarr and Weinberg estimated that the scores of these early-adopted children could be as much as twenty points higher than those of children of comparable age who had been reared in the black community. It seemed clear to the two researchers that environment influenced I.Q. considerably: specifically, being reared and educated in the culture of the I.Q. tests apparently made a large difference in achievement.

At the same time, however, Scarr and Weinberg were studying a group of white adolescents who had been adopted in early infancy by white families across the middle range of the socioeconomic spectrum. "We were interested in seeing the cumulative effects of the family environment on I.Q. scores," Scarr says. "We were astonished at the results." The hypothesis of the study was that if family environment mattered, then at the end of the child-rearing period adopted children should show the maximum effects of the advantages and disadvantages of the families that had taken them in. But what the Scarr-Weinberg adopted-adolescent study found was that the I.Q. scores of the adopted adolescents bore *no relation at all* to those of the other children reared in the same family or to those of their adoptive parents. "We had expected the children reared in the same family to resemble one another *more* in I.Q. and personality than the young children in our transracial study, but we were dead wrong on both counts," Scarr says. The adopted young black children in the other study were more similar to their white siblings than the adopted adolescents in the new study were to their siblings, despite the fact that the adolescents had spent their entire childhood with their adopted families and were of the same race. "This was really interesting," Scarr says. "First, we were amazed that in an adolescent-adoption study we did not find any resemblances among people unless they were genetic relatives. This did not jibe with previous adoption literature or with our own transracial adoption study. We tried to figure out why adolescents bore so little resemblance to their adoptive families."

Scarr found that children in the same family who were genetically unrelated were alike in their early years but grew to

be different over time. They became more like their biological parents, whom they didn't know, than like the adoptive parents who raised them—not only in social attitudes, vocational interests, and certain personality features, such as prejudice and rigidity of belief, but also in I.Q. A follow-up study of the black and mixed-race children who were adopted into white homes found that by adolescence their I.Q. scores had fallen to a point slightly above what would be the average for their racial and ethnic mixture in the area. It was similar to the progression of mental development observed in MZ and DZ twins: the two types start out life being almost equally alike but diverge as they pass through childhood, with the MZ twins becoming even more similar and the DZ twins going their separate ways.

One lesson from the adopted-adolescent study seemed to be that genetic differences caused individuals to respond differently to similar rearing conditions. Another was that adopted children reared in rural or working-class homes did not differ significantly in their intelligence from adopted children reared by parents who were professionals. From these two findings, Scarr concluded that black and white children were essentially alike in their inherent intelligence and in their ability to achieve in schools, provided that they were given realistic opportunities to become part of the culture of the tests and of the schools. As long as children in a population were reasonably nurtured, Scarr observed, the individual

differences between them must be genetic. Therefore, efforts to improve intellectual or academic performance should concentrate on rescuing those who were living on the far margins of society—who were genuinely deprived and were unable to gain the skills or knowledge needed to compete in the mainstream culture.

Over the last fifteen years, Scarr has been refining a new theory of development, based largely on her conviction that environments do influence the intellects of young children. At early stages of life, she observes, enriched environments, such as day-care centers with stimulating programs, can boost a deprived child's achievement. Even young children, however, are genetically programmed to create certain experiences for themselves. For instance, a smiling, gregarious baby is more likely to be cuddled and petted than a fussy and undemonstrative one. If these two dissimilar infants are siblings, their experiences of living in the same home can be quite different. As children mature, they gain more and more control over their environment, and actively select from the superabundance of opportunities and experiences those which conform to their genetic disposition. The distinction between genes and environment becomes less and less clear. "The dichotomy of nature and nurture has always been a bad one, not only for the oft-cited reasons that both are required for development, but because a false parallel arises between the two," Scarr wrote (in collaboration



"It's always poor you, isn't it, Albert?"

with her student Kathleen McCartney) in 1983 in the journal *Child Development*. "We propose that development is indeed the result of nature *and* nurture but that genes drive experience. Genes are components in a system that organizes the organism to experience the world."

That is why MZ twins become more similar over time and DZ twins less so. Identical genes compel MZ twins to experience the world in a similar manner, thus reinforcing the similarities of their natures, whereas the genetic variation of DZ twins awakens different interests and talents, which inevitably pull the twins apart into more distinct individuals. Identical twins who have been reared separately may live in different families, and even in different cultures, but they evoke similar responses from their environment and are disposed by their natures to make similar choices and to build similar niches for themselves.

In this school of thought, environment and genes do not represent separate, countervailing forces. To some, it may not even make sense to allocate percentages of heritability to, say, I.Q. or personality traits, because after one reaches a certain age the environment is itself a heritable reflection of one's genetic disposition. We make our environments, rather than the other way around—that is, as long as the environment we find ourselves in is not so impoverished or abusive that normal development cannot occur. "Good enough" parents, who provide an average environment to support development, will have the same effects on their children as "superparents," who press upon their children every cultural advantage.

"The statement that parents have few differential effects on children does *not* mean that not having parents is just as good as having parents," Scarr said, in a 1991 presidential address to the Society for Research in Child Development. "It may not matter much that children have *different* parents, but it does matter that they have parent(s) or some supportive, affectionate person who is willing to be parent-like. To see the effects of having no parents (or parent surrogates), one would have to return to the orphanages of long ago . . . or see children trapped in crack houses of inner cities in the United States, locked in basements and attics by vengeful, crazy relatives. Really deprived, abusive, and neglectful environments do not support normal devel-

opment for any child." Despite these caveats, Scarr's speech was bitterly attacked by developmental psychologists who oppose her views, believing that they discourage efforts to improve the welfare of children—especially black children—and fail to hold parents accountable for their children's behavior. In fairness, Scarr concedes that parents can have important effects on children's motivation and self-esteem, but she insists that, beyond a minimum level of nurturing, they have little measurable impact on intelligence, interests, and personality.

THE assault of behavioral genetics, which has had academe in tumult for the last three decades, has only recently begun to affect politics and social policy, having captured a place in the popular culture. Although twin studies are rarely a conspicuous feature of policy debates, they do exert an underlying force, through the altered understanding of human development which they have engendered. Clearly, we have moved from being a country that believes in the equality of human nature and the effectiveness of government to being one that not only doubts the ability of government to improve people's lives but also denies the possibility of personal transformation. This shift in perspective is reflected in the retreat from the social activism of our recent past. One can look at the cuts in welfare and job-training programs, the attacks on affirmative action, and the erosion of tax support for public education as strong evidence that Americans no longer embrace the ideal that it is possible to change people substantially by improving their circumstances.

Given the consequences, it's not surprising that there has been so much resistance to the portrait of human nature which has been drawn from twin studies. When we read about twins who were separated at birth and are reunited in middle age only to discover that in many respects they have become the same person, it suggests to us that life is somehow a charade: that we only *seem* to react con-

sciously to events; that the life experiences we think have shaped us are little more than ornaments or curiosities we have picked up along the way; and that the injunctions of our parents and the traumas of our youth which we believed to be the lodestones of our character may have had little more effect on us than a book we have read or a show we have seen on television—that, in effect, we could have lived another person's life and still be who we are.

And yet twins may have a different lesson to teach us. "A philosopher who was talking about twins said that maybe it's freedom that makes identical twins different," says Lindon J. Eaves, who is a human geneticist at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine. "Frankly, I don't believe that for a minute. It could be freedom that makes them alike." Eaves runs one of the largest twin studies in the world, known as the Virginia 30,000, which surveys fifteen thousand twins and their relatives. He is also an Anglican priest, and has consequently reflected on the implications of behavioral genetics for the doctrine of free will. "I think freedom means something about the capacity of the human organism not to be pushed around by external circumstances," he says. "I would argue that evolution has given us our freedom, that natural selection has placed in us the capacity to stand up and transcend the limitations of the environment. So I think the quest for freedom is genetic. I can't prove it, but I think it's a way forward."

It may be threatening to see ourselves as victims of our genes, but that may be preferable to being victims of our environment. To a major extent, after all, our genes are who we are. A trait that is genetically rooted seems somehow more immutable than one that may have been conditioned by the environment. This seems to leave aside the possibility of free choice—or even consciousness of choice at all. And yet people who are aware of their natures are constantly struggling with tendencies they recognize as ingrained or inborn. It makes little difference how such tendencies were acquired—only how they are managed. If it is true that our identical clone can sort through the world of opportunity and adversity and arrive at a similar place, then we may as well see that as a triumph of our genetic determination to become the person we ought to be. ♦



HG Creationist section

3 min short

~~4 min long~~

~~4~~

3

~~being along~~ ~~Creationist~~
~~very long~~

4min

Put in To READ part of lecture book
 in the I-J-K-L and standing there in the dark, looked across the intervening distance between himself and the next building. In a lighted office across the court he saw one of his colleagues kissing a secretary. Harlot promptly dialed that office, and as he watched, the man separated himself from the embrace long enough to pick up his phone.

"Aren't you appalled by yourself?" Harlot asked.

"Who is this?"

"God," said Harlot and hung up. *Yana*

Alternate start

The last time Hugh Montague had spoken to me about God was the last time I had taken the trip from Langley to his farmhouse ~~on the eyebrow of the four-lane truck road~~ *on the eyebrow*. He had expatiated that afternoon on the theory of Creationism, his brilliance, one can certify, not at all diminished. *(40)*

"Would you say, Harry," he inquired, "that two such words as 'sophisticated fundamentalist' make one oxymoron?"

"Can't see how it wouldn't," I told him.

"Intellectual snobbery," replied Harlot, "is your short suit. You would do better to ponder the meanings that can be extracted from apparent folly."

As so often, a flick into the eye of your ego was the price you paid for obtaining the products of his mind.

"Yes," he said, "Creationists rush to tell us that the world, according to the Bible, was commenced five thousand and some hundreds of years ago. It makes for merriment, don't it? Fundamentalists are such whole fools. Yet I said to myself once, 'What would I do if I were Jehovah about to conceive of this creature, man, who, as soon as I create him, will be hell-bent—given the equal opportunity I have offered Satan—to discover My nature. How can that not become man's passion? I have created him, after all, in My image, so he will wish to discover My nature in order to seize My throne. Would I ever have permitted such a contract in the first place, ~~therefore~~, if I had not taken the wise precaution to fashion a cover story?' "

"A cover story?" I did not wish to repeat his words, but I did.

"A majestic cover story. Nothing vulgar or small. Absolutely detailed, fabulously complete. Just suppose that in the moment of striking that agreement with Satan, God brought forth the world complete. Five thousand and some hundreds of years ago, we were given an absolutely realized presentation of the world. God created it ~~on a blank slate~~ *out of nothing* and gave it to us complete. Everyone began to live at the same instant of Creation. ~~Yet all were given a highly individual background. All had been put together, of course, from~~

~~nothingness infused with divine genius.~~ The creation of this imaginary past was God's artwork. All who lived, all men, women, and children of all varying tribes and climates, the eighty-year-old, the forty-five-year-old, the young lovers, and the two-year-old were all created at the same instant that He placed the half-cooked food on the stone-hearth fire. All of it appeared at once, the animals in their habitat just so much as the humans, each creature possessing its separate memory, the plants in command of their necessary instincts, the earth bountiful here and unfulfilled there, some crops even ready to go to harvest. All the fossil remains were carefully set in the rock. God gave us a world able to present all the material clues that Darwin would need fifty-odd centuries later to conceive of evolution. The geological strata had all been put in place. The solar system was in the heavens. Everything had been set moving at rates of orbit to encourage astronomers to declare five thousand and more years later that the age of the earth was approximately five billion years. I like this notion immensely," said Harlot. "You can say the universe is a splendidly worked-up system of disinformation calculated to make us believe in evolution and so divert us away from God. Yes, that is exactly what I would do if I were the Lord and could not trust My own creation."

~~What was it Harlot had said on a Low Thursday?~~ "The aim of these gatherings is to acquaint you with the factology of facts. One has to know whether one is dealing with the essential or the circumferential fact. Historical data, after all, tend to be not particularly factual and subject to revision by later researchers. You must look to start, therefore, with the fact that cannot be smashed into subparticles of fact."

Yes, I had been delivered from the book of documents into the world, and all of Russia lay before me. But I had one fact that was essential, even if it was no more than the hypothesis that, for fact, Harlot was here in Moscow. A man who could conceive of the universe as a distortion fashioned for purposes of self-protection by God was a man to live in monumental double dealings he had created for himself, larger than any agency he served. No, there could be no reply to why I was in Russia unless I believed that Hugh Montague was here and alive, and I had a fair chance to find him. For if here, he would choose to reside in Moscow as a most honored colleague of the KGB, yes. Given his wheelchair, he might even be dwelling within a stone's throw of the statue of Dzerzhinsky. I felt one step closer to the concealed life of my mind. The thought that Harlot might be inhabiting a room but a few hundred yards away from this room enabled me to know at last what Bill Harvey had meant nineteen years ago when

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Responses + Reaction

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15 • THE ARGUMENT ALL BUT CONCLUDED

The next piece is one of a series written for Commentary as an existential exegesis on Buber's Tales of the Hasidim. Metaphor is used here to explain a miracle, so ~~the piece while rationalized is nonetheless indistinguishable. It~~ may as well be remarked that science once saw itself as the intellectual effort to comprehend each separate miracle. About the time (a) miracles ceased or (b) those cognitive senses which could perceive miracle had withered—then too did metaphor disappear from science.

RESPONSES AND REACTIONS—V

Rabbi The Fear of God

Once Zusya prayed to God: "Lord, I love you so much, but I do not fear you enough! Lord, I love you so much, but I do not fear you enough! Let me stand in awe of you like your angels, who are penetrated by your awe-inspiring name." And God heard his prayer, and his name penetrated the hidden heart of Zusya as it does those of the angels. But Zusya crawled under the bed like a little dog, and animal fear shook him until he howled. "Lord, let me love you like Zusya again!" And God heard him this time also.

~~There is a substantial logic in this story, which leads to rest in the meaning of miracle.~~ Zusya is ambitious, he is intellectually ambitious, he wishes to feel a fear of God

because he is secretly confident he will be able to withstand that fear and so acquire more knowledge of the universe, more revelation of the secrets of God and Nature. The request is Faustian. Yet God in revealing Himself further to Zusya terrifies him profoundly. Why? Does He terrify Zusya because He is Jehovah, a God of wrath and rectitude, ~~an essentially God~~? Or is the fear which comes over Zusya a part of the profound fear God feels Himself, a fear that His conception of Being (that noble conception of man as a creature of courage and compassion, art, tenderness, skill, stamina, and imagination, exactly the imagination to carry this conception of Being out into the dark emptiness of the universe, there to war against other more malignant conceptions of Being) yes, precisely this noble conception will not prevail, and instead a wasteful, slovenly, slothful, treacherous, cowardly, and monotonous conception of Being will become the future of man—such a fear must for God be insupportable. It is the heart of existential logic that God's ultimate victory over the Devil is no more certain than the Devil's victory over God—either may conquer man and so give Being a characteristic Good or Evil, or indeed each may exhaust the other, until Being ceases to exist or sinks through seas of entropy into a Being less various, less articulated, less organic, more like plastic than the Nature we know. What a fear is this fear in God that He may lose eventually to the Devil! What abysses of anxiety and pits of woe in such a contemplation! Zusya, asking to fear God more, is given instead a vision of God's fear. Like any other man, Zusya draws back in terror.

But is not one of the secrets of the miracle just here? The miracle is revealed to those who can bear to undergo the terror which accompanies it. If intimacy with God is not merely a communion of love but a sharing of the Divine terror, then the beauty of any miracle delivered by God is always accompanied by a fear proportionate to the beauty. Because a miracle is not merely a breach in the laws of nature, but a revelation of the nature of the God behind Nature. If one cannot undergo the fear, one does

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not deserve the revelation. So our taste for miracles has left us. Man in the Middle Ages lived with dread as a natural accompaniment to his day. His senses uninsulated by the daily use of daily drugs (nicotine, caffeine, aspirin, alcohol, so forth), his mind not guarded by a society which was antsupernatural, medieval man was therefore able to live with gods, devils, angels and demons, with witches, warlocks, and spirits. Miracles, while terrifying, were nonetheless a mark of merit. One was honored to receive them. Whereas we reach quickly and in terror for the first chemical which will flatten an affect, deaden our senses, damp our madness, or forestall a miracle. Conversely, we also look to a drug to induce a hallucination—because any visitation produced by a drug is exempt from the terror of engaging the supernatural. For we know, even as the experience is upon us, that we are not privy to a vision beyond the lip of death, but merely are offered a derangement of the senses produced by chemicals. Our modern pleasure is that one is witnessing not a miracle but miracle-in-a-theater.

"And the Fire Abated" ?

The tale is told:

The rabbi of Kalev once spent the Sabbath in a nearby village as the guest of one of the Hasidim. When the hour to receive the Sabbath had come, someone suddenly screamed, and a servant rushed in and cried that the barn in which the grain was stored was on fire. The owner wanted to run out, but the rabbi took him by the hand. "Stay!" he said. "I am going to tell you a story." The Hasid stayed.

"When our master Rabbi Zusya was young," said the zaddik, "he stoked the stoves in the house of the Great Maggid, for this duty was always assigned to the youngest disciples. Once when he was saying the psalms with great fervor just before the coming of the Sabbath, he was startled by screams from within the house. Sparks had fallen from the stove which he had filled with wood, and since no one was in the living room, a fire had started.

"Zusya!" he was reproached. "There's a fire!"

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"No matter," he replied. "Is it not written: And the fire abated!" At that very same moment the fire abated."

The rabbi of Kalev fell silent. The Hasid, whom he still held by the hand, did not dare move. A moment passed and someone called in at the window that the fire in the barn had gone out.

Mood is the earth of the miracle, its garden, its terrain. The mood created by a fire is always in some part Satanic. One senses an avid implacable relentless impatience, a greed to consume, a determination to destroy the material before it, indeed a lunatic intensity within the fire to appropriate the Time which is embodied in the object which is burning. That is why a fire in a fireplace offers comfort. The fire in this case is smaller than ourselves; the material it consumes, the Time it accelerates, are subservient to the mood of calm and benevolence with which we study the fire. We have the ability at any moment to put it out. We are not confronting the force of the devil but rather devil in a theater. In effect, we are dealing with a commonplace miracle. We invoke the supernatural power of fire, but we control it. To primitive man fire was of course always a miracle, a dangerous miracle. He did not know, he could not know—for he had not yet codified the resources of fire—that he would necessarily be able to control it in every contingency. So he approached fire with profound respect, and prayed to various spirits as he put out a fire in order that the demons in the flame be not offended. How natural for him to assume that the intensity of the fire came from the rabidity of the evil contained within the material. By this understanding, it is not insignificant that the grain of the Hasid catches on fire. The grain is his hoarded wealth, his greed, his covetousness. If his heart has been impure and his plans for what he will do with the money he obtains from the sale of the grain are unholy, then the grain—by this unspoken logic—becomes filled with everything which is evil in the Hasid's soul, and so begins to smolder, then bursts into flame. The Hasid is read to run to the barn, the rabbi

restrains him. ^{But when} When the Hasid pauses to listen to the speech of the rabbi, he is in effect ready to relinquish his wealth. So what has been evil in him expires, and what has been heat for the flame in the grain is now cooled. Thus might go the religious logic. The question is whether this logic is utterly without foundation in the real. For philosophically is not as plausible to assume we have a spirit which is communicable to other people and to the very properties of our environment as it is to assume that spirit does not exist or is not communicable? And is it not equally or almost equally comfortable to assume that a fire may be extinguished by a dramatic shift in mood? Let the burden fall on the philosopher who would prove that the existence of a fire can never be affected by a mood.

Scientist

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One of them is. How do you know beauty isn't absolute?

Q. Recently I referred in the Realist to Sonny Nunez, a dead prizefighter, and Sherri Finkbone, a pregnant woman, and I suggested that if she really wanted to get a legal abortion, she should just sign up for a boxing match—to point out the irony that it's legal to kill a man in the ring, but it's illegal to remove a fetus from a woman. Would you like to attack that comparison?

A. Ah, yes. Atrocious. I think that's taking a cheap advantage. In one case a man is killed who is able to defend himself. In the other, an embryo who may have voyaged through eternity to be born again is snuffed out because of his mother's cultural propensity for socially accepted drugs like the limb-killer thalidomide.

Q. Both incidents took place in Arizona, and I just felt it was a dramatic way—

A. If somebody takes a handful of shit and throws it against the wall at a party, that's dramatic, but it's distasteful. Your example is distasteful. You were appealing to the low emotions in your readers. You have a terrible responsibility in the *Realist*, because *your* readers have low emotions too. Just because nobody could find the sort of stuff that's printed in the *Realist* except in the *Realist*, there is a danger that the people who read the sheet are going to begin to think there's something superior about them, just from the sheer fact they're reading the *Realist*.

Q. Do you think you're something of a puritan when it comes to masturbation?

A. I think masturbation is bad.

Q. In relation to heterosexual fulfillment?

A. In relation to everything—orgasm, heterosexuality, to style, to stance, to be able to fight the good fight. I think masturbation cripples people. It doesn't cripple them altogether, but it turns them askew, it sets up a bad and often enduring tension. I mean has anyone ever studied the correlation between cigarette smoking and masturbation? Anybody who spends his adolescence masturbating, generally enters his young manhood with no sense of being a man. The answer—I don't know what the answer is—sex for adolescents may be the answer, it may not. I really don't know.

Q. But can't one kid start young with heterosexual relations and yet develop all the wrong kinds of attitudes—while

another kid will go through his adolescence masturbating and yet see the humor of it, see the absurdity of it, know it's temporary?

A. I wouldn't dream of laying down a law with no variation. But let me say it another way. At the time I was growing up, there was much more sexual repression than there is today. One knew sex was good and everything was in the way of it. And so one did think of it as one of the wars to fight, if not *the* war to fight—the war for greater sexual liberty.

~~Masturbation was one expression of that deprivation. No adolescent would ever masturbate, presumably, if he could have sex with a girl. A lot of adolescents masturbate because they don't want to take part in homosexuality.~~

~~Q. There are certain societies where masturbation—~~

~~A. All I'm talking about is the one society I know. I'll be damned if I'm going to be led around with a ring in my nose by anthropologists. I mean the few I've known personally have always struck me as slightly absurd. They're like eccentrics in a comic English novel. I won't take any anthropologists as a god. I'm sure they don't know A-hole from appetite about "certain societies."~~

~~But we were talking about masturbation as the result of sexual repression. I don't see any reason to defend it. If you have more sexual liberty, why the hell still defend masturbation?~~

Bat

One has to keep coming back to one notion: How do you make life? How do you *not* make life? You have to assume, just as a working stance, that life is probably good—if it isn't good, then our existence is such an absurdity that *any* action immediately becomes absurd—but if you assume that life is good, then you have to assume that those things which keep life from happening—which tend to make life more complex without becoming more useful, more stimulating—are bad.

Anything that tends to make a man a machine without giving him the power to increase the real life in himself is bad.

Q. Is it possible that you have a totalitarian attitude against masturbation?

A. I wouldn't say all people who masturbate are evil, probably I would even say that some of the best people in the world masturbate. But I am saying it's a miserable activity.

Q. Well, we're getting right back now to this notion of absolutes. You know—to somebody, masturbation can be a thing of beauty—

A. To what end? To what end? Who is going to benefit from it?

Q. It's a better end than the beauty of a bombing.

A. Masturbation is bombing. It's bombing oneself.

Q. I see nothing wrong if the only person hurt from masturbation is the one who practices it. But it can also benefit—look, Stekel wrote a book on autoeroticism, and one of the points he made was that at least it saved some people who might otherwise go out and commit rape. ~~He was talking about extremes, but—~~

A. It's better to commit rape than masturbate. Maybe, maybe. The whole thing becomes very difficult.

~~Q. But rape involves somebody else. The minute you—~~

A. ~~Just talking about it on the basis of violence;~~ one is violence toward oneself; one is violence toward others. And you don't recognize—let's follow your argument and be speculative for a moment—if everyone becomes violent toward themselves, then past a certain point the entire race commits suicide. But if everyone becomes violent toward everyone else, you would probably have one wounded hero-monster left.

Q. And he'd have to masturbate.

A. That's true . . . But—you use that to point out how tragic was my solution, which is that he wins and still has to masturbate. I reply that at least it was more valuable than masturbating in the first place. Besides he might have no desire to masturbate. He might lie down and send his thoughts back to the root of his being.

Q. I think there's a basic flaw in your argument. Why are you assuming that masturbation is violence unto oneself? Why is it not pleasure unto oneself? And I'm not defending masturbation—well, I'm defending masturbation, yes, as a substitute if and when—

A. All right, look. When you make love, whatever is good in you or bad in you, goes out into someone else. I mean this literally. I'm not interested in the biochemistry of it, the electromagnetism of it, nor in how the psychic waves are passed back and forth, and what psychic waves are. All I know is that when one makes love, one changes a woman slightly and a woman changes you slightly.

Q. Certain circumstances can change one for the worse.

A. But at least you have gone through a process which is part of life.

One can be better for the experience, or worse. But one has experience to absorb, to think about, one has literally to digest the new spirit which has entered the flesh. The body has been galvanized for an experience of flesh, a declaration of the flesh.

If one has the courage to think about every aspect of the act—I don't mean think mechanically about it, but if one is able to brood over the act, to dwell on it—then one is *changed* by the act. Even if one has been *jangled* by the act. Because in the act of restoring one's harmony, one has to encounter all the reasons one was jangled.

So finally one has had an experience which is nourishing. Nourishing because one's able to *feel* one's way into more difficult or more precious insights as a result of it. One's able to live a tougher, more heroic life if one can digest and absorb the experience.

But, if one masturbates, all that happens is, everything that's beautiful and good in one, goes up the hand, goes into the air, is *lost*. Now what the hell is there to *absorb*? One hasn't tested himself. You see, in a way, the heterosexual act lays questions to rest, and makes one able to build upon a few answers. Whereas if one masturbates, the ability to contemplate one's experience is disturbed. Instead, fantasies of power take over and disturb all sleep.

If one has, for example, the image of a beautiful sexy babe in masturbation, one still doesn't know whether one can make love to her in the flesh. All you know is that you can violate her in your *brain*. Well, a lot of good that is.

But if one has fought the good fight or the evil fight and ended with the beautiful sexy dame, then if the experience is good, your life is changed by it; if the experience is not good, one's life is also changed by it, in a less happy way. But at least one knows something of what happened. One has something real to build on.

The ultimate direction of masturbation always has to be insanity.

~~Q. But you're not man enough to take the other position which is sex for the young. Except for petting, what else is there between those two alternatives?~~

~~A. I'd say, between masturbation and sex for the young, I prefer sex for the young. Of course. But I think there may be still a third alternative. At the time I grew up, sex had~~

Ancient Earnings Burial Xcerpt

10 min

6

Ren and Sekhem and Kha
Ba, Ke, Khaibit
Sekhem

7x1:20

10 min

Canopic jars₁

Ancient Evenings Excerpt

A hook went into my nose, battered ^{through} the gate at the roof of the nostril, and plunged into my brain. Pieces, gobbets, and whole parts of the dead flesh of my mind were now brought out through one aperture of my nose, then the other.

Yet for all it hurt, I could have been made of small rocks and roots. I ached no more than the earth when a weed is pulled and comes up with its hairs tearing away from the clods of the soil. Pain is present, but ^{only} as the small cry of the uprooted plant. So did the hooks, narrow in their curve, go up the nose, enter the head and poke like blind fingers in a burrow to ~~catch~~ ^{pull} stuffs ^{from} of the brain and ~~pull~~ ^{pull} ~~them away~~ ^{from skull}. Now I felt like a rock wall at the base of which rakes are ripping, and was warm curiously as though sunlight were baking me, but it was only the breath of the first embalmer, hot with wine and figs--how clear was the sense of smell!

Still, an enigma remained. How could my [±] mind continue to think while they pulled my ~~brain~~ ^{skull to bits} apart? They were certainly scooping chunks of material as lively as dry sponge through the dry tunnels of my nose, and I realized,--for there was a flash in my cranium when the hook first entered--that one of my lights in the Land of the Dead had

certainly stirred. Was it the Ba, the Khaibit or the Ka that was now helping me to think? And I gagged as a particularly caustic drug, some wretched mixture of lime and ash, was poured in by the embalmers to dissolve whatever might still be stuck to the inside of my skull.

How long they worked I do not know, how long they allowed that liquid to dwell in the vault of my emptied head is one more question. From time to time they lifted my feet, held me upside down, then set me back. Once they even turned me over on my stomach to slosh the fluids and let the caustic eat out my eyes. Two flowers could have been plucked when those eyes were gone.

At night my body would go cold; by midday it was close to warm. Of course I could not see, but I could smell, and got to know the embalmers. One wore perfume, yet his body carried the unmistakable pungency of a cat in heat; the other was a heavy fellow with a heavy odor not altogether bad--he was the one with breath of wine and figs. He smelled as well of fields and mud, and rich food was usually in him--a meat-eater, his sweat was strong yet not unpleasant--something loyal came out of the gravies of his flesh. Because I could smell them as they approached, I knew it was daylight so soon as the embalmers arrived, and I could count the hours. (Their scent altered with the heat

of the air in this place.) From midday to three, every redolence, good and bad, of the hot banks of the Nile was also near. After a time I came to realize I must be in a tent. There was often the crack of sailcloth flapping overhead, and gusts would clap at my hair, a sensation as definite in impression as a hoof stepping on grass. My hearing had begun to return but by a curious route. For I had no interest in what was said. I was aware of the voices of others, but felt no desire to comprehend the words. They were not even like the cry of animals so much as the lolling of surf or the skittering of wind. Yet my mind felt capable of surpassing clarity.

Once I think my mother came to visit, or, since it is likely the tent was on family grounds, it is possible she strolled through the gardens and stopped to look in. Certainly I caught her scent. It was Hathfertiti, certain enough; she gave one sob, as if belief in the mortal end of her son had finally come, and left immediately.

Somewhere in those first few days they made an incision in the side of my belly with a sharp flint knife--I know how sharp for even with the few senses my Remains could still employ, a sense of sharpness went through me like a plow breaking ground, but sharper, as if I were a snake cut in two by a chariot wheel, and then began the most detailed

searching. It is hard to describe, for it did not hurt, but I was ready in those hours to think of the inside of my torso as common to a forest in a grove, and, one by one, trees were removed, their roots disturbing veins of rock, their leaves murmuring. I had dreams of cities drifting down the Nile like floating islands. Yet when the work was done, I felt larger, as if my senses now lived in a larger space. Was it that my heart and lungs had been placed in one ~~canopic~~ ^{sacramental} jar, and my stomach and small intestines in another? Leave it that my organs were spread out in different places, floating in different fluids and spices, yet still existing about me, a village. Eventually, their allegiance would be lost. Wrapped and placed in ~~the~~ separate containers, what they knew of my life would then be offered to their own God.

How I brooded over what those ~~gods~~ ^{deities} would know of me once those organs were in Their domain. ^{the god} Qebhsenuf would dwell in my liver and know of all the days when my liver's juices had been brave; as well would Qebhsenuf know of the hours when the liver, like me, lived in the fog of a long fear. A simple example, the liver, but more agreeable to contemplate than my lungs. For, with all they knew of my passions, would they still be loyal once they moved to the jar of the ^{god who was the} jackal Tuamutef, and lived in the domain of that

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scavenger? I did not know. So long, a least, as my organs remained unwrapped, and therefore in a manner still belonged to me; I could understand how once embalmed, and ^{separated into} in their jar, I would lose them. No matter how scattered my parts might be over all the tables of this tent, there still remained the sense of family among us--the vessel of my empty corpse comfortably surrounded by old fleshly islands of endeavor, these lungs, liver, stomach, and big and little guts all attached to the same memories of my life (if with their own separate and fiercely prejudiced view--how different, after all, had my life seemed to my liver and to my heart). So, not at all, therefore was this embalming tent as I had expected, no, no bloody abattoir like a butcher's stall, more like an herb kitchen. Certainly the odors encouraged the same long flights of fancy you could find in a spice shop. Merely figure the vertigos of my nose when the empty cavity of my body (so much emptier than the belly of a woman who has just given birth) was now washed, soothed and stimulated, cleansed, peppered, herbified, and left with a resonance through which no hint of the body's corruption could breathe. They scoured the bloody inside with palm wine, and left the memories of my flesh in ferment. They pounded in spices and peppers, and rare sage from the limestone foundations to the West; then came leaves

of thyme and the honey of bees who had fed on thyme, the oil of orange was rubbed into the cavity of the ribs, and the oil of lemon balm the inside of my back to free it of the stubborn redolence of the viscera. Cedar chips, essence of jasmine, and branchlets of myrrh were crushed--I could hear the cries of the plants being broken more clearly than the sound of human voices. The myrrh even made its clarion call. A powerful aromatic (as powerful in the kingdom of herbs as the Pharaoh's voice) the myrrh was laid into the open shell of my body. Next came cinnamon leaves, stem, and cinnamon bark to sweeten the myrrh. Like rare powders added to the sweetmeats in the stuffing of a pigeon, were these bewildering atmospheres they laid into me. Dizzy was I with their beauty. When done, they sewed up the long cut in the side of my body, and I seemed to rise through high vales of fever while something of memory, intoxicated by these tendrils of the earth, began to dance and the oldest of my friends was young while the children of my mistresses grew old. I was like a royal barge lifted into the air under the ministrations of a rare Vizier.

3/4

Cleaned, stuffed, and trussed, I was deposited in a bath of natron--that salt which dries the meat to stone--and there I lay with weights to keep me down. Slowly, over the endless days that followed, as the waters of my own body

were given up to the thirst of the salt (which drank at my flesh like caravans arriving at an oasis), so all moisture, with its insatiable desire to liquefy my meats, had to leave my limbs. Bathed in natron, I became hard as the wood of a hull, then hard as the rock of the earth, then felt the last of me depart to join my Ka, my Ba, and my fearsome Khaibit. And the shell of my body entered the stone of ten thousand years. If there was nothing I could smell any longer (no more than a stone can be aware of a scent), still the hardened flesh of my body became like one of those spiraled chambers of the sea that are thrown up on the beach, yet contain the roar of waters when you hold them to your ear. I became not unlike that roar of waters, for I was close to hearing old voices that passed across the sands--if now I could not smell, I could certainly hear--and like the dolphin whose ears are reputed able to pick up echoes from the other end of the sea, so I sank into the bath of natron, and my body passed farther and farther away. Like a stone washed by fog, baked by sun, and given the flavor of the water on the bank, I was entering that universe of the dumb where it was part of our gift to hear the story told by every wind to every stone.

Two Buggies

8 min

only when they were on the move that Americans could feel anchored in their memories. Was anything more agreeable than these small hills moving by in the dark like animals? Yes, it was on a journey that the tender memories of the past (and the more sorrowful) shifted somewhere in the seat of their unconscious repose, and warmed the blood, warmed the heart, warmed something at best of that cold anxious center where was inspired so much of the American fever, yes, tender memories which did not have to rise to the mind, but drifted like lights (~~boulevard lights? harbor lights?~~) on the warm river of the journey.

6: A NIGHT AT OCCOQUAN

That night at Occoquan, Mailer had a long reverie about the war in Vietnam before he fell asleep. It was not to be the most comfortable slumber, for the mattress had old stuffing and was not two inches thick (as well as dirty) and the springs on the cot had lost their tone so the bed curved like a hammock. He had a clean pillowcase and a thin dirty blanket for cover which would not have kept a small animal warm, but it did not matter, for the heat was turned high in the long dormitory room where he slept with more than a hundred other men, and since the lights were on, and the air was filled with smoke, the condition was comparable to dozing in the dim heated currents of the Smoking Car on an overnight train.

It had not been a particularly eventful evening once they arrived. It had of course not been uneventful either, since nearly everything is interesting about a prison in the first few hours (although such interest is similar to the scrutiny a patient will give a hospital when he enters for

at the Pentagon, but he was not an Egyptologist, no sir, and the connection eluded him. He must pursue it later. Something there. But the rumination running down, we may quickly leave his thoughts.

4: A BUSLOAD OF SLOGANS

In fact, the bus is getting ready to leave the Pentagon. A driver has gotten on—to many cheers—and a wire gate is closed across the front to protect the chauffeur from attack by any prisoners while he is driving. There are also bars across each window. (~~Obviously Mailer has had the fantasy of bending the bars and making his escape, and has decided not to—it would certainly make him famous for too little.~~) The sun has been beating on the bus and it is as uncomfortably warm as a small Southern bus depot on an Indian summer afternoon, which is what the faces outside might suggest, if not for the Pentagon walls. And a battle has been taking place, even if no sign of it seems to be reaching here—except, gloomy thought, the battle cannot be going too well, for there is not the remotest sign of panic in this rear area. Except there also seems less air of self-congratulation. It is frustrating not to know.

The motor started. They backed up, turned around, pulled away. Now, their hands were out the window with their fingers extended in the V for Victory sign. They passed MPs standing at attention on the open end of the loading area, looking not unlike buoys in a channel as you pull out to sea. To a man, the prisoners in the bus began to yell, "Hell, no, we won't go; hell, no, we won't go!" and at the subtle shift of expression in each MP's face, other slogans were quickly fed: "End the war in

Vietnam. Bring the boys home! End the war. Bring the boys home." There was a rol now on the bus, somewhere between you under arrest for a strike, and a high school back from a successful game. In fact, the look of substitutes on a high school football team is behind or the game is worrisome exactly at the highest pitch of attention—they would have twanged like a bow—their heads up under their upper jaws, jaws under the helmet, line of vision cut off six feet from the helmet. That classic military attention which says: how bad I am, when I stand like this, is good.

"Hey, hey, LBJ! How many kids did you shout the prisoners in the bus to the V for Victory. It felt like they hardly knew over what, perhaps over the situation (and so the secret consternation) the MPs, same age as so many of the prisoners, uncomprehending of why anyone their for this purpose to get arrested.

They sang much of the way. Shouting high school adolescents at the few intercoms they stopped for traffic lights in the small ping streets on their route, the kids look like high school kids in Hollywood and pants, sweaters, sneakers; the girls in various blouses and mini-skirts, saddle shoes. A man always tried to believe that the American television dramas did not exist, had no course he knew it did—to direct the styles and therefore the ideas of America (where everyone lived so close to their senses) precisely, and manner, precisely, carved ideas like conformity, cleanliness, ways-right. They did not have to know the endless reverberations of chic, no, the kids could end up giving lollipops (shaped like a half-dollar) to their favorite Vietnam. "Hey, Hank, was this little girl burned by

Vietnam. Bring the boys home! End the war in Vietnam. Bring the boys home." There was a rollicking solidarity now on the bus, somewhere between young coal miners under arrest for a strike, and a high school team riding back from a successful game. In fact, the MPs had the look of substitutes on a high school football bench when the team is behind or the game is worrisome, they stood erectly at the highest pitch of attention—tweak them and they would have twanged like a bow—their chins jammed up under their upper jaws, jaws under their head, head in helmet, line of vision cut off six feet from the ground—that classic military attention which says: It don't matter how bad I am, when I stand like this, sir, I am being good.

"Hey, hey, LBJ! How many kids did you slay today?" shouted the prisoners in the bus to the MPs and waved their fingers in V for Victory. It felt like a victory, one hardly knew over what, perhaps over the lack of imagination (and so the secret consternation) of those young MPs, same age as so many of the prisoners, but utterly uncomprehending of why anyone their age would wish for this purpose to get arrested.

They sang much of the way. Shouting their slogans to high school adolescents at the few intersections where they stopped for traffic lights in the small suburban shopping streets on their route, the kids looking surprisingly like high school kids in Hollywood and TV, the long pants, sweaters, sneakers; the girls in variations on middle blouses and mini-skirts, saddle shoes. A part of him had always tried to believe that the America he saw in family television dramas did not exist, had no power—as of course he knew it did—to direct the styles and the manners and therefore the ideas of America (for in a country where everyone lived so close to their senses, then style, precisely, and manner, precisely, carved ideas into the senses) ideas like conformity, cleanliness, America-is-always-right. They did not have to know too much about the endless reverberations of chic, no, clean American kids could end up giving lollipops (shaped like Grandma's half-dollar) to their favorite Vietnamese cripple—"Hey, Hank, was this little girl burned by VC or us?"

Now the kids on the street looked at them with blank faces. They had no idea of what the V for Victory sign meant, nor even the slogans, "Hey, hey LBJ." There was that dim look which must come toward teachers from the bigger boys in the rear row—by the use of cajolery and some sizable intimidation, not to mention soul-suffocating uses of repetition, yes, a passing grade of seventy lurks in those dim eyes. So these high school kids watching them pass had that same dim look. "Yes, Sally, yes, there's something I heard was going on at the Pentagon." No, if their bus made all the noise of a high school bus after winning a game, the game had taken place on Mars, Mars where all the bright kids went. Which is maybe why they made so much noise now. Because they had never traveled on a high school victory bus.

It offered its wry perspective. All the dull kids, too stupid to study, ovulating turgid fantasies in the back row, all liveliness sunk in premature sapience of burgeoning young meats, and up front, the bright middle-class children, little intellectual drills, their mental voracity driving them to further, better, higher critiques of the public material before them until—Vietnam! Would America have to end by taking all its bright children and packing them off in buses to the Muzak Run? (For they might offer music in the gas chambers in the new totalitarianism.) He still could not believe such a day would come, but it was sometimes harder to keep this faith intact at night. Recall him to: "That long dark night of the soul when it is always three o'clock in the morning."

Ah, yes, thought Mailer, as the shopping street flickered past the bus window at a rate not faster than a good horse's trot, yes, bless Fitzgerald for his clear line—and why that long dark night, yes, why, when all was said? and Wolfe dead too early and Hemingway a suicide—how much guilt lay on the back of a good writer—it grew worse and worse. As the power of communication grew larger, so the responsibility to educate a nation lapped at the feet, new tide of a new responsibility, and one had become a writer after all to find a warm place where one was safe—responsibility was for the pompous, and the public servants; writers were born to discover wine. It

was an old argument and he was written a good essay once about American novelist to write a masterpiece out past the best-seller lists American audience brainwashed by *Time*. Yes, how much of Fitzgerald have come from that fine winning fine hair of his nose that the two not coming together, and when the history might be lost in the divide night if you had the illusion of about it, and the conviction that done. Or was it simply impossible of America drifted irretrievably these unhappy and somewhat fruitless enjoyed the ride through light on these streets in Virginia state with so sweet a name?) ed choly which was not without its remarkably disembodied from a had a hint of the emotion; doubt religious sentiments arrive thus much meat on their bones as him.

So it went. Lots of song, all that won't go." "Bring the troops home LBJ." He yelled with the rest. The being driven—you could join this fine young clergyman from Y

Then his thoughts began to flow long broad slow river on thought. had it. Delight. He had made the between Egyptian architecture and Egyptian forms, slab-like, excremental caverns, had come from the mud the medium out of which the Egyptianization, abstract ubiquitous mud only by abstract ubiquitous money of Norman O. Brown). And he moved from the existential sanctification abstract ubiquitous sanction of it had so much of the dollar bill on

was an old argument and he was worn with it—he had written a good essay once about the failure of any major American novelist to write a major novel which would reach out past the best-seller lists to a major part of that American audience brainwashed by Hollywood, TV, and *Time*. Yes, how much of Fitzgerald's long dark night may have come from that fine winnowing sense in the very fine hair of his nose that the two halves of America were not coming together, and when they failed to touch, all of history might be lost in the divide. Yes, there was a dark night if you had the illusion you could do something about it, and the conviction that not enough had been done. Or was it simply impossible—had the two worlds of America drifted irretrievably apart? Marooned on these unhappy and somewhat fruitless questions, he nonetheless enjoyed the ride through the late afternoon sunlight on these streets in Virginia (was there any other state with so sweet a name?) eddying through a melancholy which was not without its private flavor, for he felt remarkably disembodied from all proceedings—yes, he had a glint of the emotion; doubtless, he felt shriven. Did religious sentiments arrive thus often to men with as much meat on their bones as himself, wondered Mailer?

So it went. Lots of song, all the slogans. "Hell, no, we won't go." "Bring the troops home now." "Hey, hey, LBJ." He yelled with the rest. ~~That was the advantage of being shriven—you could join the Communist Sing. And this fine young clergyman from Yale for companion.~~

Then his thoughts began to meander again down a long broad slow river of thought. He turned a bend—he had it. Delight. He had made the grand connection between Egyptian architecture and the Pentagon. Yes. The Egyptian forms, slab-like, experimental thick walls, secret caverns, had come from the mud of the Nile, mud was the medium out of which the Egyptians built their civilization, abstract ubiquitous mud equaled in modern times only by abstract ubiquitous money, fifty lucas (title of Norman O. Brown). And American Civilization moved from the existential sanction of the frontier to the abstract ubiquitous sanction of the dollar bill. Nowhere had so much of the dollar bill collected as at the Penta-

"Want to hear our slogans?" asked Mailer.

"Oh, yes," said Fontaine.

"Let's sing them a song, boys," Mailer called out. He could not help it—the mountebank in him felt as if he were playing Winston Churchill. Ten minutes ago in the cell he had been mired in long slow thoughts of four wives—now he had a stage again and felt not unheroic. "Can it be," he wondered to himself, "that I have mispent twenty years as a novelist, and all along have been languishing as an actor?"

They started to sing "We Shall Overcome," but the bus driver, as if wishing to make the point that America was more totalitarian than ever, promptly turned off the lights, and they sang in darkness for the soundman. Then they shouted slogans. Finally, they took off, waving their fingers in V for Victory through the darkness. One last cry, "Hey, hey, LBJ. How many kids did you slay today?"

In a dark bus, through a dark night, they traveled. It was getting near to ten o'clock on Saturday night, the lights were out in many houses in the Virginia countryside. The drive took on pleasure as journeys at night in buses through unfamiliar country in America always take on pleasure, as if in all echo of Thomas Wolfe, it is the moment for which Americans live, the collective journey through the dark when strangers are brought close by the wind and the sound of the tires, the lights on the highway, the compass of the night. All the stale impatient resentful wastes of those hours they had spent in their cells were washed now in the night air which blew through the windows. A silence came over them—that restful silence of men traveling, that sense of security in their muscle and in their number, and in their patience, which he had not felt since old days in the Army moving in convoy along dark roads. He was almost glad he had not yet been released, for he would have missed this trip, and so have not been reminded that a night journey on a bus was one of the few times when everything ambitious, wild, overconceived, hopeless, garish, and suffocatingly technical in American life nonetheless came together long enough to give the citizens a little peace, for maybe it was

only when they were on the move that they feel anchored in their memories. Was it agreeable that these small hills moving like animals? Yes, it was on a journey of memories of the past (and the more so somewhere in the seat of their unconscious warmed the blood, warmed the heart, at best of that cold anxious center where much of the American fever, yes, tended did not have to rise to the mind, but (boudoir lights? harbor lights?) on the journey.

6: A NIGHT AT OCCOQUA

That night at Occoquan, Mailer had about the war in Vietnam before he fell to be the most comfortable slumber, for old stuffing and was not two inches dirty) and the springs on the cot had the bed curved like a hammock. He had a case and a thin dirty blanket for cover have kept a small animal warm, but it was the heat was turned high in the long where he slept with more than a hundred since the lights were on, and the air smoke, the condition was comparable to heated currents of the Smoking Car on a

It had not been a particularly eventful they arrived. It had of course not been since nearly everything is interesting about the first few hours (although such interest scrutiny a patient will give a hospital w

Why are We in Vietnam

Second Step to be read

Why are We in Vietnam

WHY ARE WE IN VIETNAM?

sharp and clean, a little park of grass. They're up high on gray domes looking across to other gray domes, and rising further until even the fold of the canyon is dry of moss, and the packhorses are hawking their breath, and Big Luke finally picks on a shielded-in kind of square saddle between some hunched-up bare knolls, Big Luke calls it a basin, near to a black-ass basin by the time they get there, and put up the tents, Ollie makes the fire, et cetera, roast beef hash with dehydrated pears, good by God! on a white gasoline cookstove. D.J. and Tex exhausted by the dialectic of the night before fall out into dead-ass air mattress sleep with the smell of the North on a September night, a tricky clean smell, like a fine nerve washed in alcohol and lightly powdered to get the rut of flesh off.

Next morning, on a light windless dawn, Tex and D.J. get out of bed, start to brush their teeth in a rill of a stream coming up out of a mountain spring, that water presenting itself to the teeth like sunlight on snow, and Tex saw, just then, a wolf standing and pointing a half mile above the timber, just standing there and studying the dawn in a wolf silence like he had come to some conclusion about the problems of life and occupation, near-relatives, in-laws, phratries, associates, herbs, roots, and grubs. Tex took him down with a shot into the gut and at first he could have been there dead, the animal fell and for an instant the hills clapped together. Down at timberline trees shifted, air moved in the wave which follows a breaking of glass,

CHAP FOUR

and then the wolf was up and running, but with a sick ass lunge like a broken fly, and then slowed, stood still, bore off at a bleeding ass walk back to the woods, and Tex run after him and got him at two hundred yards; one miss, one hit into the back of the shoulder and the lungs. The look on Big Luke's face was amiable like any boy who could hit a wolf at four hundred yards was not totally undeserving of guided service. Well, he got down and gave us each a cup of blood to drink and that was a taste of fish, odd enough, and salt, near to oyster sauce and then the taste of wild meat like an eye looking at you in the center of a midnight fire, and D.J. was on with the blood, he was half-sick having watched what Tex had done, like his own girl had been fucked in front of him and better, since he had had private plans to show Tex what real shooting might be, and here was Tex, King Front Sight Indian Hunter, Killer of Wolves. D.J. next thing was on his hands and knees, looking into that upper Yukon wolf mouth, those big teeth curved like tusk, and put his nose up close to that mouth, and thought he was looking up the belly of a whale, D.J. was breathing wolf breath, the just dead air from the dead interior, but raucous breath, all the fatigue of the wolf running broken ass to the woods and the life running the other way from him, a crazy breath, wild ass odor, something rotten from the bottom of the barrel like the stink of that which is unloved, whelp shit smell, wild as wild garlic, bad, but going all the way right back into the

WHY ARE WE IN VIETNAM?

guts of things, you could smell the anger in that wolf's heart (fucked again! I'll kill them!) burnt electric wire kind of anger like he'd lived to rip one piece of flesh from another piece, and was going to miss it now, going to miss going deep into that feeling of *release* when the flesh pulls loose from the flesh, and there D.J. was sweating, cause he was ready to get down and wrestle with the wolf, and get his teeth to its throat, his teeth had a glinty little ache where they could think to feel the cord of the jugular, it was all that blood he'd drunk, it was a black shit fuel, D.J. was up tight with the essential animal insanity of things.

That, friends, was the beginning of the hunt. Not so bad. Big Ollie came up, asked Tex if he wanted the wolf for a trophy. Tex gave a blow of breath to his front sight. That's all the tension he was going to show. "I don't want no wolf for a trophy," he said. Ollie then studied the animal, nodded, suddenly dipped his finger in the blood, sucked it with a quick-popping sound of his cheek like a cook testing a cake batter, then took out a knife and cut the wolf's head off, one twisting cut of the knife for the vertebra at the neck, one long sawing swinging cut for the rest. Then he gave the head to the boys for a look. There were two eyes open on El Lobo, both yellow coals of light, but one eye was Signor Lupo, the crazy magician in the wolf, and his eye had the pain of the madman who knows there's a better world but he is excluded, and then the other eye, Willie Wolf, like a fox's eye, full of sunlight and

Our Man at Harvard - 9 minutes

	<u>Time of idios</u>	
	long	short
①	9	9
②	5	2½
③	11	6
④	3	3
⑤	4	3
	10	10

Two lectures to the society.
 the miraculous
 and the political
 - after all I am
 a Jew among Jews.
 P.

Questions

Questions

O/ a Fur on the Moon

?

O/ a Fur on the Moon

~~The host of all came packaged~~ 3

in cellophane

Working on afterthought of flight of Diode 11

He broke up with his wife on Labor Day night and knew they would not be together for many a month, many a year, maybe forever. In the morning, after a night of no sleep, he was on a plane to Houston and the sifting of haystacks of technological fact for the gleam of a needle or a clue. ~~And no computer named HAY~~
~~STAO to serve as horse.~~

iv

It was a long September. He went back and forth between Houston and the mournful memories of the land of the Pilgrims and the cod. ~~Prose~~ was away, and traveling. In the mend of Indian summer with the crowds gone and the rose-hip bushes in bloom on the dunes, ~~their flowers artful as violet in a pearl~~, he bought a Land Rover for consolation and took long rides through lands of sand back of town, a corner of Sahara. In the bay, the flats at low tide heard the singing of the clams — ~~dreams of glory~~ at the majesty of oceans emerged in a sigh, a whistle, one could not quite hear the buried song of the clam. And the light dazzled across mirrors of inch-deep water and luminosities of glistening sand — he could almost have packed the literary equipment in for one good year of oil and gesso ground.

There were contracts however. Prose was never so much prose as when constructed with obligation. The more he visited Houston, the more he knew with what unhappiness is not automatic to tell that he might have blundered in accepting the hardest story of them all, for it was a sex-stripped mystery of machines which might have a mind, and mysterious men who managed to live like machines, and more than once in airplanes, high enough above the clouds to give a hint of other worlds in the gatherings and demarcations of airy attenuated farewell, he came to think again, as he had brooded again and again, on that simple conception of God

as an embattled vision which had terrified him from the hour he first encountered the thought around one of the bends of marijuana fifteen years ago. Every other one of his notions had followed from that, for if God were a vision of existence at war with other visions in the universe, and we were the instruments of His endeavor just so much as the conflicting cells of our body were the imperfect instrument of our own will, then what now was the condition of God? Was He trapped in the wound of nature, severed from our existence as completely as the once exquisite balances of the shattered ecology? had that vision He wished to carry across the universe depended altogether upon human mind and flesh in sensuous communication with nature? had radio-by-machine been the cancer of communication? had the savage lived in a set of communions with the invisible messages of nature which we had pulverized with our amplifiers? These days Aquarius carried Frazer's *Golden Bough* on long trips by plane.

Bechuana warriors wear the hair of a hornless ox among their own hair because the ox, having no horns, is hard to catch . . . a South African warrior who twists tufts of rat hair among his own curly black locks will have just as many chances of avoiding the enemy's spear as the nimble rat has of avoiding things thrown at it . . . When you are playing the one-stringed lute, and your fingers are stiff, the thing to do is catch some long-legged field spiders and roast them, and then rub your fingers with the ashes; that will make your fingers as lithe and nimble as the spiders' legs — at least so think the Galalereese. ~~To bring back a runaway slave an Arab will trace a magic circle on the ground, stick a nail in the middle of it and attach a beetle by a thread to the nail, taking care that the sex of the beetle is that of the fugitive. As the beetle crawls round and round, it will coil the thread about the nail, thus shortening its tether and drawing nearer to the center at every circuit. So by virtue of homeopathic magic the runaway slave will be drawn back to his master.~~

It was the magic of married spiders' legs to of the rat to the sensor spiraled-in will of in the loss of any will-to-nonsensical, it was not real exchange between mals and men, had liv first hours of history? gone out to voyage an carried up by the artv resonance of all psych and the machine had s the Vision to the univer

What if God wrestle with the Devil, who w baleful stars beyond t losing cruelly here, and crude as the counts of a premise, one would nature with every elect had forced the Lord in come back with His life juana, a drug which m severe price was not yet ing death of man in n relinquish some part c machine, and half of m: Lord was allowing Him swine of His children w and night on drugs wer of the dead, little journe death, and thus giving l drugs was, yes, consu

It was the magic of savage metaphor, the science of symbol, it married spiders' legs to the music of the fingers and the useful frenzy of the rat to the sensors in his hair. ~~It made a wedding between the spirated in will of insects forced to focus on a point of tether and the loss of any will to escape in the slave.~~ It was pretty, poetic and nonsensical, it was nonsensical. Unless it were not. What if some real exchange between insects, trees, crops, and grains, between animals and men, had lived with real if most distorted power in the first hours of history? What if that Vision of the Lord which had gone out to voyage among the stars had obtained the power to be carried up by the artwork of a bounteous earth exquisite in the resonance of all psyches in its field? — what if radio, technology, and the machine had smashed the most noble means of presenting the Vision to the universe?

What if God wrestled for the soul of man in some greased arena with the Devil, ~~who was now fortified by every emanation from baleful stars beyond the sun — could that be so?~~ What if God, losing cruelly here, and yet gaining there, was in a combat just so crude as the counts of point in a contest. What if, for the sake of a premise, one would assume that the Devil was reconstructing nature with every electronic, plastic, surgery and computer and so had forced the Lord in desperation to descend into the earth and come back with His life in the grass of that most mysterious marijuana, a drug which made one aware of life in the veins at what severe price was not yet known? What if God, aghast at the oncoming death of man in man-deviled pollution, was finally ready to relinquish some part of the Vision, and substitute a vision half machine, and half of man, rather than lose all? What indeed if the Lord was allowing Himself to be consumed so that the angels and swine of His children who swallowed Him promiscuously each day and night on drugs were able to embark on journeys into the land of the dead, little journeys in through the first gates of the palace of death, and thus giving Himself to the children in the milk of their drugs was, yes, consumed by them each night and thereby re-

linquished the largest dreams of His future. Such thoughts were an agony of pain if one held them truly, for responsibility was then like a burning of blood, and the time of apocalypse was certainly near. A war of the millennia might yet rest on the shoulders of the young. What an abattoir of brain-splattered substance if they consumed their smack and left the world dirtier than when they began.

Or was it the Devil who had insinuated marijuana into every pot and every garage? Or was the Devil being consumed as well by computers and transistors, by agents of far-off stars? There was also an hour when questions trampled upon questions to leave the ground of thought as much a mire as the gray greasy boot-trampled soil of the moon. Sometimes he even thought that pot and hash and LSD had opened the way to the moon, for they might have voided the spiritual belts of real protection. ~~Perhaps as the runaway slave came back to the master who kept the hounds on a string, so the~~ Dugged odysseys of inner space might have altered the zones of the outer. Again and again, staring out his airplane window he would say good-by to these thoughts and stare at clouds.

In the several trips to Houston, he was like a man looking for the smallest sign. For the moon book which he had begun that summer idled now in the gap of ~~Pascas~~ ^{his wife's} absence, and he did not know where to put his feet. One lifted a book like a boulder out of the mud of the mind, and his mind was a pit of wrenched habits and questions which slid like snakes. Where did you put your feet so that finally you might begin?

He found the answer at last in company with his favorite saying. "Trust the authority of your senses," Aquinas had said. He could repeat it again, for there was an object at last for his senses, there in the plastic vaults and warehouses of the Manned Spacecraft Center at Houston was a true object, a rock from the moon. Looking at it, answers came, answers strong enough to send him back to Provincetown for the fall and winter haul of his book, and a little of the spring. He finished in fact on a day when Apollo 13 was limping back to earth in wounded orbit with two fuel cells gone, its Lunar

Module Aquarius ne hour when he did no or be lost, but he ha it came on the day 1 moon, that rock wh would write his book the astronauts becau venture which might Lucifer who warred be here when men w many eons was that of this long summer space, for technology depth that voyages i discover the metaph choked the pores of to go out into space u us to regard the wor who knew that if the rather than measure.

Marvelous little mo

It was not so much after another, and up of exhibiting the rock to the Smithsonian — lar afternoon to obta had been in months l across its middle whe until Armstrong conf upstream, and there c today, but a small cas He saw the lunar pie hermetically tight gla still another hermetic

Module Aquarius never to reach the moon, yes, he finished in an hour when he did not know if the astronauts would return in safety or be lost, but he had written the ending in his mind long before; it came on the day he stood in quiet before that object from the moon, that rock which gave him certitude enough to know he would write his book and in some part applaud the feat and honor the astronauts because the expedition to the moon was finally a venture which might help to disclose the nature of the Lord and the Lucifer who warred for us; certainly, the hour of happiness would be here when men who spoke like Shakespeare rode the ships: how many eons was that away! Yes, he had come to believe by the end of this long summer that probably we had to explore into outer space, for technology had penetrated the modern mind to such a depth that voyages in space might have become the last way to discover the metaphysical pits of that world of technique which choked the pores of modern consciousness — yes, we might have to go out into space until the mystery of new discovery would force us to regard the world once again as poets, behold it as savages who knew that if the universe was a lock, its key was metaphor rather than measure.

Marvelous little moon rock: What the Devil did it say?

It was not so much. They led Aquarius through one back room after another, and up and down a stone stair or two. The week of exhibiting the rock at ~~NASA~~ ^{NASA in Houston} was over — it was now on its way to the Smithsonian — and special favors were needed this particular afternoon to obtain a peek. But he reached a place at last he had been in months before, the room with the plate-glass window across its middle where magazine writers had hounded Armstrong until Armstrong confessed that man explored out as salmon swim upstream, and there on the other side of the glass was no astronaut today, but a small case vacuum-tight on the other side of the divide. He saw the lunar piece through not one glass but two, rock in a hermetically tight glass bell on the other side of another glass with still another hermetic seal. Yet she was not two feet away from

him, this rock to which he instinctively gave gender as she — and *she* was gray, gray as everyone had said, gray as a dark cinder and not three inches across nor two inches high nor two inches for width, just a gray rock with craters the size of a pin and craters the size of a pencil point, and even craters large as a ladybug and rays ran out from the craters, fine white lines, fine as the wrinkles in an old lady's face, and maybe it was the pain of all these months of a marriage ending and a world in suffocation and a society in collapse, maybe it was just the constant sore in his heart as the blood pumped through to be cleared of love, but he liked the moon rock, and thought — his vanity finally unquenchable — that she liked him. Yes. Was she very old, three billion years or more? Yet she was young, she had just been transported here, and there was something young about her, tender as the smell of the cleanest hay, it was like the subtle lift of love which comes up from the cradle of the newborn, and he wondered if her craters were the scars of a war which had once allowed the earth to come together in the gathered shatterings of a mighty moon — there was something familiar as the ages of the bone in the sweet and modest presence of this moon rock, modest as a newborn calf, and so he had his sign, sentimental beyond measure, his poor dull senses had something they could trust, even if he and the moon were nothing but devils in new cahoots, and child of the century, ~~Nijinsky of ambivalence~~, hanging man Aquarius, four times married and lost, moved out of MSC with the memory of the moon, new mistress, two feet below his nose, ~~and knew he would live with the thought of a visit.~~ All worship the new science of smell! It was bound to work its way through two panes of glass before three and a half billion more years were lost and gone.

[Harlot's Ghost]

6:29-30

6:36:30

Randy Guff
& the Geer can

7 minutes

INTRO needs

"Then he'll end up running a small war somewhere," Cal replied.

I was interrupted from thinking of this conversation when Dix remarked, "What's on your mind tonight?" I was not about to confess it was the assignment to unmask KU/CLOAKROOM. I merely smiled and looked around the Balhaus Resi. What a polyglot of human resources! I had never seen so many people with odd faces. Of course, to be a Berliner was not unequal to having one's features set at a slant—the collective physiognomy was reminiscent of the sharp edges on a cabinetmaker's tools (not to speak of the entrepreneurial glint you could find in the dullest eye). The band at one end of the dance floor had the mien of musicians who have played through the burning of the Reichstag, the death of von Hindenburg, the rise and fall of Adolf Hitler, the Allied bombardments, the Occupation, the Berlin Airlift, and they had never had to change expression. They were musicians. In ten minutes the set would be over and they could smoke or go to the bathroom—that was more meaningful than history. Now, having played their way through such American hits as "Doggie in the Window," "Mister Sandman," and "Rock Around the Clock," which last succeeded in chasing even the most libidinous of the bourgeoisie off the floor—I was thinking that only prosperous Germans with stiff collars could bring to vice the dignity of a serious pursuit—the band moved on to an oompah waltz with a tuba. That, in turn, swept all the wildly dressed young criminal element back to their tables, plus all the younger women with pink and purple wigs.

The telephone rang at our table. An American girl across the room wanted to talk to Dix. She had dialed his number on the assumption that he was German. "Hello, honey," he said. "You got it wrong. I'm an American, but that's all right. We can still fuck."

"I'm coming over. I want to learn what kind of yo-yo talks like you."

She was big and fair, with large features and a rangy body. By any gross measure of animal husbandry—were the shades of Nazi nightlife dictating my thoughts?—she would have made an appropriate mate for him. Her name was Susan, Susan Blaylock Pierce, and she had gone to Wellesley and was working in the

American Consulate. ~~In addition to the beer-import enterprise,~~ Dix had cover from State, but when he chose to speak of working there, Susan Pierce needed no more than five minutes to poke through his qualifications. "Well, Randy Huff, or whatever your name is, I will tell you, somebody over at the Consulate must be sick and tired by now of looking at your empty desk."

"I'm just a field hand, ma'am," he said. I could see she was his choice for tonight. She had a horsey laugh and argued doggedly about the merits of English saddle over Western. "Who wants to look at some big slob slumped over a horse?" she said.

"Some people need an animal for work, instead of to show off their ass, lady."

"You," she said, "should have been a little ogre with warts."

He loved that. Marks of status rang in his mind like a cash register. I heard the bell sound for Wellesley, and for Susan Blaylock Pierce.

He surprised me by his next gambit. "Would you care to hear a long story about me?" he asked.

"No."

"Lady, cut some slack. This story is special."

"All right, but not too long," she said.

"At the age of fifteen," Dix declared, "I was in excellent shape. I lied about my age to get into the Golden Gloves in Houston, and I won my weight division. Sub-novice. I hardly drank. I ran six miles a day. I could do one-arm chin-ups, one-arm push-ups. Susan, name me a feat, I could perform it. I could have run for president of my sophomore class in high school if I wasn't from the wrong end of everything you ever saw. But I was happy. I was going with a blond girl who had blue eyes and fifteen-year-old plump little turn-up tits." When Susan Pierce showed her annoyance, he said, "Don't be offended. They were innocent, those tits. Weren't even all sure what they were there for. I loved that girl, Cora Lee, and she loved me. It was beautiful." He took a sip of his drink.

"One night I broke training to take Cora Lee to our big dance hall, Laney's, to show her off. She had to be the prettiest girl there. Laney's was always jammed with the best riffraff.

started running." Full pause. "I started running and I haven't stopped since."

Susan Pierce laughed as if something very far within had just caught on fire. "Oh, golly," she said, "oh, golly." Then she kissed his cheek. "You're cute. You're such a fool, but, do you know, you're cute." Proprietary lust for him appeared in her face.

After a few minutes, it was obvious there was nothing more for me to do than say good-night. On my way to bed I could find no explanation why his story had appealed so greatly to her. It impressed me, however, that he had told the same story once to a group of 'us at the Farm, and it had had a totally different ending. He had hardly run away. He had stayed in and taken the beating of his life against that huge old boy, but afterward he had made love to Cora Lee for all of July and August.

I was depressed. I had had dates with girls like Susan Pierce all through college and we would drink beers together. Nothing much more. Now he was going to seduce her in one night. Was it Berlin? I did not believe girls like Susan would make love that quickly back in America. On such thoughts, I fell asleep.

Funky place. You could no sooner leave your girl alone than put a piece of meat on a plate and ask somebody else's dog not to look at it. But I didn't mind if I had a fight, and I sure wanted a beer. I hadn't had a drink in a month. Training. So I was thirsty. I placed Cora Lee on a bench and said, 'Honey, don't let any man sit down next to you. If they want to give trouble, tell them to watch out for Randy Huff.' Then I left her and went to the bar and bought two cans of beer. Since I had my own church key, I told the bartender not to open them. I brought those cans back ice-cold. Hard as rocks. I was saving them until I could sit next to her, and feel her sweet little thigh nuzzling mine when the first sip of beer went down.

"What did I see instead? A fellow with his arm around her. Cora Lee was looking at me in pure panic.

"He was huge. I was big, but this old boy was huge. He had a face you could put up against the bumper of a flat-bed truck and the face alone could push the truck uphill." Susan began to chuckle. "I was not demoralized, you understand. I was boss of my own equipment, thank you. So I said, 'Fellow, I don't know if you are aware of this or not, but that happens to be *your* arm on *my* girl.'

"Well," he said, 'what are *you* planning to do about it?'

"I smiled. I gave a dumb country-boy grin like I had nothing to do but get lost. Then I hit him in the face with the bottom end of the full beer can, him sitting down, me standing up. I hit him with the right arm that did those one-arm push-ups. The end of the beer can indented a circle from the top of his nostrils to the middle of his forehead. It broke his nose and laid vertical cuts over both eyebrows. He looked like a cross between a bat and a hog."

We were silent before this memory recollected in tranquility.

"How do you think the fellow responded?" Butler asked.

"How?" asked Susan.

"He sat there. He didn't blink particularly, and he didn't move. He just smiled. Then he said, 'You want to play? Let's play.' What do you think I said?"

"I don't know," she said. "Tell me."

"I said, 'Fellow, you can have her. You can have her.' I

Oswald's Tale ?

last part ?

Oswald & the Two Warden

6 min.

Politics - 20 min.

Oswald's Tale

away. We need only compare his performance in New Orleans on the radio with Stuckey to the incapacities demonstrated by his worst dyslexia two weeks later—or, for that matter, his hysteria before the KGB in Mexico to his calm during interrogation by Captain Fritz in Dallas at police headquarters.

So, the real question is not whether Oswald had the skills to bring off the deed but whether he had the soul of a killer. Yet, the formulation is too simple. It could be said that everybody alive is, potentially, under sufficient stress, a murderer, a suicide, or capable of both. Phrased more closely, the question becomes: Would Oswald, pushed to such an extreme, have the soul of a killer?

We know a great deal about Oswald by now. Assuming that the facts chosen by the author have been salient—a sizable assumption when dealing with Lee Harvey—it is still difficult not to believe that he pulled the trigger. For one thing, it violates our understanding of Oswald that he would allow his Mannlicher-Carcano to be fired by another man on the sixth floor while he lingers in the lunchroom four landings below. To what end? What purpose would that serve for him? If he has allowed his rifle to be used in such fashion by others, he is still deeply implicated. Yet the conspiracy allows him to amount to no more than a cog in the machine. That could hardly be enough for the man who has been depicted over the length of this book. If one misperceives his character on this point, then one has misunderstood him entirely.⁵

If one's personal inclinations would find Oswald innocent, or at least part of a conspiracy, one's gloomy verdict, nonetheless, is that Lee had the character to kill Kennedy, and that he probably did it alone. This conclusion now stated, one must rush to add that a good lawyer in a trial venue outside of Dallas might well have gotten him off—ridicule of the magic bullet would have drilled many a hole through the body of evidence amassed by the prosecution. Besides, no one can be certain that our protagonist was not only the killer but was alone. The odds in favor of one's personal conclusion can be no better than, let us say, 3 out of 4 that he is definitively guilty and the sole actor in the assassination. Too much is still unknown about CIA and FBI involvement with Oswald to offer any greater conviction. There are, for example, other possibilities to be remarked upon. While one is certainly not going to enter the near-impenetrable controversy in acoustics that would prove or disprove whether a fourth shot was fired from the

grassy knoll—delineation of character, not exposition of sound-wave charts, is the aim of this work!—one would not be surprised that if there was indeed another shot, it was not necessarily fired by a conspirator of Oswald's. Such a gun could have belonged to another lone killer or to a conspirator working for some other group altogether. When the kings and political leaders of great nations appear in public on charged occasions, we can even anticipate a special property of the cosmos—coincidences accumulate: All variety of happenings race toward the core of the event. It is not inconceivable that two gunmen with wholly separate purposes both fired in the same few lacerated seconds of time.

All the same, none of that conflicts with the premise that Oswald—so far as he knew—was a lone gunman. Every insight we have gained of him suggests the solitary nature of his act. Besides, it is too difficult, no matter how one searches for a viable scenario, to believe that others could have chosen him to be the rifleman in a conspiracy. Other amateurs, conceivably. But not professionals. Who would trust him to hit the target? Any concerted plan that placed Oswald in the gunner's seat would have had to have been built on the calculation that he would miss. That, indeed, was the thesis of the CIA men in Don DeLillo's fine novel *Libra*. Indeed, it is not wholly implausible: Great damage will be done to your political enemies if the deed you designed appears to be their conspiracy. Still! It is even more difficult to organize the aftermath of a planned failure than to do the deed and escape.

We have come then, to the last set of questions: Why did Oswald choose Kennedy?

Every account of his sentiments by every witness who recalls his occasional remarks about Jack Kennedy agrees—that rarest of phenomena for evidence—agreement! There is whole consensus that he saw JFK as, relatively speaking, a good President, and he liked him. Or so he professed. Given Oswald's reflexive impulse to lie at the drop of a hat, one could question whether he was not paying lip service precisely to conceal any hint, especially to Marina, that he had such a project of assassination already in his mind. Given the absence, however, of any opportunity in Dallas or New Orleans to be close enough to the throne to commit such an act until the last couple of weeks in November, the more reasonable assumption is that he probably did like Kennedy as much as he could approve of a conventional politician but that, finally, his sentiments had very little to do with his act. He would not be

shooting at Kennedy because he liked him or disliked him—that would be irrelevant to the depth of his deed.

The focus has then shifted. Recognizing that one only argues this point in the likelihood that Oswald is guilty rather than as a found conclusion, what then happened to be the real intent of his deed?

4

Character

The answer speaks out of our understanding of him: It was the largest opportunity he had ever been offered.

The assassination of a President would be seismographic in its effect. For Americans, the aftershocks would not cease for the rest of the century or more. Yet he would also be punishing the Russians and the Cubans. They would suffer side effects for decades to come. But then, he was above capitalism and he was above Communism. Both! He had, as he would have seen it, a superior dedication, and the potential of a man like Lenin. If we know that he had none of Lenin's capacity to achieve large goals both philosophically and organizationally, Oswald did hold an equally intense belief in that fabulous end which would justify all his quotidian means. His deepest despair had to arise in those moments when he could not see himself any longer as the key protagonist in forging a new world.

Given his humiliation in Mexico and his lack of stature on weekends in Irving, the odds are that Oswald's political ideology had finally come to rest in the live nerve of nihilism—things had to get vastly worse before they could get better. We can refer ourselves back to that note he wrote on Holland-America Line stationery even as he may have been returning to America:

I wonder what would happen if someone would stand up and say he was utterly opposed not only to the governments, but to the people, to the entire land and complete foundation of his society.¹

All the motivation for shooting Kennedy is in that sentence. It may be worth quoting from *Mein Kampf* again:

Even then I saw that only a twofold road could lead to the goal of improving these conditions:

*The deepest sense of social responsibility for the creation of better foundations for our development coupled with brutal determination in breaking down incurable tumors. [Hitler's italics]*²

Kennedy had the ability to give hope to the American ethos. That was, therefore, cause enough to call upon "brutal determination in breaking down incurable tumors." Kennedy was not, as American Presidents went, a bad President; therefore, he was too good. In the profoundest sense, as Oswald saw it, he had located the tumor—it was that Kennedy was too good. The world was in crisis and the social need was to create conditions for recognizing that there had to be a new kind of society. Otherwise, the malignant effects of capitalism, added to the Soviet degradation of Communism, were going to reduce people to the point where they lost all will to create a better world.

An explosion at the heart of the American establishment's complacency would be exactly the shock therapy needed to awaken the world.

It is doubtful that Oswald wanted to debate such a question with himself. He may well have possessed an instinct that told him he had to do something enormous and do it quickly, do it for his own physical well-being. The murderer kills in order to cure himself—which is why murder is properly repudiated. It is the most selfish of acts.

McMillan: . . . the uncanny selection of a route that would carry the President right under his window could mean only one thing. Fate had singled him out to do the dangerous but necessary task which had been his destiny all along and which would cause him to go down in history.³

Back in March, living on Neely Street, he had said in a letter to Robert Oswald, "It's always better to take advantage of your chances as they come along."⁴

Which may have been Oswald's way of saying that the intent of the universe is ready to reveal itself to us by the chances we are offered. Since the President would pass beneath his Book Deposi-

tory windows, he did not have the right to violate such a monumental opportunity. Could there be another person in the universe who had been more uniquely designed to take advantage of such a situation, "vouchsafed to *him*," writes McMillan,

to deal capitalism that final, mortal blow[?] And he would strike it not at the right nor at the left, but, quite simply, at the top. It had become his fate to decapitate the American political process. *He* was history's chosen instrument.⁵

The point absent here from Priscilla Johnson McMillan's interpretation is that after the assassination, Oswald had a choice. He might not only be the instrument but the leading man. That presented a new conflict—to be the instrument of history *or* the leading man? The latter could occur only if he was captured and stood trial. If he succeeded in the act but managed to remain undiscovered, obscurity would be his lot again. He had learned as much from his attempt on Walker.

Capture, however, would guarantee him a very high level of attention. And if he was convicted, he had the temperament to live alone in a cell; he was more than half habituated to that already. He could even view his life up to this point as a preparation for spending many years in prison.

Indeed, it may even have been the thought of his trial that fired him on. What a podium! Such a trial could alter history, stimulate the stupid, rouse the lethargic, confound the powerful. So he had to feel divided between his desire to escape and his recognition that capture, trial, and incarceration might generate a vastly larger destiny.

His personal attitude toward Kennedy had little to do, therefore, with his act. In war, one may execute a man for whom one feels respect or even personal affection; Oswald saw it as an execution. One mighty leader was going to be dispatched by another high and mighty personage—of the future. The future would preempt the present.

If he failed to escape, well, he could tell his story. He could becloud the issue and possibly be acquitted, and if it came to twenty years of prison, he would be able to forge his political agenda—even as Hitler, Stalin, and Lenin had done. Should he face capital punishment, then, at the least, he would be immortal. He would take care of that at his trial. He would expound his ideas.

What he may never have taken into account is that the furies he set loose would devour him before he could utter one idea. The first element in the loss of an heroic trial became the four shots he fired into Tippit. There can be little doubt that he panicked. As soon as he killed Tippit, the mighty architecture of his ideology, hundreds of levels high and built with no more than the game cards of his political imagination, came tumbling down. He knew Americans well enough to recognize that some might listen to his ideas if he killed a President, but nearly all would be repelled by any gunman who would mow down a cop, a family man—that act was small enough to void interest in every large idea he wished to introduce. By killing Tippit he had wrecked his grand plan to be one of the oracles of history. Now he had to improvise a defense: I'm a patsy.

It may never have occurred to Oswald that the obfuscation and paranoia which followed the assassination of Kennedy would contribute immensely to the sludge and smog of the world's spirit.

Oswald may never have read Emerson, but the following passage from "Heroism" gives us luminous insight into what had to be Oswald's opinion of himself as he sat on the sixth floor waiting for the Kennedy motorcade—he was committing himself to the most heroic deed of which he was capable.

Self-trust is the essence of heroism. It is the state of the soul at war, and its ultimate objects are the last defiance of falsehood and wrong, and the power to bear all that can be inflicted by evil agents. [Heroism is] scornful of petty calculations and scornful of being scorned. It persists; it is of an undaunted boldness and of a fortitude not to be wearied out. Its jest is the littleness of common life. [Heroism] works in contradiction to the voice of mankind and in contradiction, for a time, to the voice of the great and good. Heroism is obedience to a secret impulse of an individual's character. Now to no other man can wisdom appear as it does to him, for every man must be supposed to see a little farther on his own proper path than anyone else [so] every heroic act measures itself by its contempt of some external good . . .⁶

It would have wounded Oswald to the quick if he had known that history would not see him as a hero but as an anti-hero. He went off to work that last morning, leaving the dregs of instant cof-

fee in a plastic cup, and in two days he ascended to the summit of our national obsessions—he became our First Ghost.

Oswald owned all the properties that belong to a ghost—ambition, deceit, a sense of mission, and the untold frustration of an abrupt death just as a long-held dream of personal prominence is about to unfold. Can there be any American of our century who, having failed to gain stature while he was alive, now haunts us more?

Let us give a word to Lee's brother John, whom he saw so seldom:

MR. PIC. Well, sir, ever since I was born and I was old enough to remember, I always had a feeling that some great tragedy was going to strike Lee in some way or another . . . In fact, on the very day of the assassination I was thinking about it when I was getting ready to go to work . . . and I figured well, when he defected and came back—that was his big tragedy. I found out it wasn't.⁷

5

The Widow's Elegy

First, Jacqueline Kennedy was a widow, and then Marina. As the second widow, she can no longer know what it is she knows. She has passed through thirty years of interviews, more than a thousand hours of interviews, and the questions never cease. She may be the last living smoker to consume four packs a day. How can it be otherwise? The past is filled with guilt—the future is full of dread. Only the present is clear; she always suspects the motives of the new people to whom she speaks. How innocent can be their motive for approaching? These days she feels that the walls are coming closer. If she starts thinking about what has happened to her, not with pity, she will say, or sorrow for herself, but just hop-

ing to lessen stress, she feels she is choking. She still thinks of the night Lee sat in the dark on their porch in New Orleans and he was weeping. It was such a heavy burden for him. Something, and she does not know what it was.

It is hard for her to remember details. After her Warren Commission testimony, everybody accused her of lying, but she was just a human being and if she was lying, it was honestly—because she was floating through a foggy world. Memories kept coming, going. Maybe it was some self-protective mechanism. To keep her psyche from collapsing. People were saying to her, "You're so strong"—but it was not heroic effort. "It is in every one of us—you just decide not to die, that's all. You dare not to die."

Now that she is fifty-two, Marina would agree that one doesn't need to approach her with such labels as good woman, bad woman, villainess, heroine, someone-who's-been-treated-unfairly, someone-treated-too-well. "You can be all of that in one person," said Marina. "One can be a villain, and next time a hero."

"If we go through Lee's character, I myself would like to find out: Who is he? Was he really that mean of a person?—which I think he was—but it's a hard road for me to take because I do not want to understand him. I have to tell you in advance that, as far as Lee is concerned—I don't like him. I'm mad at him. Very mad at him, yes. When a person dies, people have such anger. They loved their husband or wife for a long time so they say, 'How dare you die on me?' Okay, but that's not my reason. For me, it's, 'How dare you abandon me? In circumstances like that? I mean, *you* die but I'm still here licking my wounds.'

"All the same, I'm definitely sure he didn't do it, even if I'm still mad at him. Because he shouldn't involve a wife and family if he was playing those kinds of games. Yes, I do believe he was on a mission, maybe even when he went to Russia, but first I have to figure out what he was doing here. It wasn't just happening here all of a sudden in America. It was a continuation. In my mind, I'm not trying to convince you or the American public—I have to resolve it for myself. But I think he was sent over to Russia, maybe. I think so. I have no proof. I have nothing. I do think he was more human than has been portrayed. I'm not trying to make an angel out of him, but I was interested in him because he was different, he would broaden my horizon, and all the other men I wanted had been taken or didn't want me."

Every time she watches a film and sees an actor playing Lee, the actor is nothing like him. He turns his head like Lee or waves his hair the same way, but, she says, your American public knows Lee only from a few photographs, and that is what this actor is copying. She sees another Lee, and she does not know the psyche of that fellow. She still has it to discover.

Her interviewers asked how she would have felt if a truck had hit Alik in Minsk—if she had been his widow then, would she have thought of him fondly? She said yes. She would have thought it was just a stormy beginning but they were breaking ground that they would later stand on in their marriage. After all, she took a chance. She had crossed the ocean for him. Of course, she was afraid of him already, even if little by little she had been learning that she did not know, never knew, where she stood. Not with him. But at least you could hope.

She will never forget that on their last night in Irving, he had kept making advances to her until he went to bed, and she had refused. She had said to herself, "No, if I don't teach him this lesson right now, this lying will continue. O. H. Lee will continue. Don't butter up to me." She tried to discipline him.

Afterward, she had to think, What if he really wanted to be close to me? What if I put him in a bad mood? It torments her. What if they had made love that last night? But she is the wrong person to talk to about this, she would say, because she is not a sexual person. Sensuous but not sensual. She didn't like sex, she would say. She was not expert, nor could she tell you how grandiose something had been, because she had never experienced that. No Beethoven or Tchaikovsky for her, not in bed, no grand finale.

MARINA: In Texas, sun is very intense for me and very harsh, very bright. I love moon. It's cool and it's shiny and that's my melancholy period. And some people are shining and they are bright and they burn. You know what I mean? I'm not sun. I'm a moon . . .

I look at America, it's all wonderful. But you go to the damn grocery store and it's 200 varieties of cereal. And basically it's only oats, corn, how many things . . . Just so somebody going to make extra million off that. It's so unnecessary. If that's progress, if that's abundance, how stupid for us to want it. 300 bags of poison, maybe only two or three good [well,] that kind of progress I don't

think we should strive for . . . Do I make any sense to you? Or I'm just complaining?

INTERVIEWER: No, I agree with you.

After the assassination, there were times when she was close to ending her life. She wondered when her breaking point would come. She had crossed that ocean for nothing. Still, she tried to survive. It was a lonely life. Every day. The worst of the pain was that maybe she loved him more by the end than in their beginning. Maybe grieving was just starting to happen now! Maybe! Because she had never really had such a process. Just numb, with pain always there.

She doesn't know whether they would have stayed married, but still, Lee was the person she would have liked to have been able to make it with. Through life. There was some goodness in him to hold on to, and on that last unexpected Thursday when he came to visit, he was kind of sheepish because of that big lie, O. H. Lee.

And when he came in, he said, "Hi," nice and everything, and she said, "What are you doing here?"—cold and rude.

Later, she couldn't understand. Maybe he didn't love her, maybe he cared less for her, but he loved his little girls enormously, and even thirty years later she heard a story about how in those last days, when he lived on North Beckley, he was playing with the grandchildren of the woman who ran his last rooming house. These children called him Mr. Lee. He asked one of those boys, "Are you a good boy?" and that kid shook his head in the negative, said, "Uh-unh," and Lee said, "Never be so bad that you hurt somebody." This kid was now grown-up, but he still remembered that, still told that story.

START

The morning when Lee left, Friday morning, November 22, 1963, she did not get up with him when he arose very early. She tried to, but he said, "Don't worry. Go back to sleep." And he left quietly.

She had gone to bed after him the night before. He was already asleep or pretended to be. Then, when she woke up in the middle of the night to check on baby Rachel, she took a look at him. The only illumination was by nightlight, very low. But Lee scared her. She touched him with her foot and he kicked it away. Then he lay so still that it was like he had died. He didn't move for the next hour. She said to herself, "Is he alive?" He looked so still. Abso-

lutely gone. She couldn't hear his breath. She had to bend over very close to feel his breathing—she thought he had died on her. Isn't that funny? For all these years she remembered saying, "Thank goodness he's alive." And he made no sound all night and never moved again.

In the morning, he made himself instant coffee, drank it in a plastic cup, and went off to work.

~~START~~

She sits in a chair, a tiny woman in her early fifties, her thin shoulders hunched forward in such pain of spirit under such a mass of guilt that one would comfort her as one would hug a child. What is left of what was once her beauty are her extraordinary eyes, blue as diamonds, and they blaze with light as if, in divine compensation for the dead weight of all that will not cease to haunt her, she has been granted a spark from the hour of an apocalypse others have not seen. Perhaps it is the light offered to victims who have suffered like the gods.

6

The Third Widow

MARGUERITE OSWALD. I don't believe this letter belongs with the letters. May I see it, please? Is that a letter from Russia? I don't think so from what I can see from here.

MR. RANKIN. It purports to be, Mrs. Oswald. I hand it to you. Is it Exhibit 198 you are speaking of?

MARGUERITE OSWALD. Yes. I'm sorry. There was another very important letter of this size that I thought maybe had become confused with the Russian letters. You will have to forgive me, Chief Justice Warren, but this is quite a big undertaking.¹

All day long, throughout her testimony, she has been fumbling through her file of letters, bringing forth "documents, gentlemen," that prove nothing but that she has had her share of lonely nights filled with intolerable scenarios of suspicion. Her letters prove of little use in the lawyerly air of the Warren Commission Hearings. She is wasting their time with trivia, and all the while her possession of these letters remains as important to her as tombstones. Who is moving the tombstones in the family graveyard?

The interlocutors grow testy:

REPRESENTATIVE BOGGS. Why did your son defect to Russia? ~

MARGUERITE OSWALD. I cannot answer that yes or no sir. I am going to go through the whole story or it is no good. And that is what I have been doing for this Commission all day long—giving a story.

REPRESENTATIVE BOGGS. Suppose you just make it very brief.

MARGUERITE OSWALD. I cannot make it brief. I will say I am unable to make it brief. This is my life and my son's life going down in history.²

Marguerite has taken sufficient blame, scorn, and ridicule from other people (including the barely concealed animus of the Warren Commission) that there is no need to depict her in one more unfavorable light—it seems certain at the least that every malformation, or just about, of Lee Harvey Oswald's character had its roots in her. That much granted, it is also difficult not to feel some guarded sympathy for Marguerite Claverie Oswald. As with Lee, the internal workings of her psyche were always condemned to hard labor, and so much of what she tried, and with the best intentions, would fail—especially her obvious desire to receive some love from her sons, enough love at least to match her harsh pride. It is not agreeable to see Marguerite's life through her eyes. The boys are always leaving her as quickly as they can, and their willful wives—willful as she sees them—have no belief in her desire to be a decent mother-in-law. Her sacrifices are many and real—but no love comes back. Merely banishment from her children, and icy silence. And then her favorite is accused of killing the President.

In her heart of hearts she has to wonder whether indeed he did it—she knows how far he can go.

Denigrators of Marguerite Oswald will remark on how much she loved the limelight after he was gone, and it is true: His love of attention was equaled by hers—she spoke to large audiences for the first time in her life, and it was a great step forward from that sales job in New York where she was fired because of intractable body odor.

Yet, for all her latter-day notoriety, we have to recall that she died alone and full of a literal cancer to follow upon the bottomless cancer of those endless wounds within personal wounds—no, she had her life, and one would not want it, but somewhere in the bureaucratic corridors of Karmic Reassignment she is probably arguing now with one of the monitors, dissatisfied with the low station, by her lights, of her next placement. “I gave birth to one of the most famous and important Americans who ever lived!” she will tell the clerk-angel who is recording her story.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any family here at all?

MARGUERITE: I have no family, period. I brought three children into the world, and I have sisters, I have nieces, I have nephews, I have grandchildren, and I’m all alone. That answers that question and I don’t want to hear another word about it.³

There she stands with her outrageous ego and her self-deceit, her bold loneliness and cold bones, those endless humiliations that burn like sores.

Yet, she is worthy of Dickens. Marguerite Oswald can stand for literary office with Micawber and Uriah Heep. No word she utters will be false to her character; her stamp will be on every phrase. Few people without a literary motive would seek her company for long, but a novelist can esteem Marguerite. She does all his work for him.

Given such modest thoughts, it is time to conclude one’s sad tale of a young American who lived abroad and returned to a grave in Texas. Let us, then, say farewell to Lee Harvey Oswald’s long and determined dream of political triumph, wifely approbation,

and high destiny. Who among us can say that he is in no way related to our own dream? If it had not been for Theodore Dreiser and his last great work, one would like to have used "An American Tragedy" as the title for this journey through Oswald's beleaguered life.

THE END