THE AVIARY

VOL. III, No. 1 From Francis Baumli: for friends & associates. JAN.-FEB., 1986

" ... let us now suppose that in the mind of each man there is an aviary of all sorts of birds--some flocking together apart from the rest, others in small groups, others solitary, flying anywhere and everywhere."

Plato (Theaetetus)

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This year's Aviary, my official form letter, will perhaps have a different tone than previous such forays. The response to last year's Aviary was enthusiastic and at times quite overwhelming, both in terms of variety and with regard to

intensity of emotional reaction. Most reactions were positive, although sometimes a bit esoteric or strange. For example, an editor friend made it a point to let me know that she spotted two grammatical errors in it. An elderly woman I know said it soothed her hemmorhoids for more than a week. A friend in his early 40's said it eased him out of a two-year-long mid-life crisis. It made one woman very jealous for a day. Another woman said if she were younger, it might have made her fall in love with me. A man in his 50's said it inspired him to take up the piano again. As you can see, these reactions, if not always gratifying, were at least pleasant to hear.

But pleasantries were not the only reactions. People also reacted with an unpredicted, and still depressing, barrage of anger. Very often, people took offense to statements I made in fun. Sometimes, people were angered by what I saw to be simple assertions of my own, not entirely unlovable, personality. Upset as I was by these reactions, I must admit that I was not entirely surprised. As I above stated, I did not predict such reactions; but then, I often elicit such reactions from people, although they are always a surprise because I never can predict ill will toward me. I fail to understand what it is about me that warrants such ire, when I believe I am being fun, simple, ordinary. I begin to wonder, in fact, if somehow I am actually a very abrasive, malevolent, caustic character whose unconscious mission is to destroy any intimacy my more conscious proclivities would desire to achieve with other people. Indeed, it is not my writing only that can elicit such anger. I have, on more than one occasion, brought down the wrath of human beings upon my head simply by introducing myself. One fellow, a few years ago, who is a truthful man, said to me, "I disliked you the moment I laid eyes on you, and everything you have said since that time validates my initial impression." A woman friend once put it as, "You're too cocky; if anyone feels insecure about themselves, they'll hate you because they know you see it." I once--in one of my more reflective moments--put it as, "I have such a low opinion of myself, I feel so degraded, so beyond humiliation, that no one can make me feel bad; so people often hate me, because it is only through making other people feel inferior to them, or bad about themselves, that they can live without fear and trembling and sickness unto death."

So you see, I am accustomed to ill-willed reactions to my friendly overtures and benign temperament. Nevertheless, I must say that I was completely undone by the vitriolic barrage my last Aviary unleashed from several people. Angry words came from at least a dozen people. Two people (I am not exaggerating!) sent me entire parodies of The Aviary, each of them several pages long; and each of them, I am sure, required several days work to complete. Now, my own Aviary takes several days to complete, but this effort is directed to more than one hundred people; it therefore, I believe, is quite understandable that I would put so much time into a letter of this type. But several days work to respond to me? A parody that will be read by myself only? What, I ask you, is it in me that would elicit such effort? What strange energy fulgurates from my brain, such that it sets in motion such powerful and lengthy diatribes?

"Hey! C'mon! Hold it! Hold it! . . . Or someone's going to get hurt."

My penchant for irony, for humor, might cause you to think that I mention the effect of my Aviary for the sake of poking more fun at those who were stung by my words. Not so. To be quite candid, I was very saddened by the amount of anger, and in several cases--certainly in the two cases that involved lengthy parodies of The Aviary--I was depressed for days.

I confronted the latter two people hoping to work through the anger. With one person, it was difficult to make contact, much less amends, because he could not, or perhaps would not, say what had upset him so much. All he could verbalize was, "I don't know why, it just pissed me off, and I felt that way for days." The strain between us, while not resolved, was at least eased; our friendship now is not the same as it was before--less intimate, less passion. The other friend, who lives far away, could only be confronted by letter. When I received her lengthy parody, I was in a rage. I sat down at my typewritter and composed the following letter:

> If I had indeed given you reason to be angry, or if upon communicating such anger there was discovered to be no good cause for it, then I assure you that either result could have been both acceptable and negotiable to me.
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> But your avalanche of hostility, which my form letter has evoked (or rather, unleashed) from you, is scarcely anger but rather is a hatred that hurts me deeply. I want nothing of it, and ask that you leave me alone with it. The Aviary goes out to more than one hundred people. Are you so central to my life that you deserve to consider yourself personally insulted by every point of The Aviary you choose to fault?

You see, for all my bombast, humor, and self-aggrandizement (all of which are fully real), I am also given to fear, sadness, and very deep doubts about myself (all of which are fully real too, although fortunately, not so much that they cancel the former). I indulge what I think are my better qualities, and realize that I thereby risk anger, disagreement, or difference of temperament in others--all of which, while somewhat deflating at times, I accept as necessary risks, fortunate mirrors, and sometimes, as deserved goads. But I do not indulge my better qualities--I do not put them forth to others, generously and joyfully, as an invitation to shared rituals of spiritual disembowelment.

If I disappoint you so keenly, abuse you so savagely, by not giving you what you expect, then please expect nothing of me. And leave me separate from your hostility.

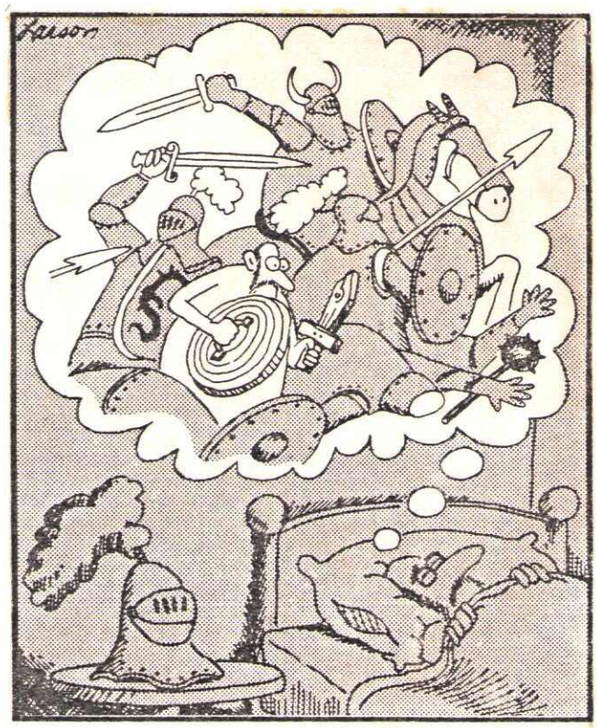
But I did not mail the above letter. Not because it did not reflect how I felt, not because I lacked the courage to send such a strong letter, but simply because I could see that it did not invite dialogue. And if I had hurt this person, I wanted to know why, and if possible, make reparation or amends. So instead I sent a short letter telling her I was sorry that she felt hurt, and if I had done something, either in The Aviary or in how I have conducted our friendship, then I would like to better understand so something can be done about it. She replied to my short note with a lengthy letter that was absolutely incoherent. I could neither extract meaning, nor even clear sentence-structure. I showed the letter to a couple of our mutual friends; they could make no sense of it either. I was beginning to worry about this friend's state of mind. I made inquiries, and was told that she was working, seemed happy, was still being a mother, wife, and occasional artist, and showed no signs of emotional lability. I sent her another note, patiently asking for explanations. To which she replied that my Aviary had hurt her deeply and irreparably, that she was so deeply wounded that she wished to never discuss the matter again, but she had decided she could forgive me and continue to be my friend.

Well; I have not contacted her since, and have no plans for doing so. I am not going to put myself in a position where someone condemns me morally, refuses to discuss the matter, and then cements that condemnation by extending forgiveness. I will not canonize self-proclaimed martyrs.

One damaged friendship and one lost friend; a big price to pay for doing The Aviary.

Other people's anger was more coherent, and usually things were easily resolved. Most of the anger seemed to be directed at two things: the statement about my limits regarding the phone, and what more than one person referred to as my flaunting my intellect.

As for the phone; I suppose it is a disappointment to many people that I am not going to be as available as I was before. But it is not as though I have not already told many people, including those who claimed to be wounded by my words, that I am needing to set limits as to how much time I can spend via that medium. I will say more about this topic later in this edition of The Aviary.



Common medieval nightmare

As for flaunting my intellect. Maybe these people are on to something. Almost. Let me try to explain.

In my early years, from about the age of five to twenty-five, I was an intellectual and progressively refined my personality toward that bent. During those days, especially my early 20's, it was popular to be an intellectual. I received much admiration for it, I was good at it, which gave me no small amount of self-esteem, and it served other purposes too. For example, it kept me from having to deal with certain emotional dimensions, safely locked away beneath the crust of intellect, which otherwise would have been absolutely terrifying. At some point, however, I began needing to deal with those emotional dimensions. They not only clamored for release, but I began to see their value. Hence, I began growing weary of my role as intellectual. But I think what caused me, even more, to move away from that role was the way many people objectified me in terms of it. For example, I will never forget the time I was about half an hour late getting to a philosophy seminar, and just as I reached the door, my body not yet visible to those inside the room, I heard the professor saying, "We need Baumli's mind right now. If only his mind were here." At the time, this felt quite flattering. But some time later, I became rather obsessed with the phrase, "Baumli's mind." Was that all they needed? My mind? Wasn't there anything else of value?

I began searching for my emotional substrata. The realm, inviting as it was, terrified me and almost undid me. At some point, in the midst of my flounderings, I sought out the above-mentioned professor, and tried to talk to him about my unhappiness, my despair, my lonliness. To which he replied, "Francis, you have to transcend it. Just transcend it!"

Transcend it?!? That was the problem already! I was walking around, trying to transcend everything except Plato's forms, instead of engaging reality directly.

For a while I tried to hide my intellect from the world. I gave it free rein in seminars and in my private studies, but to my friends, I was the bawdy, fun-loving, profligate sensualist. This posture also worked well for a time. It wasn't so trendy anymore being an intellectual anyway; everyone was "into" things like free-love, buddhism, akaido, group therapy, and such. I read Spinoza in private, and practiced cynicism in public.

But soon enough these interests became tiring. They felt superficial, the people with whom I associated did not give me enough, and I began to ricochet between the two worlds. For weeks I would bury myself in my studies until my brain was raw. I then would emerge, to bury myself in other pursuits which also left me raw.

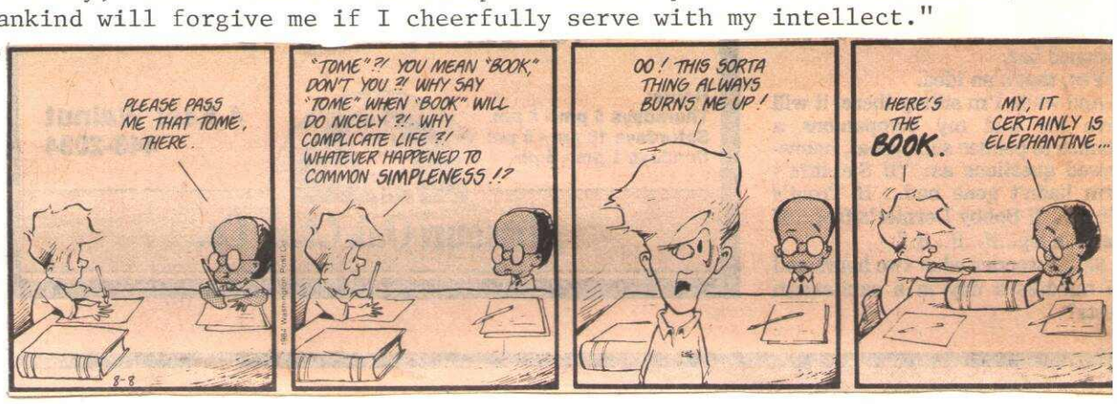
It took years before I learned my own soul, and had sufficient courage to stand up for my own personality, to find something of a synthesis.

I eventually learned that when I ignored my body and indulged my intellect only, my body suffered and my health suffered. I also learned that when I ignored my intellect and indulged my body only, my intellect went flaccid, and my emotions were soon in shreds. Aside from the damage done by neglecting either of these poles, there was always the consequence that a rebellion would set in, and I would flee to the opposite posture. If I tried to ignore my intellect, soon enough it would recover from its flaccid state, assert itself, and then enslave me for a time. My body, my sensual needs, would then atrophy for a while; but soon enough, they too would rise to the challenge, assert their rightful domain, and I for a time would then be at their mercy. I finally realized that my body has its due, as does my mind--my intellect. I now realize that I am enslaved to my mind if I indulge it too much; I also realize that it soon enough will enslave me if I try to quell it.

Now I try to give my intellect good exercise, and allow that part of myself to work very hard, to indulge itself fully, when I enter that realm. By doing so, by being thoroughly an intellectual instead of resisting this role, I remain master of my intellect. I can indulge it, humor it, and at the same time, guide it in ways that allow me to indulge other parts of myself that are just as valuable. In short, I think I now am neither obsessed nor phobic of my own intellect. As a result, it is, for me, a thoroughly enjoyable part of my personality. And because I enjoy it, along with other dimensions of my personality, I am open about it. No; I do not flaunt it, but neither am I willing to hide it, or camouflage it for those who are not intellectuals. This does not imply that I feel intellectual behavior is superior to other ways of conducting oneself; not at all. It only means that I think anyone's personality is most valuable to others, and most enjoyable to oneself, as long as it is indulged in a healthy way.

I am here reminded of Haydn, who was often criticized because, despite his devotion to God, his commitment to music, his fervor as a composer, he seemed to lack access to the dreary depths of artistic emotion that so many aesthetes utilize. To this criticism Haydn replied, "Since God gave me a cheerful heart,then surely He will forgive me if I serve Him cheerfully." If I may imitate such a sublime statement, while avoiding the sin of pride, then let me say, "Since nature bestowed upon me these powers of the intellect, then surely humankind will forgive me if I cheerfully serve with my intellect."

I do not, as a result of this lengthy discussion, intend to put forth a caveat, or limit dialogue over volatile subjects for the future. Quite the contrary; if my writings anger you, then I very much want to hear about it. All I ask for is dialogue. Actually, I very much appreciated some of the expressions of anger that



resulted from last year's publication. This does not mean I enjoyed all of them, but I do accept anger as a necessary, and hopefully productive, motivator for human intercourse. What I do not like is an avalanche of accusations that is scarcely anger, but rather, at its inception smothers interaction to the point that it feels like hatred.

I above stated that this year's Aviary may have a somewhat different tone than last year's. I suspect I will be more cautious, less spontaneous, perhaps even somewhat inhibited.

But, to reduce my inhibitions somewhat, perhaps I can put forth a disclaimer that will protect my obviously fragile ego from the possibility of retaliation from those who believe I bruise them. I can not hope to forestall viciousness, hatred, or even healthy anger. But I can hope to ameliorate the anger so many people experienced, at reading last year's Aviary, when they were led astray by my humorous fibs and joking irony. So, to help prevent a few misunderstandings, atrophied spleens, and the embarrassment people experienced upon finding out that they were angry over something about which I was only joking, I here issue a proclamation: I promise that, in this year's Aviary, I will eschew all irony, jokes, and humor; in fact, I further promise that in this issue of the Aviary there is only one sentence that is false. I will leave it up to my friends--all of them, I assure you, endowed with an intelligence which, albeit not overly intellectualistic, is quite superior--to identify the sentence which contains my sin.

On to other things, by way of introducing this year's issue.

You will note that this issue is longer than the last. This reflects the fact that 1985 was a year as hectic as it was productive. It also reflects the fact that I hope 1986 will be so productive by way of vast accomplishments--all of them easily summarized--that there will be little to say about trivial, commonplace details.

You will also note that in this year's issue there is a new section, entitled, "Portraits by an Exhibitionist." I hope you find it both informative and fun.

One last point: I know that this form letter is rather imposing, given its length. Forgive my tendency toward verbosity, indulge my proclivity for the truth, and realize that future issues of The Aviary may be much, much shorter. So ... gather ye the fruits of Baumli's typewriter while ye may: The gift of the hour is sweet, when we realize it rests within the lap of eternity. The muse is sweetest when it compresses time into creativity. Take up and read, that ye may momentarily dispell the veil of impending death.

Or something like that.

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> Marriage ... begins, not with setting up house, counting wedding presents, blowing kisses, looking at wedding groups, but with two bodies confronting one another like two wrestlers. To clinch and struggle and contend with one another. Rolling about, now one on top, now another; grunting, coaxing, sweating, murmuring, yelling. So the world began, with vast turbulence in the genitalia of space.
>
> Malcolm Muggeridge
> (from Chronicles of Wasted Time)

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SIGNIFICANT EVENTS OF 1985

(first, to mention some events of 1984 which I neglected to mention in last year's Aviary)

April 19-26,1984: This time-period involved a trip to the rural community of Debs, Minnesota; and it was a very telling trip for me. Why did I forget to mention it last year? Probably because it was a rather traumatic, unenjoyable time, both in terms of the traveling and the stay. At that time, I was unaware of how much my eyesight had deteriorated; the drive in a bouncing van caused me to get dizzy, weak, nauseated, and caused my right eye--my only good one--to act up. Hence, upon arriving at our destination, I was very sick, and remained so for about three days. Along with being sick, I was terrified, because I truly thought, "This is it! This is the time when I finally go blind!" Not a good frame of mind to be in when among strangers and one friend who was, for the duration of the trip, either drunk or stoned or recovering from the effects of having been either drunk or stoned.

But I recovered from the illness, and for about five days participated

in the life of the community, such as it was. This too was a forgetful part of the trip. The community was largely composed of families who called themselves, "back-to-the-landers." They had fled the city for nature, had their gardens and wood-burning stoves, fed themselves with food stamps, and collected welfare payments. Their activities during the first half of the day were to, "drink cawwfee 'n 'moke cigarettz." During the second half of the day, their main activity was getting together to, "drink beer 'n 'moke some pot." Scarcely my kind of life.

And, if I may be critical, scarcely a life for them. I witnessed, in this community, a boredom more ubiquitous and entrenched than I have ever observed. No; I am not here mistaking relaxed detachment for boredom. These people were not relaxed, they were not in any way detached from the foibles of human leisure. Quite the contrary, they were bored thoroughly, they complained about it, they bemoaned it, and they fled from it. Their discomfort with boredom translated into a terror of solitude, and these "back-to-the-landers" spent their entire days fleeing the privacy of country living, making the rounds from one neighbor's house to the other, always seeking company in the slogan, "C'mawn over n' drink some cawwfee 'n 'moke cigarettz."

Obviously I do not merely report on this phenomenon; I disapprove. Boredom I can scarcely tolerate. And I have little tolerance for people who espouse a creed and then do not practice it. Here were people espousing ideals of self-knowledge, rural independence, the beauties of pastoral living, and all the while supporting themselves through a parasitism on the very social and governmental structure against which they were supposedly rebelling. Parasitism is bad enough, but it was the death of the soul that aroused in me such an aversion. These people were not idle, they were lazy; they were not blissful, they were stoned; they were not enjoying their leisure, they were escaping themselves. Which, I quite agree, is no different from how most people in this culture conduct themselves. I suppose, however, I found such behavior in this particular sub-culture so repugnant because their touted, and often loquacious, ideology so pertly proclaimed otherwise.

During the latter part of this visit, I witnessed a rather appalling incident of child abuse. I reported it, and found out that the abuse in this family had been reported before, but always anonymously--the investigator, because of this anonymity, had never been able to intervene effectively and halt the abuse. I inquired among these pastoral folk as to why they had never reported the abuse. Well; they had, but always anonymously. Why anonymously? The answers came out in two varieties, "Well; I just didn't want to get involved," or, "I just didn't want to do nothin'."

Like I say; the atmosphere was no different from virtually any other place in this country. But when one goes to visit a community and is promised a paradise, upon discovering that the situation is otherwise, it is difficult not to be disappointed. And easy to forget the whole matter. Hence, the omission from last year's Aviary.

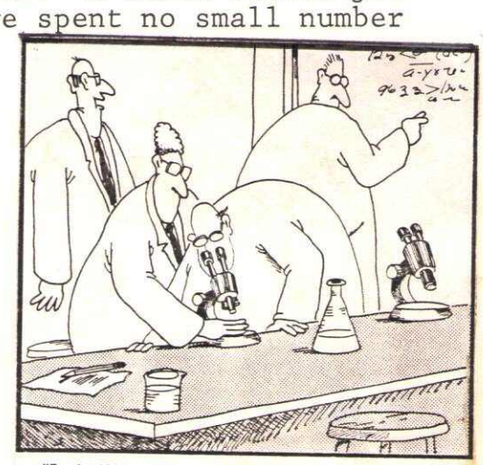
November 24, 1984: On this date, I purchased two grave plots. I believe I neglected to mention this small incident in last year's Aviary because I have such big plans in store for my demise, and have not yet had time to put it all down on paper; lacking a complete story, I forgot to mention the introduction. As for the complete story; it has yet to be written, but there are components I can mention: I desire that a requiem mass, composed especially for my funeral, be performed at my funeral. After being buried, I want all my friends to indulge in certain private, and autoerotic, acts while lying on my grave; of course, out of consideration for their sensibilities, I grant them time to abide their grief before such indulgence. And I want them all to have a tape-recorded copy of my last words, which I assure you, will be as eloquent as they are wretched.

But, more about this topic another year.

(now, on to the events of 1985)

January 5, 1985: My friend, Dexter Chisholm, gave me an excellent,

binocular microscope--brand, American Optical Spencer. A three-turret job with powers of 100, 430, & 970 magnification, I have spent no small number of hours with it, working and enjoying. I must admit, however, that I have not utilized it for my researches into neurology. Rather, I have whiled away my time looking at insects, germs, and the fauna and flora of the small world. I must confess to a certain fascination for my own body; the microscope can reveal much about oneself that would otherwise be forever obscure, or completely unknown. For example, there are few things as fascinating, under a microscope, as the expressed pustule of a pimple. Or platelets of dried ear wax. Or other such effluvia and gleanings that are to be culled from the body. But I have said enough; my more squeamish readers are likely writhing already, and I will desist in this prosaic narrative of my scientific bent.



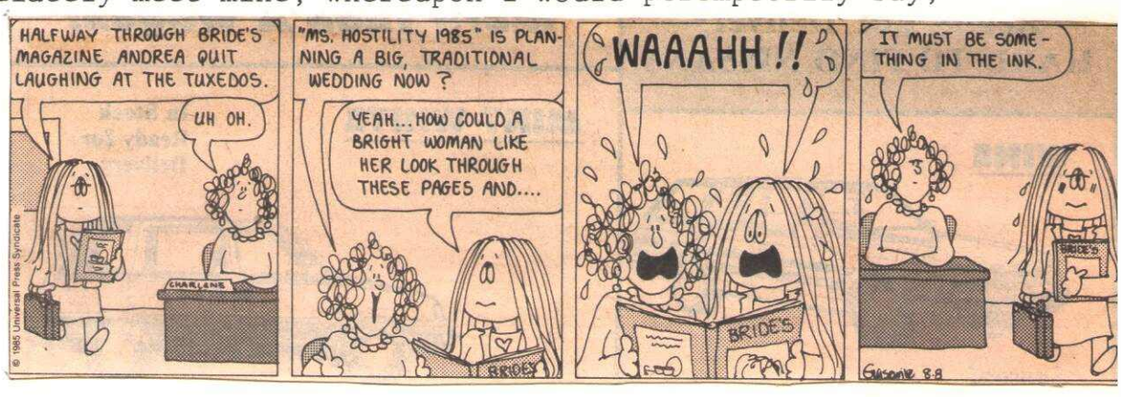
"Foster! You better get over here if you want to see Johnson's hangnail magnified 500 times."

January 21, 1985: On this date, Baumli bites the big one: he got married. It was a simple ceremony, divulged in advance to no one except Dacia who knew several days before, and the two witnesses, who knew about 1½ hours before. Why was this event not mentioned in the "Forthcoming Events" section of last year's Aviary? Well; because in 1984 this event was not clearly anticipated; or, to be more accurate, it was anticipated, but we had no idea as to exactly when it would take place. Moreover, we wanted to keep it a secret--this way there would be no ceremony, pomp, and such unnecessary accoutrements. (See the short article, in a later section, on Baumli's views about marriage ceremonies.)

But I neglect to mention the person I married. Said person is Abbe Sudvarg, known to no small number of my friends as, "Baumli's room-mate."

Abbe and I of course promulgated our marriage, once it was done. Said promulgation may itself have been a mistake, however. While I can not say that our message was met with howls of execretation, it would not be inaccurate to claim that no small number of people dumped on our heads no small amount of metaphorical dung, given that they were so outraged at not having been told in advance. This outrage, or anger, was quite depressing. Of the twenty or so people I called the first few days, only three expressed unqualified congratulations or good will. Many were somewhat awkward, others sullen, some downright hostile. Explanations were immediately demanded by many. "Why," they asked, "would someone like you get married?"

Well; this I could have answered, had I so chosen. My answer usually went something like, "I married her for three reasons. It helps regarding our economic arrangements. Dacia has said she would like this kind of arrangement. And there is a third reason, but I'm not telling it to anyone for a while." This third reason--what was it!?! One could see the look of panic in their eyes. Some would, if Abbe were present, immediately cast a furtive glance at her belly. Disappointed by the lack of evidence, their eyes would immediately meet mine, whereupon I would peremptorily say, "No; I didn't knock her up," and they then would be in a rage, simply because my crass remark so perfectly mirrored their own crass suspicions.



No; I still am not ready to divulge this third reason. When I someday sense that people, or most people, are asking this question out of genuine curiosity, and not out of a penchant for gossip, then I will tell. If, of course, the reason is still relevant, or, for that matter, still interests me.

Many people have asked me to say a few things about Abbe in this letter, since many of my friends have never yet met her. Well; this is quite a challenge. There is a great deal to be said, of course, and it is not easy for me, given that I am so close to her, to pick out the salient characteristics. Perhaps I could present a fairly objective, and comprehensive portrait by presenting statements made by other people about her. For example, one person was heard to remark, "You know, Abbe really is not particularly dykey." One of my relatives said, "Come to think of it, I don't believe Abbe is just another broad Baumli is hauling around in the back of his

hearse." And a friend, attempting a lame joke, said, "Francis, what's it like going to bed with a short Jewess with kinky black hair?" I, of course, gave this friend no information, since I tersely replied, "Insomniacal," and left him wondering whether I was telling the truth, or if he had offended me.

I suppose I can say a few things myself. Abbe is a vegetarian peacenik very involved in anti-nuclear work; needless to say, it has not been easy for a peacenik as dedicated as Abbe to adjust to living with a real man who owns a .44 magnum pistol. But we both have made certain compromises, more or less satisfying to our values. I suspect that Abbe has been aided in such compromises since she now lives in the country, and has been known to manifest signficant fear when in proximity to certain small animals, most notably snakes Abbe, by the way, is keeping her last name: Sudvarg. This is for two reasons: Abbe wants to maintain her name for reasons of identity, independence, and such; and I wish to keep my name to myself for reasons of identity, selfishness, egocentricity, and such. We both wish that people would quit sending us mail addressed to, "Mr. and Mrs. Baumli."

Abbe is now a physician, specializing in family practice, doing her first year of residency at the University of Missouri Medical Center. Baumli's friends, upon hearing that Abbe is a physician, have been heard to remark, "Ah; she may be able to start supporting Baumli in the life-style to which he deserves to be accustomed." A monied life-style does not, however, seem to be in the offing for this household, since both Abbe and Baumli have certain values which are more important than buying baubles.

January 21, 1985: Yes; on the very day Abbe and I were married, my former wife made threats that she would report me for child abuse of Dacia. She was very angry over my having married, an anger which I never could figure out, until it was reported to me by a mutual acquaintance who said, "You know;Patty said she is upset because you've married a doctor, and now you are going to be living a more affluent life-style than she." I do not know if there was any truth to this rumor, but the magnitude of this threat caused me no small amount of concern, both for myself and Dacia.

Truly, I have not been able to understand why my former wife has born such hostility toward me ever since we were divorced. I suppose it is because she was the one who left me, divorced me, abdicated responsibility for, and subsequently, custody of, Dacia, and then, after her adventure was all done, found herself in circumstances not to her liking, and ... of course, she then needed someone to blame it all on. Her animosity, however, seems to go beyond an explanation even this rational. So now, whenever I talk with her, and witness a momentary ray of good will, I am always reminded of Strindberg's statement about his own wife: "She is sometimes seized with the tenderness of a hangman for his victims."

My observation may sound harsh, but please realize, whereas I above stated that my former wife threatened me with an allegation of child abuse, she made it quite clear that she was going to include sexual molestation in the charge.

January 23, 1985: I went to see a performance by The Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre. This was the first time in my life that I had seen a dance performance that truly uplifted me, that impressed me with its aesthetic dimension. I was especially struck by the dance, "Revelations," for which the company is so famous.

January 25, 1985: From the day my former wife made threats of reporting me for child and sexual abuse, her accusations and hostility escalated. She even began calling me up to fight with me, making sure that Dacia was beside her while accusing me of sexual misconduct toward Dacia, cursing me, making incoherent accusations, sometimes even fighting with her current husband whose angry voice could be heard in the background while she would be fighting with me.

On this date, when I witnessed such hostility in my former wife's own home, and was worried that she would physically attack me in front of Dacia, I knew I no longer had any choice. I still had legal custody of Dacia, even though she had been living with her mother, and I brought Dacia back to live

with me. Dacia's mother was furious, of course; not because she wanted Dacia to live with her--she told me, in fact, that she didn't particularly want her living there anyway. Rather, she was angry that I had taken Dacia back the way I did. Angry that I had pulled a "coup."

I knew there would be repercussions. With Dacia's mother making such threats, I had already retained the best domestic-relations attorney in the state. I was trying to gird myself for a possible battle.

Meanwhile, things changed drastically at the Baumli-Sudvarg home. We had just married, we were both very busy with a thousand things, and here we were, with a very new turn of events. I was now going to be a full-time parent again. And Abbe, despite some initial difficulties adjusting, committed herself fully to being a parent to Dacia also. This was as helpful as it was heartening; there was a great deal of parenting to do. Dacia was upset and insecure with all the sudden changes. Moreover, what with becoming addicted to the television at her mother's place, she had virtually stopped reading. She needed to be helped with her homework constantly. While under the care of her mother's television, all her academic skills had suffered: her attention span had shortened, any perseverence was sadly lacking, and her frustration level was high.

The process of getting Dacia enthused about her studies was lengthy and very tiring, although eventually quite rewarding. Adjusting my own schedule back to Dacia's was difficult also, but I of course did it. And Abbe was quite suddenly put into the role of full-time parent, which she not only accepted but also demanded. A digression here is in order: I started to say that Abbe became a half-time parent, with myself being a parent the other half of the time. But no; it does not work this way. We both now were full-time parents. I can truly say that I am grateful to Abbe for so generously committing herself to Dacia. Abbe truly is as good a parent as any I have ever known.

February 12, 1985: I am investigated by the Division of Family Services on charges of child kidnapping, child abuse, and sexual molestation. Having these charges read to me was one of the most frightening, upsetting experiences of my life. Stable, solid Baumli literally went into hysterics for several minutes. Calls were this day subsequently made to my attorney, Dacia's counselor, and many other people. All forces were marshaled, and Baumli made ready to smash somebody.

February 24, 1985: This date was the 300th anniversary of Georg Friedrich Handel. I celebrated it by listening to a recording of his complete Water Music performed on period instruments by the English Baroque Soloists, conducted by John Gardiner.

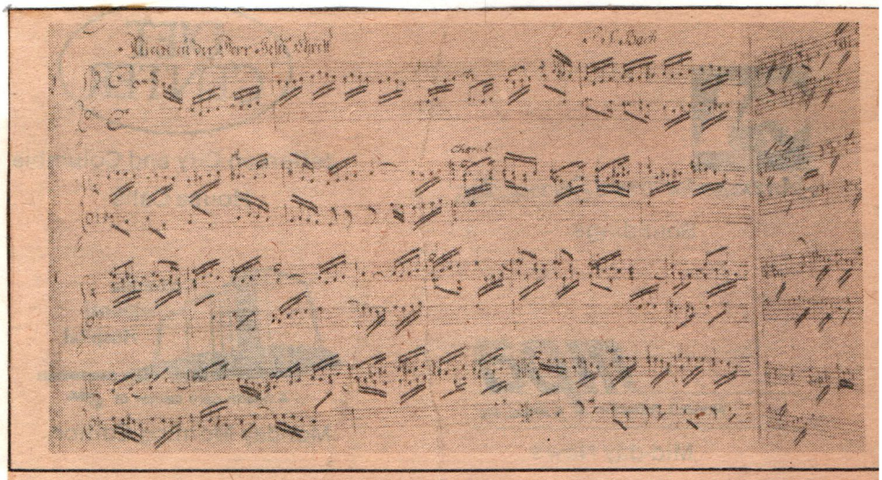
March 14, 1985: On this date, after one of the most frantic, grueling, and exhausting battles I have ever fought, the Division of Family Services cleared me of all allegations that had been made against me. Throughout the investigation, Dacia's mother denied that she had made the charges. Indeed, the charges were phoned anonymously to the hot line, but I never had any doubt that she, or someone who helped her, made the phone call.

Look forward to a lengthy article, in which I will describe some of the gruesome details, and name names.

March 14-29, 1985: During this time, I went to Atlanta, Georgia to participage in a pornography conference held by The Men's Experience. There I gave a workshop, participated in a panel discussion, addressed the group on topics that pertain to female pornography, and generally felt very uplifted by the group of men. While there I made some wonderful new friends, and renewed old friendships.

March 21, 1985: This date was the 300th anniversary of Johann Sebastian

Bach. I celebrated it by listening to Glenn Gould's 1955 recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations. And I resolved that over the next year, I would get to know this piece of music much better, and also study more of his organ music. If indeed there is a Bach rennaisance, as some have predicted, then I hope we can look forward to some new Bach instrumentalists who are of the highest quality--similar to that of Gould, Biggs, Kraft, and the like, all of whom are now dead.



One of the 33 unknown organ chorales of J.S. Bach discovered in Yale University Library, December, 1984. (Photo by T. Charles Erickson)

On this date, one of my friends asked me, "Is Beethoven really greater than Bach?" I could not, in good conscience, say that he clearly is. I prefer Beethoven, but this is not to say he is a greater composer than was Bach; similarly, I prefer Dali to Bosch, but I can not claim that Dali is the greater of the two. But then, these arguments are moot, and I desist.

May 4-5, 1985: This involved two days spent at the St. Louis Gallery of Art. While this gallery is not one of the "great" galleries in this country, it certainly has some very fine art. Refer to the later section on paintings for a discussion of the highlights of this visit.

May 5, 1985: Abbe and I went to see the St. Louis Arch. It is not regional pride that causes me to say that, in my opinion, this is the greatest, most beautiful monument on the face of this earth. Many people, seeing it from a distance, say, "What's so great about an arch? I can see a pair of those everytime I see a McDonald's Hamburger joint." Well; go see for yourself. Get up close to the thing--within one-quarter of a mile. It will stir you like no other monument you have ever seen.

I confess, however, to one major disappointment with this work. I think the builders made a mistake when they built it so people could go up inside it. Somehow this makes the edifice seem more vulnerable, less exhalted, its sublime dimension less pristine. It pains me, in fact, to see people going up inside it. I think of a huge animal, plagued by intestinal parasites, when I see people milling around at the entrance, clamoring to get inside.

May 17, 1985: On this day, Abbe graduated from medical school, and became a full-fledged physician. We held a celebration at home in the country, with perhaps fifty people attending. The festivities were fittingly Dionysian, and Baumli did his best to keep a low profile so as to not take all the attention away from Abbe.

May 22, 1985: This is the day I learned how to scratch my ass without using either my hands or my ass.

May 31, 1985: My 37th birthday; probably the most enjoyable ever. I received a plethora of gifts from various people, my favorite being one I requested: a list of 25 superlative descriptives about myself from Abbe. I will not here give the entire list; rather, I will mention but a few which I am sure will not embarrass Abbe's privacy: #4) Most able to not tell the truth without lying, #11) Best taste in cars, #12) Least tolerant person with dishonesty, #21) Most enjoyable exhibitionist.

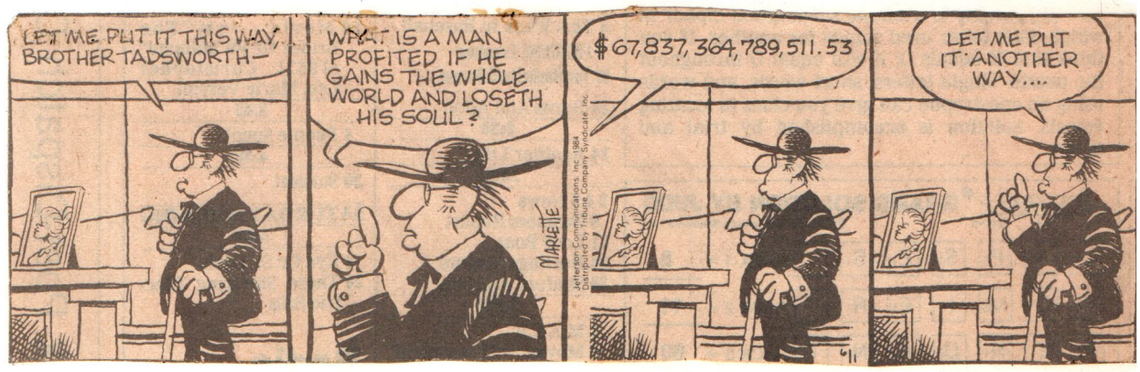
There was much food, fun with Dacia, and the occasion aroused so much enthusiasm that Abbe and I ~~consummated~~ celebrated it well into the night.

June 8-10, 1985: Abbe, Dacia and I went to northwest Missouri, which is the area where I grew up. We spent some time with relatives, and left Dacia in the good hands of her "Aunt Bomma" while Abbe and I went off to D.C.

June 11-18, 1985: Abbe and I spent this week in D.C. Although both of us have many friends in the area, we decided to visit none of them (we made one exception) and do things together--primarily see a lot of art.

This was probably the most enjoyable trip I have ever taken. The

art at the Smithsonian's National Gallery of Art is tremendous; see a note in a later section herein for a description of some of the high points. Experiencing the city itself was an adventure. Such contrast! So many very poor street people; and so many very rich, very conceited people. The city had a very depressing effect too; I realized how close I then was to so many people who occupy positions of power in my government, and yet, listening to world events on the radio, I felt no closer to those people, no more efficacious in matters of making myself heard; in other words, being that proximal to my government, and yet no more able to participate in it than when in Missouri, drove home to me the clear point that I do not live in a democracy.



The tourists--well, they were something to contend with. I was quite amazed, while in the National Gallery of Art, to see how tourists usually view art. I am not exaggerating when I say that most people spent an average of only 20 seconds with a piece of art. Even this short span of time was divided up into clearly defined segments: before even looking at the work of art, they would spend about 7 seconds reading its description; they then would spend 3 seconds looking at the work of art; finally, about 10 seconds would be spent focusing a camera and snapping a photo. Truly, an amazing, and sad, attitude, when confronting works of art whose immortal value deserves at least an hour or more. I do not exaggerate when I say that there were people who spent no more than their customary 20 seconds with paintings as sublime as da Vinci's Ginevra de Benci or Rembrandt's 1659 self-portrait.

STATUTORY OFFENSE: **Donna Mills,** in Florence to film a segment of *Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous,* decided to pop in to see **Michelangelo's** famed marble statue of **David.** While lost in her thoughts, gazing up at the larger-than-life sculpture, she was jolted back to reality by a barrage of flashbulbs. Turning around she found a group of American tourists who had decided they were more intrigued by her features than David's. Observed Mills: "I bet this is the last time I get top billing over a giant nude man."

(People Weekly,6-24-85)

While in D.C., I did not intend to spend time with the various memorials and monuments. But I did, for very personal reasons, want to see the Vietnam Memorial, and experience certain memories--and their grief--which have weighed heavily upon me for many years. But I was not able to accomplish my goal. Visiting that memorial was, quite frankly, a very upsetting experience. Not because of any old grief that came forth, but because I saw, so clearly repeated, the very mentality of the American citizenry which allowed that war to be conducted in the first place. Let me try to explain. There were, in the thirty minutes I was at the memorial, probably at least five hundred people who filed through, or milled about. Tour buses disgorged their contents, the people would file through, led by a loquacious tour guide; ten minutes later, these people would board the bus, and another bus would pull up to disgorge. The people looked bored, their flash cubes popped, and they hurried off to the next distraction. These people quite obviously did not come to remember, reflect, much less, grieve. They came to this memorial, this memorial for the dead, to be entertained. Entertainment! Yes; entertainment is the only fodder the average American's brain knows. Give an American entertainment, and he will let you do anything. Give him his television, his golf clubs, his boat, his country club; give her her bridge club, her soap operas, her romance magazines, her afternoon for shopping; do all this, and anything else you can take away. As long as an American is entertained, you can take away the rest of his freedoms, the rest of his possessions, and the remainder of his values, and he will not protest. He will not even protest, for example, a war in Vietnam, as long as you turn the war into entertainment. Like, lest we forget, those 15-minute live action shots of the Vietnam War that people watched on the 6 o'clock news every evening for several years. Yes; as long as they could get a good dose of titillation, like maybe a couple of soldiers writhing from a bullet, or a building full of children turning into a napalm inferno, then the war--well, that's not so important, as long as the evening entertainment, i.e., news, keeps being played. I often said, during the Vietnam War, that the only reason the American people tolerated it was because the television networks turned it into such spicey entertainment for the television addicts. But I was not ready for the fact that this Vietnam memorial, intended for spiritual and even sacred ends, would itself become but another piece of fodder for the American entertainment gullet. It was saddening, depressing; I came away from that monument in a state of despair. It was not easy being

reminded that the average American is comfortable in two situations only: in front of a television or behind a flash cube.

June 21-23, 1985: In St. Louis, I attended the tenth National Conference on Men and Masculinity, a conference largely staged by the National Organization for Changing Men. I went, primarily to promote my forthcoming book, Men Freeing Men. And I carried no small amount of apprehension with me. The men of that organization style themselves pro-feminist in ideology, and they have made it clear that they have no use for people like myself who belong to The Coalition of Free Men. As it turned out, I encountered some overt hostility, but generally I kept a low profile and hence escaped the barbs and accusations.

The first night, a slide-show presentation did an excellent job of recounting the organization's history and cultural concerns. The keynote address by Joe Pleck, however, was a sophomoric gloss of issues which generally stated that the two main issues of the men's movement are gay rights and feminism. (I could not help but wonder, given this claim, why he bothers even calling it a men's movement!) The workshops varied in quality; some were stimulating, others--especially those put on by the Men's Studies Task Force--were made up of college professors and were accordingly pedantic and boring, although even here there were some nice exceptions. I made some new friends, met several people with whom I have worked professionally but had never met, and while there wrote some good poetry.

The general tenor of the conference can best be described by pointing to the language used by the participants. I tell the truth when I claim that I heard sentences that went quite like, "Well; I was low on energy and I needed some good energy so I processed my feelings until I felt the flow and knew there was good energy being shared again." Truly, as I was leaving the main building, heading for my car to return home, the last conversation I overheard was: "Thanks for the time."

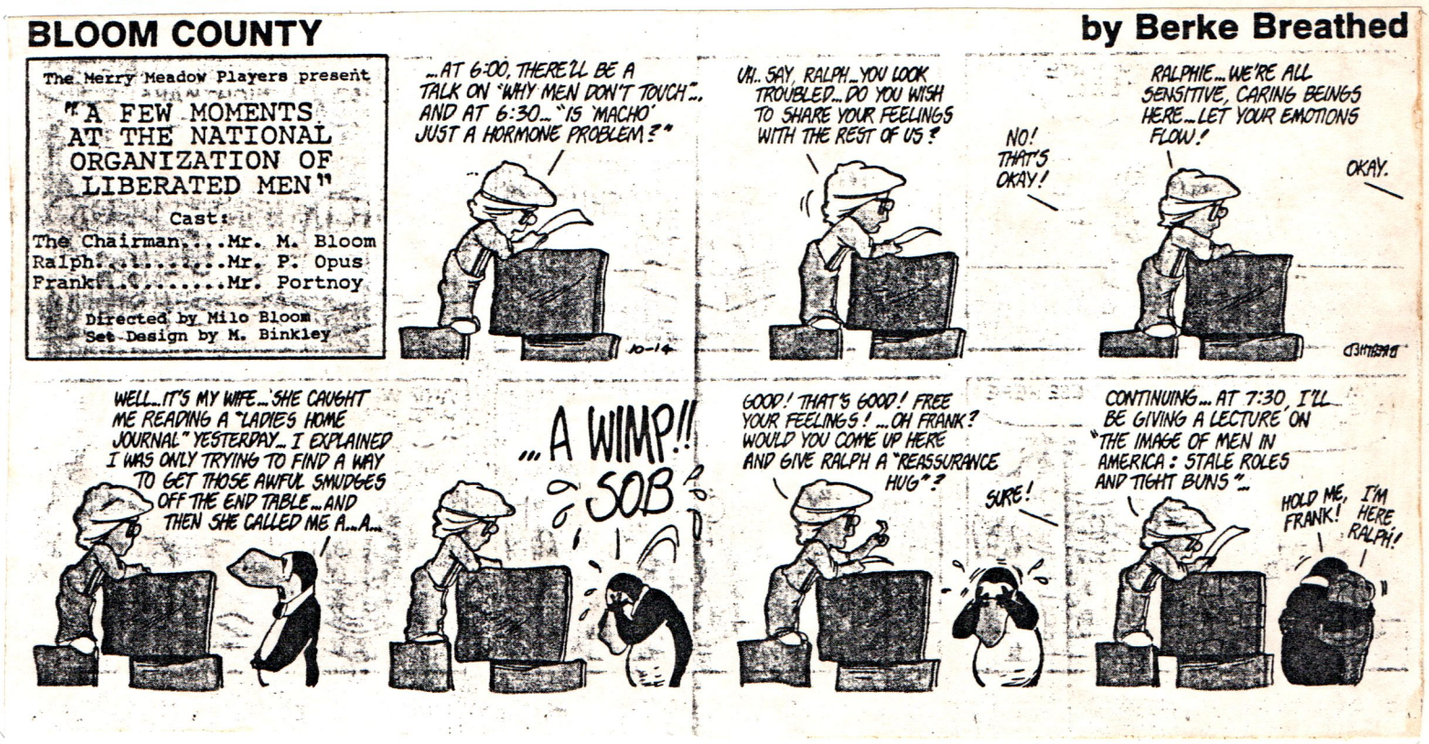
"Yeah; and the process."

"And the sharing!"

"Uh; yeah, the process and the sharing!"

Can you imagine trying to translate a conversation such as this into another language, and hope to make sense out of it?!

I came away from the conference aware that I'm not a very good pusher when it comes to ~~sharing~~ selling my book. Moreover, I was keenly disappointed by an interaction that happened, or rather, was supposed to happen and didn't, with a couple of friends. And I realized that although the conference was not without value, it did not leave me with any desires to ever attend another of its ilk.



June 27, 1985: On this date I bought a new washer and drier. A very mundane event, yes, so why do I here give it mention? Well, because for so many years, I prided myself on my dutiful resolve that, "Why should I own such machines all by myself, when all I have to do is go to the laundromat, and use the community facilities?" I suppose it was a residue of my early communist leanings, to thus extoll the value of public facilities. Boy was I dumb. What once was a major chore that had to be done at least every two weeks is now a simple task that takes minutes. And I have not felt one bit of shame when more than one friend has chided me for my capitulation to the bourgeois life-style.

July 11, 1985: On this date, I discovered another neurosis among my menagerie of emotional beasties. On many an occasion, over the last few years, people have remarked on how many pairs of socks I own. Abbe had often remarked on the quantity of underwear I own. In mid-June, I was discussing what I at the time believed to be an entirely unrelated matter--how, in my youth, my family was much more impoverished than I at the time perceived. During those days, I was more or less taught that everyone in America, except for a few people in the city slums who were lower-class and a select few people whom I would never meet who were upper-class, occupied a moderately comfortable middle-class life-style. I did not think it unordinary that I had only two pairs of socks, one with holes in it, and that I wore the ones with holes with last year's low-cut, worn-out Sunday shoes to do chores, even in below-zero temperatures. I did not think anything uncommon about my having only two pair of underpants. I believed that people, even if they did have running water--which my household did not for several years--did not take a bath more than maybe once a month. All those years I thought my life-style was quite like the norm; messages to the contrary--remarks made by neighbors, teachers, friends, classmates--were not so much ignored as they were simply misunderstood.

It took some years for me to realize that, very simply, I lived a lower-class, rural life-style while growing up. But it was not until July 11 of this last year that I realized how I have been compensating, in a rather benign way, for those years of deprivation--such as it was. My way of compensating has been to go out and buy socks and underwear everytime I am feeling depressed or insecure about something. Which by itself is neurotic enough, but always one to complicate matters, I do not always wear these new garments. Instead, I hang on to my old ones, no matter how full of holes, how ragged, and refuse to throw them away. My new underclothes, I wear when I go out; but at home I will be wearing socks with holes in both heels, and underpants that are ripped and have so little elastic I have to keep pulling them up. If I throw away an old pair of socks, or underwear, I am likely to wake up during the night, regretting it, and on some occasions, I have even gotten out of bed to go retrieve the piece of clothing so I can get back to sleep.

Yes; crazy.

On this date--July 11--I took an inventory of my clothes. I found that I have 79 shirts. This, I do not think, reflects any neurosis on my part. Almost all these shirts have been given to me, and I do not feel attached to them at all. As for slacks and shorts, I own 30 pair. T-shirts and undershirts, 43. Underpants: 42! And socks, no less than 68 pair!!

It was during the conversation, above-mentioned, which happened in mid-June, that I first realized that my owning all these undergarments is probably a throw-back to my early years. It took me nearly a month to think it through, and get up the nerve to do an inventory.

Since then, I have tried to maintain better control over this strange compulsion. I have given away many of my shirts, shorts, t-shirts, and such. As for socks and underpants, I would say that the number I own is holding steady. I haven't yet been able to part with any, except a few that really would not cling to my body any longer.

July 12, 1985: Quite by accident, I discovered a small, varicose vein on my left leg. Mid-way on the shin, pale blue, barely visible, thin as a hair, perhaps half an inch long, there it was--sheer horror, undeniably extant! Only my best friends, who know my horrible fear of unpredictable and terminal bodily leaks, can understand what fear this evidence caused me. Varicose veins that bulge, balloon, protrude, change color, sag, stagnate, or most horrible--rupture--absolutely terrify me. I always have this image of such veins breaking open and one's blood slowly leaking out. Blood that leaks because of a wound, or because of a major organ convulsing during its death throes, this I can understand. But to think of blood leaving the body simply because its channel, its container, has weakened; aacckk! I can not go on.

Not only did I witness this varicosity--on my own body--mind you, on this date, but I showed it to several people for verification. They all agreed (two of them medical doctors) that yes, it was a small varicose vein.

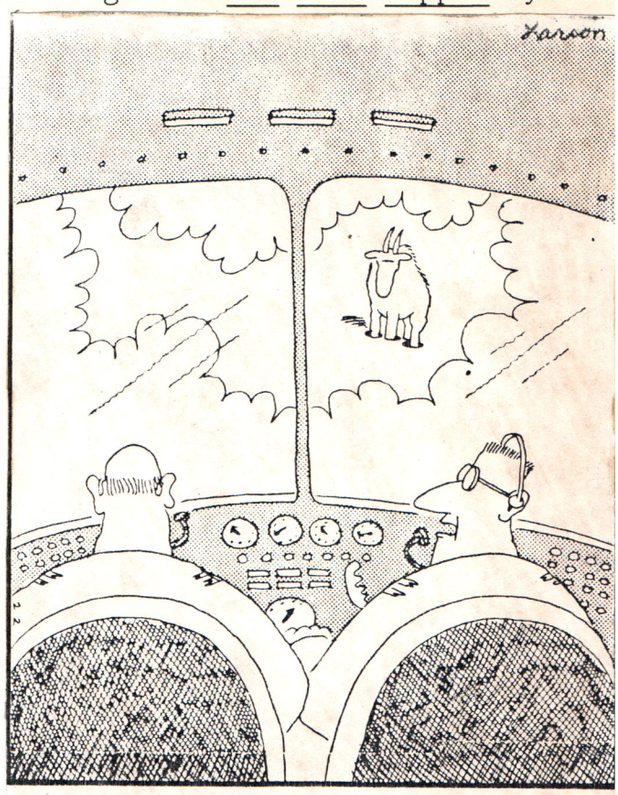
The fact that evidence of this impending rupture has disappeared, and has not since been located, affords me no comfort. My body is succumbing, and soon enough, these small, incipient leaks will converge into the final, terminal leak.

August 1, 1985: My beautiful black car, my 1955 Cadillac hearse, died. And as of this writing, is not yet ~~repaired~~ revived.

August 22, 1985: Abbe Sudvarg turned 27 years old. This birthday was celebrated in a variety of magnitudinous ways. However, the most telling event of the day was Abbe's own statement, "I guess I'm now an incipient hag." Baumli, of course, disagreed violently, only to be accused of speaking in a tone of voice that sounded less than sincere.

September 5, 1985: I went to see an opthamologist, and discovered that this multiple sclerosis I have has damaged my eyes much more than I was aware of. My left eye is now not functional; I wear a patch over it all the time. But I had thought that, excepting for occasional bouts of obvious weakness in my right eye, that it has been holding its own. Not so. I had not realized that it has weakened considerably, while I have found ways to compensate for its weakness and thus camouflage from myself any awareness of its further debilitation. The opthamologist pointed out to me that I have trouble raising my eye above mid-line; by way of compensation, I tip my head back when I need to look up. I also have trouble moving the eye to the right. The news is most depressing. And of course, upon realizing that I have been compensating for these added difficulties, I very soon became aware of the actual limitations and the trouble they cause.

I have become more and more acutely aware that the question I face is not if I eventually go blind, but when it will happen. And the dilammas now present themselves to me with more and more urgency. What to do with these last remaining years of sight--of failing sight? Spend more time with paintings and the visual arts? More time reading? But looking at paintings itself becomes tiring. For example, the first thing I did, upon going to The National Gallery of Art during the summer, was to go see The Last Supper by Salvadore Dali. On looking at it, I experienced a strange depression, a dizziness, a disappointment. I kept asking myself if, now, upon seeing this painting after wanting to for so many years, it was less than I had expected. But no; it was stunningly beautiful. It was only several days later that I realized I was experiencing this emotion quite often, and then, only when I was feeling very tired. Slowly I began to realize that I was not very comfortable looking up at paintings. "What is this," I thought to myself, "that for hundreds of years people mount paintings so far up, instead of putting them next to the floor, at eye-level or even below eye-level? Are people so accustomed to convention that it has never before occurred to anyone that a painting might look better with the eye looking down instead of up?" Given my penchant for self-righteous cerebration, I even began formulating theories of physical and psychical distancing, was going to couch it all in the aesthetical context of Edward Bullough, and prove to the art world that art galleries henceforth could be built with lower ceilings, because paintings and sculpture would be better appreciated on the same physical plane as the contemplator.



"Say . . . What's a mountain goat doing way up here in a cloud bank?"

It was all rather silly, of course, but I can only say that with hindsight. It was not until the opthamologist informed me of the problem with my eye that I finally realized why my initial experience with the Dali painting, and several others, was so difficult.

But looking at paintings is not the only thing that has become more difficult. Reading too can become quite a chore, especially if the print is small and I am already weary. So now I am compensating for these difficulties in other ways. Books that once I likely would have read, I now throw aside if they are not of the utmost quality; I simply do not have time to spend on a book that is less than superb, when the hours of my

vision are thus numbered. Meanwhile, I try to adjust for the difficulties. I use a magnifying glass sometimes when reading, I try to enjoy my microscope and telescope while I yet have sight, and when I look at my daughter, Dacia, my attention is fixed on her every feature like never before.

September 6, 1985: Baumli, the uncle, now has another niece: Michaela Marie. Exhibiting all the traits of good Baumli stock, I predict that she will make a significant contribution to the cultural and scientific affairs of this world within 2½ decades.

September 11, 1985: A new resolve, this day, concretized by a visit to a psychiatrist, and plans to see this psychiatrist for as long as necessary to at last solve a very painful, very tiring, problem -- I speak of insomnia. Curious, that when I was quite young, I thought this was the strangest of maladies. I would hear people complain about how they were so tired because they could not sleep, and I would think, "God; if you're tired, just go to sleep. What's the problem?"

But I lost that innocence. I lost it in the Fall of 1978, in an experience, not overly traumatic by ordinary standards, which lasted all of about five seconds. For the last 7½ years, I have been unable to sleep well. Difficult as it is sleeping alone, it is nearly impossible for me to sleep more than 4½ hours with another person. Yes; I can say this about my own particular species of insomnia: I experience it more acutely when trying to sleep with another person. Further veracity, about the task of sleeping, I can not offer. I am fully aware that a reader here, who need not even be overly perceptive, is already yelping inwardly about that clause, "trying to sleep." I am quite aware of the absurdity, the contradiction, in such language. But please realize that I have been wrestling with this problem for 7½ years now. Certain habits of language are with me. And they are habits not born of self-deception, but rather, finely attuned to life, and sleep--or its absence, as I experience them.

I of course agree that 7½ years is a long time to abide a problem as debilitating as is this one. Mind you I have not been idle with it. I have grappled with it, I have probed it, and (yes; so as to quickly absolve my impatient readers of their penchant for advice) I have also struggled with leaving off the struggle. I have tried to leave it be, hoping, even somehow trusting, that the problem would work its way out. I have tried hypnosis, meditation, approaches via paradox, and I saw a counselor more than four years. This counselor helped me with fine-tuning many other aspects of my personality, but as for the insomnia, I gained no ground at all.

What is it, this insomnia? It has a specifiable emotion, i.e., it is not merely the kind of sleeplessness that can happen when one is eagerly anticipating the morrow, bedding a new lover, or worried about a forthcoming task. No; with this insomnia, none of those mundane emotions enter. Rather, there is a fear that descends like the lid of a casket, a fear that snuggles in around my body like a wall of lead, a fear that sharpens my sensibilities until a person's breathing sounds like a snorting bull who, towering above me, is about to lower its head and crush me with its weight. Yes; it is an emotion unto itself, and I can not escape it. I can be reeling with weariness, hallucinating from sleeplessness, dreaming as I go about my waking tasks, and yet, at the moment I begin to drop off to sleep, that lancing fear jerks me wide awake. It appears that there is no escaping it.

Sadly, but perhaps not so paradoxically, there seems to be no escaping it even in sleep. Because since that day in fall of '78, the moment I drop off to sleep, to a sound sleep, I begin traversing a vast plane of consciousness that is inhabited by horrible, horrible nightmares. There have been mornings I have awakened, remembering dreams in which I killed hundreds of people. Sometimes I would be able to remember, with a detail as tactile as it is visual, the very method I used to dispatch the people who would be pursuing or trying to kill me. Other dreams, just as nightmarish although not so overtly violent, will involve being rejected by people whom I love, or the death of people I love, or a sense of implacable lonliness and eternal isolation. Other dreams ... well, I need not go into further detail, except to say that I have never heard anyone tell a nightmare that I have not had. The fact is, most often, when people tell me of their nightmares I have to stifle my laughter, simply because theirs seem so tame when

compared to mine. Trust me; I am not here entering into a kind of perverse competition, whereby I try to justify my angst by touting its dimensions. Not at all. Exhibitionist that I am, I do not at all enjoy telling this story; frankly it affords me no small embarrassment in the telling.

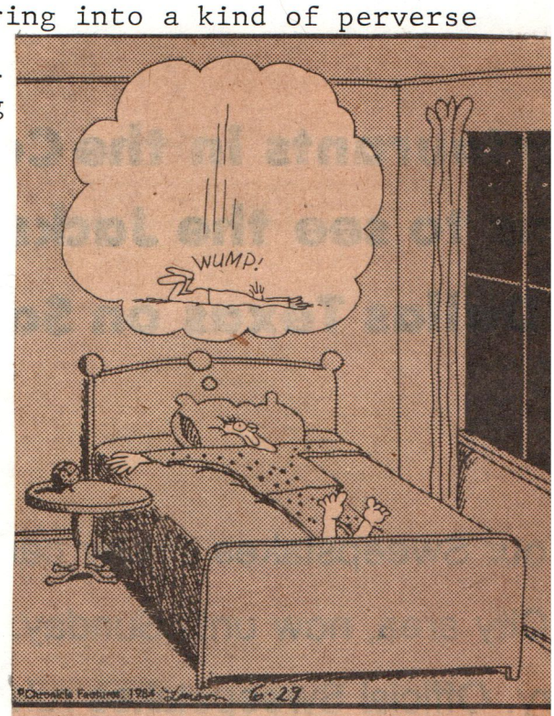
"So," the gleeful cynics, always wanting to trip Baumli up, ask, "why do you go on about it?"

I will explain this soon enough. But allow me to reiterate--talking about this difficulty embarrasses me, I am ashamed of it, I feel stupid, silly, childish, ridiculous. "Well; I couldn't sleep last night. I just lay there, wide awake, so tired I could not even get up to read, too tired to listen to Ravel or Stravinsky, too frightened to listen to Mozart or Schumann."

"Schumann?" someone asks. "Why him?"

"Well; he was going crazy, you know; I can feel it in his music."

Crazy? What does this have to do with problems sleeping? Well; perhaps a great deal. You see, I am a strange person; I go to bed, and sleep, to rest my body. But I swear, I wake up to rest my mind, to find surcease from emotional turmoil. I have even learned to play tricks with myself when it comes to this insomnia. For example, if there is a big task in the offing which I must get done, and sleepiness is interfering, then all the Baumli has to do is do a brief ponder, a serious imagining, of what it would be like sleeping that sixth or seventh hour with another person, and then he is wide awake, with more than enough alertness to go ahead and do the task that awaits him.



Dreaming he's falling, Jerry forgets the well-known "always-wake-up-before-you-land" rule.

In fact, at this very moment, while writing these words, I am staying up late, partly because I want to get this edition of The Aviary finished, and partly because I am afraid to sleep. I was reeling with weariness two hours ago, but the thought of sleep would drive me back to work. At what point am I working to avoid sleep? This is a simple question. A more complicated issue would ask, at what point is it that the work has become this important because it can provide a setting in which I can find minimal surcease, if not distraction, from the possibility of sleeping?

But my language, thus betraying my weariness, becomes even more complicated than the question; I must go on to other facets of this strange phenomenon.

So you now begin to understand why this struggle begins to feel proximal to something on the order of--to use the word I above mentioned--craziness (a kind way, a cowardly way, of skirting the word, "insanity").

Darrell suspected someone had once again slipped him a spoon with the concave side reversed.

I certainly have done a great deal to try curing myself of this malady. I above mentioned some of the avenues I have explored, all to no avail. Believe me, I have also put in a good stint at not trying anything, aware, most certainly, that the very trying--the struggle--may be what makes everything so much more difficult. But as I say, nothing gave me any results. I even studied the matter deeply; I read every text I could find on the subject. No where did I find a reference to the unique genesis of my insomnia. In fact, the closest description of my state of mind, with regard to that brief experience which began this maudlin epic, is the dismal diagnosis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This may seem a bit hyperbolical, or even exotic, but the truth must vouchsafe itself. Verily I sometimes fear, in dealing with this state, that I may actually be going insane. After all, if a state of mind, of such major dimensions, can rise up to rule me for so many hours during the night, then what emotional wellsprings of sordid, psychic effluvia might erupt into my daylight hours, and manifest itself in ways that are more visible to the world?

Other things I have tried too. For some time, I would copy out of

every piece of literature I read any unusual or curious reference to sleep. These proved to be somewhat interesting, even comforting--reading them made me feel less alone with this problem. But the exercise did not help.

> "In that case, a nap's not a bad thing," observed Arkady.
> "Certainly; only don't look at me; every man's face is stupid when he's asleep."
>
> *(from Fathers and Sons by Turgenev, p. 89)*

And I have tried talking to friends and acquaintances about my situation. These attempts have met with a most curious and disappointing response. I am amazed, truly amazed, at the number of people to whom I have broached the topic, perhaps for the dozenth time, and these people will look at me and say, "H'mmm; I never knew you had trouble sleeping."

To which I protest, "But I recall speaking about it several times; why, just the other day, when we were sitting on my front porch, I was telling you about ... ."

But they seldom remember.

Most curious--the incident, which, as I say, lasted perhaps five seconds and triggered this whole thing, seems to arouse in people no interest at all. I have talked about it point-blank to many people, to which they will have no response. Only a blank stare,after which they change the subject, and begin talking of other things. When I point this out to them, I can clearly see that they did not change the subject on purpose, and it does not appear that it frightens them; rather, for some strange reason, that incident seems to evoke no resonance in most people's minds. They hear it, and it can find no niche in which to reside. I tell my story and I might as well be dumb, silently gesticulating the esoterica of my own emotional ataxia.

I even, from these experiences, wonder if a similar effect will ensue after the mailing of this Aviary. I realize that I have not here recounted that brief experience of perhaps five seconds. Why do I not recount it? Because to tell it, to try and capture everything that happened in those five seconds, would take perhaps five pages here. And I am not up to writing this much. Moreover, I at this point am very discouraged; I do not want to take up valuable space telling the story, only to discover that no one, absolutely no one, is interested enough to respond. I even wonder if an amnesia, similar to what happens when I verbally relate the story in full, will attach itself to the readers of this lame missive. No; I am not being cynical, nor condemning, nor even angry. But curious, and discouraged--yes, these I am. Because I wonder if my readers will read this account, and after proceeding to the end of this year's lengthy Aviary, will have entirely blotted this entry from their minds.

So why do I here recount a depressing story about insomnia? Why do I embarrass, shame, even revile myself in the telling? Not necessarily because I hope to get a response from others that will be helpful. No; I have nearly given up on hoping that there will be a respite. I think I do it simply so I no longer have to feel that I am hiding it. Or, perhaps more accurately, I can now go public with my story, and if, after spending the night at someone's place, and that person inquires about how I slept, I do not have to enter upon an explanation. I can say something simple, like, "Well; you read about it in the 1986 Aviary. There's nothing more to say." If my inquirer claims to not remember this entry, I then can simply recommend another reading. Not that I would mind telling the story, but I must say that I begin to feel very, very lonely, telling it so many times, and realizing that people do not--seemingly, can not--understand, remember, or relate.

Not, I assure you, that I blame them. After all, I scarcely understand it myself. And I certainly am not the sort to ask my friends to plumb the dismal, subterranean dungeons of my crippled psyche. I am probably more comfortable, albeit not content, with fingering the gore in private.

Meanwhile, I continue to see a psychiatrist. Thus far there is no apparent progress, and the process feels like surgery without anasthesia. But I continue with the struggle. Stubborn, maybe. Probably deluded. More persevering than hopeful.

But my motives for pursuing therapy, against such odds, are not entirely blind; I have a very specific goad that prods me forward. It is this. Losing sleep, as I do, is one of the worst things I could experience, given that I have multiple sclerosis. Sleep seems to be its only healer, and I have little doubt that the disease has progressed much further than it otherwise would have, could I have been sleeping normally over the last few years. With my eyesight failing, is it any wonder that the curse of insomnia weighs upon me even more heavily? It is almost as though, lacking the ability to sleep at night, this disease is going to erode my bodily functions until I one day lie in a torpor, bed-ridden, perhaps unconscious--sleep finally triumphant, thus having overcome the interference my psyche posed by soliciting the aid of sickness and disease.

September 16, 1985: Baumli, in company with friends, experienced the

delights of artificial chocolate soda--no calories, no caffeine, no sugar, no chocolate. The following conversation was overheard between Baumli and one of the people present. (I will leave it to my readers, well aware of Baumli's penchant for chaste ribaldry, to surmise which of the following conversationalists is the obvious embodiment of his virtue.)

"Damn! This is good! Next it will be oral sex in a can."

"So what would be the advantages of that?"

"More available. Not to mention, more aesthetic."

"You're being sexist."

"No; I'm not being sexist at all. I'm being lewd. And I'm not the least bit ashamed of it."

"Oh; uh ... ."

September 17, 1985: Dacia's birthday! She now is one decade old. Strange metamorphosis: half little girl, half budding adolescent. One hour playing with her sticker books and talking about unicorns, the next hour talking about Don Johnson and the other male bimbos she sees on her mother's television. Meanwhile, she is getting involved in activities--basketball, acting, school events; and the big Baumli is beginning to feel like too much of a chauffeur for the little Baumli.

October 18, 1985: I attended a concert by the Beaux Arts Trio; see notes in the music section.

October 26, 1985: This date was the 300 anniversary of Domenico Scarlatti's birthday. I cerebrated by listening to some piano sonatas performed by Horowitz and De Larrocha.

October 31, 1985: I received my first copy of my long-awaited anthology, Men Freeing Men, and I finally believed that it had been published. And to think that the initial letter I wrote, to get the project going, was penned September 1, 1980. More than five years, from inception of the idea to publication of the book! Too long. The entire project was terribly, terribly demanding. The final stages of the book--proofing galleys, doing an index, and such--nearly drove me over the edge, and, I believe, even made me slightly dyslexic for a few weeks. I came to fully understand why I have heard many an author say, "There is nothing worse than publishing a book; it makes you want to never try publishing another, so you can count on continuing to write."

I had thought that receiving the book would be so anticlimactic that I would be entirely unimpressed. I was wrong.

November 1, 1985: I attended a concert by Jorge Bolet; see notes on this concert in the music section.

November 16, 1985: The second time this year, I went to the St. Louis Gallery of Art. See the section on the visual arts for news about this visit.

November 16, 1985: I do not know what it is that causes me to deserve such generosity from friends, but on this date, my friend, Karen Presley, gave me the best-sounding 12-string guitar I have ever heard. It is an Alvarez, with more bass to it than even the best of Gibsons. I have, since receiving it, spent many an hour playing it. No; Baumli is not going to revert to his olde folk-singing days. This time, it is for private enjoyment, and perhaps the barding of a few friends.

November 25, 1985: I attended a concert by The Hungarian State Symphony, conducted by Adam Fischer, and appearing with Jeno Jando. See notes on this concert in the music section.

November 26, 1985: Abbe and I threw one hell of a party, complete with good music, dancing, food, and the kind of debauchery that only seems to happen in Baumli's presence. People seemed to enjoy the huge bonfire the most, the only problem being that people often were gathered in circles around the fire, only to suddenly realize that they were gathered around Baumli, who was in a rather effervescent mood that night.

December 10, 1985: On this day, I unwittingly reckoned further with my battle with dog flesh. Yes; many of you are quite aware that Baumli has a difficult time with dogs. It is not that I hate them; quite the contrary, I find them to be generally quite benign and loveable. The problem, very simply, is that I am quite allergic to their odor. More than one encounter with these olfactory factories has given me an incapacitating migraine. Of course there have been instances when dogs have aroused in me a passion akin to hatred. For example, some years ago I went to visit a friend, and upon getting out of my car, was immediately accosted by a leaping, pouncing, drooling animal of perhaps ninety pounds, that slavered upon me until I was soaked, and smeared my clothes (I was wearing a white shirt and white slacks) from shoulder to toe. And as if this was not bad enough, this particular creature was afflicted with a mange that was so bad the wretched animal was

dripping pus from a dozen putrid, psoriatic sores. I do not know, given this gruesome encounter, whether I felt more pity or more hatred for this dog. I was then aware, however, and have long been aware, that dogs on the whole must be one of the most miserable species on this earth. Blessed with a wonderful sense of smell, they yet are condemned to close proximity to the most foul of odors which, since emitted by their own bodies, can not be blamed on anything else, a situation which I suspect is as humiliating as it is painful.

Of course, I present these statements about dogs as something of an introduction to my experiences with Pacino, Abbe's ageing dachshund, which moved in when Abbe did. Over the last year, I have evolved an intricate and amazingly accurate vocabulary in my dealings with Pacino. On more than one occasion, terms such as, "sphincter dog," "flesh," "piece of carrion flesh," "flesh of the dog," and such, have been liberally interchanged with "Pacino," all during my many dealings with this animal. I say "many." You see, Pacino's sphincterial habits require that she be "walked" four times a day. May I presume that you understand: "walked" is a term which politely describes the task of taking Pacino out so she can do her primal squat, depositing a perfume called "Essence of Dawg" all over the southeast corner of my yard. Of course this innocent activity does not seem so taxing in and of itself, but realize, that with Abbe working away from home, and with me doing my work at home, the task of "walking" Pacino devolved upon me. Four times a day, at five minutes per walk; that is 20 minutes per day, or 121 hours and 40 minutes per year. Time spent walking a dog that could otherwise be spent writing a novel or in some other way embellishing my immortality. And as if this inconvenience were not trouble enough for me, I was further faced with several very overt manifestations of weak character in this canine animal. For example, if it were tied outside, it would yelp constantly, seemingly unable to enjoy the spectacle or ambiance of the great outdoors. And it could not be left to run free outside; it would run straight into the path of a vehicle, seemingly unaware of its own mortality. This dog, Pacino, would, rather than being outside--whether free or tethered--prefer to stay in its room, ~~huddled~~ snuggled under a blanket where it was content to stay for hours, quiet and unmoving, except to indulge a rhythmic thumping of its leg against the floor as it would scratch at fleas.

Snake dreams

Of course, all the unpleasant situations above described were transient and disparate. Occasionally, some of these situations, aided by the vagaries of nature, had a cumulative effect which did no small assault to my sensibilities. For example, given that the prevailing winds where I live are from the northwest, Pacino's fecal arena was in the southeast corner of the yard, thus to keep the odor away from the house. This arrangement was tolerable enough, and even quite unannoying during the early part of the winter, given that a cold snap caused all of her fecal deposits to freeze solid, and thus be without odor. This relative peace, however, was broken by a sudden thaw during which temperatures climbed daily to the mid-fifties. During this time, the accumulated feces all thawed at once, and the result was almost unbearable. For one and one-half weeks, there was not a sparrow or songbird in sight. Fortunately, the prevailing northwesterly prevailed; had it not, I suspect I would have had to leave the premises for at least a week.

I must say, however, that even in withstanding such difficulties as I describe, I have been relatively fortunate in my dealings with this animal. I judge my fortune by comparison to the encounters she has had with other people. For example, at one time, this dog, in company with its owner, shared a house with a cat and that cat's owner. This cat did not have to be walked, since it had a litter box. Cleaning the litter box, of course, was no small or pleasant task for the owner; however, upon Pacino's moving in, cleaning said box became less of a task than before. Now it only had to be emptied and cleaned when it became soaked with the cat's urine. As for the more solid particles, Pacino would notice the cat go into the other room, and her ears would prick up at the scratching sound the cat made. But, lazy dog that she was, she would not be up to check out the possibilities of a meal, but rather, would wait until the olfactory message announced the choice. If the elimination had been solid, Pacino's nose would be seen to twitch quickly, whereupon she would be up and scrambling quickly to the other room, there to snatch the yet-warm morsel, and greedily gulp it down.

But I will desist in this description, before someone accuses me of trying to make out this little doggie to be a scurrilous cur. A person might, of course, suggest that my lengthy description has thus far been less than fair to Pacino, given that, for all of her irritating habits, she is a simple, loveable creature deserving of affection. Likely my description has,

most verily, been unfair. If anything, I have been this unfair to allow my readers, if they are perceptive, to divine what a scurrilous cad I have been.

Yes, a cad; because, on this day, December 10th, Pacino died. Since both Abbe and I were gone this day, she had been tethered outside. Rather than staying inside her doghouse, she went across the yard chasing a morsel of food that was just beyond the reach of her tether. There, at the end of her tether, she wrapped her rope around the root of a large weed, and could not get back inside her house when a freezing rain began falling.

That night the roads were terrible. Abbe stayed in Columbia so she would not have to drive to work the next morning. I drove home, stopped at a neighbor's house on the way, and discovered that the freezing rain--with ice accumulating on the electric and telephone lines--had knocked out nearly everyone's electricity and phones. I drove on home, and discovered little Pacino, frozen to death.

My electricity and phone still worked. I managed to let Abbe know; she asked me to bury Pacino that night. I spent more than an hour outside, from about midnight until 1 A.M., digging her grave. It was a sobering experience. As I dug, the rain kept freezing on my shoulders. All around me, limbs weighed down by ice would suddenly break, with a snap loud as a pistol report. There were no lights to be seen off in the distance; the ice had taken out the wires. There was no traffic to be heard, either on neighboring roads or from the highway about one mile away. I was afraid--very sad about this little dead dog, and very aware that a slip on this slick ground could easily mean that I would be dead too. Inside the house, Dacia--as upset as I was about Pacino's death--had at last fallen asleep. The house, snug and warm, complete with electricity and phones that had not failed, looked very secure and inviting; but I stayed outside, delving through the frozen ground, until Pacino was safely interred.

When I had finished, I came back inside, and picked up the phone to call a friend. By now the phone was dead. But at least we still had electricity. After a couple of hours I went to bed and slept.

The next few days were not easy. I think I was more upset by Pacino's death than Abbe was. Abbe's sadness lasted longer, of course; but it seems that somehow, in the course of caring for this little animal's needs, attending to her "walks" and feeding and watering daily, I had come to care emotionally. Toil of the hands means an opening of the heart; caring for physical needs means that the soul begins to care also. I was humbled, and hopefully, chastened.

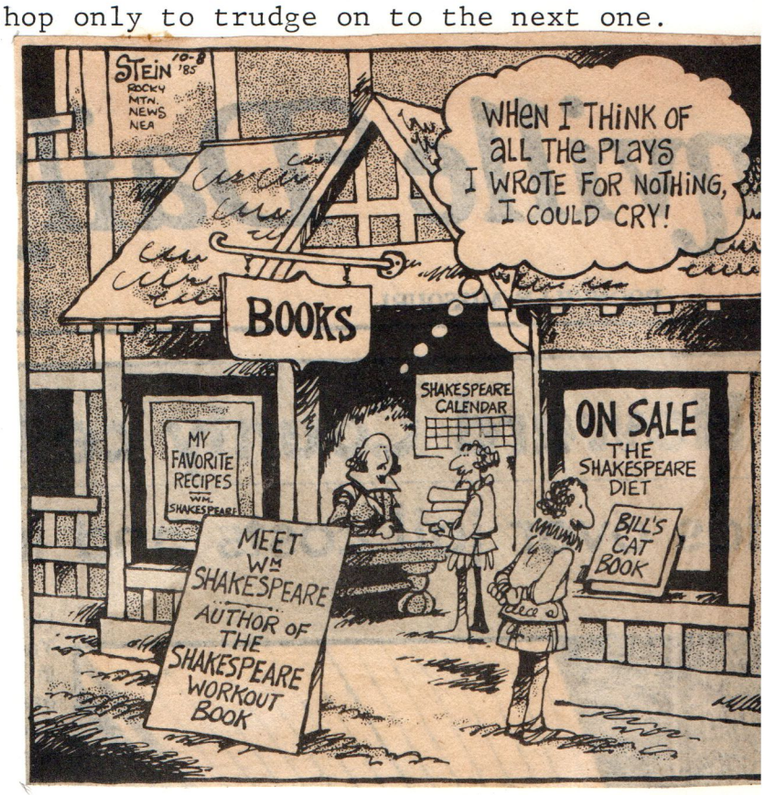
For the next several days, Dacia stayed home from school because the buses did not run. Abbe had difficulty getting back and forth from work, and my own work was made more difficult because it took the phone people more than a week to repair our phone. When they at last came, they worked on the phone for more than an hour before concluding that the line between the road and the house was bad, with absolutely no connection. They finally put in a new line.

It was not until the repairmen were leaving, pulling away in their truck, that my gaze drifted over to where Pacino was now buried. And the realization came to me, somewhat unconsciously, in such a way that I knew it fully before I even allowed myself to think it. I remembered when the people had come, just a few years before, to put in my new, private line; yes, they had laid the line in the ground, and I had dug Pacino's grave directly over that line. I had cut my own phone line when burying her.

I should have known. I would be fighting it out with that ~~piece/of dog/flesh~~ dog even after she had died. I fear that my penance will be deservedly eternal. Henceforth, it seems, I may have to undertake a completely new definition of the axiological nuance of my lame cosmology, all because of one dog's death.

December 16, 1985: This date marked the "official" publication date of my anthology on men's liberation, Men Freeing Men. Since the book had actually been out for several weeks at this point, the date was rather irrelevant. However, at this point, I was already confronting some new tasks with regard to the book. For one thing, the awesome task of promoting the book began to make itself known. And my horrible fear of getting swallowed up in this task also made itself known. I have watched many an author, after publishing a single book, bow to the demands of publisher, friends, reviewers, and public, and go forth to do the obligatory television talk-shows, radio spots, personality plugs with the celebrities, lectures, symposia, and such. In so doing, it seems these people, for the most part, cease being authors. Some of these people, in fact, as long as five years later, are still plugging their books. The smorgasboard of promotional appearances soon narrows down to one main dish--a protracted, seemingly infinite number of workshops in which they present certain ideas of their book, do a cutesy little twist with the workshop participants to make those ideas somehow fun or impactful or memorable or entertaining, they collect their fee for the workshop, talk eloquently about the next book they are planning to write any

month now, and then leave that workshop only to trudge on to the next one. Weary, drained, unable to create, malnourished by their work, they soon lose both the drive and the ability to go on and do another book.



Such inanition of the soul I have pledged to avoid. I have worked, and am working, to promote my book, but I can not whore out my soul forever. As I told a friend, who was trying to get me to make appearances in as many college classes as possible, "Look, I'm willing to be a whore, but I can only spread my legs so far." Put in a very different way, I realize that the writer's first duty is, not to promote what he has written, but to continue writing.

I have put out a good book, and I have given it a good boost when it comes to promotion. Now, it is up to the gods, my publisher, other men in the movement, and, since this book is intended as a text for men's studies courses in college, it is also up to the professors. It is possible, however, that the professors will be less than loyal to this book. When I was at the men's studies workshops at the National Conference on Men and Masculinity, I heard the professors there saying, over and over, that they are tired of pop psychology works on men, that they want some serious academic stuff. This would be okay by me, except that I know professors too well. When they say, "serious academic stuff," I know they are talking about stuffy, soul-killing, pedantic works that would put the gods to sleep. Sure enough, I have seen some of the syllabii for courses offered by these professors. Most of them were very disappointing--just a rehash of the same, old, dry issues: "buckets full of dried cobwebs," as my friend Silly Billy observed. I even asked one of these professors, who was teaching a men's studies course, what kind of text he wanted. "Something less personal; more objective," he said. Just as I had feared. Another professor sent me a notice of a new anthology on men's studies he was putting together, asking that I submit something for consideration. I sent him two articles. He rejected them, stating simply, "These are too personal for a serious anthology."

Count on a gaggle of professors to mess up a good thing.

I think it was seeing this pedantic fixation among the men's studies professors that caused me, five years ago, to realize that a new men's liberation anthology was needed. It would go beyond popular psychology books because it would be emotionally authentic instead of treating emotions as baubles and trinkets; but it would avoid pedantry by remaining personal, candid, impassioned.

In fact, about six years ago--before I began work on Men Freeing Men--I wrote a short article discussing the need for a new anthology on men's issues. Toward the end of this Aviary, this article is reprinted; it may help put my present anthology, Men Freeing Men, in a somewhat more meaningful context.

One final note about Men Freeing Men: some people have been disappointed, a few have been angry, because I am not giving free copies of the book to all my friends and relatives. Perhaps I can explain. Very simply, I have no more free copies to give away. I have to buy copies of the book myself. And at this point, I have spent more than enough on the book--more than two thousand dollars just in 1985! So please understand. If anyone might be in a position, at this point, to be generous when it comes to Men Freeing Men, it is yourself. You can purchase copies of the book from me. I will pass along, to my relatives and friends, the discount that is available to me. But I am not financially able to go beyond this in terms of generosity.

Generally, many other things of note happened in 1985 which can not be clearly dated:

1. Early 1985, around February or March, I went through something of an identity crisis with regard to my association with The Coalition of Free Men. Disagreements arose over its philosophy, and the organization's way of stating that philosophy. The disagreements were quite painful, given how closely I identify myself with that organization. In the articles section

of this issue is a letter to the editor of Transitions, which will best explain what this conflict was about.

2. During the early summer--May to June--the 13-year cicadas came out. It was a riot of song, mating, and dying. A vivifying and profound experience.

3. During the latter part of 1985, I agreed to become an associate editor of Transitions; I do not know how long this job will last, but I look forward to helping make Transitions a better publication.

4. I had said in last year's Aviary that I would be going into the hospital during 1985 for treatment of multiple sclerosis; however, I did not do this. The treatment is too experimental, has too many adverse side-effects, and simply did not seem worth the risks.

5. I had hoped, during 1985, to do some more painting. Plans for this did not work out. The main problem, probably, was that I talked about it. If I have not already begun a particular project, then talking about doing that project is usually fatal; I never begin it. Perhaps one of these years, after I feel sufficiently removed from the shackles of my prediction, I will get back to it.

Without doubt, I was somewhat discouraged at painting, too; I had done what I believed was a wonderful painting of a woman's vulva. My medium had been ink and poke-weed berry juice only. A friend had predicted that the purple would fade, and she was right. Alas, to see my masterpiece disappearing before my eyes. I suppose da Vinci would have understood.

6. It was quite significant for me that, in 1985, I did no counseling. While this was a profession I enjoyed immensely, the demands from clients were just too taxing; the feeling of always being "on call" was too distracting from my writing.

Now, with hindsight, I think I also was becoming weary of the lack of professionalism in many of the 'professionals' I dealt with. At least 95% of the attorneys I worked with in my forensic counseling were so unethical, that often I found myself fighting with them for my right to give truthful evidence; this was not my idea of how to help clients.

Also, other therapists tended to disappoint me. I am schocked, truly, at the lack of professionalism in many therapists, their unwillingness to respect confidentiality of clients, their lack of training, their lack of fervor when it comes to dealing with difficult clients, the classism (calling poor clients "dirt balls" and "road kill"), and their inability to admit to their own personal failings and how these emotional conflicts may affect their ability as counselors. To give but one example of this latter failing: I was discussing methods of sex-therapy with a counselor in Columbia, Missouri, who bills herself as a Masters and Johnson sex-therapist. I had never thought she was a very good therapist, but on this particular occasion, I had one small bit of evidence to explain why I felt this. In the course of discussing several aspects of sex-therapy, I casually alluded to anal intercourse, whereupon this respectable lady clacked her knees together with such force that not only did the sound hurt my ears, I fear she might have splintered a femur, had it not been for the girdle of flesh that amply cushioned her reflex.

7. I was very glad to be able to finish Volume 8 of my lenthy work in philosophy: A Phenomenology of Pseudo-Sentient Aeschatology. Upon finishing it, I immediately embarked on the 9th volume, and also have begun work on a lengthy appendix. Also, by way of writing, I finished a book of short stories called, The Analonus Quartet.

8. Still, during 1985, there was the on-going issue of the phone. This issue, as stated above, was the one which aroused so much ire among friends when I discussed it in last year's Aviary.

Let me try to make a few things more clear about what I want, and need, when it comes to the phone. The main thing I ask for, and I would even be content to ask for no more than this, is that when people call, they politely ask me if this is a good time for me to talk. Truly, I can not understand what is amiss in other people's minds when they call me up and begin with words to the effect, "Well, I finally found a free hour, so I thought I'd

call you up and talk a while." They then proceed with a five-minute monologue, without once asking me if perchance I happen to have a free hour also. It then devolves upon me to interrupt these people if I do not have free time, inform them so, and then, it always seems that they are hurt if I am in the midst of something else. It does not matter if I happen to be on my way out the door, already late for an appointment. It does not matter if I am sitting down to supper, or helping Dacia with her homework, or talking with Abbe, or listening to music; no, the fact that they dialed my number seems to mean that the universe is suddenly organized so that I am at their beck and call. A few years ago, when Dacia had the flu, a woman friend called, and just as I said hello, I heard Dacia begin vomiting. I said to my friend, "I'll call you back later; Dacia has the flu and just began vomiting." I hung up, called her back within half an hour, and ... yes, her feelings were hurt, because I had not been able to talk to her. She understood, of course; but still, somehow, by a twist of ratiocinative limbic logic that even she could not explain, her feelings were hurt, and now that her feelings were hurt, it was up to us to talk it through, since I was now paying for the phone call.

I suppose that part of the reason people get so upset when I can not talk to them, when they reach me by phone, is that they have such a difficult time ever getting in touch with me. They have this trouble because a great deal of the time my phone is unplugged. This is partly because Abbe and I are on somewhat different schedules; if the phone were plugged in all the time, one of us would be awakened by the other person's calls. But the main reason the phone is unplugged is because I simply do not have the time or energy for all the calls, especially business calls, that pour in. Many evenings I will plug the phone in, say, at eight o'clock. Between eight and ten, five or six calls will come in, taking up all of that two hours. By then I am tired, and I simply unplug the phone. I am sorry if this makes it hard for my friends; I am especially sorry because this means that I do not get to receive calls from many people whom I would very much enjoy talking to. But very simply, I have my limits. Some of this is caused by the damage this multiple sclerosis has done to my hearing. I have to wear cotton in my ears all the time to filter out the high sounds and the loud sounds; a phone has many high-pitched hisses and such, and trying to hear a voice through all the interference becomes physically demanding and ultimately tiring. But even without this physical handicap when it comes to the phone, I think I would be setting similar limits.

Why so many phone calls? Too many of them come from business associates who would rather spend ten dollars making a ten minute call than ten minutes writing the same thing out in a letter. And most of these business calls are quite unnecessary. Abbe has pointed out to me that whenever she takes a call from a man, and he acts as though getting in touch with me is an absolute emergency and must be done immediately, she knows it is someone in the men's movement. Why all the emergency? I swear, I can not understand why someone will phone me from New York three times in an evening to let me know that a review of Phyllis Chesler's latest book appeared in such-and-such magazine, and shouldn't we write a letter to the editor protesting their printing said review? Maybe we should; but letting me know this situation by letter, and thus delaying things a couple of days, is probably not going to expedite the publishing of this letter to the editor.

Friends have said, "It would help if you would just answer your phone so we know you're alive; if you don't want to talk, all you have to do is say so." Well; it is not so simple. Saying "no" to a dozen phone calls in two hours can be just as wearying as going ahead and talking to half a dozen people in those two hours. Besides, all the people to whom I say I cannot talk want to know when I <u>can</u> talk. And discussing that issue can become a major conversation in and <u>of</u> itself.

Why do so many friends call? Well; this broaches another topic, which I do not want to dwell on; I will, however, put it briefly. It seems that so many people in this world are bereft of friends, that I am their only--yes, <u>only</u>--friend. A fact which, I assure you, I feel neither angry nor cynical about. So many, many times, someone has said to me, "You know, you're the only one in the world I can really talk to," or, "You're the only one in the world worth being my friend." This, often from people whom I scarcely know! People with whom I have had a few somewhat intimate conversations, but no true baring of the souls, no basis upon which to build trust.

To such people, when they declare their friendship, I protest, "But I do not have the time to be your only friend. Nor do I think I can give that much." Which, rather than deterring them, only impresses them the more, given that I am so honest. Such candor, they are sure, must, despite my words to the contrary, vouchsafe the most absolute declaration of undying friendship.

So please understand; when I unplug my phone, the frustration is felt not only by people who would like to contact me; I also experience frustration,

since the plethora of calls keeps me from being able to talk to the people I would really like to hear from.

Courtesy--simple courtesy! This is all I ask for from people who call! Give me this, and you will not hear Baumli protesting so much the demands of the telephone.

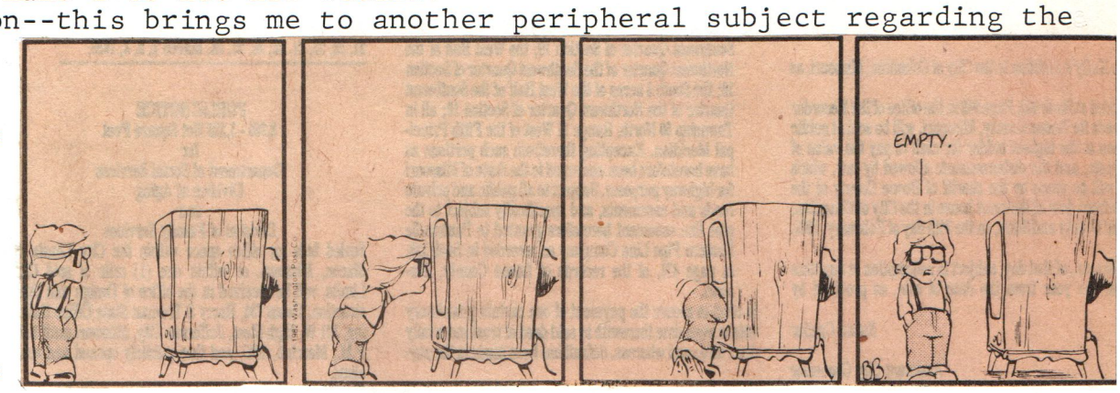
If this lengthy diatribe causes some of you to again be angry at me, then this year, in your angry letters and phone calls, please, along with expressing your anger, answer a few questions for me. Why, for example, is it you call me up and expect me to take out perhaps as much as two hours to talk to you, without your even asking me if I have the time, but you would not expect me to take out this much time if you came by and interrupted me at my work? Why is it you so angrily condemn me for not phoning, and yet in no way judge yourself harshly for never writing? How is it, for that matter, that you can afford to spend so much money on long-distance calls?

Answer me other things too, if you will. Why are people so discourteous, even rude, when talking on the phone? Many is the time I phone people, and right in the midst of my talking to them, they begin talking to someone who is in the room with them. They expect me to know that they are now directing their words to someone else, without their even having said so. Or--and this is something I experience a great deal when calling attorneys or medical doctors--I will be in the midst of a phone call, likely long-distance, and they will suddenly say, "Hang on," and start talking to someone else, without it ever occurring to them that they might say, "Do you mind hanging on for a minute?" or, "Would you please wait a minute while I say a word to someone else?" Sometimes I do not want to hang on; sometimes I would rather hang off and let them call me back. I, at the very least, would like the courtesy of being given a choice. But, henceforth, when people do this--when people say, "Hang on," without being polite enough to ask if I am willing to do so, I will simply hang up. I would be polite enough to tell them I am hanging up, if I had a chance to do so, but since they have delimited that chance, I simply hang up and thus mirror to them their lack of considerateness. If they call me back, then I will tell them very clearly why I hung up.

Answer me too, if you are angered by this epistle, why it is people feel they have a right to take such liberties with my own phone? More than once, I have called people, and someone else in the house--usually friends when there is a party--takes the liberty of picking up an extension phone and joining in the conversation, without asking. Little does it matter to them that the phone call might be expensive, private, or simply none of their business. They somehow think it is their right to join in what they presume is the "fun."

Am I being overly rigid, overly protective about my fragile autonomy, to protest what I term such rudeness? Tell me then, how I am amiss in protesting the fact that a few months ago, when my phone rang during a social gathering, a friend who was present picked up the phone and began doing an imitation of a British maid answering the phone for her absent master. Now, if it could be presumed that the person calling was a good friend in a jocular mood and ready for play, then such behavior would not be amiss. But such conditions can not be presumed. A variety of people call my phone number--Abbe's patients, sometimes my former patients, current business associates, newspeople, my scarcely sophisticated neighbors who are simple farmers, along with many friends--some of them with play on their minds, and some not. As it turned out, the person calling me, who was answered by this surrogate secretary, was not in the mood for such jocularity, and was very upset by it. As was another person who called my number some time ago, and three times hung up when she reached a different surrogate secretary, who was testing his tongue by trying to sound like a telephone answering machine voiced by a television character whose name I do not now recall.

Television--this brings me to another peripheral subject regarding the phone: people so often make phone calls because they are bored. Many times people have told me, outright that they called me because they were bored and had nothing else to do! As if this is not insult enough, they go on to ask me if maybe I can help them. Help them?!? Yes; usually I can, by not talking to them, given that I think increasing people's discomfort with their own boredom is likely the only way they will ever get off their duffs and get moving fast enough to leave their boredom behind them.



More than once, a variation of the following conversation has taken

place when someone called me:

"Hello?"

"Yeah. Uh, hi. This is so-and-so. Uh." (There is a pause.) Uh; I was sitting here, you know, not much on my mind, and, uh," (another pause, of maybe ten seconds), "I thought I would call you and see what you're up to."

"Well; I have been ... ." And I go on to say a few words about what I have been doing of late. "What's up with you?"

"Like I said; not much. Uh," (another pause), "uh, yeah, just," (another pause), "what did you say?"

"No; the question is, what did you say."

"Oh; hah hah. Yeah. Well," (another long pause), "uh, yeah."

"What are you doing? Why did you call?"

"Oh; I'm not doing anything. I was just sitting here watching some tv, and it was a boring show so I thought I'd call you."

"So are you still watching it?"

"Uh," (another long pause--and now I know what explains all the long pauses), "not really."

"But the show's still on, right?"

"Yeah?" The voice begins to sound suspicious at this point.

"And you're sitting in front of the television?"

"Yeah?" Again the admission is a question.

"Well; I'd appreciate it if you would either turn it off, or call me back after it's finished."

"But like I said, it's just a boring show."

"Yeah; and your boring show is making this a boring conversation."

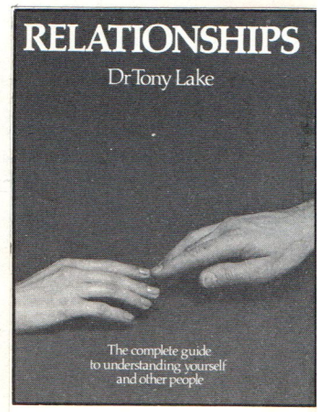
Etc.

Dear reader, friend, associate--are you beginning to get the point? Realize, I had to unplug my phone on Christmas Eve--which I was wanting to spend with my family, because business--yes, business--calls began coming in. They would begin, "Hey! I thought I'd catch you at home tonight! Listen, about that conference we've been ... ."

Enuf?

9. As in 1984, my war against slatternly language used to describe love has continued. Specifically, I have continued to wage battle against those who use the word, "relationship," in a generic way while presuming that it has a specific denotation: "love relationship." Not only do they thus use the word wrongly, but they accompany such usage with a sniveling and whining that feels like a wire brush across my soul.

Why do I protest using the word, "relationship," in this way? Perhaps it is because I am something of a purist with language. Likely it is because I am aware of how language affects thinking and conduct. When language is thus used wrongly, it has a malignant toxicity which pervades and gives direction to many a social disease--in this case, the disease of being unable to give emotional importance to any aspect of one's life except one's romantic attachments. The romantic relationship becomes the only relationship worthwhile; soon, to this demented way of thinking, it is the only relationship that exists. People then, conducting themselves in this way, walk about like lobotomized cabbages, drifting timorously in the direction of any possibility of a sexual encounter, unaware of any other avenue of self-expression, all their passion atrophying to the point that it becomes a cancerous bile, a putrifying sac of decayed emotions, which can only be lanced by another--yes, another--relationship, i.e., a love relationship, which of course will soon enough go bad, given that a loving relationship can not hope to contain the acidic drippings of so much sepsis.



Relationships
$11.95 paper

I suppose my dealings with people who use the word "relationship" wrongly would go more easily, be more productive, were I able to deal with it in a more calculated manner. The problem is, however, that when someone says something to me like, "I would be so much happier, if only I had a relationship," I always reply, "But you have thousands of relationships! How can you be so naive?" These people, already aware of my disapproval of thus using the word generically with an improperly implied specificity, think I am challenging or insulting them. Not so; perhaps I would at this point proceed with a challenge, but truly, when I first hear the word used generically, I can not seem to take up the habit of realizing people intend more (or less) than they say. Let me give an example.

One morning, sitting in a small cafe, I had just been introduced to a fellow by a mutual friend. The fellow I had just met sat down across from me and, looking at me closely as if inviting immediate rapport--mutual intimacy--said, "What do you think about relationships?"

I brightened. I thought to myself that here is one of those rare people who are interested in metaphysics, and are just as comfortable

discussing weighty matters at breakfast as mulling them over during an evening seminar. I rose to the opportunity, and launched into an enthusiastic monologue. While this monologue might seem to have eclipsed any awareness of the other person, I assure you it did not. I went on to speak for about two minutes, enrapt as I was by my own observations: as I spoke, I was surprised at how closely my views resembled Santayana's in his book, The Realm of Essence. I then began talking about how I saw Santayana's doctrine of determinate relations as a precursor to recent set theory and the epistemology of Quine. Then, just as I began subjecting my entire thesis to the scrutiny of Godel's theorem, an examination which would not have occupied more than another minute, thus limiting my entire monologue to a time-span of no more than three minutes--a time-span brief enough, surely, to exonerate me from any charges of egocentricity--my recent acquaintance suddenly turned rather white, looked over at our mutual friend, and said, "What's with this guy?"

My friend Jim said, "Well Jim," (he was a Jim too), "you've got to make yourself clear with Francis."

But the new Jim was angry. "Hell," he said, "I'll bet he's never even had a relationship."

They soon left, my friend Jim very embarrassed, my acquaintance Jim very surly.

By then, of course, I realized what had gone wrong. But damned if I can get it through my head, so that when words are thus misused, I can immediately spot the problem and set it aright, instead of first embarrassing the other person by thus mirroring to them the paucity of their world-view.

It seems that this limited world-view, given its oncological greed, has so pervaded the world that people who believe themselves to be of an exploratory mind, are using the confines of this conception as a point of departure into what they believe are new realms of the psyche. I personally know one counselor in southern California who is fielding some new therapy workshops using, as a novel gimmick, the promise that people can learn to have a "relationship!!!!!" (his Pollyannaish emphases) with things as varied as, for example, their piano, or their car, or their boss. This counselor believes he is imparting to these potential clients a profound insight, a new trend. He says, "Did you know that you can have a relationship with someone besides your wife, lover, or girlfriend, and still be monogamous?"

But I should not ridicule his approach. If indeed people's world-view is thus so limited, then he surely is doing them a service. And if he has figured out a way of thus making money off of these axiological xenophobes, then good for him ... and them.

During 1985 I learned that there are three other words that now, when used generically, have a presumed specificity. The words are: "interested," "personal," and, "problems." Let me illustrate.

As for the first word, it now is the case that when people say, "I am interested in you," what they should say--if they want to reflect their intentions--is, "I am interested in getting to know you sexually." In my days of innocence, prior to this year when I discovered the misuse of this word, many was the woman who was apparently making sexual overtures to me that never hit their mark. For example, not too many years ago, a certain young woman named Rosa, whom I had known for some months, approached me in private and in a quavering voice said, "Francis; don't you know that I've been interested in you for months?"

I replied, "Yes; of course, it's been quite obvious all along." My reflections went back to the many discussions we had shared about Plato, and how, yes, quite certainly, this woman found me more than a little interesting.

"Obvious?" Rosa asked, blushing red.

"Quite," I replied.

She then stared at me with a look of sheer terror. "Aren't you," she stammered, "going to say anything else?"

"Why?" I asked. "Is this upsetting you?"

"Yes it's upsetting me."

"Why?"

"Because I'm interested in you."

"Well," I tried to think of something more to say, "I should hope you are."

Perceiving that my every rejoinder had only added to her discomfort, and believing myself incapable of calming this unexplainable terror, I excused myself on the basis of other, pressing obligations, and took my leave.

An unfortunate woman, this Rosa; had she tidied up her grammar, she might have spared me this confusion and realized her pleasure.

Since learning the singularly intended meaning of this word, I have on more than one occasion divined its misuse. Such misuse is rather easy to detect, given the way people pronounce the word in this context. They do not pronounce it, "in-tĕr-ĕs-tĕd," as the English language demands, nor do they even pronounce it, "in-nĕr-rĕs-td," as does the peasantry. Rather,

their habit of speech when using this word is sorely slothful, as though their already lazy locution, encumbered by a vaguely nervous slavering at the thought of incipeint oral sex, causes their tongue, already weighed down by a coating of thick mucous, to wag clumsily mid-word. Thus, rather than saying, "ĭn-tĕr-ĕs-tĕd," as they should, and unable to even utter the less refined, "ĭn-nĕr-rĕs-td," they pronounce it, "ĭn-ĕr-std," with only three syllables, and no accent on any one syllable, as though the emotional depression they anticipate at being frustrated in realizing the goal of their, uh, "inerst," has lamed their diction to the point that they can barely emit the word, much less modulate it properly.

As for the word, "personal;" it usually comes up in response to a question. For example, I sit down with an old friend, we exchange pleasantries, and then I say something like, "And how is your personal life going?" The respondent immediately begins talking about the person with whom he is involved sexually, or the person with whom he is not involved sexually but used to be, or wishes he could be, or hopes he never will be, or some such. All in answer to my question about his personal life, in which I was not at all querying about his interpersonal life!

But I will not go on about the misuse of the word "personal." Instead, I will briefly mention another word that gives me difficulties for similar reasons. I refer to the word, "problems." This word, if used to describe a situation with two people who are romantically involved, invariably, in the nomenclature of these emotionally dysarthuriatic speakers, refers to but one plaintive situation only, or so it would seem from my haphazard observations. You see,I had for some time noticed that whenever someone says, for example, "Joe and I are having problems," the speaker means not that the two people are sharing problems caused by an outside agent; rather, the problems involve their ways of interacting. This presupposed specificity, when the generic term was used, roused my ire as have other words used similarly. So, I decided to, before judging these speakers overly harshly, make sure that indeed they are incapable of thinking about the word "problems" in any way other than the one I have specified.

To make sure of this, I said to an acquaintance, when he asked me how I was doing, "Well; Abbe and I are having problems," (which we were), "but I don't want to talk about it now. I'd rather talk about something else."

Over the next two weeks, three people came up to me and said, "I hear you and Abbe are having problems?" or some such variation on this question.

Whereupon I would reply, "Yes, we are; but I don't want to talk about it now. It's too depressing." The people would look at me strangely, exchange raised eyebrows with one another, and then shift the subject to their own "problems."

Some weeks later, when I was in company with two of these four people, I said, "Well; I'm glad to report that Abbe and I have finally more or less worked through our problems."

"Oh really?" one of them said. "What was the matter? You never said."

"Well; we were short on money, Abbe's car kept breaking down, and I was immersed in some work that I hated, and we didn't have time to be together as much as we wanted, and it was really hard."

"So all that caused you to have problems?"

"No; they were the problems."

"But I thought you said you and Abbe were having problems."

"We were."

"But what were they?"

"I just told you!"

"But you said you and Abbe were having problems."

"We were."

"Did all the money problems and those things make you come close to splitting up?"

"No. If anything, it brought us closer together. When we were able to find the time to be together."

"But I thought you said you were having problems."

"We were."

"But I thought ... ."

"No you didn't. You didn't think at all. You presumed."

"Uh ... ." He looked off toward his imaginary horizon and blinked.

Cruel of me, yes, to thus subject my friends to my picky hypotheses. How much better it would have been of me to carefully scrutinize their diction, and thus discern when they are using the generic word with presumed specificity. Such scrutiny I have since done, and I am glad to be able to report that such discernment is actually quite easy. When people say the word as, "prŏb-lem," as it should be, they are using it generically and will inject further language to give it specificity. However, when they are using the word improperly, as I have above described, count on their speaking it as, "prâwb-lms," the first syllable getting such an accent as to nearly drown out the latter syllable, which is lucky to come through as more than an incoherent mumble.

But I will leave this analysis of such problematical words be, and

proceed with a digression, or, more accurately, proceed to the main point.

I must confess that my convictions about language being used properly, however strong, are not enough to warrant the lengthy diatribes and harsh condemnations I pronounce against slack-minded and lax-tongued people. No; there is another, very personal, motive behind my pseudo-philological fixation.

Perhaps it is obvious to a few readers that I am angry about something. Not just angry about the use of language, but angry about something more personal. I will try to explain, but I suspect it will be difficult; allow me some latitude here, and I will do my best to be coherent.

Some years ago, January 16, 1981, to be exact, a loving relationship with a dear woman had finally reached the point where the conflict could no longer be withstood, and I parted company with her. The time of grieving that followed that break-up, I refer to a time-period of more than two years, was truly the darkest time of my life. The emotional pain was as though my soul had been burned raw, stripped of its covering, and I walked around, my spirit a huge, suppurating sore. Did I, like so many men, retreat from the world and hide my pain? No. Did I, like so many people, talk endlessly about my loss without ever really emoting? No. On the contrary, I had spent many a year getting in touch with my feelings, learning to express those feelings, and I did my best to express how I felt--all the pain, the horror, even the numbness and dumb bewilderment. To my friends I took my grief and cried, and to them I took my silent horror and merely asked to be comforted in silence.

But, with the exception of a very few, very brief, encounters, I did not find comfort. Why?

The question, "why?" suggests that an explanation is in order. I am not sure I can offer one. But I can relate what I experienced during this time.

With these people, I would barely have begun--with my story, my catharting, my sadness--before I would encounter a response that invited dialogue while denying any sharing, a response that pretended to sympathy by assumming a facile, i.e., false, empathy; in short, I encountered a soul-killing, "me too." These people would respond to my needs, my grief, by talking about their "problems," i.e., their problems with their current, past, yearned-for, romantic relationships.

But I was not talking about such "problems." I was scarcely, as were they, even talking. I was manifestly, undeniably, obviously writhing with emotional pain. And these people (yes; you do indeed detect no small resentment here) would not, or could not, deal with this. Instead, their preferred response was to talk about "problems" when I was mourning a death. And such talk it was! Sometimes I would wait patiently, thinking that this person needs to relieve himself or herself before responding to me; but the patience turned into interminable and lonely waiting. And lonliness before friends was not something I could withstand given the state I was already in. Such talk not only could go on interminably, but it also was so vapid, so lazy, so seemingly without urgency. It was all a maudlin miasma of complaining, of lame lamentation, a gruel of morbid moping and penurious pain. My own statements, my own emoting, was for them but a springboard for talking about their own "problems." (Note that I put the word in quotation marks, thus to indicate their having used the word generically with presumed specificity.) Their eagerness to cancel all I felt with a, "Me too! Let me tell you about ... !" caused me to have difficulty believing

that anyone cared very much about my pain. This difficulty believing such was concretized by a curious realization: These people themselves, as much as they talked about their pain, really cared about it very little! I do not imply, by my words, that their pain did not matter to them; on the contrary, it mattered a great deal. But while it mattered, somehow they did not show a very caring attitude toward their pain, toward themselves. They lamented the loss of passion, or they complained about their current passion, or they yearned so impotently for their imagined passion, and throughout all this they talked so incessantly about this passion that they stripped it of its character and it no longer was passion.

And to hear their talk about passion effectively kill all passion, I realized that there was no room in our intercourse for my own passion.

I do believe these people had a right to express their pain in their own way. But I also believe that when every nuance of one's pain must be verbally acclaimed and analyzed and discussed interminably, then eventually all perspective is lost about that pain, and about other people's pain. There are so many words, there have been so many conversations, the anecdotes have been repeated so many times, that soon one does not know when the pain is small or when it is acute, when it is important but short-lived if expressed, and when it is all-consuming, emergent, and must be given full and unbegrudged attention.

Clearly, these people were so accustomed to the litany of their own multitude of martyrdoms, that they could not halt their murmurings and lend a caring ear when a cry sounded out above the chorus of their monophonic dirge. Yes, I say it--I proclaim it; this time of grieving was horrible enough for me, and the horror became all but unbearable when I over and over sought succor and came away only more depressed and lonely.

The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing, and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is the friend who cares.

by Henri Nouwen

I think I would not have minded the, "me too," response, had it been put forth in a way that invited my own passion--proffering an atmosphere of security, concern, caring. Projecting a sense of anger, fierceness, immediacy, involvement, and--I come back to the word again and again--passion. If they themselves were despairing, then I wanted to witness despair; I did not want to see them weakly telling their tale, puckering their lips over a cup of tea all evening as they poured out the same old story for the hundredth time. One time I recall clearly: I had reached what I felt was the end of my endurance for that pain, and I drove 75 miles to visit a friend, hoping to find comfort. We sat on the floor, me crying, he keeping a safe distance, and he did his best to comfort me by telling me that he knew exactly how I felt, in fact, he could prove to me that he knew exactly how I felt by going into one story after another, telling me all the travails he had experienced over the last six months with the women he picked up at the singles bars.

I tried to protest his stories. I said, "But that is not how I feel at all. I knew this woman nearly three years, and ... ."

His response would be something to the effect, "Well, yeah, but this one woman, she ... ."

Should I have protested the more? Perhaps. But I think I have a right to excuse myself somewhat. Already in a state of despair, how could--why should--I have to come up with the assertive, even aggressive, stance to get what I needed, when the very thing I needed was to be comforted generously--so abundantly befriended--that my sense of helplessness, however spurious, could be salved until I could go on by myself. How, in other words, can one safely clamor for friendship, when the valley of shadows is so frightening one has lost the ability to plead, much less scream?

From these people I only wanted to be comforted; I did not expect anyone to solve my problems or erase the pain. But I did not receive the comfort I asked for, and quite obviously I am angry, resentful.

For a long time, I also was curious. Why did these people find it so hard to put their own stories--their, "me too,"--aside for the sake of my own needs? Are they really that selfish? No; I really do not, and then did not, believe that the difficulty involved selfishness. Rather, I have come to realize that these people did not extend comfort to me because, with regard

to their own complainings, they did not want to feel better! They, in fact, wanted to feel miserable about the difficulties of their current, past, or future love relationships. They wanted their pain, their mediocre misery, because it gave them an identity--it gave them the only taste of passion (albeit soon to be killed) that they could glean from their world. I now realize that when they saw me trying to emote, needing to express myself so strongly, they quite expressly needed to talk the more--partly because it gave them a forum for their own talking, a claim to the passion they were busily interring, but mainly because my attempts at true emoting terrified them. Yes; terrified them. Not because they were frightened of emoting in and of itself, but because they knew that such emoting could be their deadliest enemy. Their enemy, because, if they were to find that, unawares, their proximity to my own emoting evoked in them a similar response, and they were to emote this strongly too, then they might unawares cathart their misery, and suddenly find themselves stripped of all identity, devoid of the one umbilicus that had heretofore given them sustenance and attached them to the world of the living.

Truly, the greatest tragedy for modern man is that, for him, pain is the only route to passion. And the greatest, albeit saddest, comedy is that sexual desire--always disappointed, and therefore painful, because it is expected to carry upon its back the burden of all other desires--is the only path to pain. And the greatest absurdity is that modern man does everything he can to trade away his passion, which challenges him to rise above the spectre of death via the rigors and joys of life, for a false mantra--mediocre complainings about every puerile pain, mediocre complainings that remember pain so faithfully they forget death, and thus deal death to every passion.

10. A final, and scarcely noteworthy event of 1985, has been the continuing presence of an excited throng of voyeurs who constantly monitor Baumli's activities to glean a new encyclopaedic list of real-man qualities. I have done my best to avoid any knowledge of such qualities these people daily record from observing my behavior. I did, quite accidentally however, discover in my yard a scrap of paper which apparently was a rough-draft version of someone's latest entry. It read, "Real-men are not ashamed when they have not the strength to open stubborn jars. They would, however, be ashamed to use those little rubber pads that supposedly ensure a better grip. A real man has no use for such useless trinkets; he goes to his tool-box and gets out his channel-lock pliers."

I do, to some extent, wonder what these people are recording about my attitudes, i.e., a real man's attitudes, on the use of pistols. As stated in last year's Aviary, there is now a proscription regarding other people using guns at my place. This new arrangement has afforded me much peace of mind. I also reported, in last year's Aviary, my ambivalence about owning pistols. To test my feelings around this issue, I put my pistols in a safety-deposit box for one year, never bringing them home, my only contact with them involving my going by the bank to oil them periodically. I did not feel scared or inadequate without them, except one night when I came home late, after visiting a friend who was watching the movie, Halloween on his television. Although I saw only about five minutes of this movie, it was enough to make me want my .44 magnum on my person as I walked from my pickup to the house. Other than this one instance, however, the guns did not preoccupy me. Upon bringing them home, I took them out, did some warm-up shooting, and then on the first timed trial, shot a perfect 500 score with my .44 magnum. That was a good feeling.

Why, some of my friends ask, do I like that .44 magnum pistol? Well; it is hard to explain. Maybe I enjoy knowing that each time I fire off an accurate round, I am proving to myself that I can be on the kick-ass end of a gun that has 1300+ footpounds of energy on the other end, and do this without flinching. Doing this is something of a meditation; you know, perhaps a bit like the Zen archer. Maybe I like the gun because it is unambiguous; it is so powerful it is quite unlikely that it would ever wound someone. With this gun, speed is fine, but accuracy is final--always. Which, and listen before you hastily judge me, puts one hell of a responsibility on me when it comes to sorting out my own ambivalent feelings about guns. Nothing like a lack of ambiguity to challenge, i.e., invite, the clarity of mind that lacks ambivalence.

Meanwhile, this real man is ageing. Real men of course are not upset

by graying hair or a receding hairline; in fact, I rather like both, which have become quite pronounced over this last year.

However, during the latter part of 1985, I did discover a gray hair on my chest. This single gray hair did not bother me in the least; however, it did arouse in me a deep dread of that horror of horrors: the possibility that someday my pubic hair might turn gray.

Understand, real men always dread their pubic hair turning gray. This dread has roots in an atavistic awareness with regard to certain sacred rites performed by way of ensuring the survival of the fittest. I do not here have space to set forth a description of this singularly complex aspect of the collective unconsciousness of real men; perhaps the topic will be broached in a future issue of The Aviary.

NOTICES ABOUT FORTHCOMING EVENTS

This year, I think it would behoove me to say little about my plans for 1986. For a person with a temperament as private as mine, to predict is to paralyze.

Still, a few words about the following:

1. I plan to continue my success of 1985 by doing my best to avoid smokers, and the debilitating effects cigarette smoking has on me. Such avoidance, unfortunately, by itself has redefined some of my friendships. Not that I am so bellicose about the issue as to alienate friends; rather, I simply tend to not visit people as much when they smoke. For example, I have one good friend who lives between Columbia and my home; it is enjoyable to stop and see him for a bit before coming home when I am returning from town. He lives in a house with a large picture window, and when I pull in his driveway, he always walks to the large window to see who has pulled in. What I see, everytime, is this friend reaching into his shirt pocket to pull out a pack of cigarettes. When I am deciding whether or not to drop by, this image always comes to mind, and I have to ask myself: Is it worth getting nauseated, feeling somewhat ill the next day, and having to change clothes and shower the minute I get home? If it is not, then I do not see him. Unfortunate.

And unfortunate for the many people who smoke. I think I have become less of a nag about the issue; I have come to realize, I think, how truly difficult it is for many people to break the habit, and I understand that many of them would stop smoking if they could. Many of them try, of course; one friend tried to stop smoking using Nicorette gum, and now when he smokes he also chews the gum to get the extra nicotine kick--a double habit.

I appreciate the consideration many friends have shown me on this matter. Some people go to another room of their house to smoke when I am there; this helps. Some people go outside their homes to smoke when I am there; this helps even more. But I will not ask people to do this. Sometimes, however, I do state my conditions: if you want me to come by, you'll have to smoke outside, or not smoke at all. Otherwise, you'll have to come visit me, where these rules apply.

"Well, here's your problem, Mr. Schueler."

2. My plans for killing a working television in 1985 still did not work out. Although at one time there were many offers from people of free televisions, now that they know I am going to shoot it up, they hang on to their emotional prostheses fiercely.

Please ... I know that many of you out there have extra ones, old black-and-white sets sitting in your basements, that still work but are never used. Give it to me and I will kill it for you, put it out of its misery. Don't worry; I'll use my .44 mangum; it won't suffer. Just give me one shot; I'll even do it at 80 yards. If I miss, you can take your machine home and I won't ask again.

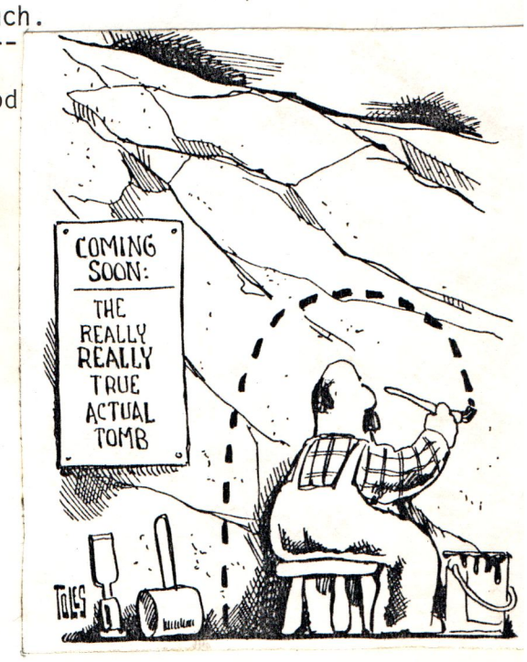
3. As predicted, there were no chili parties for 1985, and I plan none for 1986. Yes; quite a few people were upset about this. In fact, 2½ months before the chili party would normally have taken place in 1985, I was talking to a fellow whom I know on a business basis only, and with whom I meet perhaps twice a year. He asked about the party, I told him there would be none this year, and he literally blew up and started yelling at me. He was just getting to know a woman, he said, and had been looking forward to taking her to my chili party, and now I was really disappointing him, etc. Yes; this man, whom I really don't know very well, was furious. As I before said, one of the main reasons I quit having the parties is because they ceased feeling as though they were my parties.

My other reasons for halting the parties were well explained in last year's Aviary. One reason I forgot to mention: at the last party, three people were observed crushing up crackers and putting them into Baumli's chili. Such behavior is unnatural, and perhaps criminal. Rather like mixing water with good whiskey. Or putting on a prophylactic for oral sex.

4. The philosophy meetings that had been happening at my place were halted during 1985.

Why? The atmosphere, as many people complained, was becoming very competitive and cynical. Antagonism in terms of male/female dynamics was going on too. As a result, quite a few people quit coming, and I ceased to enjoy the meetings as much.

I may, however, hold one meeting in 1986. The topic--actually, the emotional miasma--of my nultheism weighs upon me heavily. I can honestly say that losing a belief in a god was for me, and remains, the most painful experience I have ever had. No loss has been more profound, or more private. I have wondered if holding a kind of grief workshop for those who experience this emotion in the face of a lost god, would be valuable not only for myself but also for others.



My only concern, at such a workshop, would be that people be candid, open, honest. As stated above, the cynicism and verbal fighting were my main reasons for halting the philosophy meetings. I should add that my disappointment--depression--at witnessing other people's dishonesty during the workshop/discussion on jealousy was also a factor which caused me to want to stop the meetings. You see; I knew most of the participants at that workshop quite personally; I knew much about their intimate, somewhat private lives. At that workshop, I knew that more than half the participants were currently having sexual affairs with another person, but not telling their primary "significant other" about it, i.e., lying about it. Yet, from all these people, I kept hearing things like, "If I were to ever have sex with someone else, then ... ." In other words, I heard people lying about some aspects of their own lives that were crucial to the topic at hand. The posturing, needless to say, made much of the dialogue hollow.

Lying to someone you love--I think this is the one sin I can scarcely tolerate.

5. I am hoping against hope to finally, some time in 1986, get my beautiful black car fixed. I am beginning to have sad, longing dreams about driving my 1955 Caddy hearse.

6. Also, 1986 should be a wonderful year for listening to music; attending several major concerts is planned, as is listening to some wonderful recordings.

7. I am planning, in 1986, to quite often put serious pursuits aside, and indulge the hedonistic life. While my desk groans beneath the weight of work awaiting me, I will on many an occasion be lying out in the sun, consuming large quantities of melon and strawberries. Maybe I will smear a couple of quarts of bright red strawberries all over my naked body while warming beneath a very hot sun. Maybe I will dangle a cluster of white grapes before my lips, each grape hanging on the stem like a pendulous but firm breast, waiting to be plucked, bitten, and then the liquid. Yes, and there of course will be ... but no, I must desist in this description; otherwise, I will never finish this edition of The Aviary, and my goodly wife Abbe will never be finished with me.

8. My eye, always sharpened to the aesthetic appeal of cars, has perceived that the next great classic has recently been built. Yes; the 1985 Cadillac Seville is one day going to be coveted as are the 1957 Chevys, the 1959 Caddy convertibles, and such. Problem is, I can not afford to buy one. I therefore extend an invitation: whover would wish to become benefactor to one of aesthetic dimension as profound as Baumli's, is invited to purchase for him a black, 1985 Cadillac Seville. Note: I said 1985, not 1986. Baumli will keep the car in mint condition, driving it very infrequently, and will write lengthy epistles on its aesthetic and erotic merits.

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ON-GOING WORK

1. My multi-volume work, A Phenomenology of Pseudo-Sentient Aeschatology, is progressing well. I am well into the ninth volume, and hope to begin a very lengthy appendix in 1986.

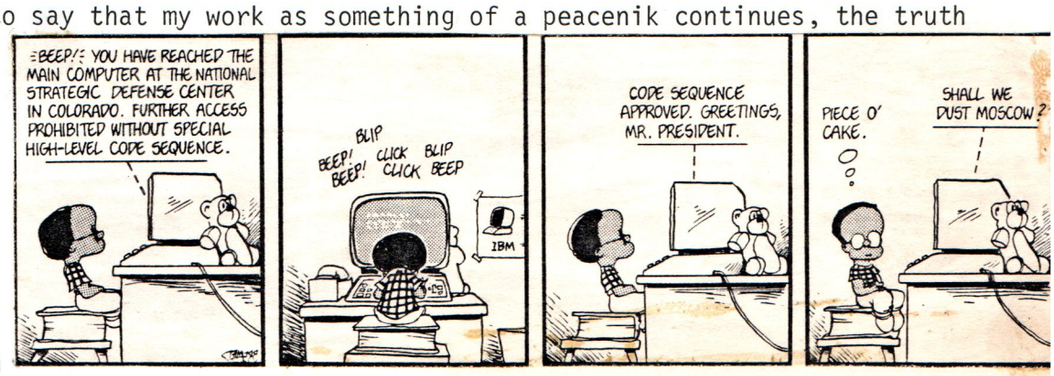
2. I am doing a certain amount of promotional work for my book, Men Freeing Men. I am not going to gear up for so much promo work that it interferes with my other writing, but I am committed to doing a certain amount as time goes by. If I could be realatively sure

that my work would result in sales, I would feel much better about doing it.

3. My work as associate editor of Transitions has been going surprisingly well. I most enjoy trying to set forth the ideology of The Coalition of Free Men in a way that will appeal to both the intellectual and the man whose exposure to ideas is not so frequent. The most difficult, and frustrating, part of the job is taking articles that contain profound, wonderful ideas, and trying to make them readable. I already learned, in the course of editing Men Freeing Men, that good thinking and good writing do not always go together--but my frustration over the fact that they don't has not left me.

4. I will continue my work as Missouri representative for The Coalition of Free Men; my research and writing in men's liberation issues, however, is tapering off, given the work I am doing in phenomenology.

5. While I would like to say that my work as something of a peacenik continues, the truth is that I am working at finding a social milieu within which I can do this. I briefly flirted, this last year, with the group called Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), and at one of their meetings submitted for consideration a resolution for action (see a copy of this proposal in the articles section). The proposal was rejected by a clear majority, however, given that those present believed that their anti-nuclear work, and the credibility they have in this arena, would suffer if their activities regarding disarmament issues were to address conventional weaponry also.



I must admit that my own work is actually more directed against violence and war than it is clearly focused toward what many people refer to as "peace issues." I do not believe I have a surfeit of humility, but truly, until I am a happier, more self-knowledgable person, I do not think I can claim any special knowledge about inner or world peace. So, confining my work to "anti-violence" issues, I primarily have worked at educating a few people to the dimensions of the nuclear threat, and showing how gender conflicts often lead to a psychology which allows bellicosity of such magnitude.

Also, I have attempted to better understand why it is the people of this country allow themselves to be led by politicians (I do not indict our current President only) who clearly do not represent them, whose grasp of world issues is so limited, who care not a whit about the fact that they are supposed to be the representatives of a democratic, peaceful nation. And I think I begin to detect something of an answer. People are so discouraged by the lies and falsehood, that they want to believe something; and in their want to believe, they will accept almost any vestige of the truth, or anything that resembles the truth, as truth's substitute. Our current President, Ronald Reagan, is wonderful at providing substitutes for the truth: he is a sincere man. In fact, he is perhaps the most sincere president we have ever had. He believes in himself fully; he goes to bed at night with a clear conscience, and sleeps easily, because he does not doubt. If he does lie to the American people, he is fully convinced that the lie is for the sake of a higher truth, the common good, a justified end. If he makes a mistake, this also is only a small error which will balance itself in the higher scheme of things. Sincerity--never doubting! Such tranquility!

"You guys are both witnesses . . . He laughed when my marshmallow caught fire."

Conviction and tranquility--they can quite easily be mistaken for wisdom and inner peace. And for a people so hungry for leaders who embody these latter qualities, conviction and tranquility are a close enough substitute.

But I do not want to enter into a lengthy discussion of the psychology of politics. Suffice it to say that I am still seeking a more satisfactory context within which I can work as an anti-nuclear activist. My exhortations to PSR that they attempt to accomplish their ends, not by establishing community respectability only, but also by embodying the charisma that comes of personal authenticity, did not work out. So be it; PSR is still a wonderful organization, with worthy goals and impressive accomplishments. Meanwhile, my own work seeks direction as much as it seeks success.

6. And my translating continues. This is the one aspect of my life which I truly am compulsive about: I make sure that I translate at least ½ hr. per day; this way, I am not likely to lapse into procrastination, which is easily done when bumping my head against a difficult phrase or passage.

Translating Bergson from the French continues at a good pace. Surely it will not be too many more years before I have a book-length selection of his prose ready for the publisher. As for my Latin, this is a different story. As many of you know, I have been working at doing a modern-day translation of Virgil's Georgicon. Virgil I love. Pure genius: as representational as he is formalistic, and in some ways similar to, although certainly greater than, E.A. Poe, I had read many a translation of the Georgicon and had always come away very dissatisfied. I knew I could do it better, and I began. But I believe I have given up on the idea. Why?

The news, toward the end of 1985, that my right eye now is failing too, caused me to carefully assess some priorities. I am aware that to finish translating the Bergson essays I am committed to will yet take several years; finishing the Georgicon would have taken several more years--I had spent about four years already, and was only about half-way through book three. True, I had only 1½ books to go, but the part I had already translated would have to be gone over many more times. Plus there would be notes, comparisons with other translations, and all the preliminaries one must go through before actually getting a book published. I have felt, correctly I still believe, that I simply do not have enough years of eyesight left to do both Bergson and Virgil. So a choice was in order. Being willing to make this choice was very, very difficult, but once I realized that I could not avoid it, the choice between the two men was fairly easy. I love French more than classical Latin, although not more than medieval Latin. The essays of Bergson's I am working on have never been translated; Virgil's Georgicon has been translated many times. I am passionately committed to Bergson's philosophy; Virgil is high entertainment. In short, Bergson was my choice.

Putting Virgil aside, looking at Latin only every few days instead of every second day, was something of a shock to my cerebrum. I began thinking in Latin, almost hallucinating in it at times, as though a kind of compensatory cerebration was necessitated by the lack of sensory input. This tapered off soon enough, but still, now and then, I find myself drawn to the language strongly. I indulge--I open a book, read a while, and put it down. Thus I can enjoy the language, while not feeling as though I am racing against a deadline everytime I take up the language.

"Indulge," I said. Yes; the language is opulent enough that it demands such. Allow me, if you will, to even indulge myself right now; perhaps you will get a sense for the enthusiasm this language arouses in me.

The language is so pregnant; this is what inspires me most about it. It is a language of few words, simply because each word can mean so many, many things. Take the word, "feel," which as noun or verb, has come to occupy a much-used place in the English language. Where might you locate this word in Latin? Well; there is "capere," for instance, which means to feel, receive, conceive, take in, thrill, learn, understand, comprehend. And there is "percipere," which means to feel, take in, thrill, learn, understand or comprehend. "Sentire," means feel too, but it also is likely to mean see, perceive via sensation, realize, experience, be aware of an outside force, intuit, figure out, etc. And "laetitiam," the noun, may entail feeling, beauty, gladness, fertility, grace, joy, delight, happiness, tranquility, and so on. Note how, in the definition of each of these words, there is such a flow between states of passive receptivity and active grasping for meaning, such an interplay between emotion and intellect. This continuity between feeling or emotional states and intellectual states has always suggested to me that, contrary to common opinion among classicists, the Romans were not so logical and intellectualistic, as they were very facil at embodying their feelings directly--vitalistically--with little atrophy of emotion as it becomes, or finds company with, ideation in language and thought.

The upshot of such fertility is that one can go to the Latin and find so much. Taking up a Latin word is like biting into a ripe peach; the juice flows everywhere, and one must drink greedily, quickly, to imbibe it all. Note, for example, this line from the "Ecloga II" of Virgil's Bucolica: lac mihi non aestate novum, ... (actually, I give here but a part of the line). Note; we have but five words. Yet, to hope to capture all the meaning contained herein, one would have to write a great deal. My first attempt might be something like: "my milky-white complexion remains such,
even though the summer scarcely has begun,"
Further refinements of the line would attempt to render the simple resonance Virgil has.

Capturing all the meaning is not always the issue, however; often, there is so much possible meaning, that it takes much, much reflection to discern what is intended by a Latin phrase, especially in poetry as fertile as Virgil's. Take, as another example, this

line from "Ecloga VII" of the Bucolica: ... iam lento turgent in palmite gemmae (again I give but part of the line). I have savored and reflected upon this line many, many times, and I have always come up with three very different translations, all quite befitting the context, no one of which recommends a greater claim to veracity than the others. I here list my three ways of rendering that one pregnant line:

1. "now their udders are slowly swelling out like the buds of a ripening palm tree."
2. "now their udders are slowly swelling out to fill the hand like precious things."
3. "now slowly these lines of my poetry are beginning to grow into the jewels that will take the victory."

Actually, the line probably means all this, and more; hence, the difficulty, and the challenge, of translating Virgil.

I had thought of translating the entire Bucolica, but I must admit that the translations of these little poems generally satisfy me. As for the Georgicon, however, I could not rest easy. I had looked at several translations, and they all had seemed so stilted and artificial. In trying to capture Virgil's meter, his grandeur of style and finesse of poetic license, these translators always attempted to maintain his brevity also. As a result, they captured a modicum of the poetic flair, but lost most of the content. By content, however, I do not meant information only. I also refer to the power and intensity of the emotion, and the gradations of voicing that pleasure the ear, the intonations and resonance that give a musical quality to the original.

But to capture all these qualities, it is not possible to try, as every translator of the Georgicon has, to make English sound like Latin. Latin is naturally elegant and even dignified; English is not. Hence, to try capturing Latin's elegance and dignity with an attempt at elegant and dignified English is to birth an English that is pompous, pretentious, artificial. One thus ends up with a translation that, in its try for accuracy, ends by being dismally inaccurate.

The alternative I have used is to resort to what there is within the English language that can match what is intended in the Latin phraseology. English, for example, does not have elegance, but it does have flair and polish. English scarcely has dignity, but it certainly has the self-prepossession of a confident ease. By rendering elegance into a modest but confident flair, by rendering dignity as self-composure and candor, one can translate Virgil into a naturally beautiful English. No existing translation, however, has done this; I therefore believed that it was up to me to take Virgil's crucible of stately metaphor and pour it into a goodly tankard of sound English verse. Thus I could retain a natural, as opposed to an artificial, beauty in Virgil's poetry; and by so rendering Virgil, the reader, whether or not familiar with Virgil in the Latin, would be able to find a fresh charm in his lofty genius, a charm which can be embraced intimately rather than admired from afar.

But to state strategy, when it comes to translating, is a far cry from succeeding in one's purpose. I knew that embarking upon a translation of the Georgicon would be quite a formidable task; there would be necessitated hundreds of footnotes to explain the mythological and historical subtleties. Moreover, I would have to realize the intentions of my strategy: I would have to embody, in English, both the beauty and all the content of Virgil's poetry. Note I say all the content. I would not confine myself, as have so many translators, to imitating Virgil's rhyme and meter; to do so would be to eliminate too much of the content. As I have said, Latin is quite pregnant, and a five-word line in Latin can almost never be captured in a five-word line in English. Rather than imitating the form of Virgil's poetry, I would render his precise form into a carefully woven free verse. By free verse, I certainly do not mean a flaccid or vapid style that is insensitive or immune to the demands for aesthetic ambiance, demands which no serious reader of Virgil could ever overlook or feel encumbered by. Rather, I mean a style which would be fluid enough, flexible enough, to contain all that Virgil contains. For example, when a line in the Latin suggests two or three meanings which could never be captured by one terse English line, then I would compose a lengthy sentence of several lines which, in language both opulent and succinct, would spell out all those meanings for the reader.

But to thus state my intentions, perhaps I leave my reader disappointed if I do not illustrate. Let me turn to lines 388-392 of the first book. I here give the Latin:

tum cornix plena pluviam vocat inproba voce
et sola in sicca secum spatiatur harena.
ne nocturna quidem carpentes pensa puellae
nescivere hiemem, testa cum ardente viderent
scintillare oleum et putres concrescere fungos.

If I may presume that you are sufficiently familiar with Latin that you can read these verses correctly, then you certainly are aware of the power of the language, and especially of how alliteration and other poetic devices give power to the image Virgil wishes to invoke. Can this image be captured in a few lines of English verse? Let us see how other translators have fared. First, this by Smith Palmer Bovie:

The raven calls for rain, that wretched bird
Who, croaking hoarsely, stalks along the sand
In solitary splendor. And even maidens,
Spinning at their looms, can sense the storm,
When oil starts sputtering in the burning lamp
And a moldy fungus gathers on the wick.

His verse is scarcely accurate to what the Latin states; in fact, for the sake of meter, he positively distorts some of Virgil's meaning, and certainly has lost all poetic power in a passage that should be both highly pictorial and carefully controlled in terms of melodic voicing.

Let us see how L.P. Wilkinson, a much better translator than Bovie, does it:

'Rain, rain,' the relentless raven calls full-throated
And stalks the shore in solitary state.
Even girls spinning their nightly stint of wool
Indoors, are made aware that a storm is coming
When they notice the oil is sputtering in their lamp
And mouldy fungus gathering on the wick.

Certainly this is a better try, but I do not see how,"'Rain, rain,' the relentless raven," captures the alliteration of, "tum cornix plena pluviam vocat." One alliteration is substituted for another, and that is all. The translation contains neither the precise meaning of the poetry, nor the formalistic unfolding of the language. So, how does Baumli do it? His own attempt, not yet polished to what would have been final form had he continued with his translation, proceeds as:

Thereupon the crow, with loud unceasing voice,
hoarsely caws to greet the rain while
stalking solitary on the sandy shore.
Not even by night have maidens, as they
pluck their share of wool, failed to know
the storm approaches, when they see
the sputtering oil in the earthern lamps,
and mark the mouldering snuff that
gathers on the wick.

I can vouchsafe that my rendering is true to Virgil's meaning. As to whether or not it is more successful as poetry, I believe it is, but of course I must not encroach upon my reader's right to be his own judge.

I had thought to give two or three more examples, but glancing back over what I have written on this topic, I find that I have already covered more than two pages, and I must move on to other topics. Moreover, I am aware that not all of my friends have stuck with their Latin; hence, it is possible that some of my readers may be weary of the topic at this point, and others may accuse me of intellectual self-indulgence.

Obviously I miss translating Virgil; otherwise I would not have indulged my topic this long. It is difficult not to regret thus giving up an opportunity for presenting Virgil to readers in a more beautiful light. It is also difficult to bypass what would have been another pleasant aspect of this translation, namely, conveying to readers the practical wisdom of Virgil's poetry. In verse as lofty and beautiful as the Georgicon, Virgil sets forth, for example, a theory of crop rotation that would be edifying to any modern-day agronomist. And his simple bit of advice, that when transplanting a tree or plant, it should be replanted so that its limbs or stems face in the same direction as they did in its nascent locale, is something I have passed on to some botanists I know. They were astounded at how logical the advice was, and at how well it worked when they themselves applied it.

So ... I will leave Latin be, except for an occasional sampling, and be on to French. And fortunately, as I stated above, I do prefer French to Latin. French is a more beautiful language. It is more fluid, more temporal, more tactile--even epidermal. But Latin is, to give it credit, a more fetal language than is French. Its concepts are not fully embodied; one must read the words and then, in a sense, grope back to the concept, which perhaps will then be discovered as nothing more than a vague, atavistic feeling that has been compressed into words. In this sense, Latin is not so rigid as some would claim, but rather, is reluctant before scrutiny because it is so naked. Latin is not so spatial as it is pre-spatial and pre-temporal; not so conceptual as it is half-spoken. Hence, if one gives its mystery--its elusiveness, its due, then there is much to be learned from its pregnant nudity. Just as, if one fondles the French language with familiarity, but handles it lightly nevertheless, then there is much to be enjoyed beneath its veil of voluptuous plumage.

READING FOR 1985

This year I packed 96 books into my brain. As usual, I can look back over the list I read, and see that most of them were scarcely worth my time. But, in keeping with tradition, I here list the best books I read:

1. Men Freeing Men edited by Francis Baumli. Already heralded herein, I surely need say nothing more here.

2. Ham on Rye by Charles Bukowski. Bukowski's novel about his youth, and growing up. Books in this genre generally tend to be very, very bad; the fact that Bukowski could write such a good book about his childhood attests to his genius.

3. Post Office by Charles Bukowski. This is his first novel, written in less than a month; and it is perhaps his best book. I recommend it highly for its artistic merit. I also was struck by Bukowski's portrait of himself as a father. In that portrait, I saw some aspects of his personality that I had never before discerned; namely, it was when Bukowski's wife left him, "Fay got the girl. I got the cat." that he began heading for skid-row. And, more than once, he declares that the only reason he did not commit suicide during that time was because he got to see his little girl regularly.

Over and over, it seems that many of the most salient messages of men's liberation

are to be found in great literature, and not in the popular psychology books.

4. Men Talk: An Anthology of Male Experience Poetry edited by Elliot Fried and Barry Singer. The title describes the book; the poetry is truly wonderful; I reviewed it in several publications, because I would like to see this title being used in the colleges and universities more.

5. Symposium by Plato (translated by Benjamin Jowett). I suppose this work is long enough to be considered a book. It is my very favorite piece of literature; I do not think there is another book as profound, poetic, and inspiring.

In keeping with what I did last year, I will also list the books which I went to with great expectations, and found rather disappointing.

1. Hot Water Music by Charles Bukowski. A book of short stories, rather mediocre compared to Bukowski's usual power.

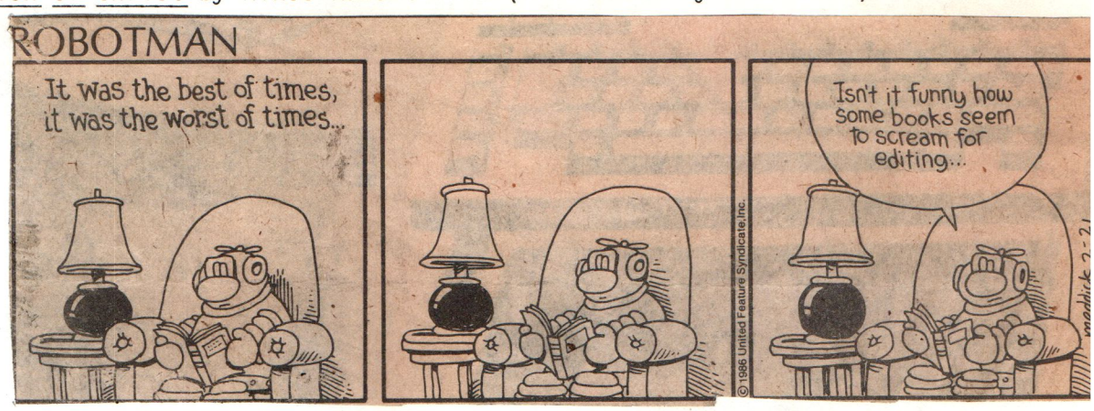
2. Love Is a Dog from Hell by Charles Bukowski. A book of poetry. Bukowski was careless on this one, as though he merely wanted to get another book out. I actually found myself speed-reading some of the poems.

3. War All the Time: Poems 1981-1984 by Charles Bukowski. Also a book of poetry; some of the poems were very lax, but a very few were absolutely great.

4. Women by Charles Bukowski. A novel. Yes; this makes four books by the same author which disappointed me. Bukowski is a great writer. He also seems to be a rather compulsive writer. He seems to write all the time, as though it is a duty, and as a result he turns out some rather mediocre things. It is as though he believes that every time he gets half an erection, he has to do something about it. One suspects that he ends up having a great deal of mediocre sex, and does a good deal of writing which contains his itch but not his inspiration. I become irritated with the constant fixation with women in his books. True, he does not glorify them; but the constant obsession wearies me. I think this is why I liked his books, Post Office and Ham on Rye so much; in them, for a change, he talks about people besides the ones he is fucking.

5. The Iliad by Homer (translated by Samuel Butler). I had not read this book since high school, and remembered that while I then thought it was exciting, I had not been overly impressed with it as a piece of literature. I rather believe that many people judge it great only because they think they're supposed to. It is a terribly violent book, which loses its grisly character only because the slaughter becomes so redundant as to almost bore. Here, I take the book down and ... opening it at random, on page 252, look at what we have: "Idomeneus speared Erymas in the mouth. The bronze point of the spear went clean through it beneath the brain, crashing in among the white bones and smashing them up. His teeth were all of them knocked out and the blood came gushing in a stream from both his eyes; it also came gurgling up from his mouth and nostrils, and the darkness of death enfolded him round about." I go to the next page; now Homer is talking about Patroclus: "Next he sprang on Thestor, son of Enops, who was sitting all huddled up in his chariot, for he had lost his head and the reins had been torn out of his hands. Patroclus went up to him and drove a spear into his right jaw; he thus hooked him by the teeth and the spear pulled him over the rim of his car, as one who sits at the end of some jutting rock and draws a strong fish out of the sea with a hook and a line--even so with his spear did he pull Thestor all gaping from his chariot; he then threw him down on his face and he died while falling. On this, as Erylaus was coming on to attack him, he struck him full on the head with a stone, and his brains were all battered inside his helmet, whereon he fell headlong to the ground and the pangs of death took hold upon him. Then he laid low, one after the other, Erymas, Amphoterus, Epaltes, Tlepolemus, Echius, son of Damastor, Pyris, Ipheus, Euippus, and Polymelus, son of Argeas." I do not exaggerate when I say that well over half the book is an account of the various battles, and wherever there is battle, Homer is this generous with gore.

6. The Last Temptation of Christ by Nikos Kazantzakis (translated by P.A. Bien). This book has an unbelievably powerful ending, but one must endure so much that is tedious to get to that end. The personality of Christ, while convincingly modeled in the beginning, becomes narcissistic and weak as Kazantzakis tries to develop the character. Moreover, the way Kazantzakis began nearly each chapter with a description of the sun--either rising or



setting--demanded a command of language, and a variety of perspectives, that simply was beyond him.

Before I criticize Kazantzakis too much, however, I must admit to a more personal difficulty with his book. I earlier referred to the nultheistic grief that I yet carry with me, in having lost a belief in a god. This book tugged at that grief, and I could not stay with it for very long at any one reading. In fact, when I finished it on August 29, I realized that I had begun it on March 14 when I was in Atlanta. Almost 5½ months! Yes; the problem is me.

7. Passion Play by Jerzy Kosinski. This is the last of Kosinski's novels I will read. I have read all of his novels written previous to this one. I was impressed with Being There, astonished by The Painted Bird, and exultant with Steps. But it seems that every novel he has written since has been a lame variation of the style and motif he used in Steps. I began his latest novel, Pinball, and saw that the approach was the same. Too bad. Kosinski has written some great literature, but it seems that the affluent life has spoiled him.

Last year, my reading had been such an immersion in literary scum, that I selected a new category of mention: the most offensive book I have read. For 1985, recipient of this award is, The Compleat Chauvinist by Edgar Berman, M.D. It is a book that tries to pass off misogyny by being humorous. Sometimes humorous misogyny can be fun, if it is obvious that the author is not actually hating, but is only asking our indulgence while he is being funny. But Edgar Berman's misogyny was serious and vapid; moreover, his humor was sophomoric and boring. He hates women, he insults men, and ultimately he reveals himself as a stupid, posturing paranoic.

A final award goes to the worst book I read this year: The Situation Is Hopeless, but Not Serious: The Pursuit of Unhappiness by Paul Watzlawick, Ph.D. Watzlawick is a psychologist whose books I have always admired greatly. But this book, what can I say? It is as though someone dared him to try and write an entire book in one weekend, so he got drunk and did it. The entire manuscript for this bound tome could not have been more than sixty typewritten pages. And as for content, well, Watzlawick never has gotten over his fixation with American women, and how sexually available they are compared to the women of his native Austria. His fixation, fueled by the vitality of a very creative mind, seems at times to necessitate a phobia for the dissipation that tempts him. Such obsessions emerge within this little book. But do not bother reading it. Let's just hope that Watzlawick recovers from his slump and goes on to pen books that reflect the quality of his previous ones.

Many of the books I read this year were on the topic of fathering. The "New Father" is almost a media celebrity these days, or so it would seem. I enjoyed the immersion in this topic, but was struck by the almost consistent lack of any mention of the mother. It was not as though these authors were divorced; most of them were from intact homes, with a wife and mother in the wings. So ... why no mention of the mother? It seemed as though all these placid, warm-fuzzy fathers were all so eager to make up for the sins of the chauvinistic past, that they dared not mention women. After all, it is rather difficult to write about either women or men without at some point saying something critical, no matter how lavish the praise might otherwise be.

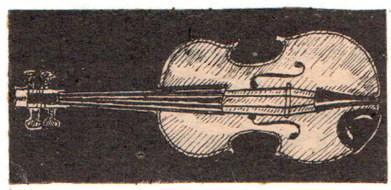
I also read a good deal of poetry this year, but I have decided to not here write about it. It seems that everyone with whom I discuss poetry ends up, before the conversation is over, pronouncing the word, "poem," as either, "pōm," or, "pō-ĕ̄wm." Either way of speaking disgusts me so utterly that I no longer speak the word for fear that before long my own enunciation will be askew.

The classics I have also read this year, but again, it is difficult to discuss such authors. Quite recently, I opened a conversation with two female friends about Goethe, and neither of them knew who I was talking about. One of them thought she had heard the name, opined, "I assume he's a man," and then went on to talk about a lesser Geman author, I think it was Rilke.

What is to be done about this virtual illiteracy I confront over and over? At one time I pressed my books upon other people, trying to force them to read the great authors. But I never seemed to have any luck. These people never read the books, seldom returned them without my tracking the books down myself, and often lost the books before I could track them down. As a result, I have virtually quit lending my books. And now that I have quit pressing my books upon other people, have quit lending them, it seems that people suddenly want to borrow my entire library. And they are frustrated, irritated, when I tell them that I would rather not lend certain books, suggesting that they check them out of the university library. They plead convenience--it is so much easier for them to borrow my books than check them out of the university library. Yes; I'm sure it is, but it is not more convenient for me, when they lose my books, or take years to return them. I patiently try to explain: my library is a reference library--my reference library, not a lending library. As my reference library, the books get used; they are not shelved just for looks,

which seems to be the reason most people shelve their books. In the course of my daily research, a day seldom goes by when I do not pull down at least twenty volumes, and some days as many as fifty. In other words, my library is here for my use, not as a surplus stock of reading material for other people to borrow at whim.

Perhaps I shall again relent, however. Indeed it seems that in this country a literary desert is in the making; better perhaps that I lose a few books than deprive another person of a spontaneous impulse toward a book. I suppose that as my own shelves empty, I can spend more time in the university library myself. The environment there, however, is not as peaceful as it once was. When I go there to work, it seems there is so much noise that I can scarcely concentrate. Students seem to use the building more as a place to socialize than to study. Strange, no? Some months ago, when I was sitting in the library, doing some research, a woman I had not seen in perhaps three years came over to the table where I was seated and said, "Hi; I saw you were reading, so I thought I'd come over and talk to you since you aren't doing anything."



After lending a large sum of money to a fellow author, **VOLTAIRE** learned that the man had a host of other creditors. When it became apparent that the other did not intend to honor the debt, the French writer sent him a note, which read:

"If you do not pay me within twenty-four hours, I will advise all your creditors that you have paid me in full."

The money was promptly forthcoming.

I glanced covertly at the book I was reading. It was entitled, Requiem: Music of Mourning and Consolation by Alec Robertson. I decided not to argue her point, conversed pleasantly for about fifteen minutes, then said I had to get back to work. This woman glanced at me curiously, looked very insecure for a moment, then, apparently deciding to be aggressive about the matter, said as she left, "Well; I'll let you get back to what you weren't doing."

I recall nothing of my conversation with this lady, except that she was lamenting how she had a term paper due the next day, and was suffering from what she described as, "writer's block." I thought her diagnosis rather pretentious, but then, perhaps she was right--it is, I suppose, quite possible that deep down in her subconscious she knew that she had no business trying to finish her courses, and was preparing herself a convenient exit.

As people read less, it seems they write less well. In fact, people write so badly these days that I have begun taking special notice of the more glaring examples of bad prose. Note the following sentence, taken from the prosaic foray of a friend. Note that this friend, mind you, is an accomplished journalist, who hopes to one day make a big name as a writer: "If we tried to balance the proportions of loveableness and hate in this world of ours, I am afraid it would come up fearfully short."

Does it make sense to you?

This, mind you, was from the final draft of the essay!

Maybe I am getting nigglingly picky, but I have almost given up hoping that the coined aberration, "proven," will disappear from the English language. It has already made its way into the pages of The New York Times, National Geographic, Smithsonian, The Humanist, and even the New Yorker.

Scholar sees writing as today's Pearl Harbor

WASHINGTON (AP) — If Thomas Jefferson came back to modern-day America, he'd be delighted with the machinery but dismayed by writing that emits "the authentic stink of the synthetic prose of a technological age," an honored scholar says.

Cleanth Brooks, professor emeritus of rhetoric at Yale University, declared that the state of learning in America "amounts to a disaster, and one of Pearl Harbor dimensions."

Brooks cited studies that show four 17-year-olds in 10 cannot comprehend ordinary documents, 23 million adults are functionally illiterate and only 20 percent of high school seniors can write a coherent essay.

Brooks, 78, a native of Murray, Ky., is the author of textbooks which introduced generations of Americans to prose and poetry.

"I shall have to be blunt," Brooks said in his text. "Neither reading nor writing flourishes in our blessed United States.... In important respects, we are an illiterate nation. A large section of our population cannot read at all, and many of those who can read do not read books."

As for the state of today's writing, Brooks made his point with a parody by Ross Baker of Rutgers University in which the first lines of Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another...," are rendered:

"When at a given point in time in the human cycle the phaseout of political relationships is mandated, a clear signal needs to be communicated to the world as to why we are putting independence on-line."

That is caricature, said Brooks, but "every day we read prose nearly as bad."

He said Baker's parody rings true because it "has the authentic stink of the synthetic prose of a technological age: gutless, bloodless, thoroughly inhuman."

Brooks sought to answer the question, what difference does it make if much of the best of American writing goes unread?

One role of literature, he said, is that it "focuses attention on mankind's purposes, wise or unwise, and upon the values for which men and women have lived and died."

"When the true muses retire from the scene, the bastard muses are ready to take over.

"Their names are Propaganda, Sentimentality and Pornography. The shared trait that proves their sisterhood is this: all three are bent on distorting the human dimension."

(from Columbia Daily Tribune, Columbia, Mo., Sunday, May 12, 1985, page 24.)

Because I have admired the writing in the National Geographic for so long, I took it upon myself to write their editor about what I perceived to be grave violence done to the English language in the July, 1985 issue. My letter is listed in the "Articles" section toward the end of this issue of The Aviary. Other issues have errors that are just as glaring. Note this, in the September 1985 issue of National Geographic, (p. 326): "They came back through Paris on the eve of the first anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, and joined exuberant crowds in the streets."

But writing-style is not the only thing to blemish the pages of this magazine. I turn to the very last page; there is an advertisement for Kodak film . Pictured is a pot-bellied cowboy carrying a saddle, with a caption describing him as, "a vanishing breed of real-life hero." How, I ask you, can people believe such tripe? When I was in my mid-teens, I used to ride horses for hours at a time. Believe me, there was nothing heroic about getting my thighs galled and my spinal column shortened a few millimeters.

But here. As I write, I reach for another magazine. I turn to its back page. This ad is for cigarettes; it pictures a fellow driving a truck. The caption describes him as, "the last frontiersman." And sure enough, there it is: the word, "hero."

Frontiersman!?! How,I ask you, does driving an 18-wheeler down a four-slab concrete highway have anything to do with exploring a frontier? When these men have smooth roads and accurate signs to tell them where they are going and truck stops that are fitted out like small cities, how is this a frontier? And as for the truckers? Most truckers I know have bellies that droop down over their belt buckles, hemmorhoids hanging seven inches out their ass, and they are hooked on speed which they use to stay awake. Hardly my idea of a frontiersman. Certainly not my idea of a hero.

Of course, one might not expect good writing, or tasteful advertising, from lesser writing genres For example, the sample from a sports column at right, disgusting as it is, can perhaps be forgiven when one considers the fact that the writer is doing his best to squeeze value from a basically trite mundaneity. But note the lame attempt at snobbery by a reviewer in the august New York Times. I venture to say that even the seemingly impervious Bartleby the scrivener would have been moved to protest the unreasonableness of such style.

Blues Enjoy 10-1 Laugher Over Toronto

By John Sonderegger
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

The Blues were clicking on all cylinders Wednesday night at The Arena, and they zipped past the Toronto Maple Leafs like a spiffy Corvette passing a beat-up Volkswagen.

And as for my third example on this page, how does one hope to thoroughly protest such a claim? Methinks of those little comic strips, for example one called "Mary Worth," in the newspaper in which the characters, when presented with a piece of news, emit a sound described as GASP!!!, while the character, emitting this airy expletive, has little black lines drawn in by the face to indicate that the person's utterance is accompanied by pronounced tremors of the body.

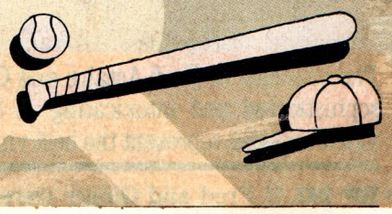
BLACK WOLF
THE LIFE OF ERNEST THOMPSON SETON
Betty Keller

I can promise that once I started Betty Keller's shrewdly observed and delicately amused and peculiarly fascinating account of his life, I would not and could not stop reading it.

Christoper Lehman-Haupt, The New York Times

Believe me, I was astounded that anyone could compare a book on the Chicago Cubs to Tolstoy's greatest novel. Such astonishment even caused me to wonder if the George Will in question had ever even read War and Peace. So, I did some checking around to find out who George Will is (a writer, it turned out, of considerable reputation) and then I tracked him down. I called him up to ask him to defend his comparison. I used a ruse to get past his secretary, and when he answered, I pretended to be in a great hurry: "Listen George," I said, "this is Bill Thurmond upstairs at the Times. We've got to check something out right now that's due to hit press in ten minutes. Can you tell me--us--who wrote a book called War and Peace?"

George Will says, "Not since 'War and Peace' has a novel done justice to a theme as large as this—growing up with the Chicago Cubs of the 1950s"



OUT AT HOME
by Gary Pomeranz

"Uh," he said, "wasn't that one of Barbara Tuchman's early books?"

"Oh; yeah. How could that slip my mind? Listen, thanks. Hello to everyone. Catch you later. Goodbye."

Oh well. It was good for a laugh. And a good cry.

And, as if the written word is not agony enough to my sensibilities, it seems that I am constantly being assaulted by the most gruesome of verbal abominations. For example, some months ago I was at a friend's house, and the television was on. A news program was in progress, the camera was panning over some floodwaters, and the announcer, sitting in a small boat, was saying, "And the flood waters decimated this small town of four houses and a store. All houses are intact, the residents escaped in plenty of time, but houses and residents must stay apart until the waters recede. And no one knows when that will be."

Decimated!?! God spare me.

But then, language this sloppy is perhaps to be expected from the media, when common

parlance does worse. Allow me to ask you: are you as irritated as I am over the habit, recently picked up by the people of this country, of dropping first words from sentences they are about to speak, deleting consonants from many words within a spoken sentence, and usually neglecting to enunciate the final syllable of a sentence? Surely you know what I speak of. For example, the sentence, "That would be fine, if you want to go, but I can't," becomes, when spoken, "Un-nuh be fine 'f you wanna go uh I cah." It seems that such speaking necessitates that the listener do all the work, doing his best to fill in all the grammatical blanks, while the speaker mumbles away, blissfully lethargic as he mouthes such peasantries.

My objections to such slothful speech are quite self-serving, I admit; I simply do not want to have to work so hard at figuring out what other people are muttering at me. But sometimes difficulties understanding other people's speech take on quite serious dimension--dimension that surely transcends my personal preferences about well-spoken language. You will understand the gravity of my concern as I procede to give an illustration of how such lazy diction can cause human intercourse to break down entirely.

I was visiting friends in a distant city, and was at table with a mother and daughter who were conversing jovially. They were joking about a certain man the daughter knew who purportedly was missing his front teeth. The daughter remarked, "Well; surely there are advantages to having no front teeth."

The young woman's motherly companion answered, "Well; I s'poz it'd make it easier 't suck penis."

Now please, dear reader; allow me to beg your indulgence. You know quite well that I am a man of chaste temperament and moderate disposition. It therefore pains me to bring this conversation to you, but be assurred that you will quite understand that I have worthy reasons for so doing. Reasons that espouse virtue, I promise you; the same virtue that I practiced upon hearing this mother speak thusly to her daughter, for upon hearing this bawdy, if not obscene, sentence, I arose from the table quitely and, on pretense of other business, discreetly left the room so that I might contemplate the implications of such unexpected conduct on the part of these two women.

Later this day, after nursing my shock for some hours, I confided what I had witnessed to a third friend. This third friend happened to be daughter and sister--respectively--to the two above-mentioned women. This friend was, however, incredulous at my story. I persisted. Yes, I assurred her, her mother had actually said that an advantage of having no front teeth is that it would make it easier to suck penis. And yes, her sister had laughed at their mother's remark. This friend would not believe me. She protested that her mother is too prudish to say such things. She affirmed that her sister is too protective of her mother's prudery to ever engage a conversation around such a topic. She even irately defended her mother's moral character, claiming that her matronly virtue would never allow her to say such a thing.

In a burst of self-righteous fervor--she would defend her mother's honor and her sister's discretion--she called her sister, even though the hour was very late, to verify my tale. I stood by while she, with some embarrassment, broached the topic and explained our disagreement to her sister.

While I could not hear her sister's words, I did hear a shrill tone coming from the phone. My friend turned to me and said, "You're wrong! My mother said, 'suck penis.'"

"I'm not wrong; that's what I said," I said.

"No; suck penis!"

"Yes; suck penis."

Again my friend conversed with her sister. Again she turned to me, now quite angry, and asserted, "You're wrong. It's not penis they were talking about. It was sucking penis."

"Okay," I answered, "be picky. It wasn't penis. It was sucking penis. What's the difference! Just don't try and tell me your mother is a prude. She may be duplicitous, but she isn't a prude."

"He won't believe me," my friend said to her sister.

"Tell him!" This time I heard the sister's words.

"She said, 'suck penis!'"

"Right."

"No! Suck peanuts!!"

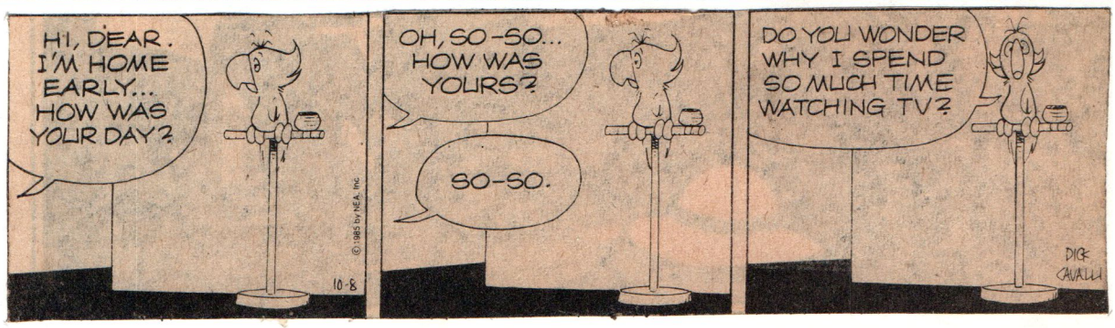
Now it was my turn to be incredulous. This entire misunderstanding, involving four people--serious assault to two daughters' loyalty to their mother, aspersion cast upon the reputation of an innocent mother, and devastating consequences for my sense of moral equilibrium--had all resulted from the inability, or unwillingness, of three people to give one consonant its due in the course of pronouncing a very simple word.

Surely this story, every word of it true, must impress upon you the fact that there are reasons of no small consequence for encouraging speakers of the English language to deliver their words with no small modicum of precision.

Please understand, dear friend and loyal correspondent, that you have every right to be angry at my bringing a topic so gauche to these pages, especially given that my literary style, not to mention my choice of subject-matter, is usually more pristine and lofty. Mind you, I would rather have eschewed such vulgar reminiscing, but I felt it my duty to make this small compromise of my moral convictions, and even risk sacrificing my reputation, in order to explain how carelessness, although seemingly innocent, on the part of a speaker can bring about repercussions so serious.

A momentary digression is in order here: I confess that I can not, for the life of me, see the humor, or even any simple silliness, in saying that an advantage to having no front teeth is that one could better suck peanuts. But then, perhaps I am not only easily

discomfited by a negligent approach to speech, but also quite naive about the workings of humor as it is injected into the daily conversations of the masses.



But I will leave my topic with one final admonition: "When prudent men avoid the vice of lazy tongues, then do wisdom and virtue remain inviolate. Where good grammar and right speech abide, there does justice prevail."

Dear reader, remember my aphorism well. Many an ancient sage would have quoted it already, had he but lived after me.

##

MOVIES AND SUCH

Many people do not like going to movies with me, for the simple reason that I seldom like any particular movie as much as they do. Afterwards I gripe and complain, spoiling their fun. I guess I am something of a snob when it comes to movies; I always demand. I am not content with simple entertainment, I want sublime aesthetic dimension. Usually keenly disappointed by the fare, I yet seek out new movies, ever faithful that I will find another powerful, grand spectacle to add to my list of favorites.

The following is a list of movies I saw during 1985, in the order I saw them:

1. The Big Chill. A very good movie, with some wonderful studies of character. I was very upset by the story line, simply because I saw people practicing values that in earlier decades were my undoing.

2. The Killing Fields. This one was a total disappointment. The war scenes and depictions of horror were sappy and artificial; they evoked very little to suggest how actually terrible the Cambodian take over was. Of course, many people were impressed by the friendship between the American reporter and his Cambodian assistant. But it didn't look like friendship to me. It looked more like an American who orders his assistant around and later feels guilty about it. As for that supposedly tear-jerking meeting of the two, when they are finally reunited, it looked so staged I actually laughed. You know, the director's voice in the background saying, "Okay; now stop, stare at one another for at least three seconds, try to look curious, then incredulous, then excited, then happy, then overcome with joy, then tearful, and now that three seconds have gone by, rush toward each other. Now." About as subtle as two cowpokes facing off in an old Gunsmoke episode.

3. Amadeus. A great, great movie; it must take its place on my list of ten favorites! Once I could put aside all the historical inaccuracies, I was able to enjoy both the drama and the music. From this movie, I better understood the poles of Mozart's muse--his lean asceticism in music which demands reverence, and his opulent dissipation which invites celebration and even carousing. The movie moved me somewhat closer to an appreciation for opera, a medium which I have always had an aversion for.

4. Amadeus. A second viewing; well worth it. This time on a somewhat smaller screen. I was able to concentrate more closely on the wonderful congruence between the choreography and the brilliant interpretations of Sir Neville Marriner and the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields.

5. Being There. A nice take-off on Kosinsky's novel. As usual, the book is better, but the humor in the movie likely will motivate one to go back and re-read the book.

6. Mask. I tried to work up some pity and admiration for the young boy with the deformed face, but what with being distracted by Cher's lithe body and her amateurish acting, and disgusted by the bimbo qualities of the man playing at her lover, I couldn't muster the proper sentiment.

7. Taxi Driver. At one time, this movie was one of my favorites. On this viewing, my interest fell. I think the violence is a bit much for my waxing peacenik personality.

8. Ordinary People. This movie too was one of my favorites, and my interest in this one also fell. Unquestionably, it is a great movie. I think I liked it so much at first viewing because it was such a breath of fresh air, given the usual anti-male sentiment one sees in movies. Fortunately, a few more movies that take a benign attitude toward men have come along, thus stripping Ordinary People of some of its uniqueness.

9. Rashomon. Truly a delight for anyone interested not only in a good story but also in a powerful phenomenological approach to the workings of the human mind. The statements,

albeit quite subtle and indirect, about machismo and about female duplicity were quite telling too.

10. 1984. A failure. The director thought he would be able to do a good movie by making everything gray. Gray faces, gray emotions, gray television screens, gray sex. I would rather have stayed home and scribbled in one of Dacia's old coloring books.

11. Cocoon. Another failure, which I saw with Dacia at her request. The theme was nice--old people making love, and enjoying it. I'm sure the movie cured, even if only temporarily, many a case of terminal lumbago.

12. The Graduate. I had never seen this one before. Yes; it is very emotionally charged, and even if the romantic eclipse at the end is not quite convincing, the overall atmosphere was powerful and pleasing. I enjoyed the alcoholic sleaze hag. She reminded me of a woman I encountered in my younger days, a woman who gave me memories about which I never talk, except during vulnerable and careless episodes of somnambulistic afterglow.

13. Tales of Ordinary Madness. Some movies have erotic scenes; other movies have fuck scenes. The former are easier to bring off with aesthetic success than the latter. This one achieved the latter. Which was one of its few good points. Modeled on Bukowski's book, it is a poor imitation. I enjoyed the company of the people with whom I watched the movie more than the movie. This movie, watched on a small VCR monitor in someone's home, evoked a fierce debate over color adjustments. My vote for pink won.

14. Back to the Future. Moderately fun, but the blatant classist and success values, not to mention the rampant sexism, pretty much ruined the experience for me.

15. Autumn Sonata. One of Bergman's best. I went to this movie as much for practical reasons as for aesthetic ones. The movie suggests strongly that emotional and family dynamics are at the root of the invalid's disease. I wondered if I might gain some insight into similarities to my own family and my having multiple sclerosis. It felt like indeed there is a comparison somewhere, but I could not locate it with enough specificity to say that I learned a lesson. But I hope to see the movie more. Perhaps after enough viewings, an insight will one day come. Of course, if that happens, then it will be up to me to do something about it. A task so difficult I do not relish the idea.

16. Paris, Texas. A great, great movie. The imagery, garish at times, was quite acceptable because the story felt so plausible. The man's pursuit of the woman he had loved, and pursuit of his own inner understanding, was an heroic odyssey into the subterranean dungeons of the subconscious. But at the end, when the man turned his son over to the woman--his former wife, now a prostitute--hoping that his son would gain and flourish from the love he himself had lost, my blood ran cold. The Oedipus myth was here turned on its head. The son does not kill the father to sleep with his mother; rather, the father sacrifices himself so that the son may succeed in the bed he himself has soiled.

17. 101 Dalmatians. A Dacia indulgence. It was good fun. I still argue, despite Dacia's staunch difference of opinion, that The Aristocats was a better movie.

++ PORTRAITS BY AN EXHIBITIONIST **++**

This section, new to The Aviary, is warranted because viewing the pictorial arts is such a major part of my life. Unfortunately, indulging this activity must usually be coupled to travel, simply because there is so little art of value in Columbia, Missouri. Which is especially sad, given the supposed civic interest in the arts. After all, there are several major works of commissioned art that grace buildings in Columbia. But as for their quality? Some years ago, a woman friend in Columbia, with whom I was arguing the merits of Columbia's public art, asked me, "Well; just what would your standard be for judging whether a public work of art is good?"

I thought about it, and I came up with several aesthetic criteria. But I put them all aside and simply answered, "I know it is good if I would take a visiting friend, who appreciates the arts, to see it. Now tell me; is there even one such work in Columbia that you would go out of your way to take a friend to see?"

She replied in the negative. Which is quite understandable. There is not even one such work in the city I would take a friend to either. I will try to explain

There is a big plastic group of people outside the Boone County Bank; if it were given to me I would pitch it in the dump. The public library has some free-form metal sculpture attached to its sides, and a big winged metal object in its yard. They would better serve a purpose if put up on a playground. As for the metal sculpture behind the Fine Arts building on the University campus, and the wooden cubescent free-form in front, they only illustrate that academia is not an environment in which the arts might flourish. And as for the Columbia College wooden cubescent free-form, it looks like a large-scale version of a support my deceased great-aunt wore for her vaginal hernia. The Tribune has a group of people, arranged as sculpture, out behind their building hidden amont the trees and foliage; cut out of three-eights plate steel, these forms look like the results the welders turned out during their last six-pack before they went home. All of these works of art,

some I am sure costing tens of thousands of dollars, not only would not motivate me to see them with a friend, but also would be a downright embarrassment.

There is one work, a bronze mother with child, in front of a bank on Bus.Loop 70, which is not an embarrassment. Not good, but not an embarrassment.

For a few months, there was some wonderful sculpture displayed in the lobby of the new medical school library; done by a fellow named Larry Young, these splendid bronzes are good enough to be displayed in any major art gallery in this country. And Larry Young is a local--he lives in Rocheport, not ten miles from where I live. But his sculpture was displayed but temporarily. His prices are too high, or Columbia art patrons are either too cheap or too unsophisticated, to warrant his sculpture being bought and put on permanent display.

So I have to go afield to see good art. Sometimes, and fortunately, not very far afield though. To give one convenient example--a mere picture in the November '85 National Geographic was so great it constituted, for me, a major art experience for this year. On pp. 620-621 of this issue, a bison, carved by Cro-Magnon people, is depicted reaching back to lick an insect bite. I have spent hours looking at this one picture. I would highly recommend that next time you are at your local library you look up this issue and have a look.

Sometimes private collections, or pieces of art, afford good viewing. When in Atlanta, Georgia early this year I spent an evening at Gene Loring's house. His collection, although small, was truly superb--wonderful paintings, sculpture, pottery, screens. And my friend, Richard Presley, in St. Louis has a very old Japanese painting that deserves hours of contemplation. Closer to home, there is the Museum of Art and Archeology on the UMC campus. It has a few good paintings, and some very good pieces of African art, along with a variety of good pieces ranging from Ancient Egyptian to ancient Greek. Definitely worth a visit.

St. Louis, about 140 miles from where I live, is also worth a visit. There is the Arch, which I have commented on already. And there is the St. Louis Art Gallery, which I visited twice in 1985. It would be impossible, and probably boring for you, were I to try and comment on all that I enjoyed during these visits. So I will mention just a few of the high points. Hands Holding the Void by Alberto Giacometti is a wonderful abstract of a human figure. The Puritan, also a bronze, by Augustus St. Gaudens, is a starkly ascetic representation of a spirited Puritan man. While viewing these two works, I was told by one of the guards that the gallery's policy is to allow blind people to touch any of the sculptures that are not behind glass; a very generous and enlightened policy I thought. Ballet Dancer by Degas is the best piece of sculpture in this gallery, and one of the best in the nation. As one walks around it, viewing the angles and curves of arms and legs, space always opens in exact proportion as it closes.

As for paintings, there is a small still-life, by Martin Joseph Heade, called, A Vase of Corn Lilies and Heliotrope, which I absolutely love; however, none of my friends, who have visited this gallery with me, care very much for it. Picasso's The Mother is in this gallery; while I do not care for most of Picasso's paintings--to the horror of many of my friends--I do find this one very powerful. Chagall's Temptation, done in 1912 during his cubist period, is a painting that should be seen by anyone who is an admirer of Chagall. And Rembrandt's, Portrait of a Young Man, done in 1662--seven years before his death--is of course one of the best paintings in the gallery. This gallery is fortunate enough to house what I believe to be one of Monet's best small paintings, the Charing Cross Bridge, which is on a par with the best of Monet in the National Gallery. One of the most voluptuous paintings in this nation, Nicolas de Largiliere's Portrait of a Woman as Venus, hangs in this gallery, and is worth three or four hours by itself. But ... speaking of voluptuousness--perhaps it is loyalty to my gender, but I must confess that I tire of all the paintings of sexual, sensual, voluptuous, lascivious women done by the great painters when I am aware of the paucity of paintings that portray men as sexual or sensual. Of course, men are sometimes painted with sensual and sexual intention; other times, painters seem to attach these qualities to their male subjects even when such qualities are clearly not the focus of the aesthetic emotion. A good example of this type, at the St. Louis Art Gallery, is the Portrait of Cardinal Jean de Rouchechouart by Batoni. While the Cardinal is somewhat stiff and certainly heavily garbed, his face is filled with soft emotion, and his hands are so wonderfully expressive they--as a detail--constitute a portrait of sorts in and of themselves.

Another of my favorites, during these two trips was, Suffer the Little Children to Come Unto Me by Jacob Jordains; here we have a subtle mixture of cheerfulness and sad compassion, perfectly appropriate to the subject-matter. And finally, I enjoyed, The Emperor Constantine Presented to the Holy Trinity by his Mother, St. Helena by Corrado Giaquinto. This multitiered masterpiece is replete with expressive and allegorical meaning; its only problem is that it is such a tall painting--perhaps twenty feet--that it is very difficult to see the detail at the top. Unfortunately, it is mounted perhaps six feet off the floor; if it were mounted from floor level up, the upper reaches of the painting would be much more accessible.

But, in describing the paintings at the St. Louis gallery, I find that my passion lags. I am, it seems, rather impatient to be on to something greater. Namely, the paintings

at The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Such an experience this was! I had never before been to D.C., except perhaps to there touch down in the airport during a flight. And on this trip, except for one evening spent seeing some of the city's monuments, I greedily spent every available hour in The National Gallery. The Gallery, and its best paintings, became such a wonderful home; in fact, now whenever I see reproductions of the paintings I enjoyed there, I experience a keen, poignant sadness--like missing some very old, very dear friends. Yes; I need to go back to this gallery, over and over.

There is, however, an impediment to viewing these paintings even when I can get back to D.C. I am alluding to the fact that the Gallery is open such short hours: 10-5 Monday through Saturday, and 12-9 on Sunday. Very frustrating, to just be getting some momentum going--finding one's aesthetic stride--and then to be told by a guard to leave. I am not indulging pretentions toward pomposity when I say that I hope someone--probably an attorney with some spare time and lots of money--will initiate an affirmative action suit to keep this gallery, and all such galleries in this country, open 24 hours a day. The same, of course, goes for libraries--although such is not my topic here. To deny access to these institutions during the night is to hinder many a creative urge. It is in the night that the muses are most restless; the artist's medium, the scholars tools, should not then be locked away.

Of course, were libraries and galleries open 24 hours a day, I doubt not but that no one would use them at first. Which might initially discourage the curators. But soon enough the word would get out, and I doubt not but that hordes of artists, not to mention an inspired citizenry, would soon fill them.

Note I say an "inspired" citizenry. Yes; this might be a while coming. A certain salient fact was not lost on me when I visited the National Gallery; namely, that most of the visitors there were foreigners. What few English speaking people were there spent little time with the paintings, hurrying through as they indulged the ritual with their cameras which I earlier mentioned.

So ... what were the high points of this visit to the National Gallery? A friend asked me to send him a list of all the paintings I saw. Well; this is impossible, and likely is not what he meant. I suspect he wanted a list of all the paintings that impressed me deeply. This task, too, is not small. I fear I may bore some of my readers by here giving such a lengthy list. But I will try it, and then comment on a few. However, I invite you--friend and correspondent--to let me know if such a list pleases you; your comment will give me some idea as to what you would like me to write about in future editions of The Aviary.

I here list the high points of my visit, in the order I first saw them--given that several of them I saw on various days:

1. Last Supper by Salvador Dali.
2. Five paintings by Raphael: The Small Cowper Madonna, The Niccolini-Cowper Madonna, The Alba Madonna, St. George and the Dragon, and Bindo Altoviti.
3. A special exhibit called, Collection for a King: Old Master Paintings from the Dulwitch Picture Gallery; in this exhibit, there were five paintings that were especially good: Rinaldo and Armida by Nicolas Poussin, William Linley by Sir Thomas Lawrence, Portrait of a Boy as a Shepherd by Sir Peter Lely, Girl leaning on a Stone Pedestal by Rembrandt, and Portrait of Titus by Rembrandt.
4. Diana by Renoir, plus Bather Arranging Her Hair and A Girl with a Watering Can.
5. Nude Warrior with a Spear by Géricault.
6. Several paintings by Henri Fantin-Latour: Duchesse de Fitz-James, Still Life (1810), Mademoiselle de Fitz-James, Portrait of Sonia.
7. Miss Mary Ellison and The Boating Party by Mary Cassatt.
8. All the paintings by Monet, especially Morning Haze.
9. The Prodigal Son by Pierre Puvis de Chauvenues.
10. Hide and Seek by James Jacques Tissot.
11. Two by Rubens: Daniel in the Lion's Den, and Deborah Kip, Wife of Sir Balthasar Gerbier, and Her Children.
12. Several small sketches by da Vinci, and his Ginevra de-Benci portrait.
13. Two paintings by Simon Vouet: The Muses Urania and Calliope, and St. Jerome and the Angel
14. Several of Boucher's paintings: Diana & Edymion, Madame Bergeret, Allegory of Music, Venus Consoling Love, and Allegory of Painting.
15. Summer by Tintoretto.
16. The Veil of Veronica by Fetti.
17. Five by Titian: Doge Andrea Gritti, Venus and Adonis, Venus with a Mirror, Portrait of a Lady, and Ranuccio Farnese.
18. As for Rembrandt, nearly every one of his paintings is a "high point" for me. But especially, I loved: Saskia van Uilenburgh, the Wife of the Artist, along with A Girl with a Broom, the the Self-Portrait(s) of 1650 and 1659, and The Mill.

So much for my "list." Do you see why there were times I had to rush from the gallery, to keep from succumbing to a catatonic schizophrenia, brought on by the constant input of so much beauty? Only to rush back inside, to again saturate myself with the surfeit of sentient delight.

A few comments? How can I be brief?

Perhaps the most profound experience while at the National Gallery was viewing Rembrandt's 1659 Self-Portrait. It is the most pitiless portrait every done. Full of self-reproach, but lacking self-contempt or self-hatred, it is a window into the fragile power of genius--a power that will succumb to no obstacle, a power that grasps creativity as its destiny, knowing all the time that self-dissolution is the tandem fate. The disease of self, seeking escape through the drug of creative joy, eschews happiness; awareness is

sacrificed for insight, bliss denied for the sake of always another freshly incised emotion.

No artist approaches Rembrandt's ability with the portrait, with the possible exception of da Vinci. Rembrandt's portraits are like beautiful tone poems done by a large, but carefully modulated, symphony orchestra. Leonardo da Vinci's portraits, perhaps as great, yield their contents differently. Whereas Rembrandt's portraits seem to be constantly seeping blood, da Vinci's portraits have an emotion that is all but locked away, and only comes forth, almost phantom-like, as the viewer sits quietly and absorbs by the hour. Unlike Rembrandt's aria that mounts amidst the symphony, da Vinci's portraits yield but a whisper--like the most subtle probings of elusive, scarcely sounded musical nuance by a flawless string quartet.

With Rembrandt, all the viewer must do is give the portrait careful attention, and the emotion pours forth. But with da Vinci, there is an initial effort required. One must begin with the mouth and the eyes. For da Vince, the mouth is unity, the eyes are conflict. Notice the emotion in the mouth, and then, from the mouth, look at one eye only. There--you experience a miniscule shift in the emotion. Go back to the mouth; there, re-orient yourself with the original unity, and now go to the other eye. Again, a miniscule shift happens; but however slight this shift from the initial unity, it is radically different from the shift that occurred when traveling from the mouth to the other eye. Now, you begin to see the variety, and you begin to sense the complexity. Still, looking from mouth to each eye, and slowly scrutinizing other parts of the face--and soon enough you are saturated, inundated, swept along, and gratefully lost in a current of eternal nuance. When next you are at the National Gallery, plan on at least two hours with da Vince's Ginevra de-Benci; I think you will see what I mean. Remember, always begin with the mouth. There is the unity. By the time you are finished, you there will also see variety, then conflict too, and perhaps chaos. But in the beginning is unity. Begin from there.

There is something not so profound or varied in the portraits by Raphael. But his genius lies in his ability to capture a unified personna, most often manifest in a serene, well-balanced temperament. Unlike the unhappy and tumultuous personality of Michelangelo (1475-1564); unlike the obsessive, worldly, and gloomy temperament of da Vinci (1452-1519), Raphael (1483-1520) was a cheerful, amiable, and optimistic man. Whereas Michelangelo painted religeous motifs as if seeking his own redemption, and da Vinci painted religeous motifs as though to mock the possibility of any human redemption, Raphael painted out of sheer love and devotion to the divine. Unlike his two contemporaries, he did not so much seek eternal life, as he participated in the eternality of the spiritual life by sharing its daily creation. A happy man, who died at the age of 37, his paintings contain a freshness, an innocence, unequaled by any other painter.

The Alba Madonna, c.1510
Raphael

If Raphael is the epitome of the serene painter, Titian is the epitome of the impassioned painter so fixated by ideals as to transform the softness of love and divinity into

something harsh and severe. Yes; even his Venus with a Mirror, although perhaps escaping this rigidity, lacks warmth. In fact, it is this lack of warmth which causes me to rank Titian below the triad of da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael. The greatest of painters, it seems to me, not only are attracted to soft, warm qualities (although indeed the opposite qualities may occupy them too), but also are capable of bringing such qualities to their male subjects. This Titian is virtually incapable of. Look at his Cardinal Pietro Bembo and his Sebastiano del Piombo; every feature is stern, gloomy, brooding, black. Even his portrait of a young boy, Ranuccio Farnese, shows a spirit already shattered by fear and paralyzed by an incipient, defensive pride. Contrast, if you will, Titian's Cardinal Pietro Bembe with Batoni's Portrait of Cardinal Jean de Rouchechouart; the former is stiff and ascetic, the latter, however aloof, is sensual and fluid. Contrast any of Titian's portraits with da Vinci's St. John the Baptist, or Raphael's Bindo Altoviti, or even the father in Michelangelo's Holy Family of the Doni, where the man's brow, however hard and compressed, is yet softened by a powerful paternal love. I admit that the male in Titian's painting, Young Woman at her Toilette, may constitute an exception to my criticism of Titian; but, it is an exception, and this man clearly is a secondary figure in the painting. Hence, my criticism must stand. As does my judgement--a claim that might edify somewhat the modern-day men's liberationists who are in search of role models--that the greatest of painters have been able to portray soft, compelling, gentle qualities in their men.

But I go on at length, when I should confine myself to brief comments. Let me try to make some brief statements about some of the paintings I admired greatly.

Tintoretto's Summer, which I had never really noticed in the books that contain reproductions, was a real treat. It reminded me of Henri Rousseau's style and subject-matter as in The Equatorial Jungle; an amazing comparison, considering that four centuries and such differences in style separate these men.

Boucher is one of my very favorite painters. Looking at the five I mentioned above was a real treat. I am especially fond of his Allegory of Music, because there he gives equal attention to every figure in the painting, unlike his treatment of the figures in Venus Consoling Love and Allegory of Painting.

Rubens' Daniel in the Lion's Den is something of a disappointment; I had often admired this work in reproductions, but on canvas it lacks brilliance and projection. One disappointment does not, however, merit a critical note. Rubens is one of my favorite painters, and in my opinion, one of the greatest who ever lived. In fact, his Deborah Kip, Wife of Sir Balthasar Gerbier, and her Children is, in my humble opinion, perhaps the greatest group portrait ever done. No painter can project a spotlight into so many areas of the painting, and yet achieve a perfect harmony, as can Rubens. His ability to mix his paints directly on the canvas--a technique quite different from, for example, Raphael--allows for an organic sense of motion which makes the hours go by quite easily in viewing one of his works.

As for Renoir, it would take too long to comment on all the paintings I liked; but a special comment is perhaps appropriate for his Diana. Here, painting the flesh so vividly, he clearly puts the blue veins on white flesh, and does not avoid revealing blemishes in the corporeal form. Blue veins--well, I have spoken on this subject above. Needless to say, it was a paradox that had my attention, seeing this strong suggestion of corporeality, i.e., mortality, in an artistic medium that invokes the eternal.

The two Rembrandts in the exhibit entitled, Collection for a King: Old Master Paintings from the Dulwitch Picture Gallery, deserve comment. The Girl Leaning on a Stone Pedestal is probably better than the National Gallery's own, A Girl with a Broom; it projects more, and is laced with flaming reds that depict a blooming sensuality. As for the Portrait of Titus, I was scarcely able to appreciate it because of the poor lighting. The painting was illuminated with a quartz-halogen bulb, which, focused on one side, so distorted the painting that any greatness was lost. When the guard was not looking, I held up a notebook to block the light; although the painting then was quite dark, it at least was not disproportionate with respect to brilliance. The debate still rages among scholarly circles as to whether this painting is actually a Rembrandt. I certainly could not gain an opinion for myself from this poor showing.

Viewing all the paintings of Mary Cassatt was an interesting experience, not because I think she is a great painter, but because her paintings trouble me. I have always liked her 1892 La Toilette, and in the National Gallery, I liked both the Miss Mary Ellison and The Boating Party. These three paintings are undeniably great, well-drafted, and filled with appropriate emotion. But, and here is the trouble, so many of her paintings are disappointingly flawed--and it is always the same flaw. I wonder if Mary Cassatt lived with a horrible fear that she had cancer, and could only bear her affliction by transferring, to nearly all her subjects, one or more tumors to contain the projection of her phobia. I allude, of course, to those red, cancerous bulges she put on her portraits. Red bulges that we are supposed to accept as cheeks, cancerous splotches that stain a figure--usually the face--in an otherwise perfect painting. Note the girl's cheek in, Girl Arranging Her Hair; it appears as though a huge, weighty fibroid will soon give obeisance to gravity and tear away her flesh as it falls to the floor. In Woman with a Red Zinnia, the blooming cancer so greddily gobbles the face that the right ear is being pushed askew, as though there is no longer room for it. The visible face in, Two Children at the Seashore, looks raw and putrescent, as though the child's digging in the sand is symbolic of its impending interment. And that horribly sad little girl in Mother and Child!! The left foot has rotted and awaits amputation, the cheek bulges from the coursing toxins, the grayed belly causes one to think that this child has an advanced case of abdominal necrotic edema caused by end-stage infantile pellagra.

Do you begin to understand why my senses--aesthetic and otherwise--recoil when viewing Cassatt's works? This is why I was so relieved to see her forego her phobia in certain of

her paintings. Abbe's pointing out to me the strong sense of touch between people, a wonderful characteristic in Cassatt's paintings I had not before noticed, also helped me appreciate Cassatt's skill as a painter.

One of the most rewarding experiences at the National Gallery was seeing Salvador Dali's Last Supper. Dali, as many of you know, I consider to be the greatest painter of this century. While his Last Supper is not my favorite of his, it certainly is one of his greatest. In that painting, he does things with light that a description of which would strain the vocabularly of St. Bonaventure himself. It is a light with tight, penciled, precise lines; yet it is a suffused light that is subtle, strange, mystical. As for the significance of the hands in this painting--no one has ever commented on it. I do not understand it, but there is something here, something, that must bear analysis. Christ's hands are so powerful, symmetrical; the apostles' hands are hidden, except for two men, and theirs are grotesquely swollen. Such rendering, such symbiology, from the brush of Dali is no accident. One day I must get to the bottom of this.

Renoir is perhaps the greatest of the impressionists in his rendering of human warmth; but Monet is the greatest insofar as he is an impressionist. He pushes impressionism to its limits--color and light could not become more ethereal, mercurial, ephemeral, without disappearing entirely. And he accomplishes something with space that no other painter, with the occasional exception of Michelangelo, Bosch, or Dali, does. He cancels the fourth dimension of subjective space. Let me explain. Along with the three dimensions of any painting (unless one should argue that certain works, e.g., the collages of Henry Matisse, are but two-dimensional), there is the fourth-dimension of the subject's space--a fourth dimension which actually involves the subject's three-dimensional space, but as experienced, is unified into a uni-dimensional awareness in the aesthetic experience appropriately called the proprioceptive fourth dimension. Monet, however, dispenses with this proprioceptive dimension; or rather, the quality of his paintings is such that this dimension sometimes is canceled. This happens, not insofar as one becomes a part of the painting's space--such becoming may take place in the experience of architecture, but not of a canvas--but rather, it happens because the space within the painting is so receptive, i.e., suggesting infinite depth without utilizing foreground measured to receding background, that the viewer, thus denied--relieved of--measured space, can be subjectively absorbed into the painting's space, just as the painting's objective space is absorbed into the viewer's psychic space, whereupon a fusion of subjective and objective spatial dimension occurs, the physiological proprioceptive equilibrium is lost, and an extreme suspension of not only practical spatial concerns but also the horizon of possible personal spatial concerns occurs. In this medium, aesthetic expression in the appreciator can achieve an extremely high degree of power, as emergent emotion, achieving unhindered fusion between object and subject, releases a joy so powerful because it springs forth, pristine and free, seemingly unattached to any nuance of the subject's ordinary world. Such joy is especially possible in, for example, Monet's Morning Haze and a score of others which are more or less similar in subject and treatment.

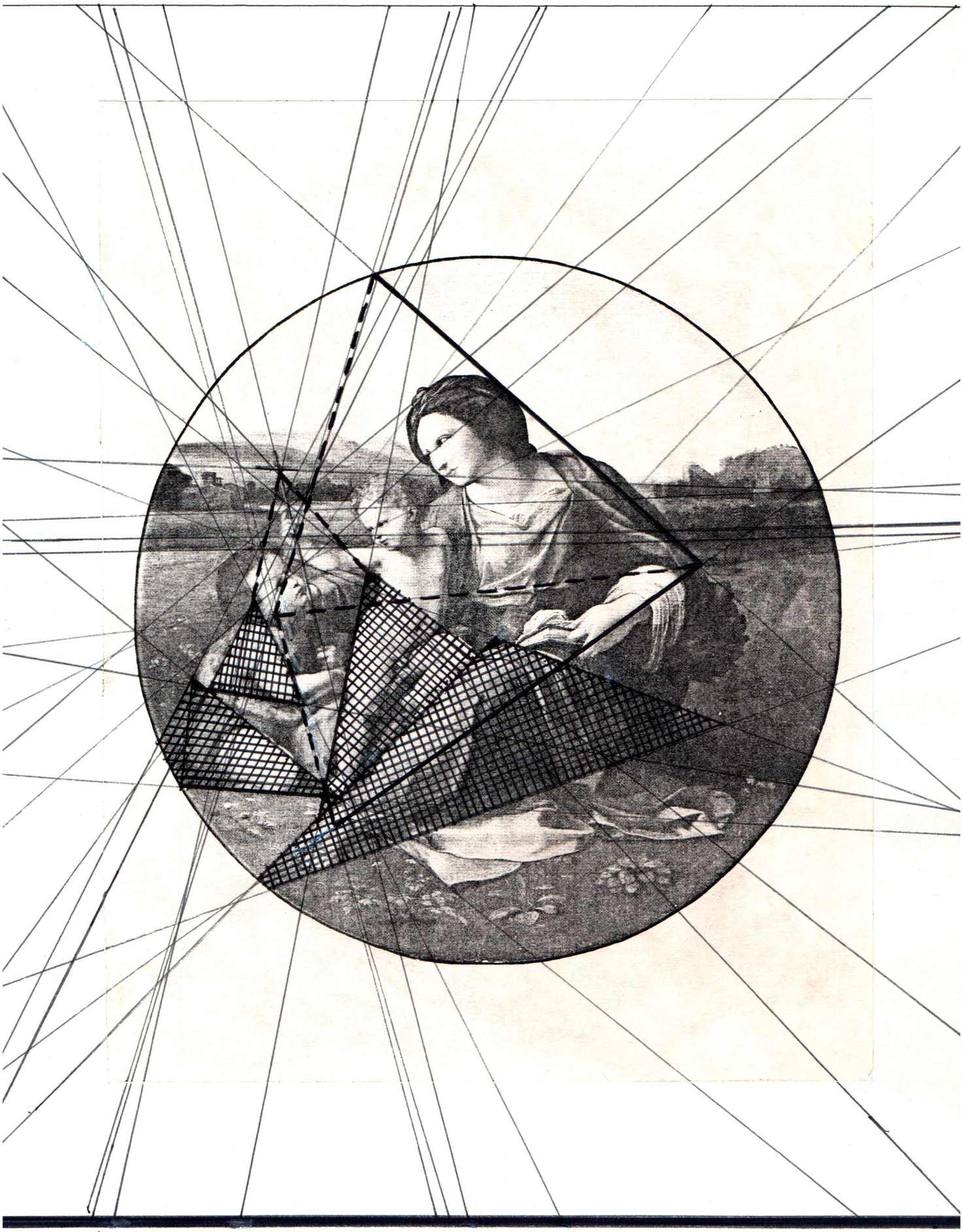
But let me return to Raphael. On page 46, there is a reproduction of his Alba Madonna. As you can see, it is not only a beautiful subject, it also is a rather awesome composition. In fact, the compositional skill that Raphael brought to this painting has evoked the comment of many an aesthetician. Such comments, however enthusiastic, have been disarmingly terse and simplistic. Aestheticians, art critics, art professors, and the like, all render the same judgement--the painting is perfectly done because it is a complex set of figures, set in a round space, and in such flawless harmony that the painting does not, like virtually every painting done in a perfect circle, seem to spin somewhat. "Harmonious," is the description they all use, not willing to strain their vocabularly, much less their perceptive faculties, in judging the painting in terms of its true merits.

To call this painting harmonious in terms of composition is wrong. Indeed the achieved emotion is quite harmonious; but in the strict aesthetic sense, harmony is unity based on similarity of parts. This painting has no such unity; rather, its unity is based upon a highly complex and varied asymmetric multi-axial balance. It is not that this painting does not spin because everything is perfectly proportioned and exact; such traits, were they present, given the positioning of the figures, would very likely make it seem to spin. Rather, this painting does not spin, when viewed, because it is propped, wedged up, shored, suspended, and most of all, given exacting localization by juxtaposed linearity. All this I had, contrary to the thinking of every commentator on this painting I had ever read, long suspected from looking at reproductions. But I waited until I could view the actual painting in the National Gallery before passing definite judgement. Simply put, the Alba Madonna does not spin, does not roll like a wheel, because of an extremely complex, and obviously intended, juxtaposition of compositional elements. On the next page, in my rather crude hand, I have attempted to illustrate what some of these elements are. My list, by no means exhaustive, will perhaps help you view this painting--a favorite of mine--with a fresh, and more appreciative, eye.

Note that there are, in effect, four wedges: one defined by the kneeling John the Baptist's knee; one defined by his back, shoulder, and arm; one defined by the Christ child's two legs, and a fourth one defined by Mary's left leg and buttock as she sits and supports all three children. (These wedges are defined by blocked wedges.)

Also, there are two supportive truss systems: one is defined by an angle from Mary's heel to her hip and up the line of her shoulder across the top of her head; the support then is held by her reaching arm which cradles the Christ child and grasp's John the Baptist's shoulder, and the support is further defined by two imaginary lines, one running from the top of the triangle to John the Baptist's shoulder, the other from his shoulder back to Mary's heel. The second supportive truss is defined from the axis of the cross, with two imaginary lines running to the top of two wedges. (These supportive truss systems are illustrated

(notes continued after illustration on next page)



(notes cont.)

via two dark lines for the angle on Mary, and dotted dark lines for the suspension supports.)

Also, there are 29 straight lines clearly defined in the painting: one through Mary's eyes, one through the Christ's child's eyes, and one through John the Baptist's eyes; plus two lines defined by the cross, four by the horizon, one by John the Baptist's back, eleven lines defined by the sides of the four wedges, a line from the top of Mary's head to the top of John the Baptist's head, two lines defined by the supported angles of Mary's body, and five lines defined by the suspension trusses.

Actually, there are other lines that are somewhat more subtle; I have decided to not try drawing them in, since my illustrative skills are limited, and this picture is perhaps already crowded enough.

So, lacking space, and, I must confess, lacking inclination, given the labors that

yet await me in this missive, I will leave the picture be, trusting that I have sufficiently illustrated my point: that the Alba Madonna, as a circular painting, has stability not by virtue of a perfect harmony, but because it is locked into a fixed position by weighty wedges, juxtaposed lines of optic travel causing peripheral and stabilizing tension, and subtle but powerful suspending trusses that tie the painting together.

Having said so much, I will desist in this lengthy expostulation about what is perhaps an esoteric topic in aesthetics and be on to other things.

Reserving, however, one final mention: The time spent at the National Gallery of Art, and also at the St. Louis Art Gallery, was in company with Abbe. Her passion for art is enjoyable and contageous, and at its most intense, spills over into other channels--within which, were it not for the cautionary temperance of her goodly husband, that transmogrified and not entirely acorporeal passion might, contrary to verisimilitude, otherwise seem to run amok.

*****MUSICAL MUSINGS*****

When it comes to music, the French expression, "avoir l'orielle juste," aptly applies to Baumli. But perhaps it applies too much. My love for classical music is not content to be love only; it becomes a carefully attuned attentiveness which too often keeps me from relaxing with what I love. Rather than being content to, "doigter un morceau de musique," I always listen intently, critically, aware of every shading of each note, irritated by every mistake, bothered by even a momentary slackening of attention by the performer, indignant if someone interrupts my listening, obsessive about absorbing as much of this art as I can. Not entirely healthy, I must admit. A friend of mine told me not long ago that he considers it a quite conservative estimate to speculate that he has listented to Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition a thousand times. A thousand times! It would never, absolutely never, be possible for me to listen to a piece that many times. Not because there are not works I love this much. But simply because I could never muster this much energy. Classical music can never be mere background for my ears. If it is on, I must give it my attention. Not just my attention, but my full attention, the kind of attention that requires a great deal of energy, so much energy, in fact, that I simply can not listen to even the simplest pieces of classical music unless I am quite awake, enthused, and fully ready to strain my perceptive faculties to the utmost, while yet maintaining the capacity to experience a genuine joy in what I am doing. It is not every day that I have the energy for something like Berlioz' Requiem or even Beethoven's Third Symphony.

I have at last accepted, in myself, this fixation with what I hear. Perhaps I relax less, but I think the joys are just as profound. I must admit, however, that it is not a lack of energy alone that prevents my spending more hours listening to music. There is in me another factor, a deep melancholy, which rises up when in the presence of great music. I have often wondered about its genesis. I wonder if I am sad that my piano lessons were halted at an early age because my dad would not let me practice. Perhaps the issue is quite simple though; maybe it is simply the case that I enjoy music so much that each time I indulge it, I am acutely aware that soon enough I will have to put it aside--my energies will run low, or I will have to do other things. It is also quite possible that one can evoke a more transcendental explanation: great music, for me, approaches more nearly to divine dimension than does any other art; yet, it of course falls short of entering that realm. Hence, such music yields both ecstasy and terror. It proffers the wine of immortality, but the cup is snatched from my lips before there is time to drink. Another explanation, just as plausible, and which I believe contains no small quantum of the truth, is that classical music brings me to a kind of close proximity with great composers--men of great passion. Such proximity arouses in me a deep yearning--the desire to be close to men emotionally, a desire which, as much as I have pursued it, remains unsated. Men of music invite closeness via their music. Such intimacy suggests the rewards of other kinds of intimacy. But it is likely fortunate that such intimacy is at most suggested, for likely, any pursuit of such other kinds of friendship, were they possible, would encounter the same kinds of barriers that are met with in men of lesser passion. Barriers which, for that matter, I encounter in other men who appreciate great music. Put a different way: men who appreciate the arts seem no less homophobic than men who seem to be interested in more traditionally masculine things. In fact, interacting with other male music appreciators can be quite frustrating at times. So often there is a kind of machismo present--who knows who composed what when, who sang in which oratorio, who was the concert master for the Chicago Symphony in 1968, and such. Occasionally this competition reaches quite absurd dimensions. More than once, I have been with a gathering of men, listening to sublime music, and someone wants to play "drop the needle," a game I had never heard of until just a few years ago. "Drop the needle" involves taking out a record, not letting anyone know what it is, and putting the needle down somewhere in the middle of the record. The person to guess first wins, and scores then are kept through the evening as to who has the most wins. I hate it. I get nervous, I don't get to enjoy the music, and the whole atmosphere becomes charged with something that seems quite the antithesis of aesthetic enjoyment. Perhaps I have become overly resistant to such games, but when Karl Haas, on his radio show, Adventures in Good Music, does his show once a month that is called, "Can you Name Him?" I find it irritating. He starts out by playing obscure selections from a master, giving various hints, and then gradually playing works that are more familiar until, by the end of the program, the listener should have been able to name the composer. Problem for me is, by the end of the program I have shut the radio off.

But of course I also have friends for whom music is pure delight, and it is their company, when enjoying music, that I most often keep. Some of these friends have asked me--encouraged me--to this year say a bit more about my own personal druthers and indio-syncrasies in music. For example, who are my favorite violinists, what are my favorite string quartets, and such. Well;many of these questions I really can't answer. My mind is often not made up, or I just do not care to have an opinion on certain issues in music. But I will, for the sake of those who are curious, indulge a few such opinions.

As to my favorite song. Well; here we get into jazz, which is the type of music I most often played when I was spending my time being a musician. My favorite song is, The Shadow of Your Smile. My favorite piece of jazz music: Cast Your Fate to the Wind, as performed by Vince Gueraldi, who wrote it. My favorite piece of classical music: The Concerto No. 6 in D Major for Two Organs by Padre Antonio Soler. My favorite symphony: well, of course, Beethoven's Ninth.

But I fear this list of favorites could go on interminably. Several people have asked me to list all the bands, rock, country, and jazz that I ever played with. Well; this is impossible; I have, at various times, played with probably one hundred different groups. But, of course, in most of these groups I was considered a stand-in, a temporary replacement for someone who was sick, or I took the job temporarily until I could find a better one. The number of groups in which I was considered a more or less permament member was, of course, much smaller. So, to satisfy the queries of my friends, I hear list them. Perhaps one or two of these groups attained enough fame that their names will sound familiar:

1. The Blue Diamonds (rock; my first group, and second-to-the-worst group I ever played in).
2. The Shades of Blue (rock; this name might ring a bell).
3. The Knights of Night (rock).
4. The Sirens (rock).
5. The Blue Spirits (rock).
6. Lufflowers (rock and jazz).
7. Windhover (rock).
8. The Dennis Wilson Jazz Trio (jazz; finally I broke into good, top-quality professional jazz).
9. The Country Playboys (country; I took this job when I was really needing money, and ended up with a long and very enjoyable relationship with country music and some wonderful people).
10. The Frank Black Jazz Combo (jazz; a wonderful group, with great memories; unfortunately, the group fell apart with the illness and subsequent death of its leader, Frank Black).
11. The Forrest Trio (jazz).
12. Lady and the Tramps (jazz).
13. The Joker's Wild (rock; this, the last group I was ever associated with for any length of time, was also the worst group I ever played with. I took the job because it paid well, I was out of work, and it beat staying at home keeping my fingers in shape by running scales on my bass).

It has, of course, been a long while since I have played regularly with any group. These days I simply do not have the time to commit myself to any group; moreover, my health is not good enough for me to count on the stamina required for commiting myself to a group. So these days I play less and listen more.

This year I tried to broaden my musical horizons more by listening to Eastern and Oriental music. I confess that I did not learn much; instead, I began listening to the Orientals who play Western music. Their mastery is indeed awesome; my friend S. Billy put it quite well when he said, "Those Japs can out-do us at anything, including playing Beethoven."

I had, as indicated in last year's Aviary, intended to this year listen to organ music a good deal more. Somehow, my interests took a different turn. I did listen to E. Power Biggs, my favorite organist, a good deal. Unfortunately, I also turned to Virgil Fox, a lesser musician who is all flair and bombast, and seldom plays either well or accurately. Glutton for punishment that I am, I however sat down one afternoon to try and understand why Fox is so popular. I came close to appreciating something about him at one point when I tried to imagine how Bach would play the organ if he were actually in the mood to be playing the harpsichord. But the lack of emotion in Fox' playing soon dissolved this generous speculation, and the result was that I did not listen to very much organ music the rest of the year.

I did manage to spend a good deal of time with Beethoven's symphonies. I was wanting to learn more about not so much the emotion in each individual symphony but the total emotional continuity that binds each successive symphony to the next, and that unites them all into one highly organic, carefully aesthetized corpus. There simply is not the space to herein write about what I have learned. I will, however, answer the question of one friend who asked me how I would rank the symphonies in terms of greatness. I realize this job is highly subjective, and perhaps too easy; but, beginning with the greatest, I rank them as: 9,3,5,4,6,7,8,2,1. There, wasn't that easy? I do anticipate that no small number of people would disagree about my placing the 6th so far down, but I confess that it is probably my own prejudices about music that justify my placing it so far down; I tend not to like highly representational music, and this the 6th is. I liked it much more at a younger age, before I had read statements telling me what I should imagine is happening in the various passages.

The most valuable part of listening to Beethoven's symphonies this carefully was finally getting a better understanding of the Ninth's last movement. The understanding began quite suddenly--realizing that, of course, the Eighth precedes the Ninth not only in time, but in terms of key signature--F Major's minor is D Minor. I thus began to see that whereas I had always tried to understand the Ninth's last movement as a junction between mystical vision and mystical union, this was giving too much spiritual height to Beethoven's music. Lacking this much height, it makes up for it in spiritual breadth--the movement is much more human, prayer-like, and however lacking it may be in pretensions to mystical dimension, it does expand the human dimension to where it can exercise its full capacity for the holy.

During this listening to the Beethoven symphonies, I again turned my attention to Beethoven's Sonata No. 29 in B flat Major, op. 106, the "Hammerklavier." The Fourth Symphony and this sonata are both in the same key, and I thought that listening to them together might afford me some understanding of the Hammerklavier, understanding that has always before eluded me. I am not sure that this conjoint listening afforded me the insight I wanted, but obtaining a different recording of this sonata did give me insight. The new recording I listened to was the first one done by Alfred Brendel, an undisputed master of the piano. My understanding is still nascent at this point, but I now trust it will proceed. Before I had not been able to nurture such trust. I had long felt that I would be forever stymied before this complex and powerful sonata. I came to realize, however, upon hearing my new recording, that I was stymied only because I was listening to a very poor rendition--one by Daniel Barenboim. I should have suspected that this was the problem. Daniel Barenboim simply can not keep company with the greats among concert performers, and his performances are often seriously flawed. Now, after hearing Brendel's performance of the Hammerklavier, I see that his performance is not only flawed, it is a failure when judged by exacting standards. And to think that for so many years, Danny's performance had so disappointed me that I had falted my understanding of the music rather than his playing, and had been too discouraged to ever even listen to a different rendition.

I will not here embark upon a lengthy description of what I experience in this sonata. As I said, my grasp of the sonata has just begun. I will, however, acknowledge that I am troubled by a strong suspicion that all of Schumann's piano music is an unsuccessful footnote to the third movement of the Hammerklavier.

This year I also turned my attention to the sonata repertoire for cello. Bach and Kodaly pieces interest me the most, although I have listened to works by others too. Rather than comment on these works, let me digress and ask a question: Does anyone know anything about the cellist Aldo Parisot? I have one recording by him, and have not been able to locate any others, even though the information on the jacket of the album I do have indicates that he was quite popular thirty years ago. I have not been able to locate a single recording by him that is in print, even though, when it comes to the sonata form, I think he is unmatched by any other cellist, Starker included.

1985 happened to provide a surfeit of musical possibilities, given that I obtained several very good collections of records. For less than $125, I obtained: the complete Schubert symphonies, performed by The London Symphony Orchestra and conducted by Leopold Ludwig; the complete Beethoven string quartets, performed by The Fine Arts Quartet; the complete Beethoven piano music performed by Alfred Brendel; the complete Mozart solo piano music performed by Walter Klien; and the complete Beethoven symphonies performed by the Wiener Philharmoniker and conducted by Karl Bohm. Most of these are old recordings, and in some ways are relatively lacking in recording quality, but I can put concerns about record engineering aside when I have opportunity to collect so much wonderfully performed music so cheaply.

I especially have enjoyed the collection of Beethoven's complete string quartets. Virtually every time I have heard his quartets, they have been performed live, with the usual accompanying irritation--I refer to the performers tuning their instruments between movements. Yes; call it an indulgence on my part if you must, but I find these pauses for tuning a quite unnecessary interruption. In fact, I suspect it is usually a rather narcissistic indulgence on the part of the musicians, as though, by their tuning, they are saying, "Notice me! I am such a perfectionist I can tell when my instrument is even the slightest bit out of tune! Be patient, while I show you how exacting my ear is!" I am not beguiled by such affectation, especially when I see the likes of Heifetz or Oistrakh play something as complex as the Tchaikovsky Concerto for Violin in D Major without once stopping to tune, and yet remaining in tune throughout the piece. How can they do this when the violins in a string quartet apparently can not? It is quite simple. They tune while

they are playing. I have seen great performers do it. And I have done it myself while playing the double bass. In even the most complex pieces there are moments when the left hand can leap from the fingerboard to the tuning pegs, and if you know your instrument well, there then is time to make the small adjustments that may be required. Thus, my basis for claiming justice for my impatience when the string quartets indulge their narcissism.

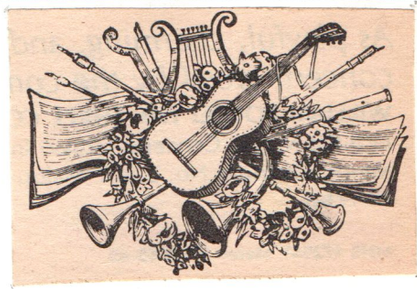
But on to other things, before my digression becomes a dissertation.

1985 was also a year for reckoning with Mozart. Many times I have said to a friend that I do not like Mozart all that much, but then am reminded that I have more recordings of Mozart than any other composer. Yes, I then think to myself, there must be something of a love-hate relationship here. Because truly, Mozart causes me difficulties. I very seldom can listen to him without a certain show of generosity. And why is this? I suppose it is because Mozart's keyboard music, however beautiful and complex, is at the same time so austere that the aesthetic dimension becomes ascetic. Imbued with this asceticism, while listening to Mozart, I can not but hunger for something more--a less skeletal, more opulent dimension which, if not voluptuous, is at least more humanly incarnate. I find his music so complex and yet austere, that it threatens to become non-music; were it the slightest bit leaner, it would lose all emotion, leaving but a brakish, brittle structure. Thus, it was inevitable that as music progressed after Mozart to even more complex forms, it had to assume the girth of romantic color and the sheen of sensual creativity. But Mozart himself--where to find respite from his fast clinging to the framework of form? But then, the question can only be asked if it assumes that one does indeed find such respite. And I believe the listener does, which accounts for why I listen to so much Mozart, even when I find him so difficult. Such respite is most apparent in his operas, his German dances, and his keyboard variations on borrowed themes. In that music, Mozart is able to temporarily escape the air of desperation, of impending tragedy, that otherwise always imbues his music. I was better able to understand this escape--perhaps more accurately described as temporary surcease--by seeing the staging of Mozart's operas in the movie, Amadeus. In that movie, song provides distraction from morbid fixation, and celebration invites a play that can for a while ignore how feeble is the human spirit when confronted with impending death. This, yes this, is what attracts me to Mozart: more than any other composer he carried with him a lucid, unflinching awareness of his mortality; and yet, more than any other composer, he showed the courage to laugh, play, celebrate, and knowing that escape was impossible, create a medium in which he could find respite from the gravity of the human condition.

Many another composer had my attention last year too. For example, I at last was able to obtain some of Alicia de Larrocha's recordings of Soler's keyboard sonatas. Her playing contains a few mistakes, a lack of smoothness on the trills which is typical of her playing, and yet her wonderful Catalonian style is inimitable, and her command of the pedal is approximated by no other player. I also obtained a recording of Soler's which was entitled, Six Concerti for Two Keyboard Instruments. Recorded by Anthony Newman and Joseph Payne, this album was actually somewhat mistitled; the six concerti in question were actually written for two organs, and the Newman/Payne duo took liberties with them, recording #s 1 and 3 on organ and harpsichord, #s 2 and 6 on two harpsichords, and #s 4 and 5 on two organs. The two harpsichords worked well on the relatively subdued concerto #2 in A Minor, but in the more sublime #6 in D Major, they were not powerful enough and hence failed the demands of this piece. While the combination of the organ and harpsichord on #s 1 and 3 were not overly successful, hearing the combination was quite interesting. On #s 4 and 5, where the two organs were used as Soler intended, the playing was quite mediocre. While Newman achieved the reed sonorities which he is so famous for, Payne's playing was quite inferior. The two together did not handle their timing well, and every piece was ended sloppily. All in all, it is interesting listening to this piece, given the lofty musical architecture of the six concertoes, but the interest comes primarily by way of contrasting the Newman/Payne rendition with other renderings. Unquestionably, the best recording of these six concerti, done on two pipe organs, is the one by Biggs and Pinkham, which unfortunately is currently out of print.

The most exciting musical event of 1985 was at last obtaining Sviatoslav Richter's recording of Prokofiev's Sonata No.7 in B-flat Major, Op.83. I had spent several years trying to track down a copy of it, and finally came up with three copies, all at once! This sonata is truly one of my favorites in the whole repertoire of the piano sonata. I had previously heard versions of this sonata by several performers, but only the one by Glenn Gould approximated the power that Prokofiev intended for this work, especially for the "Precipitato" movement. But even Gould's interpretation seemed to be lacking, and it was not until I heard a recording by Richter, played on the radio, that I knew a pianist had finally done this work justice. Prokofiev's Seventh Sonata has a primordial energy as insistent as the morphic power of Beethoven's Appassionata, and I love Prokofiev's sonata almost as much as Beethoven's Appassionata, which is my favorite among the piano sonata repertoire. Hence, my very strong desire to obtain the best available recording of this piece. Stravinsky may have felt justified in dismissing Richter as, "just a big, fat fag," but I contend that he is the best of the Russian pianists, even better than Gilels.

Dare I make a prediction regarding what I want to hear in 1986? Better to leave off with predictions, methinks, except to say that right now I am listening to several



recordings by the classical guitarist John Williams. Other than this, I want to listen to several verions of Berlioz' Requiem and some of the Requiem repertoire of other composers. As for other listening, I will have to wait and see.

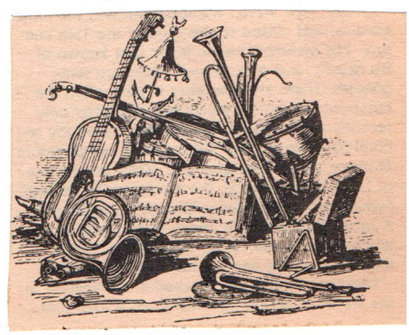
While I am making no plans for this in 1986, I am at least hoping that I will be able to afford a good compact disc player. It would be nice to play discs that I do not have to worry about wearing out. As it is, I have several records which I value very much, but which I play very rarely--and then, usually play only tapings of them--because they are worn and irreplacable, i.e., out of print. The idea of having great music on discs, which could be played tens of thousands of times without wearing, is very appealing. Plus, one can, in that medium, hope for something of an improvement over the dismal engineering that usually goes into classical recordings. When I listen to Dacia playing her rock albums, I wish heartily that the studios that record classical music would hire some of those long-haired engineers to help out with the production part of the industry. Some brands can usually be counted on for passable quality, especially Deutsche Grammophon, London, and Philips, but others are terrible; for example, RCA and RCA Red Seal, touted as high quality recordings, will have skips on new records about 40% of the time. In fact, there have been times when I have passed up buying recordings I otherwise would have purchased, simply because they are pressed on certain brands that so often are bad. For example, John Williams, who I have been listening to: his classical playing is so precise, the notes from his guitar ringing out like shards of broken crystal, that the slightest imperfection on a record can ruin a listening. Imagine spending twelve dollars for one of his albums, sitting down and becoming immersed, inspired, elated, and then ... the well tempoed scritch, scritch, scritch comes through, or worse, the sudden loud pops that so often mar the quality of these recordings. Yes; I look forward to getting a CD player.

But I fear I tax your patience, thus indulging a peeve. I will be on to other things.

There are topics, when it comes to classical music, that amuse me as much as they interest me. One such topic involves the discussions--actually, the arguments--I have with my friends about the quality of various symphony orchestras. I detect the presence of a very strictly used nomenclature in these discussions, for example, people are adamant about using the phrase, "great orchestra," in contrast to, "first-rate orchestra." It has never been stated to my satisfaction as to what constitutes this difference, but I have heard arguments last half an hour on whether, for example, the Chicago Symphony is merely a first-rate orchestra, or is truly a great orchestra.

Listening to such arguments, noting how encumbered they are by a lack of precisely defined terms, I here must attempt remedies. Allow me to begin.

As for what constitutes a first-rate orchestra; well, this is not difficult, and seems to pose no problem for most people. A first-rate orchestra is one that can, and usually does (excepting certain off-nights), play superbly. So what is a great orchestra? Well; it is like a first-rate orchestra in that it can and usually does play superbly. But it has three added features. It plays superbly whether in recordings or live performances; its quality is not confined to one of these mediums only. Moreover, it plays superbly regardless of the conductor; some conductors may work better with this orchestra,but the appearance of a guest-conductor--even a second-rate guest conductor--does not appreciably detract from the symphony orchestra's performance. And finally, they can play the works of a variety of composers superbly. For example, a symphony orchestra that can play Ravel and Stravinsky masterfully does not qualify for greatness unless it can demonstrate that it can also do a masterful job with the likes of Wagner, Bartok, or Haydn.

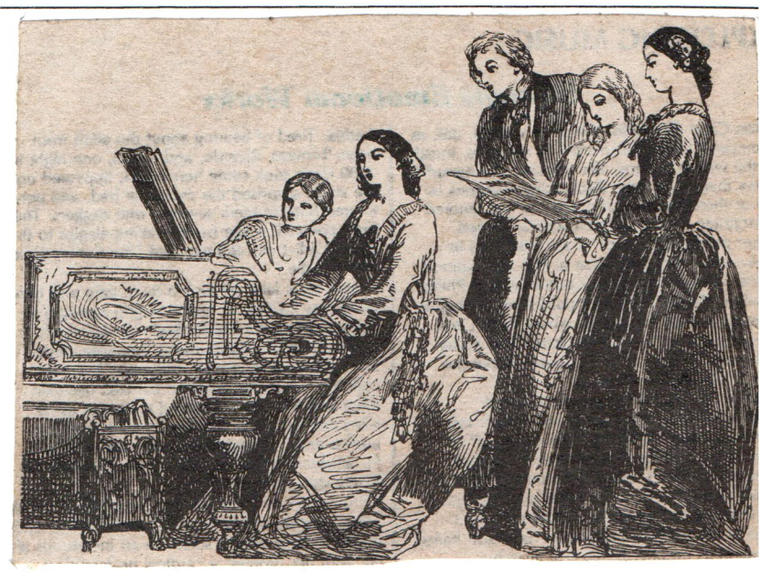


So, who are the great orchestras? Well; let me start with the greatest. Yes; the Berlin Philharmonic is unquestionably the greatest symphony orchestra in the world. Next, in my opinion, is the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Third, the Cleveland Orchestra. Fourth, the London Symphony Orchestra. Fifth ... at this point it becomes difficult to continue ranking.

But, if I may opine on another matter that often comes up for discussion, namely, what are the best orchestras in this country? Well, the Cleveland Orchestra is the best,next is the Philadelphia Orchestra, and then the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. And yes, all three of these are great orchestras. In fact, I would say that when Eugene Ormandy was directing the Philadelphia Orchestra, it was the greatest symphony orchestra in the world. I would not say that it has deteriorated in quality since, but rather, that other symphony orchestras have gotten better.

Are there other great orchestras in this country? No; I think not. Do you protest that I am overlooking the New York Philharmonic? No; I am not overlooking it. I do not think the New York is great; too often, they barely qualify for first-rate. Despite many an opinion to the contrary, I think this orchestra is perhaps the most over-rated orchestra in this country. Their quality just does not match their reputation.

As long as I am this replete with opinions, allow me to give mine on the oft-raised question as to what are the ten best symphony orchestras in this country. I have already listed the first three. Allow me to list the others by city only: Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, St. Louis, Minnesota, Boston, and New York. My opinion on these latter seven selections could easily be swayed, or change as orchestras evolve. There are other close candidates for this list of the ten best, namely, those in San Francisco, Detroit, Baltimore, Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, and Milwaukee.



But thus finishing my list, I find I am brought face-to-face with another topic which necessitates comment, namely, the tendency of many an Easterner in this country to derogate everything about the Midwest. While such derogation tends to prick my pride a bit, it also becomes quite ridiculous when the classical music efficionados are asked to back up their claims that, "Hmph; how can there be good classical music in the Midwest, when there isn't anything in the Midwest?"

I reply, "Well; there's the Chicago Symphony. And quite obviously the St. Louis Symphony. Need I go on? There is also ... ."

But they reply quickly, "Huh? You mean St. Louis is the Midwest? And Chicago?"

Which only shows one very salient fact about such judges. They tend to think that if anything is great, then it must exist in the East; or, if it doesn't exist in the East, then it doesn't really exist.

But yes, the Midwest does have great classical music. Of the orchestras I listed among my ten favorites, three are clearly in the Midwest. If I took the geography of the Eastern efficionados, even more on this list would be defined as being in the Midwest. There are no small number of people, for example, who claim that the "East" does not begin until one is clearly into the state of New York. I am not one to take a stance so dogmatic; I do not think of this country's geographical "East" until one reaches Princeton, New Jersey. Everything west of Princeton then exists in the "Midwest" until one reaches the line of Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico. Everything west of this line then becomes Baumli's official "West."

By this definition, the three great orchestras in this country, as I define them, are in the Midwest; as are four others on my list of ten favorite symphony orchestras. This makes seven of the greatest orchestras in this country that exist in the Midwest! One exists in the West, and only two in the East!

Methinks at this point that my friends who are from the East, if they yet have halted their gnashings of teeth over my not calling the New York Philharmonic a "great" orchestra, are suddenly betaking their thoughts to geographic concerns, and wondering what new concepts are in order to reclaim certain of those indubitably great orchestras under the property bounds of the "East." So, while these friends of mine--all much admired, I assure you!--are wrestling with their gruesome pride, I will proceed with a few words about the concerts I saw in 1985.

I attended a concert by what is probably the best trio in the world, namely, The Beaux Arts Trio, on Oct. 18. Their program was limited to two works: Beethoven's Archudke Trio and his Triple Concerto. Unfortunately, this small group of musicians were having something of an "off-night." Their performance of the Archduke Trio was sallow and almost lethargic. Fortunately, I had already heard their recording of this work, done about six years ago on the Philips label; had I not already heard this recording, which in my opinion is the best available recording of this work, I would have come away from this performance with a rather poor opinion of this masterful group of musicians. Of the three musicians, Pressler played best. His enthusiasm is unquenchable--I am almost sorry to use this analogy, given the lofty topic, but he bounced up and down on the stool so much, rubbing his fingers over the ivories even when he was not playing, bobbing his head about, his feet jouncing on the floor, that there were times he seemed to be an ape playing on a vine instead of a human working at a piano. Cohen's violin and Greenhouse' cello were not aggressive enough for this piece; the violin had attack but too little modulation, the cello was always precise but too subdued. As for the Triple Concerto: I must say that I did not expect it to be performed overly well, given that the University of Missouri Symphony played with this very famous trio. Actually (yes; the cynic in me must confess) I had rather believed that this symphony orchestra would not be able to get through this very complex piece with any semblance of organization or timing with the trio. I was pleasantly surprised. The orchestra did quite well, and although the trio was still somewhat weak, they picked up energy during the playing and the overall effect was quite satisfactory. Congratulations to the University of Missouri Symphony Orchestra!

Then, on Nov. 1, there was Jorge Bolet, who was in Columbia for The American Liszt Society's 1985 Festival. First, a note about the man and his piano. Bolet has a confusing demeanor. In pictures, he always looks like a very small, very timid man. In person he is a giant of a man, with an imposing physiognomy, and a frame that literally dwarfs the concert grand piano when he sits down to it. Yet, despite his stature and the massiveness of his personal presence, he seems painfully shy, very ill at ease. It is as though he regrets his large body, and wishes he could shrink to a smaller size--hence, the smaller demeanor he projects in pictures. And, given that he plays a Baldwin piano--which has not the power and volume of other brands, however much it may make up for this deficiency in subtlety of soft voicing--it would seem that Bolet is projecting these attitudes about his body into his playing. It is as if he is afraid of himself, afraid of the power he might unleash from that powerful body, so he sits down to a Baldwin, fully aware that it will soften his energy, mute his presence. Despite this handicap--and I do not use the word loosely--Bolet is a great

performer. His performance of Liszt's Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude was the first piece on his program, and he performed it better than I have ever heard it performed. He next did Liszt's Ballade No. 2 in B Minor; this, of course, is a powerful piece, and Bolet's Baldwin did not--could not--suffice for its demands. With a weak bass, the crescendos that should have roared and snarled flattened out and made the work sound almost comical at times. He next did Carnival by Schumann, which was interpreted in a warm, delightful way--both playful and passionate--that Kempff himself could not have surpassed. Bolet ended his program with Chopin's Sonata in B Minor, Op. 58 which he played well--there were a few minor mistakes which can be overlooked. The Largo movement was played especially well, but in the second and fourth movements, it seemed that Bolet's energies, too taxed by the earlier pieces, were sagging; he seemed equal to, but not eager for, the demands of this piece. Add to this the relative weakness of the Baldwin, and one must say that the performance, while quite good, was scarcely one that will be clearly remembered. Thereafter, Bolet did three small encores, which the audience scarcely demanded, but he seemed very enthused by a small group within the audience with whom he seemed to have a personal rapport.

Finally, on November 25, I heard The Hungarian State Symphony, conducted by Adam Fischer, with Jeno Jando appearing as piano soloist. This was a superb performance, with truly magnificent playing on the part of the orchestra, wonderful shepherding of the music by Fischer, and charmingly fresh interpretations by the very skillful Jando. Dances from Galanta by Kodály was first on the program; the clarinets were absolutely flawless, playing with a tone and timbre I have not before heard in a symphony orchestra. Bartok's Suite from The Miraculous Mandarin followed, and this time the wonderful playing of the clarinets was joined by flutes which played with equal quality. Jando then appeared with the orchestra, playing Liszt's Hungarian Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra. While the piano was not quite loud enough, given the volume of the orchestra, Jando's playing was quite impressive. His own, personal encore was one of the 20 Hungarian Rhapsodies for Piano--I think it was #4, but since I do not have these recordings, I am not sure. Jando played this little piece with a consummate skill that should make one eager to hear some of his recordings. The orchestra then played the last piece on their program, which was Kodály's Suite from Háry János. This work was played as well as I have ever heard it recorded, and the hammer dulcimer was especially impressive. The orchestra then did two encores: the "Hungarian March" from Berlioz' The Damnation of Faust, and Brahm's Hungarian Dance No. 5. The string section of the orchestra, which had been somewhat weak throughout the concert, finally came through very strongly; and the hammer dulcimer, although almost drowned out by the enthusiastic orchestra at times, was a strong plus.

But ... I will say no more about these three concerts, except to here conclude by registering the lament that these were the only ones I attended in 1985.

A note about last year's section on music: it seemed to be the section people appreciated the most. A few people, schooled in classical music, said some scurrilous things about my lengthy commentary on sonatas as "common," as one commentator put it, as the Moonlight, Pathetique, and Appassionata. But even these people said they generally appreciated my analysis of the performers.

I did, this year, listen to one more version of all these sonatas, a version which I am rather surprised I omitted from last year's writing. I speak of the 1965 recording done by Wilhelm Kempff. Allow me to say a few words about Kempff. He is one of my favorite interpretors of Beethoven's piano works. In fact, Kempff should be described as the quintessential interpretor. Unlike many players, he is never content to just play the score. At every bar he is carefully modulating, molding, melding the notes into a carefully monotored emotion.

In the Moonlight sonata, he approached the first movement with a softness I have heard from no other player,and his sense of timing was perfect. He carried these qualities through the second movement too, and began the third movement with a pristine subtlety that only he is capable of, and which was eminently possible in this case given that, in Kempff's rendering, the abyss of the second movement was not quite so deep. He carried the third movement through to a rich culmination of languor forged into a powerful anger. I confess that Kempff is not as his best when he must achieve volume and power on the fingerboard; this lacking is apparent in his rendering of the Moonlight, but it is not a disturbing lacking.

In fact, Kempff often makes up for his shyness about volume and power with a careful blending of dynamic nuance which provides a richness that qualitatively substitutes for volume. This was quite apparent in his playing of the Pathetique, where the unusual timing lended great effect to the first movement, and an absolutely perfect balance of forces between the two hands gave a sublime composure to the entire sonata. This composure began increasing in appeal during the second movement, and reached a true climax in the third movement where Kempff showed that he can indeed attain powerful volume when he himself has occasion to believe this is the quality of preference.

Kempff's playing of the Appassionata was not entirely satisfactory, mainly because the rather rigid score of this sonata does not lend itself to the attempts at novel temporal interpretations that Kempff brought to it. The result, especially in the first movement, lent the impression that Kempff was at times a bit confused by the timing. Moreover, there were a few too many minor mistakes committed in the performance, and the last movement especially was not done powerfully enough. Kempff is the master at subtlety, and he is capable of power; but he falls short when he tries to mix the two, as was the case in this sonata. Moreover, in this playing, there was one string on the piano which was a bit out of tune, and it showed up too often in the F minor key.

I of course listened to these three sonatas many times this last year, but my analytic bent toward them had ceased. Instead, I turned such attentions to Beethoven's Emperor Concerto, i.e., Concerto No.5, in E flat major, for Pianoforte and Orchestra, Opus 73,

which was completed in 1809. Why this concerto? Well; I like it, for one thing; listening to it many times for enjoyment would rather naturally arouse one's curiosity about many a nuance in its intricate emotion. But such curiosity, I believe, would not have goaded me to analysis, had there not been many a question put to me by friends. Over and over, people have stated a variation on the following: "What is wrong with that concerto? It always disappoints. Always." I usually tried to dismiss such questions, often saying something like, "You've heard it too much, that's all." But I knew this was not a fair answer. Deep down, I think I also knew something was wrong. Friends would ask me to listen to certain versions of the piece I had not before heard. "Why does the piano falter in the third movement here?" someone would ask. Or, "They actually sound off-key at the end? Why can't they keep it going?" I would listen to these versions; I would hear the problems my friends spoke of. There were many, many things going wrong in most performed versions of the concerto. I went to the score and studied it. The things that were wrong in the performances were not wrong in the score. Clearly, the problem was with interpretation, with playing, and not with Beethoven. I asked my friends to try and tell me what they believed was wrong. Usually people had no opinion at all, summing it up with something like, "Who knows? It just sounds sloppy in so many places." Others offered opinions that they were obviously pulling out of the air. For example, one person opined that the piece of music is emotionally askew because Beethoven wrote it just as his deafness was becoming acute; fully aware that he would never be able to perform this concerto in public, he injected a certain vengeance--a vengeance upon his own music--into the concerto. An interesting hypothesis, this; but this vengeance is not apparent in the score--in it, there is nothing emotionally askew. Another friend dismissed his own dissatisfaction with the piece by claiming that Beethoven himself was dissatisfied with it, as was evidenced by the fact that he never wrote another piano concerto in the remaining 18 years of his life. Also an interesting claim, no? But it is rather discordant with the fact that Beethoven pronounced this concerto his greatest work for piano upon its completion, and indeed proceeded for several years to work at a sketch for another piano concerto, this time in D major. The fact that he abandoned this attempt in no way suggests dissatisfaction with the fifth piano concerto. Beethoven was never remiss when it came to recording, in writing, his dissatisfactions with his own music; no report, suggesting either dissatisfaction or regret with the concerto in question, appears in any of his notebooks.

Roger screws up.

By this time, my curiosity was very much aroused. And I felt, growing inside myself, a certain indignation. The Emperor is such a wonderful piece of music; how dare any performer play it less than perfectly! Yet they do play it imperfectly. And the pianists, as well as the orchestras and their conductors, who attempted the piece were usually members of the most elite echelons of musicianship. I listened even more carefully; I kept looking back at the score. Yes; the score is seldom done justice; in fact, it is often done poorly. The concerto is so majestic, so surely enunciated, so lyrical, that to the slack ear, or to the newcomer to classical music, it always sounds good; but to the demanding listener, the full quality of the concerto is virtually never delivered. Pianists, to do it justice, obviously had to be capable of something more than virtuoso playing. Orchestras obviously needed to find a different voice, a new stride, than the one they were accustomed to. Conductors--well, it became obvious that quite often they were not a little timid in directing the performance. But their timidity was never present until they were at least more than half way through the first movement. Clearly, something in the concerto had begun taking on dimensions, and posing demands, that no matter how many times they had rehearsed it, they could neither fully anticipate nor control. Too often, the overall effect of the performance was subtly dissonant when it should have been harmonious, or overly placid when it should have been unleashing power. Why could not such a masterful concerto be played better?

One day I saw something--a simple fact which I could express in one sentence: The score contains so much it demands too little! Yes; here was something indubitable. A score this rich, with so many themes, so much stridency in the piano, a clear matching of the solo instrument with the orchestra: of course; with this much given, presented so clearly, how easy it would be to play it through and, by thus being required to present so much, by thus rendering a performance that careens through such a broad spectrum of themes and emotions, exult at the surfeit so wantonly that the subtleties are forgotten and the difficulties neglected. Yes; I had located the locus of the problem. But this problem contained many problems. I will try to specify a few of these.

By the time the Fifth Piano Concerto appeared, the piano had been elevated to a status equal to that of the orchestra in the piano concerto genre. Often the tendency was to work the two elements into one harmonious sphere. Some of the greater piano concertos, e.g., Beethoven's own C Minor, pitted the orchestra and piano against each other, hurling and meeting challenges, and in the end finding a kind of reconciliation or balance. These contests were usually defined not only in terms of thematic statements and variations, but also in terms of the recognized power of the instruments, i.e., the orchestra often challenged the piano to meet its might, and the piano often challenged the orchestra to match its capacity for soft modulation. But the Fifth Piano Concerto, unlike any concerto that had been written before, does quite the opposite. In the first movement, a courageous piano clearly challenges the orchestra to match the might of the keyboard, and it is no mean

task that awaits the orchestra in meeting this challenge. Then, in the second movement, the mighty orchestra turns the tables and challenges the piano to a duet of muted softness. To match the orchestra's softness, and yet be heard as a solo instrument, the piano must be played with a crystalline purity that only the best of virtuoso pianists can render. Thus, in the first and second movements of this concerto, both the orchestra and piano are subjected to emotional rigors--virtuosic demands, that are not common to the piano concerto. The capacity of a pianist and orchestra to meet these demands is very often a sufficient criterion by which to determine the overall quality of a performance. Which is not to say, however, that the concerto has no other great expectations.

For example, in the first movement of this concerto, there are five themes to be expounded by both the piano and orchestra; too often, one or two of these themes is given preference, in emotional emphasis, to the others. The result is that the movement has an inconsistent power, and both the orchestra and piano give the appearance of never quite finding their stride. Moreover, thematic material, crucial to the development of the final movement, is never sufficiently stated to sound familiar in the final movement.

Furthermore, the first movement demands incredible power in the left hand of the pianist; too many players simply can not produce such power, and end up over-compensating with the right hand. The striding chordal arpeggios thus lose their epic proportions, and end up sounding like a silly little march.

The second movement itself poses problems simply because it is in the key of B major. This key appears relatively rarely in classical music, its emotional content is rather remote, and for reasons unknown, it is often a difficult key for musicians to "hear" with precise intonation.

A tremendous challenge in the concerto happens in that miraculous transition from the second to third movements. Truly, this transition--the sustained B slipping down a semi-tone to the key of B flat major, i.e., the dominant of the concerto's home key--is one of the most magnificent moments in all that is music. I swear, had John Scotus Erigena heard this concerto, it would have inspired him to add another dimension to his layered cosmology. The transition, of course, is not defined by this key change only. It is also defined by--given breadth by--the initial flexing of the piano before its triple-forte plunge. But this pianistic flexing is so rarefied, so ethereal, and ultimately so ephemeral, as to demand absolute control on the part of the pianist. But absolute control is not easily consistent with beauty. Subtlety is in order, but it is easy for the pianist to instead sound timid; care that must be exercised can too easily come across as caution. Truly, these few exotic bars of what sounds like almost improvisatory exploration exact the ultimate in virtuosic skill. In fact, listening to these few bars by themselves is usually quite sufficient for determining the quality of the solo performer on any recording.

The concerto poses a certain difficulty to the performer not only by virtue of its demands for emotional concentration, but also by virtue of the physical strength required of the pianist. Seldom does one hear a recording in which the solo performer does not tire mid-way in the third movement. Sadly, the younger musicians are not so likely to tire, but they do not play so well; the older musicians, while otherwise capable of playing masterfully--who actually do play it masterfully, quite obviously tire in the third movement, and the listener's satisfaction is marred accordingly.

One of the main hurdles faced by both piano and orchestra is that subtle cadenza just before the coda, and the coda itself. The timpani accompaniment in the cadenza seems to so often determine the precision of what will follow. The piano flouish that begins the coda, breathtakingly fast, must nevertheless remain unerringly precise. And the orchestra's entry into the coda must be accurate down to the millisecond, for if the cue is off even the slightest bit, the remaining seven bars will also be off. But it is in this section, where extreme accuracy is in order, that orchestras almost invariably mess up. The cadenza gropes instead of exploring, the piano rushes instead of commanding, and the orchestra falters instead of leaping. Truly, it is that coda that causes many a careful listener to go away from the concerto feeling frustrated instead of inspired.

But I speak here about the elements of the concerto, without invoking specific recordings. As I above stated, I have listened to quite a few recordings of the Emperor, some by reason of my own curiosity, some at the request of friends, and many because of an aesthetic interest on my part which truly eclipses questions about the quality or precision of any one recording.

I will say a few words--convey impressions--about 15 versions of the Emperor I listened to this last year. Each of these versions I listened to at least two times, some I listened to five or six times. When I told friends that I was doing something of an informal study of the Emperor, many suggested I go on to write an academic article on the piece. Perhaps I shall do this, but meanwhile, to answer requests of friends as to what my judgements are when it comes to assessing the quality of recordings, I will here list all 15 versions by stating in order the solo pianist, the conductor, and the orchestra. I then will list some of the reactions I had to each piece, reactions which have bearing on the quality of the performance; but I will forgo an exhaustive analysis of each version, given that there is not the space in this already overly lengthy Aviary.

Note that of the fifteen versions of the Emperor which I heard, there are four versions which truly stand out as top-quality recordings. I list these four first, in order of their preference, and designate them with the symbol: *+. Other recordings were quite good; I proceed to list them after the truly outstanding ones, but ask you to note that I am not listing them in any order of preference. I designate them with the symbol: +. And some were quite bad; I designate them with the symbol: -. For those of you who are bent on understanding this piano concerto better, I would especially recommend that you

listen to the outstanding versions marked *+. Any of those that are marked + have their merits, and are certainly worth listening to. Those marked - are not worth listening to, and perhaps are even so bad that they should expressly be avoided.

*+ 1. Gina Bachauer, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, London Symphony Orchestra. Yes; this version is the best of all I heard! Played at a very fast tempo, it is about two minutes shorter in total duration than most versions. The speed is accomplished primarily in the first and third movements; that slow, carefully modulated second movement is played as slow as is appropriate.

I suppose some criticisms of this version are in order. Bachauer sometimes lacks subtlety in the solo parts of the second movement, and there were moments when the orchestra did not slow its pace when it should have. Bachauer tired by the middle of the third movement, and as a result, some individual notes welded into chords. But these criticisms are not of much importance compared to the quality of the performance. The opening to the third movement was tremendous--flawless and containing a unique exploration of the temporal configuration. The piano and orchestra worked together perfectly; both were very powerful, yet neither buried the other. And the coda was done perfectly. The prior cadenza had an unusually muted, yet perfectly appropriate, timpani; the coda's cueing then was handled perfectly, and Bachauer's energies, having earlier flagged, were back in full force . It was interesting seeing how Skrowaczewski handled the orchestra. Knowing his own temperament, it seems that Skrowaczewski decided to play the concerto full speed. But it appears that Bachauer wanted to play it even faster. Skrawaczewski tried to slow the pace down by reining in the orchestra, but his efforts never prevailed; Bachauer's pace took precedence, and the orchestra followed her.

All in all, a wonderful matching of elements: a great symphony orchestra, a great pianist, and a great conductor.

*+ 2. Wilhelm Kempff, Ferdinand Leitner, Berlin Philharmonic. This version runs a very close second to the version discussed above. It is a splendid recording wherein Kempff shows an exquisite power and finesse. Indeed there are places in the recording where Kempff quails at the intensity of the orchestra, but he is never overwhelmed; he immediately proceeds to match the orchestra, if not with equal intensity, then with a subtle phrasing which yields a unique fidelity that unerringly pierces through the orchestra's volume. Kempff is like a warbler singing in flight, cheerfully convinced of the elegance of its little body and the sublimity of its small but powerful voice. In the third movement, Kempff was especially wonderful, the notes exploding forth like shards of spectral light that had been fractured through the crystal of his hands.

The Berlin Philharmonic is, of course, a perfect match for Kempff. Their instrumentation in this recording was perfectly balanced. One could not have asked for better playing from the basses and cellos. The woodwinds were out of tune on one grating note, but this is the sort of criticism that one would never make of a lesser orchestra; it is just that one expects so much from the Berlin Philharmonic that any mistake at all seems like an insult to all of creation.

Unfortunately, and disappointingly, the coda to this version was off. The timpani which defines the cadenza not only had too much staccato, it was actually off in its timing. Kempff came in with the piano flourish perfectly, but the orchestra came in with a hesitant cueing, and remained off during the following seven bars. It pains me to admit that an orchestra this great messed up that coda, but I can excuse them to some extent, given that the problem seemed to be more with Leitner's cueing than with the skill of the orchestra.

Leitner was something of a weak link in this recording. I have above stated that a great orchestra is partially defined by its ability to play superbly regardless of the conductor standing before it. The Berlin Philharmonic is unquestionably a great orchestra; they always play superbly, which however, is not to say that they do not play better with some conductors than with others. The Berlin Philharmonic is a powerful orchestra, and Leitner simply is not powerful enough to keep them in check when they need be checked; he lacks the energy, and seems to lack the self-confidence. The Berlin Philharmonic may be likened to a huge pipe organ--it will sound forth, full volume from every pipe, unless the pipe is closed; a conductor, working with them, must keep those pipes closed. A conductor as masterful as Herbert von Karajen can of course do this; Leitner can not do it as well, and he knows this. Hence, he hesitates in cueing the orchestra, which in this version causes too many mistakes in the timing, especially in the second movement and in the transition between the second and third movements.

Hearing the interaction between the Berlin Philharmonic and Leitner reminded me of Phaëthon. If you remember your mythology, you will recall that Phaëthon's father, Helios, had promised to grant him a wish. Phaëthon demanded to drive the chariot of the sun across the sky, even though this task supposedly was beyond the powers of any mortal--and Phaëthon was a mortal, because even though his father was a god, his mother was the nymph Clymene. Well, you know the rest: Helios gives careful instructions to Phaëthon, but Phaëthon still loses control of the horses. He drives too near the earth, sets it on fire, and Zeus, to save the earth, kills Phaëthon with a thunderbolt. So ... you may ask, how does this apply to the subject at hand? I tend to think of the Berlin Philharmonic as the steeds of Helios' chariot. They are so powerful, so perfectly trained, that they play well, with all their might and vigor, regardless of the conductor who is put up in front of them. But when direction, control, cueing is in order, no ordinary conductor can suffice. The orchestra still plays superbly, but there is a certain reckless abandon that

is too obvious, and which threatens the solo performer. In this case, Kempff was equal to the challenge posed by this threat, but I can not but indulge my secret, "If only ... ." Yes; if only von Karajen had been the conductor in this version, I doubt not but that it would have sounded better than that of Leitner,who could scarcely curb the orchestral steeds.

But perhaps I criticize too much. This recording was truly splendid, and wistful yearning must not here eclipse praise. Especially when I must add, after these criticisms, that this recording contains the best orchestral playing on any version I have heard. The problems with cueing were Leitner's, and seldom detracted from the general quality of the orchestra itself.

*+ 3. Leon Fleisher, George Szell, Cleveland Orchestra. The grandest feature of this recording is the perfect balance between the piano and orchestra. The playing by Fleisher is masterful but occasionally flawed. His phrasing could use more variation of nuance, his left hand is sometimes weak in the second movement and at the end of this movement his chords turn to an imprecise mush. Both the piano and orchestra are groping at the beginning of the second movement, and it takes them about three minutes to find the perfect synchronicity that otherwise marks this recording. Unfortunately, the horns are full of spit at that miraculous transition from the second to third movements, but I am glad I can say that the brass is very strong in this orchestra. The cadenza's timpani at the end lends a flawless tempo to the orchestra, and the coda is the most accurately rendered of all these versions I have heard.

Overall, the effect of this recording is of musical sublimity, great emotion, and controlled balance. One can criticize the recording, because there are obvious mistakes. When the basses and cellos occasionally lag behind the orchestra's higher instruments, it is quite noticable, and the listener can not but wince. But difficult as such mistakes may be, they are rare, and hence can be forgiven.

One of the nicer things about this recording is that no one feature, either of the orchestra or Fleisher's playing, stands out from other features. The performance is organized, controlled, achieving greatness without needing to rely upon the sterling quality of any one aspect.

*+ 4. Alicia de Larrocha, Zubin Mehta, The Los Angeles Philharmonic. When listening to de Larrocha, one listens more with the heart than the ear. She, in this recording as in most of her playing, plays with an unusual energy--an energy neither subtle nor powerful; one gets the impression that for her the universe of music holds no mystery, but rather, simply yields the kind of novelty that delights a child. Hence, when she plays, it is as though she is a child romping over the keyboard, constantly delighted but never awed. Although de Larrocha's trills are rather uneven in this recording, one rather expects this, since it is her most consistent handicap. But despite this handicap, her playing of this version on the whole was the most precise rendition I have heard. The careful listener will hear things he has heard in no other recording. And her sense of timing is perfect; so perfect, in fact, that even as often as I have heard this piece, her precision moved me to tears. One can fault her in some minor ways in this recording. As I said, her trills were sometimes uneven. Her left hand is a bit too soft--one does not get the impression that this is a weakness, but rather, that she merely does not play as loudly with the left hand as she perhaps should. She faltered a bit at the beginning of the second movement, but at that one place in the Emperor where the pianist absolutely must not falter, namely, the transition from the second to the third movement, she played perfectly.

It was apparent in this recording that the pianist is a better musican than is the orchestra. Still, it was obvious that de Larrocha inspired the Los Angeles Philharmonic to outdo itself. There were a few, very obvious mistakes in their playing; and overall, they tended to lag, especially at the beginning of movements, but each time they lagged they quickly remedied themselves, and did a good job of making up in enthusiasm what they lacked in punctuality.

I feared for the coda, because the orchestra made a glaring mistake in timing some measures before the end. But as it turned out, they gathered their forces for the cue in time, and came off very well. In fact, it is in their playing that I can best see how the timpani's playing, in the cadenza prior to the coda, can best prepare the way for the orchestra's playing a precise coda. The timpani player is playing a dotted rhythm, which seems to warrant a staccato effect. However, by playing this staccato effect by striking the timpani at the middle rather than near the edge of the head, more undertones--which allow more temporal breadth intercurrent with the staccato of the strikes themselves--are invoked in each beat. Hence, a musical atmosphere--a temporal medium--with equal elements of precision and breadth is established. The orchestra then can enter the coda within the context of this pre-existing breadth, rather than having to, in one split second, create a new temporal medium for itself. Thus, precision is possible because it takes up residence in musical time, instead of faltering at the prospect of creating a new temporal habitat within which there is scarecely sufficient time to establish comfortable residence.

Zubin Mehta's performance as a conductor in this recording was splendid. He did a masterful job of changing tempo as a way of moving the orchestra beyond its occasional moments of uncertainty.

+ 5. Rudolf Serkin, Leonard Bernstein, The New York Philharmonic. I came close to listing this version of the Emperor as one of the outstanding ones, but caution caused me to give it a lesser ranking. Serkin's humming along with his playing was rather irritating, and perhaps this caused me to like the entire piece less. His playing is generally

outstanding. His staccato touch on the high keys was so sharp as to sometimes irritate, but other times the same touch allowed a brilliance to come through in which one could discern a great deal of musical value. Other times, in his enthusiasm, Serkin rushed the music, but his rushing, because of its motive, was quite pleasing even if not musically correct (just as a chorus may sing a bit sharp, when it is truly inspired, and thereby sound all the more comely even though musical accuracy is somewhat compromised).

The orchestra and Serkin were obviously inspired by each other, and in this version the New York Philharmonic sounds superb--which is to be expected, considering that this recording was made back when the New York Philharmonic was still a great orchestra. There were several irritating, although fortunately noncrucial, mistakes. The middle of the second movement was rough, and the horns make quite a few mistakes in the third movement. The beginning of the second movement was rough too; in fact, it was only when Bernstein invoked the precision of some very assertive basses that the relapses in precision of timing between the orchestra and piano were smoothed out. But overall, the orchestra played wonderfully; the strings were very precise, and the woodwinds, especially the flutes, played unusually well in the second movement. When the orchestra was playing well, Serkin played especially well; he did some fantastic interpretations of temporal emphasis in the second movement, and showed a unique command of dynamic emphasis.

The rendering of the coda was rather confusing and scarcely satisfactory. Serkin himself, halfway into the piano flourish, stumbled and lagged; he caught up with himself, the orchestra cued properly, but then half-way through the orchestra and piano duet, both the piano and orchestra faltered. Bernstein rectified the problem by cueing the timpani and basses--both very strong elements of the orchestra--to greater volume, thus injecting a precise stride that the rest of the orchestra could follow. Bernstein showed his colors as a great conductor by thus, in more places than one, calling upon the strongest elements within this orchestra to aid other elements when they momentarily lagged.

Allow me, here, to digress for a minute on Serkin. I last year, when analyzing the three Beethoven piano sonatas, said that I think Serkin is over-rated as a pianist. I spoke wrongly. What I should have said is that Serkin under-rates himself as a pianist. Let me try to explain. There have been several truly great musicians who are at their very best when playing the concerto form; it seems that they need the orchestra, the give and take, the mutual inspiration and challenge and tacit applause, to inspire them to the heights they are capable of. Such musicians sometimes disappoint their fans when they eschew the concerto form for the sonata form. They simply do not have the vigor, the focus, the concentration, that they attain in the concerto form. Serkin is this type of musician, as are Itzhak Perlman, Pablo Casals, and many others. I do not criticize these musicians for this trait. While they themselves may not be so outstanding in the sonata form, they are outstanding in the concerto form; and, what is a real bonus with such people, they seem to generate and share the inspiration which they themselves require so much. As a result, while they perhaps play better with orchestras than when alone, orchestras often play better with them than they would with musicians who are equally adept in either the sonata or concerto form. So, let me state my opinion more accurately; Serkin is often over-rated when it comes to the sonata form. But in the concerto form, he can not be over-rated. Such is the case with his playing on this recording. It is worth buying for many reasons, but one of the foremost reasons is Serkin's obvious ability to inspire the orchestra in terms of his own personal charisma and virtuosic skill as a musician.

\+ 6. Alfred Brendel, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, James Levine. This June, 1983 recording is the best of three Brendel versions I have. There is excellent syncopation between the orchestra and piano; the orchestra so perfectly matches the emotion of the piano that one scarcely notices which is playing. In the second movement, there is an unearthly serenity to be found in no other version; it is as though you are a corpse, confined to your crypt, and this is the music which will breathe life back into you, open the door of the mausoleum, and gently lead you back to the living. And the third movement is played so well that the full temporal organization, as indicated by the score, was finally revealed to me. And yes, with an orchestra this good, and a pianist so good, and a conductor who is so good at working with solo performers, one could not but expect them to hit that coda right on the mark; and they did.

Brendel shows himself in this recording as a more confident performer. His sound is fuller, brighter, more balanced between the hands--he has more subtlety in the right hand here while retaining considerable power in the left hand.

This is an excellent version to illustrate perfect playing of the chordal arpeggios; Brendel's temporal modulation in these strident statements is most subtle, and his playing of the trills is exquisite. On the whole, the orchestra played masterfully. There were slight problems with cueing in the third movement, and occasional lack of cooperation between the strings and horns, but this is a small criticism.

As a well-balanced version of the Emperor, with excellent playing throughout, this recording is highly recommended. It lacks the power, the lofty reaches, of some other versions, and hence it is not outstanding. Still, it is a good reference piece for either

the seasoned or the amateur listener.

+ 7. Alfred Brendel, Bernard Haitink, London Philharmonic Orchestra. Here Brendel is absolutely brilliant. His left hand is so powerful it is difficult not to imagine that another pianist is working with him; the effect is a richness from the piano such as one would only expect from a small orchestra. This recording is worth buying for this aspect alone. The orchestra was often too loud for the piano, even overbearing at times, which is the main flaw in this recording. Brendel, trying to be heard over the orchestra's volume, played so hard that he sometimes has a staccato effect even when not intended. Still, this extra effort did not cost him his skill in other areas; for example, his transition into the third movement is the most exciting I have heard.

The orchestra, except for its overbearing attitude, was quite good although there were occasional problems. Toward the end of the first movement, the violins were playing somewhat flat in certain places. And in the third movement, the orchestra as a whole was not crisp enough, the sound becoming too diffuse, lacking individual voicing among the instruments. And Haitink was rather slow on cueing the orchestra at times, although he did manage to bring the orchestra to attention on an accurate coda, even though the cadenza's timpani was so punctuated as to suggest there would be problems.

I believe Brendel is at his best in this, of his three, versions. But overall,the 6th version discussed above is better when one takes into consideration the quality of the orchestra, and the balance between piano and orchestra.

+ 8. Alfred Brendel, Heinz Wallberg, Pro Musica Orchestra of Vienna. This is an early recording, done in the late 50's or early 60's. Here, Brendel's playing is so good that the main difficulty encountered in the recording is that he did not fit well with the orchestra, which was no more than adequate for the task at hand. Brendel's playing lacks the power of his later years, but one can sense its beginnings. Occasionally his left hand is a bit too light, but this is a rare occurrance, and produces only a brief irritation and not an overall dissatisfaction. If anything, the lighter touch in his left hand is not so much a lack of power as it is an attempt at subtlety, a subtlety which he has since put aside for more pronounced voicing, but which, in this early playing, is reminiscent of Kempff--who has brought this form of interpretation to such a high degree of perfection.

On the chordal arpeggios and progressions, Brendel shows a lovely ability to keep the voicing of each chord quite distinct, and yet merge them in a closely unified continuum. He is a bit too loud, too much given to staccato, in the second movement, but this does not detract overly much from the quality of the concerto as a whole. I was especially impressed by his use of the pedal in the third movement; one would think that he had been listening carefully to Alicia de Larrocha during this time.

The orchestra did not make a good showing. There was a lack of precision throughout, especially between the percussion and strings, almost as though there were separate conductors for each of these orchestral sections. The strings, however, were especially good; and even though the woodwinds sometimes played a bit off-key, they showed excellent matching of timbre between the different instruments.

In approaching the coda, the timpani showed a very unusual and quite pleasing tone--rather like a snare, given its synthesis of highs and lows. Brendel's announcement of the coda was very uniquely controlled,even in this breathtakingly fast section. He began at what can be considered a rather slow pace for this section and then carefully picked up speed, thus injecting a high element of novelty into one of the most difficult and demanding sections of the concerto. The orchestra, bless their hearts, did not spoil Brendel's show; they came in precisely on cue, and thus contributed to a finale that is exultant to say the least. This version is worth buying just to hear Brendel's way of ending it!

+ 9. Guiomar Novaes, Jonel Perlea, Bamberg Symphony Orchestra. Here Novaes is much better than the orchestra, and even though there is a good balance between the piano and orchestra when it comes to volume, unfortunately the balance is not there with regard to quality. Novaes' command of the keyboard is quite impressive; he is very good at balancing staccato with sustain, and thus played the chordal arpeggios of the first movement extremely well. His modulation of volume is equally excellent, and even though he is sometimes uneven on his trills,this is not a serious fault. His introduction to the third movement showed unbelievable finesse, as though he were actually making love to that piano; then, as he proceeded to the loud announcement of its first theme, he showed a powerful command of intense dynamic range which never once skirted close to bombast.

The orchestra had a nice tone, but was sluggish on cues, showed poor temporal modulation, and had a noticably poor balance between the woodwinds and strings. Moreover, the orchestra blended notes too much instead of giving them individual definition. But while the playing was often not very good, the orchestra at other times played so well as to redeem many a fault. The timpani's approach to the coda, as in the above version #4 with de Larrocha, well illustrated how an orchestra can achieve precise cueing by entering a pre-established temporal scheme rather than--so to speak--coming in out of silence.

+ 10. Emil Gilels, George Szell, Cleveland Orchestra. This version, while quite good, is also irritating in some unexpected ways. For one thing, the recording engineers were careless, and there is a microphone rattling against the piano. Gilels himself is rather weak in the bass end of the piano, and while he is capable of power, is not capable of grand volume; it seems that he plays with his fingers and wrists only, but never with his

arms. Gilels' performance in the first movement is especially problematic when he reaches the chordal arpeggios. He strides too deliberately, as though hopping from one chord to the next, instead of playing them in a continuum that shows discrete elements united in a musical flow. His striding, in fact, is so ridiculous that it actually brings to mind a visual scene of a robust, corn-fed Iowa girl running across a newly plowed field, her heavily muscled legs, with calves like soccer balls, laboring grimly as she stubbornly traverses the soft earth and uneven furrows.

Actually, if I may enter a not entirely inappropriate digression here, then I would like to opine that the thought has often come to me that Gilels is a woman trying to pass as a man. In fact, I have long rather suspected that the solicitous sponsorship he received from the likes of Szell, Ormandy, and Bernstein was the result of their unconscious chivalric response to his residual femininity, and not the result of a cogent appraisal of ~~her~~ his artistic merits.

But, putting considerations of gender aside, let me observe that had it not been for this one very flawed aspect of Gilels' performance, the total performance would have come across much better. Gilels shows a wonderful lyricism with her right hand, even though at time there are some notes that get skipped. The left hand, unfortunately, is too often discordant to the right hand; at times the syncopation sounds perfect, at other times flawed, and the listener's appreciation of the piano playing ricochets accordingly.

Even though Szell has some trouble cueing the orchestra precisely during the second movement and during the transition to the third movement, the playing by both the piano and orchestra is exquisitely sweet here. This recording has one aspect which is truly outstanding: Gilels does not tire during the third movement; in fact, the piano is flawless during the first half of the third movement. The recording is quite worth buying for this feature alone!

The precision between the piano and orchestra is generally perfect; obviously Szell was letting himself play at chivalry, careful to direct the orchestra to Gilel's every need, and careful to curb the orchestra to her limitations. What the orchestra thus gains by way of a precise matching with the piano, it loses in general orchestral quality because they are too constrained by Szell who is taking pains to not let the orchestra overpower Gilels. When Gilels does break loose with power, the orchestra is superb; but with the intermittent quality of Gilels' playing, and the orchestra's careful attunement to her abilities, their consistency of quality suffered accordingly. It is rather disconcerting seeing Szell curb the orchestra in this way, but one must recognize that this problem sometimes plagued the Cleveland Orchestra when Szell was conducting them with solo performers other than Gilels. Szell often has his ear cocked too keenly to the soloist, showing a solicitude that quite often distracted him from conducting the orchestra to its full quality. Too often, when appearing with talent that was lesser than his orchestra, Szell preferred to curb the orchestra to show the soloist at his or her best, rather than allow the orchestra to do its best. In my opinion, he thus denied these soloists the opportunity of being inspired to greater artistry by an unquestionably great orchestra. It has also been my opinion that Szell was much better as a conductor when he was working in the strict symphonic medium, thus avoiding his tendency to defer to the needs, limits, and idiosyncrasies of soloists.

But before I digress too long, let me return to this version of the Emperor. The coda: well, Gilels was hesitant at first, but the orchestra came in accurately, and thus saved it.

It is difficult to not believe I am being too critical of this version; mind you, there were aspects of the recording that were excellent, especially Gilels' handling of the first half of the third movement. But there were irritations which simply were not erased by the positive qualities of the playing. Still, it is a worthy version, and no listener, who has but one or two versions of the Emperor, need feel deprived if this is the best he has.

- 11. Artur Rubinstein, Daniel Barenboim, London Philharmonic Orchestra.
We have here some big names, but a poor performance. Rubinstein never plays Beethoven superbly, but in this recording he does do a better job than usual. However, his performance contained many a lacking. The trills are uneven too often, and there is virtually no congruity regarding timing between the two hands. This latter difficulty gives a strange sound to the recording, as though one's speakers are out of phase. There are many actual mistakes regarding the score; individual notes are skipped or played hesitantly, and while any one such mistake can be overlooked, in this performance there are so many as to weaken the effect. Rubinstein's right hand is brilliant, but the brilliance is so constant as to become boring given that he never modulates his tone for the sake of subtlety. And his left hand, as would be expected, is weak and out of time; he simply has not the strength in that left hand, attached, as it is, to an overly limpid wrist, to attain the power that a Beethoven piece demands.

The orchestra, as is to be expected, gave an excellent performance. One could, however, sense no small amount of anger in the playing, as though the members of the orchestra were chaffing at the lesser quality of the pianist, and resenting the direction of a scarcely commendable conductor. It was not only irritating, but also saddening, to see how often the orchestra's superb playing, e.g., during the transition from the second to the third movement, was quickly weakened by the entrance of Rubinstein or the confusion of Berenboim.

Daniel Berenboim, a concert pianist who has never been able to enter the top rank of virtuoso performers, has been accepting his limitations at the keyboard and, over the

last few years, has been trying to establish a reputation for himself by guest conducting major orchestras every chance he gets. I am amazed that Danny is able to squirrel himself into the conducting slots he does; he has even made a few recordings with the unmatched Berlin Philharmonic. In each of these recordings, the orchestra sounds wonderful because it already great; however, there is absolutely no sense of direction as infused by the conductor.

Such lack of direction is quite apparent in the recording under discussion. It is obvious that Danny is trying to follow Rubinstein's lead for cueing the orchestra. Rubinstein, however, is not the sort to understand the complexities of orchestration, and he does not provide for Barenboim the cues he wants. And it is also obvious that this great orchestra is not inclined to follow any direction that Danny provides unless the complexities of the score absolutely demand it. Hence, the orchestra sometimes follows Rubinstein's playing, other times provides its own direction, and occasionally looks to its conductor. In those places where a cue from the conductor is important, either Danny is unable to give it, or the cooperation between the orchestra and conductor has already been so compromised as to sabotage any temporary tryst. One can, of course, fault the orchestra for this inability; unhappy as they may be with their conductor, this does not excuse the hostility they so clearly manifest toward poor Danny. But one can wonder what strange arrangements were made with the director of this orchestra so that Daniel Berenboim could conduct it; and criticism is certainly in order for anyone who assented to such a farcical arrangement.

"Your room is right in here, Maestro."

On a positive note: the coda was played well. The timpani was a bit sharp, but Rubinstein handled his part wonderfully. And the orchestra's momentum carried through to a precise playing, aided, in this case, by Berenboim who, given his own experience as a pianist, recognized the importance of precision here and gave a perfunctorily accurate cue.

While this performance of the Emperor has little to recommend it, there is some value to be gleaned from the general interpretation of the score; two pianists are cooperating, as pianist and conductor, on a concerto for piano, and as a result there occasionally is a novel twist to the playing.

- 12. Julius Katchen, Pierino Gamba, London Symphony Orchestra. This version is almost as fast as the one which Bachauer played, but in this case, neither the pianist nor the orchestra can keep up with the pace they have tried to set. Every movement eludes them, especially the third, where both the piano and orchestra, already overly taxed at this point, virtually give up the ghost. Were it not for this global flaw in the performance, this version would have been much better, especially in terms of Katchen's playing. While Katchen is too timid virtually every time he approaches the orchestra, once he is thoroughly engaged in the musical dialogue he is very powerful and plays in full complement to the orchestra. There are rare, but very painful, mistakes under Katchen's fingers which seem to result from the fast pace, but fortunately, in the slower second movement, Katchen was able to demonstrate both skill and fine interpretative abilities. His humming along with his playing was quite noticable, but was not particularly irritating; unlike Gould, he at least hummed in tune with the music.

The London Symphony Orchestra, although they played wonderfully, also played very badly--again, this seems to have resulted from the fast-paced tempo. The basses especially were weak on the fast parts, and the orchestra, as if tired out, played a very rough transition from the second to the third movements. They were more or less saved when Katchen came in with a splendid interpretation and emphasis, but their playing remained weak to the coda. Approaching the coda, a terribly timid timpani set a slack pace, but a powerful presentation by the piano roused the recently tepid orchestra to execute a flawless ending. There, the music again was pure, but one could not but have the impression that this was their dying breath.

- 13. Glenn Gould, Leopold Stowkowski, American Symphony Orchestra. This version began well, with an unbelievably subtle introduction to the first movement played by Gould. But thereafter, the performance quickly went down hill. Gould, trying very hard to give an unconventional interpretation to this concerto, injected some very novel technique and timing, but in no way thereby infused the piece with aesthetic quality. He seemed to be playing only for himself, oblivious to the orchestra, and throughout the piece showed an irritating tendency to play each bar separately, with a slight but noticable pause at the end of each bar. In this version Gould showed unequaled power of attack; there were times he seemed to put the ivory through the floor. One could almost imagine that, suspended above him were a battery of well-aimed window weights, and that at precise moments, certain of the weights were dropped from up above, striking the piano keys at the appropriate moment,

thus accounting for the force with which the hammers hit the strings. But for all his force and strength, Gould did not give a sense of power. He simply played, showing no tendency at all to vary the nuance of the piano's color, even though he can do this, as is evidenced by his recordings of Bach and Strauss. In fact, the playing was so bland in some places one would almost have thought it was a player-piano running its roll instead of a virtuoso musician at the keys. Perhaps Gould would have done better, in this performance, to listen to his playing rather than his humming. Gould's humming has, of course, been commented on by many a musicologist. Gould, when criticized for it, says he can not help it. I am not sure I believe him. It seems that he has somehow been convinced that eccentricity is the mark of genius, so he must pretend to genius by feigning an aura of snobbish eccentricity. I must confess, however, that while I do not like his humming generally, it was not as irritating in this recording as it often is.

The orchestra played rather poorly throughout, showing virtually no ability for staccato or emphasis. The transition from the second to third movements was done terribly, and the cue was missed on the coda. Not only the orchestra was off at the coda, but Gould also was; he came in with a flourish so fast it might have dazzled, but Gould's dexterity was no equal to his dazzle, and he slurred the flourish into a meaningless surd.

Stowkowski's cues, as a conductor, were not done precisely. The orchestra itself was not well-balanced in terms of instrumentation, and one has the impression that Stowkowski was so discouraged by both the orchestra's limitations and Gould's ineptitude with Beethoven that he gave up any hope of doing a good recording.

It should be mentioned here that the recording engineering on this version was especially poor, although it is unlikely that better engineering would have done anything except make the limitations of the performance more glaring.

+ 14. Claudio Arrau, Zubin Mehta, New York Philharmonic. This version was taped from a live broadcast in June of 1983; hence, it is not available as a general recording, and this is fortunate. Arrau was not capable of giving attention to more hand than one; when he had to work hard with the left hand, he made mistakes with the right hand, and when he worked hard with the right hand, he played so softly with the left hand it seemed at times he was on the verge of forgetting to use it. He was generally weak on the middle keys, and although he evoked from his piano a beautiful bell-like tonality on the upper end, this tonality soon lost its interest given that Arrau showed no sense of accent and seemed to be doing nothing more exciting than running scales.

The overall temporal scheme, as defined by the orchestra, was very good, but when the performance is looked at in parts, the orchestra played very poorly. They were actually flat at times, seldom precise, and played with a lassitude and lack of quality that is bad because it is lazy. Although one might try to give the orchestra credit for its interpretation of the temporal confines of the music, this credit is actually Mehta's due; the orchestra insisted on playing badly; it plodded, stumbled, and gimped its way along like a fat, mangy dog in a swamp. The coda, surprisingly, came off adequately; the orchestra nearly messed it up, given that they were slack on the cue, but Mehta cued the basses to twice their normal volume and they thus punctuated the last six bars to inject an accuracy that would command the rest of the orchestra.

For some reason the audience applauded at the end of the concerto's first movement; I do not know if it was amateur night, and they were letting the uninitiated in for free, or if the audience was actually inspired enough by the playing to unleash itself thus prematurely. Kindness forces me to conclude the former.

+ 15. Hanae Nakajima, Zsolt Déaky, Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra. This was a terrible, terrible version. The entire orchestra was somewhat out of tune; the violins and basses were sharp, the horns flat. Truly, I can not understand why the conductor, the concert master, or even the pianist did not object. Overall the orchestra was weak, flaccid, late on cues, poor on timing, and the horns were full of spit throughout the playing. Truly, I have heard good high school orchestras play better, although (and here allow me to enter a digression) I have heard some college orchestras play worse. I am reminded of the dismal fall of 1974 when I was teaching at Missouri Western State College in St. Joseph, Missouri. One afternoon I was in the music building, and heard the orchestra tuning. Out of curiosity, I walked down the hall to the practice room, where I could see through the glass door. They were still tuning, but when I looked in, I saw the conductor directing them. Strange, I thought, that this conductor needs to warm himself up too. But then I noticed that the musicians were all concentrated on their instruments, the string players moving their fingers over the fingerboards with a modicum of purpose. I suddenly realized that these musicians were either running scales, or actually playing a piece of music. And they sounded so bad that it still seemed that they were only tuning.

"Gee... look at all the little black dots."

Well, the Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra did not sound quite this bad, so let me forego this digression and be back to them. But no; I have said enough about them, except to mention that they hit the coda right on cue, only to mess it up half way through.

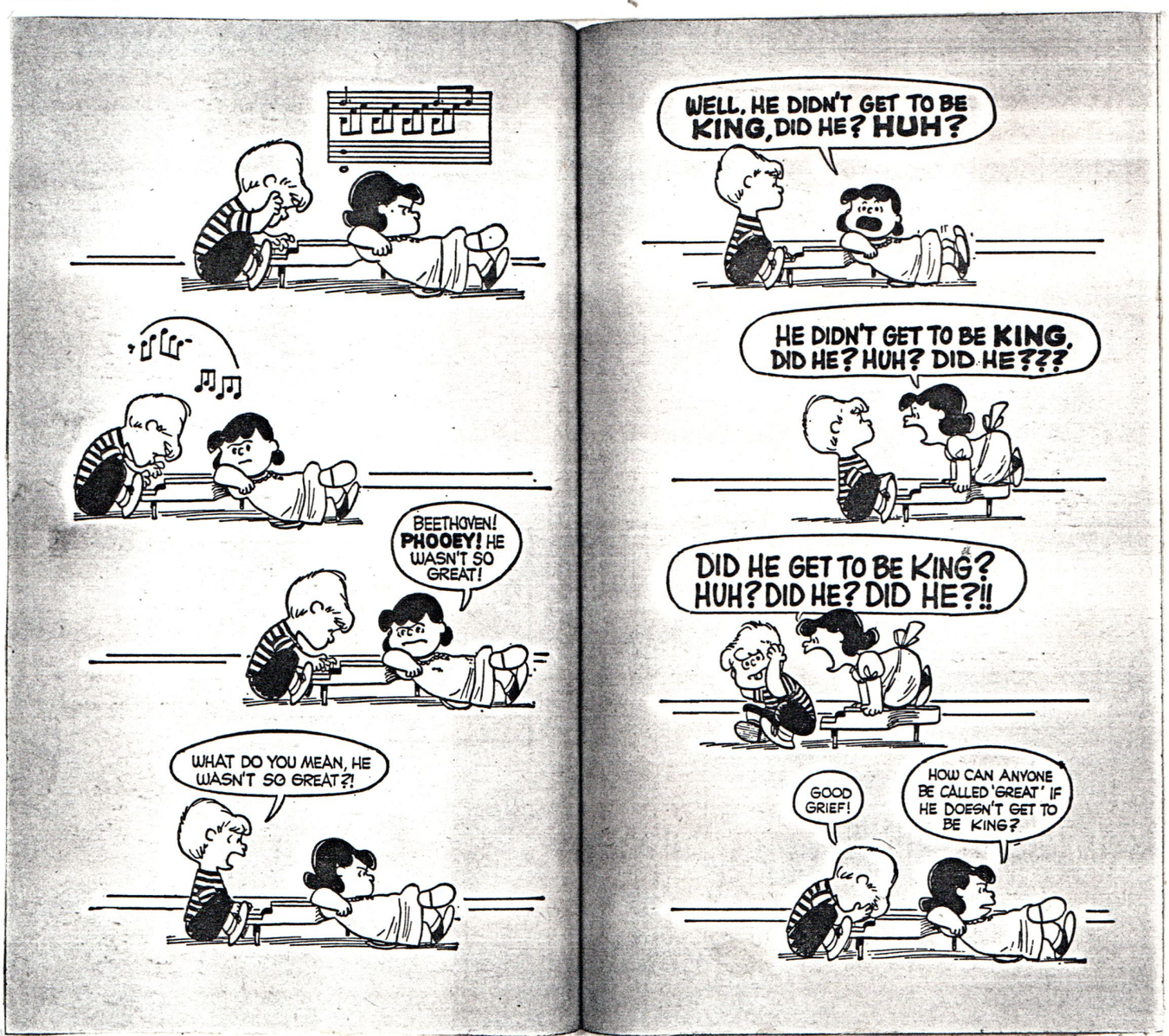
Nakajima I have never heard of, and I do not even know if the name if male or female, although I suspect the latter. Regardless, the playing here is excellent, even though it is not nearly loud enough next to the orchestra. Of course, it is somewhat hard to judge the quality of the playing, when it is set alongside an orchestra as bad as this one. On my second--and I assure you, last--listening to this version, I tried to concentrate on the piano alone. It is obvious that this player would sound splendid if teamed with a decent orchestra. And it was also obvious that this player's concentration and self-confidence were very much shaken by the orchestra. Still, the pianist showed good interpretation, with many very unusual and captivating nuances I have never heard from other pianists. The balance between the hands is quite admirable at times, although at other times, when the left hand was taxed, it detracted from the precision of the right hand. The microphone, unfortunately, was placed so that it picked up too much of the piano's mechanical action, but still, the piano came through as a strong instrument despite the impediment of the orchestra.

While I expressly recommend that you do not hear this version of the Emperor, I very strongly recommend that if you see a version of this concerto that has Nakajima as soloist appearing with a different orchestra, then try to give it a listen. And then let me know your impressions.

Well; so much for analyzing 15 versions of Beethoven's Emperor. How very, very excessive of me. When I set out to do it, I had not anticipated that it would take up so much space. Sad, when I think that I could buy myself that compact-disc player for the money I will spend xeroxing 130 copies of this now massive missive.

One further thing, however, about this analysis. I discover, upon finishing, that not only did I analyze the superb recordings, i.e., the first four, in order of preference, but I did the same with the others too. Be informed: the 15 versions of the Emperor, as numbered, are all of them ranked in terms of what I consider to be their merits relative to one another.

A final note: if you are not overly familiar with this concerto, and are not highly familiar with classical music, then as much as I like the first four versions I have analyzed, I am not sure I would recommend starting with them. Brendel would probably be the best place to start, or possibly Serkin. After becoming familiar with one of these simpler versions, then work your way back up through Kempff and Bachauer.



NOTES FROM TWIN FRANCES

(First, a note from brother Francis about my twin sister. I promised her I would not make reply to anything she says in her section, but this does not exclude my saying a few things at the beginning while I wait for her to get to the typewriter and speak her own mind. At this moment, while I am sequestered in my study, she is preparing to leave again for London. Procrastinator that she is, she waited until these last hours to pack, and hence, will not have very much time for leaving a message herein.

But even though such failings on her part have been a stone around my neck from the day we were born, I tolerate such things, being a goodly brother and quite patient by temperament. "A stone around my neck" I said; actually, this statement is probably closer to the truth than the metaphor would suggest. I am sure most of you would have inferred by now, if I have not already told you, that of us two I am the first born. But being born thusly was not without dangers, because I came into the world with my sister's umbilical cord wrapped around my neck. My last few inches of travel from womb to world had drawn the cord tight, and I was literally being strangled as I made what was to be my grand entrance. Only the quick ministrations of an alert nurse kept my life from being cut short, and ever since that time, I have felt the mark of that first struggle. Likely I would be able to forget it, but as I said, my dear sister, for all her goodly intentions, injects no small quantity of conflict and weariness into my otherwise relatively peaceful existence. Let me give but two examples; or rather, one example that contains two clear indications of such conflict.

Shortly after Abbe and I were married, my sister Frances, who despite her denials carries with her considerable jealousy of my new wife, returned from London bearing gifts for the two of us. I had just ... .)

Hello again!

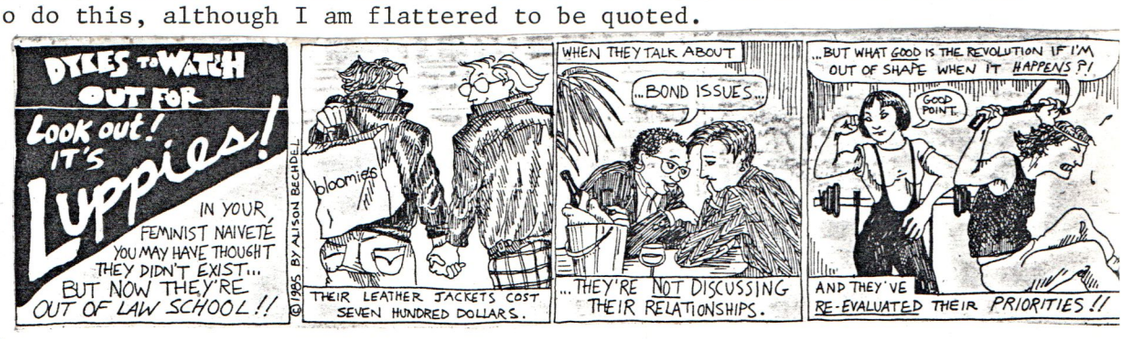
As is usually the case, Francis must indulge his primordial death-wish. He sneers and baits, and can not understand why I get angry!

I procrastinated my packing, but not my intentions for The Aviary. For more than a week, I have clamored to write my piece, but Francis has put me off, immersed as he is in his long-winded declarations. Now, when I must leave in less than an hour to catch my bus for the airport, he at last grants me access.

Shall I reply to his accusation about my role in his birth trauma? Or might I simply place a counter-accusation? After all, dear brother, I was the one whose life was endangered. I was the one whose birth trauma, clearly physical and not of the elusive and likely fictitious emotional kind you claim, did actual and dangerous damage. It was my umbilicus that was snipped, in order to save your life. Had I not been on the verge of emerging, those few seconds without oxygen would have become minutes. As it is, those few seconds caused damage that lasted for years. Minutes would have been fatal.

Dear reader, my brother encroaches upon a delicate issue by bringing this matter up. I suspect he will soon enough be ashamed of himself -- his bombast turned to bluster. So I shall say no more about him, and talk about myself.

First, I want to say that I was surprised, and pleased, by the number of Francis' friends who responded to what I said last year. Many people, especially men in the men's movement in the USA, asked me to elaborate on what I had said about the prejudice against myself from lesbian feminists. I even received two invitations to give a talk on the topic, and received a call from a reporter. I declined the two speaking invitations; I have opinions, but this does not mean I can turn them into orations. Besides, I have no desire to become a spokeswoman for the men's movement. I simply do not have the time and inclindation to do this, although I am flattered to be quoted.



To take up the topic again, although briefly, I must say that I am by now totally disillusioned by what I see to be the abdication of feminist ideals by feminists. While this cartoon may illustrate my point to some extent, I should put it in my own words. I simply can't tolerate the way the radical feminists use every rhetorical point about sexism for their self-interests--either themselves as individuals or women as a group. Note, however, that I speak of the "radical" feminists. I still consider myself a feminist (although my brother Francis says that if he considered me a feminist he would disown me). But if I am a feminist, I am a "women's liberationist feminist," and not a "women's self-interest feminist." Actually my break with radical feminism happened more than a year ago. This last year has seen a different break--a break with feminist men. I literally can not stand to be in the same room with most feminist men. They treat me more chivalrously than the big macho guys. Their deferential manner disgusts me. It seems that all they want to do is sit at my feet and tell me how oppressed I am. Then, if they're not gay (and usually they are gay) they want to seduce me. And believe me, when it comes to seductions, these feminist men are very unimaginative. Their favorite way of seducing women is to keep telling a woman how oppressed she is. Needless to say, this puts me in a bind--since these men

never talk to me about anything except how oppressed I am, I always wonder if they're trying to seduce me. Of course, I can avoid all this by talking to them about my own ideas and such. But I got so tired of the groveling and head-nodding that I gave it up.

So now I am still working as a reporter for several small newspapers in London, and working very hard on my anti-nuclear work. I now spend very little time in the States; when I do come here, it is usually to see Francis for a few days, and see other members of my family. I think the reason I come so rarely is because of the culture-shock, if that's the right word. I am constantly surprised by the lack of political awareness among Americans. In London, everyone is politically conscious. In Europe, where I travel a good deal, there is scarcely a person who is not terrified of the United States and their nuclear arsenal. In fact, I have never met a European who is not more afraid of the USA than of the Russians. People in France, Belgium, Germany, England ... need I go on? ... are all of the opinion that Ronald Reagan is a dunce. Believe me, I come away from that atmosphere to a different one, and it is overwhelming. The minute I land at the airport I am depressed and terrified. Hardly anyone in this country even seems to care, much less worry, about nuclear war. Very few people read books. Not many read the newspapers (not that they can be trusted in this country). And they all watch television, which is their version of the truth. While I do not hate television like my brother does (maybe because I am more accustomed to the fine programming of the BBC) I can not for the life of me understand why people in this country believe the evening news. It is more like a comedy show, with a heavy sampling of soap opera trivia mixed in with lots of violence.

One good thing about my anti-nuclear work is that I now have a chance to speak before large groups of people. This is something I have needed for a long time. I have for many, many years been handicapped by a keen shyness when it comes to speaking before groups. This shyness was the consequence, so to speak, of early physical problems which I above alluded to. It has taken me years to even begin overcoming it, and I must say (despite his inclination to sometimes be unkind in what he says about me) that Francis' kindness and help have been invaluable for me in working with this problem.

Since I have already read what Francis wrote in this Aviary (up to this point) I feel inclined to say some things about my brother. I am glad he wrote about his insomnia. He needs to be less closed up about his problems. Believe me, his insomnia is as bad as he describes it. He walks about in a daze much of the time. Sometimes he even seems to be hallucinating, although of course this is only his dreaming, so to speak, while awake. When he is this sleepy, it can be very hard trying to talk to him. Although I have found out how to bypass this difficulty. If Francis is so sleepy he isn't making any sense, all I have to do is say, "Francis, why don't you go take a nap?" and he is immediately wide awake and completely lucid. But sadly, he is terrified too.

He seems convinced that his insomnia is rooted in a terribly deep and remote neurosis. I sometimes think that it may be but a small manifestation of something he is worried about, but that his worry about his worry is his main problem. Actually, I even wonder if his insomnia is just one more symptom of what seems to be a rather early bout (we are only 38) of mid-life crisis. I think, if this is true, his fear of sleep is a fear of death. And believe me, he is burdened with many fears. While he claims to like growing old, I think he is terrified of it. I also think he has deep feelings of sexual inadequacy before his lusty young bride, although he denies this too.

As well as I know Francis, even I was surprised by his depressed and angry tone in this year's Aviary. I know people responded unfairly to some things he said last year, but now he is so angry about that he is baiting people to do it again. I thought his analysis of what he called Monet's "proprioceptive fourth dimension" was a little pompous. And I know he used those two French phrases at the beginning of the music section to show off his intellect. To spare you the frustration of not knowing what they mean, I'll give you the translation here. The first phrase, "avoir l'orielle juste," means, "to have a good, or appreciative, ear for music. And the phrase, "doigter un morceau de musique," means, literally, "to finger a small piece of music," although, more generally, it means, "to enjoy music simply," or, "to dabble in music."

While Francis' tone, in his writing, would certainly elicit anger, even I do not understand why people get as angry at him as they do. Maybe people really don't get overly angry, though. Maybe the problem is just that there are always so many people around Francis. In his own ways, he is very generous. There are evenings when dozens of people drop by to see him. These people impose on him, weary him, use him up. And when they are angry at him, it is especially hard, because since he knows so many people he is more likely to have someone in his life who is angry at him. Does this make sense? For example, if it is not overly pessimistic to assume that five percent of our friends may be angry at us at any one time, then this would imply that there are ten people who are angry at Francis at any one time. Unlike some people, who would become callous to so much negativity, Francis is very sensitive to it. He feels hurt, and he always feels that he must confront such people. So it seems that he is always fighting a battle with somebody.

I think Francis feels especially frustrated in his dealings with people because of how his own anger comes out. When people impose on him too much, or when people drop in and interrupt his writing so much, he tries to set limits and keep them away. But people never pay attention to him. Then he gets angry. But his anger never works. Why? Believe me, it is not because his anger is not real or not strong. I can certainly attest to how wicked his anger can sometimes be! No; it's a strange and frustrating paradox for him. The same magnetism that causes so many people to visit him also prevents his ever setting up limits. Paradoxically, when Francis tries to drive toxic people (his term) away from him, he only seems to draw them the more! People actually like it when he gets angry at them. I have seen him get angry at people, cuss and yell, and the people actually start glowing, as though they feel honored by his anger. It's as though they feel so profoundly shamed by him that they immediately forgive themselves. And when shame so quickly gives rise to self-forgiveness, then people thereupon feel exonerated by Francis' anger and all the more intimately enfolded by his personality. What is this about Francis' personality? Lacking a better word, I have always called it "charisma." It can't be anything else. Otherwise, why would people actually like it when Francis gets angry at them? Why is it people would even brag that they were the recipients of his anger. I am not kidding; I actually heard two people saying after a party: "We must be pretty important to Francis. He noticed us enough to get angry," one of them said. And the other said, "Yeah; he chewed our asses for five minutes. Doesn't this prove that, deep down, he really loves us?"

But I did not mean to go on so much about Francis. I think the only reason I do is to start changing how he and I relate. We have always been so competitive. And--maybe because we are twins--we always do our best to make sure our identities are kept separate. Sometimes I think we're both kind of neurotic about this. Few people who knew Francis during his marriage to his first wife knew they were married. He never talked about it, trying to make sure no one would ever question his independence. He and his current wife did not tell anyone they were getting married, not even me, until after they had done it. I assume this was Francis' doing, although he says they both agreed to it. At least, in this Aviary, he is making an effort to be public about it. But even then, he conducts himself so autonomously that many people will never suspect he is married unless he tells them. Something of the same is true with me. I think the reason I have never succeeded in a lengthy romantic attachment is because I must prove my independence. I probably am more careful about this than is Francis, but then, I have to make sure that my identity is not usurped by the greedy gobblings of his personality.

But regardless, I think Francis' appearance of being unmarried stems from his always making sure he is perceived separately from me. And I am sure that my own independence, often admired by my friends, is largely an effort on my part to not be thought of in terms of him. But we are both changing this a little bit. And we are becoming better friends, regardless of what Francis' introductory words (to my section!) would seem to imply.

But my time is running out. I must race to meet my bus, from there to the airport, and then back to London. My work and friends await me.

I leave you with fond farewells, and I leave Francis to his precious, conjugal bliss.

Thanks for everything!

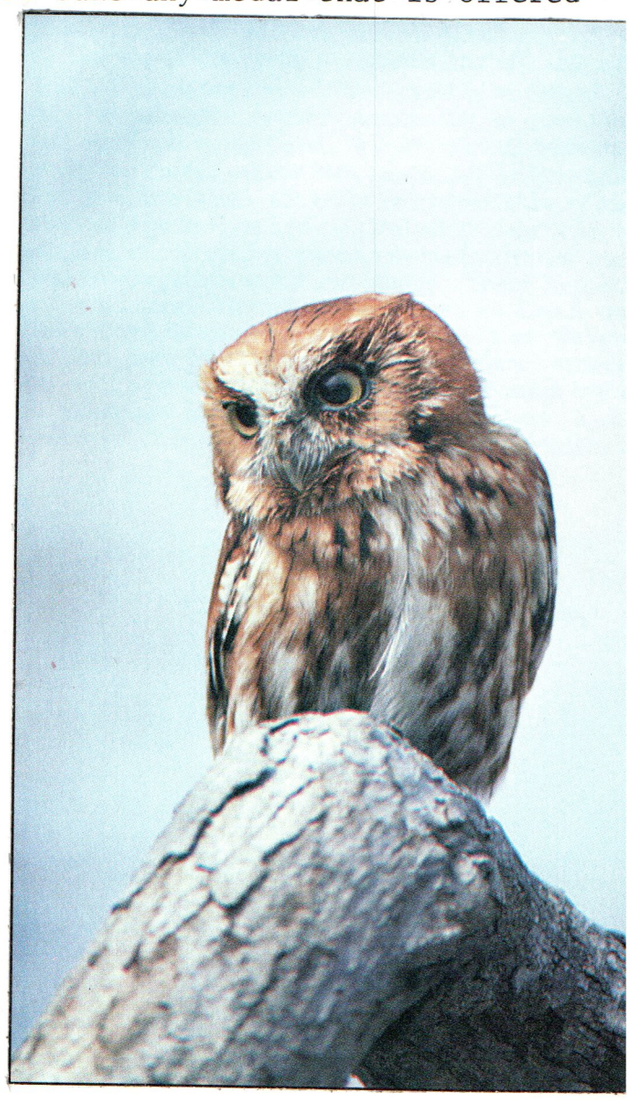
Frances

*******ARTICLES*******

1985 was a difficult year for publishing. It seems that, more and more, I have a great deal of difficulty matching my stylistic inclinations with the guidelines used by editors. I refer especially to the requirements regarding length. In the area of men's liberation, articles must be kept at five to ten pages; anything longer is not likely to be published. Even in the scholarly fields of philosophy, psychology, and neurology, it seems that everything must be kept at 15 to 25 pages. These parameters do not allow me to submit seminal ideas--ideas which I would just as soon someone else picked up on and carried through to their logical ends. And they certainly do not allow me to publish my more ambitious (I would offend academic sensibilities if I used the word "inspired") forays which often come to 50 or 75 pages. Hence, my best articles remain unpublished and fallow.

Still, in 1985 I managed, through persistence, to publish 23 things.

The most widely read--or so I presume--thing I published was that little piece called, "Mako Shark and Bluefin Tuna" in the February issue of the National Geographic. Of course, the publication I am most proud of was my book, Men Freeing Men. However, there was another publication I was extremely proud of, simply because it reflected a great deal of perseverence. The University of Dayton Review at last published my article, "Erica Jong Revisited (or) No Wonder We Men Had Trouble Understanding Feminism." Now, why am I proud of this publication? Well; I do think it's a good article. But aside from its quality, realize that I submitted this piece 42 times before submitting it to The University of Dayton Review. In other words, the article finally placed on its 43rd submission. I'll take praise for faith in my own writing, thank you. And I'll take any medal that is offered for perseverence too.



Allow me to refer back to a small publishing event of 1984. In the November 1984 issue of Hustler I published a short article called, "Castration by Decree?" and I received comments or letters from dozens of friends criticizing or condemning me for publishing an article in a pornographic magazine.

Okay; Hustler is pornography. It is worse than that; it is about the sleaziest of the sleaze magazines. Moreover, it is racist, pedophilic, and its articles seldom have redeeming literary value. So what is my excuse?

Well; for one thing, it had been years since I had seen the magazine. Truly, it was not as bad "back then" as it is now. But yes; I hear the hammering criticism already: "How can you talk about degrees of bad when all pornography is obscene?"

Granted. But a problem remains for me. Namely, how can you talk about degrees of obscenity when, to my perception, nearly every magazine I read is obscene? Would you rather I had published the article in, for example, the New Yorker? Well; I tried them with the article, but they rejected it. Besides, in my opinion, they are every bit as obscene as Hustler. Not obscene in the pornographic sense, but in other ways. For example, their snobbery (which believe me is not just feigned) and classism offend me deeply--certainly as deeply as does the racism and pornographic mentality of Hustler. Would you, then, prefer I publish in Esquire? But there you have obscenity too. Their ads are scarcely less pornographic than many of the pictures in Hustler; the only difference is that in Hustler the models are paid less, so reveal more of their bodies, whereas the higher paid models for Esquire can titillate and entice by showing a bit less. Like any good business man these business women know that by making their bodies (like any product) teasingly scarce, the higher is the price they can command for their goods, i.e., goodies. And here, just now I open a copy of Esquire, turn to a page of print, and here is a man telling me what I should and shouldn't wear. He goes so far as to tell me that I am being absolutely improper, even gauche, if I wear socks with sandles. If I must wear socks, then shoes are my proper and expected attire.

And here, I open the pages of Cosmopolitan. Am I expected to believe that this magazine is not obscene? I tell you, if I were a pornophile, this magazine would do quite nicely. These high-class women, except for the beaver shots, reveal almost as much as do the girls in Playboy. And here, I open a copy of Ms. Magazine. Let me tell you, some of these ads reveal more than did the pictures of women modeling underwear in the old Sears catalogues I used to masturbate to when young.

Where can I go to publish without encountering obscenity? But here; I pick up a magazine I have never read, which I bought out of curiosity just to see what it prints. Called the Complete Woman I now open it for the first time. Already, just looking at the titles of articles, I can see it is pretty much slanted toward any bored, empty-headed female. And looking at their editorial masthead, I see that the eighth person listed is Tiffany Holmes, who is described as, "Astrological Forecaster!!" Now tell me, can

you seriously expect me to be offended by the pornophilic obscenity of Hustler, and not also be offended by such intellectual obscenity? You expect me to forgo publishing in a pornographic magazine, and yet keep company with people who are playing at astrology out there in la-la land?

Of course, there are a few magazines which are not obscene. The Humanist is one. Free Inquiry is another. The Smithsonian is not obscene, but I can no longer say the same for National Geographic. So where do I publish? I submitted the article in question to The Humanist; they were already committed to topics for forthcoming issues which did not embrace the content of my article. So ... I submitted the article to about ten other magazines, all of them obscene, and Hustler was the first one to take it.

Still, allow me to assure you that I do not feel overly comfortable about having published an article there. However, I do not know what to do about this discomfort. I ask you just one favor: direct me to a magazine that is not obscene, and which is enlightened enough to publish what I write, and I promise you I will henceforth forgo publishing in any magazine which contains obscenity of any ilk.

Is my point by now clear?

But I digress long enough. I will here, as stated earlier in this edition of The Aviary (a publication which, I assure you, is not at all obscene) present for your edification five small articles:

LANGUAGE AND CEREMONY

(Letter to the Editors of Book of the Month Club)

by Francis Baumli, Ph.D.

Most traditional marriage ceremonies begin with the words, "We are gathered here together to celebrate ... ."

The redundancy in this statement is as garish as it is ridiculous. Do the goodly ministers uttering these words fear that members of their flock might wonder if they are "gathered apart" rather than "gathered together?" Or wonder if they are gathered "over there" instead of "here?"

I suggest that marrying couples insist on good grammar at their ceremony. "We are gathered to celebrate ... ," should suffice.

AN OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE IN THE MEN'S MOVEMENT

by Francis Baumli, Ph.D.

As the men's movement in our country has gained momentum, the literature of its primary spokesmen has both reflected and given direction to its current ideology. But the history of this movement has not yet been charted. Pleck and Pleck, in The American Man (1980), concentrate only on a history of how men have oppressed women or have aided feminist groups, while overlooking the many other issues and perspectives common to men themselves. Fortunately however, even though our written history is rather sparse at present, our history has nevertheless been in the making.

It was during the '70s that the men's movement came to the fore. Seminal books such as Marc Fasteau's The Male Machine (1974), Jack Nichols' Men's Liberation (1975), and Warren Farrell's The Liberated Man (1975), were very influential insofar as they proceeded beyond feminist concerns to speak to male needs and emotions. Fasteau outlined how male values in politics and war cause male suffering. Nichols emphasized how men suffer within traditional roles, implicated but quickly forgave women as oppressors of men, and emphasized the joys and rewards of an alternative gender identity. And Farrell's most important contribution was in providing consciousness-raising guidelines for men.

But it was when Herb Goldberg published The Hazards of Being Male (1976) that the men's movement found its most eloquent spokesman. This book was the first to articulate how men feel oppressed, to focus on the socio-matrix that allows this to happen, and direct men toward productive emotional avenues: anger toward women who oppress them, self-nurturing, the right to parent the children they have fathered, and the right to relaxed sexual fulfillment. Goldberg's subsequent The New Male (1979) continued the themes

of his first book, emphasizing male needs in emotional and physical health care, and giving advice on how men can more happily communicate with women. Meanwhile, Bernie Zilbergeld's Male Sexuality (1978), although somewhat critical of Goldberg's first book, wisely encorporated many of its themes into a refreshing and fun view of male sexuality.

While Goldberg provided the best overview of men's health needs, Sam Julty's Men's Bodies, Men's Selves (1979) addressed many health questions in detail and provided a good basic compendium of advice. Julty's earlier book, Male Sexual Performance (1975), although it focused on the problems of male sexual dysfunction, also had much to say about male health. Julty's books, however, were hampered by a strong feminist orientation which often left him blind to the full scope of the physical and emotional needs that men themselves have.

Other writers in the field of sex research, not content with the outdated statistics gathered by Kinsey or Hunt, are currently trying to assess what male attitudes about gender interaction and sexuality are. Shere Hite's The Hite Report on Male Sexuality (1981) gives data to show that men are much more enjoyable creatures to be around than was suggested by her initial report on female sexuality. This book, however, is encumbered by statistical gaps and Hite's prejudices against men. The earlier, Beyond the Male Myth (1977) by Pietropinto and Simenauer, however, is statistically sound, and shows that not only men in the liberation movements clamor for gentleness and playful sensuality, but also the average man on the street has such desires. This book, however, is seriously flawed by its sophomoric submission to the Jungian archetypal man who splits his urges between the madonna and prostitute, and even comes off as ridiculous when its findings are directed to helping women better understand what men want so they can succeed at pleasing them.

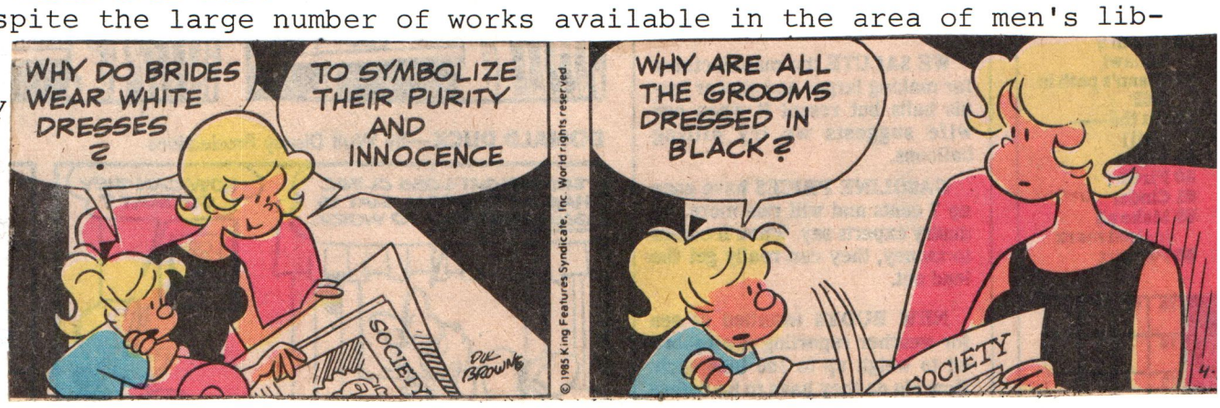
With regard to male legal concerns, Charles Metz' Divorce and Custody for Men (1968) is an important early work concerned with men's rights. Richard Doyle's sometimes overly radical The Rape of the Male (1976) continues Metz' main themes, and Men's Rights by Wishard and Wishard (1980) gives an overview of how men can protect themselves against the legal establishment's favoritism toward the "helpless" woman.

Several anthologies are now out, including Men and Masculinity (1974) edited by Pleck and Sawyer, The Forty-Nine Percent Majority (1976) edited by David and Brannon, For Men Against Sexism (1977) edited by Snodgras, The Women Say, The Men Say (1979) edited by Shapiro and Shapiro, and Jock: Sports and Male Identity (1980) edited by Sabo and Runfola. The latter book is rather esoteric in focus and sometimes overly academic; the other four books all contain interesting articles, but their tone is such that only highly selective reading within each book will render much that is of value to the new male consciousness.

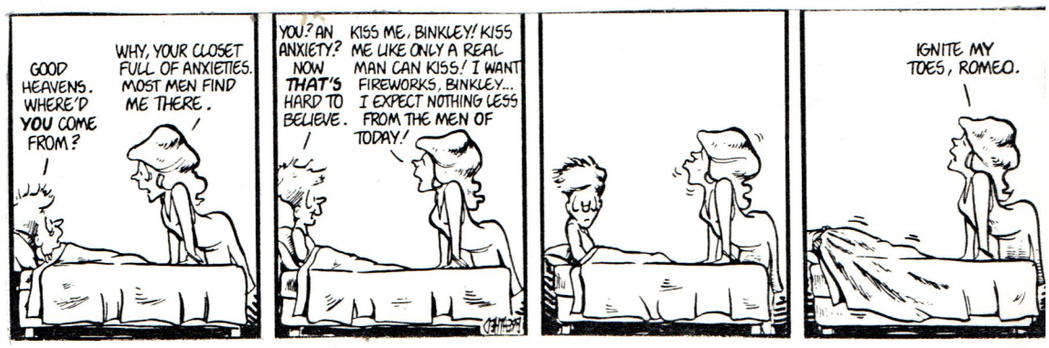
In fiction we often find valuable insights into male liberationist attitudes. Even writers who otherwise appear chauvinistic and given to machismo, in the midst of their own flounderings give us profound glimpses of alternative attitudes. Cases in point are Norman Mailer's The Prisoner of Sex (1971), and many works by Henry Miller, Charles Bukowski, and John Updike. Leonard Kriegal's anthology, The Myth of American Manhood (1978) uses literary and philosophical figures to examine the whole gamut of male concerns and emotions, as do the anthologies, A Book of Men edited by Ross Firestone (1978) and Men without Masks edited by Michael Rubin (1980). Other works sensitive to the male condition include the poetry of Walt Whitman, James Thurber's "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" (1942), and Franz Kafka's Letter to His Father (published in 1953).

While women authors have seldom been sympathetic to issues in men's liberation, there are a few exceptions. Margaret Mead's Male and Female (1949) still stands as one of the most valuable and unprejudiced accounts of gender identity ever written. Betty Friedan, in It Changed My Life (1963), can sometimes show sensitivity to men's emotional needs; and even a feminist as radical as Betty Dodson, in Liberating Masturbation (1974), is very willing to admit to the oppressive power women who are playing out traditional roles can wield over men.

Despite the large number of works available in the area of men's liberation, many are tainted by anti-male prejudices; but even excepting these, we are left without a comprehensive literature.



Doug Thompson's excellent book, As Boys Become Men: Learning New Roles (1980) is oriented toward helping boys in junior and senior high schools learn more liberated male attitudes, and Dale Carlson's Boys Have Feelings Too (1980) provides excellent advice for the young boy in late grade school or early high school. But except for these two books, there does not yet exist a comprehensive boys' or men's literature for use in kindergarten, grade school, high school or college years. Other gaps are apparent. We do not yet have a definitive history of the men's movement. A comprehensive and understandable book on men's health concerns is yet to be written. Men's rights in issues concerned with divorce, child custody, the draft, and other legal areas bear further exploration. And what is perhaps most seriously lacking is a comprehensive anthology which mirrors the ideology of the current men's movement. /Note: Remember, this article was originally written circa 1980-81./



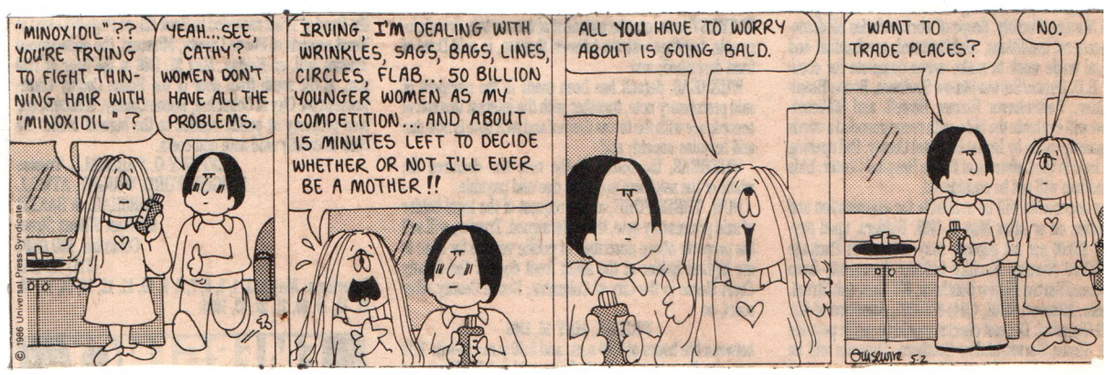
Our need for a more comprehensive literature, however, would not exist were there not many men who already are articulating the values which such a literature would embody. The new literature is thus already in the making. Many men around the nation are now writing what they hope will be valuable contributions to our literature. Hence, it would not be accurate to say that we have just begun. Rather, our movement began a long time ago, and we are continuing the process. Now, in the anger and the joy of our new freedoms, we are voicing the hope that all men will soon be able to join us.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: TRANSITIONS

(March 11, 1985)

by **Francis Baumli, Ph.D.**

Mel Feit's article, "Democracy = Male Discrimination," in Transitions (January/February 1985), made two claims. First, that the grossest injustice in our society is the male only draft



I couldn't agree more.

Second, that because of this injustice, "I didn't vote for Mondale/Ferraro simply because Geraldine Ferraro is a woman."

I find this attitude very disturbing. Both men and women have helped create this exemption for women. Mr. Feit, had he stopped to think, might have realized that President Reagan would be just as quick to oppose a draft for women as would Ms. Ferraro.

Above Mr. Feit's article is The Coalition of Free Men's statement of purpose, "CFM ... seeks to explore the interrelated nature of the sexes and ... does not accept scapegoating in any form, i.e., it is unacceptable that one identifiable group be labeled responsible for all of the problems of another group." How do these fine words justify Feit's article which follows, scapegoating Ferraro and labeling women as those responsible for men's problems with the draft?

I am not given to defending women. But I do believe that when CFM

gives a disclaimer to blaming, and then proceeds to do so, the pendulum of human conflict has been given another sad push. Which causes me, with no small embarrassment, to believe that when CFM thus so glaringly contradicts itself, it is courting a severe identity crisis.

** PROPOSED RESOLUTION **

by Francis Baumli, Ph.D.

Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), in its concern for world peace, has engaged a variety of issues. Some issues have been amenable to clearly definable policy by PSR, e.g., opposition to nuclear weapons and support of a nuclear freeze.

Other issues have not been so clear. These issues involve questions about PSR's affiliation with socialist reform groups, disagreements over PSR's stance on South Africa's apartheid policy, and conflicting opinions on the USA's involvement in Central America.

These other issues, by reason of their complexity, are not easily amenable to clearly defined policy. It therefore will be PSR's task, for the future, to cohere opinion on these difficult issues. This task, for PSR's members, will require patience, invite generosity, and demand a passionate commitment to the goals PSR has set for itself.

It is important, however, to remember that complex issues can sometimes detract from simple issues. Moreover, the confusion of intricate issues can sometimes move an organization away from its definable, i.e., applicable, axioms of purpose.

With this caution in mind, let us here state the simple premises which give unity to PSR's public policy.

As health care professionals, our purpose is to promote the health of human beings. In so doing, our purpose takes on specific focii: the postponement of death, and the healing and prevention of injury and disease.

However, by definition, any military force is specifically designed--whether in defense or offense--to inflict death, injury, and disease.

It thus follows that all aspects of the military are inherently opposed to the purposes of PSR as a health care profession.

Therefore, we members of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), regardless of the complexity of any issue, do contradict our very identity if we do less than:

> Resolve that we oppose all military financing, aid, or advice; oppose the production, deployment, preparedness, or maintenance of all weaponry; and oppose the actual engagement of any war--at whatever magnitude and for whatever purpose.

This opposition, clearly definable, must maintain its focus, integrity, and applicability, regardless of the other contingencies of any issue before us.

ON GEOGRAPHY AND LANGUAGE
LETTER TO THE EDITORS: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE

(October 18, 1985)

by Francis Baumli, Ph.D.

Gilbert Grosvenor, president of the National Geographic Society, has good reason to be concerned about the ignorance of geography among people in the USA. I am equally concerned about the inability of our people to write well. And I am sorry to observe, over the last several years, a marked decline in the quality of writing in the National Geographic. This was too apparent in, "Hampton Roads, Where the Rivers End" by William S. Ellis, a Senior Writer on the National Geographic staff. Note his sentence on page 95: (July 1985): "There are those here, however, who say they enjoy the bracing odor; not only does it signal, like Kleenex changing color near the end of the box, that the tide is running low, but it also announces that Hampton is a waterman's place."

Kleenex changing color near the end of the box!?!

Good style requires that a simile be more suggestive than its referent, and that a figure of speech have more or less universal meaning. It is somewhat contradictory to expect our students to know the names of countries in Africa, and yet allow your writers to compose sentences which so tritely reflect their own cultural esotericism.

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profinis

So, at last I finish. Reading back over what I have written, I am at times appalled by my grammer. That constant switching from present to past tense in the analysis of the Emperor recordings; how very unlike me! But then, I compose from the typewriter, and I have not the opportunity in a format such as this to go back and refine my prose. So please forgive the rough spots.

I am quite aware that this edition of The Aviary is not as fun as previous ones. The tone is rather dark, angry, depressing. Doubtless I carried into my writing some anger at responses to last year's Aviary. But I suspect that the trace of moribund pseudo-despair that taints these pages is more the result of my current depressive state of mind. Angry at my former wife, plagued by insomnia, worried at my failing health, I am not the jovial fellow I used to be.

Still, why is it so long? Depressive fixations make for compulsions, and indeed it seems I am indulging my penchant for compulsive thoroughness--everytime I began a new topic, it seemed that I had to vent upon it my every opinion. Also, I believe I indulged myself in this missive given that, when I look forward to my projected activities during late 1986 and early 1987, I doubt seriously that I shall have time for but a very short Aviary. Hence, I wanted to atone somewhat for that future lacking with a lengthy edition this year. But more than anything, I think such length is the result of my insomnia. Weary as I am, constantly fighting to stay alert, I believe my ideas take on the breadth of dreams, and are lengthened accordingly. I work half awake and half asleep. Perhaps one day I will learn to quite effectively do both at the same time. Dr. Samuel Dunkell, in his book, Sleep Positions, says, "Although elephants usually sleep lying down on their sides, a sick elephant will sleep standing up because it would not feel secure in the prone position--in its weakened state, the extra time and effort of getting to its feet in an emergency would make the animal more vulnerable." Perhaps in 1986 I shall learn the trick of sleeping on my feet, or working while asleep, or sleeping while awake, or ... . Ah well. Meanwhile, I remain, yours with a modicum of sincerity,