

HORIZON

AUTUMN, 1972 · VOLUME XIV, NUMBER 4

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AUTUMN, 1972 · VOLUME XIV, NUMBER 4

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Worlds Apart



BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE

Jean Froissart



Marcel Proust

Two writers preoccupied with the French aristo
figure prominently in this issue of HORIZON. The
is the poet-priest Jean Froissart, famed chro
of feudal war and adventure, whose life and wor
described by Morris Bishop in an article startir
page 66. The second is the monklike Marcel Pr
whose great novel, *Remembrance of Things Pa*
discussed by his fellow novelist John Updike b
ning on page 102, and whose city, Paris at the tu
the century, is recalled by Sanche de Gramont b
ning on page 20. Juxtaposing Proust and Froi
provides a deep and poignant picture of the cha
wrought by time. There, on the one hand, is F
sart's nobility, perpetually engaged in war,
there, on the other hand, is Proust's Parisian ari
racy, perpetually engaged for dinner; the fo
powerful and dangerous, the latter decorative,
and dangerous only to social climbers.

No one was more keenly alive to this contrast
Proust himself, for in a sense Froissart's *Chro*
haunt the pages of Proust's novel. To the n
narrator, Marcel, what lent the aristocrats o
Faubourg Saint-Germain their luster was pre
their "famous and poetic" names, names v
poetry derived from his youthful reading of Fro
and other chroniclers of medieval chivalry and
What made them seem, in the end, so wasted
frivolous was precisely the disproportion bet
their historic names and their lives—spent fre
over dinner invitations and keeping "upstarts"
of the Jockey Club.

To underscore that contrast and make it
vivid, Proust frequently used historic French f
names, with the result that the "forebears" of

his minor characters can actually be found in oissart's pages. There is, for example, Proust's nce de Foix, whose ancestor, Gaston, Count de ix, figures notably in Froissart's *Chronicles* as gallant knight who in 1358 rescued three hundred ies from the clutches of the savage *Jacquerie* (a niature depicting the uprising appears on pages -79). The young prince, alas, is a mere snobbish n about town "for whom the practice of imperti- nce," says Proust, "seemed the sole occupation." ere is also the Duchesse d'Auberjon, whose name- e Guichard Aubergeon, Froissart tells us, was a ve Burgundian warrior who once routed a fero- us company of freebooters. Guichard's descend- , however, is one of those nonentities who is ited to help out at parties, as if, says Proust, she e a hired waiter. Then there are the supremely hborn La Trémoïlles, whose ancestor Sir Guy de Trémoïlle was chamberlain to a king of France who, on the eve of an invasion of England, re- ts Froissart, "had his personal ship magnificently orated" with "devices and paintings" at the cost small fortune. The only enterprise left the Prous- La Trémoïlles, however, is maintaining their ivaled pedigree and perhaps recalling venture- e ancestors like Sir Guy.

et for Proust the deeper truth about the aristo- s of the Faubourg Saint-Germain did not lie in objective contrast between their feudal names their futile lives. It lay, rather, in recapturing mysterious and "iridescent" they first appeared im and how they appeared later on, when time intimacy had effaced the magic of their names. ere, perhaps, lies the really decisive contrast be- en the aristocratic worlds of Proust and Froissart. the medieval chronicler, the truth about men lay ply in what they did, particularly in politics and . So he went about energetically collecting stories nen's "feats" and adventures. To Proust, men's ds meant little and revealed less. What mattered im was recapturing the subjective aspect of men things—how they appeared, not objectively, but ne man's memory and consciousness. We have wn so accustomed to such subjectivity in art, in ature, and in thought that it takes a real effort rasp that Froissart would have found such an roach quite literally incomprehensible. The pas- of five centuries has wrought profound changes, only in the fate of aristocracies, but in the very men's minds grasp reality. —W.K.

The City

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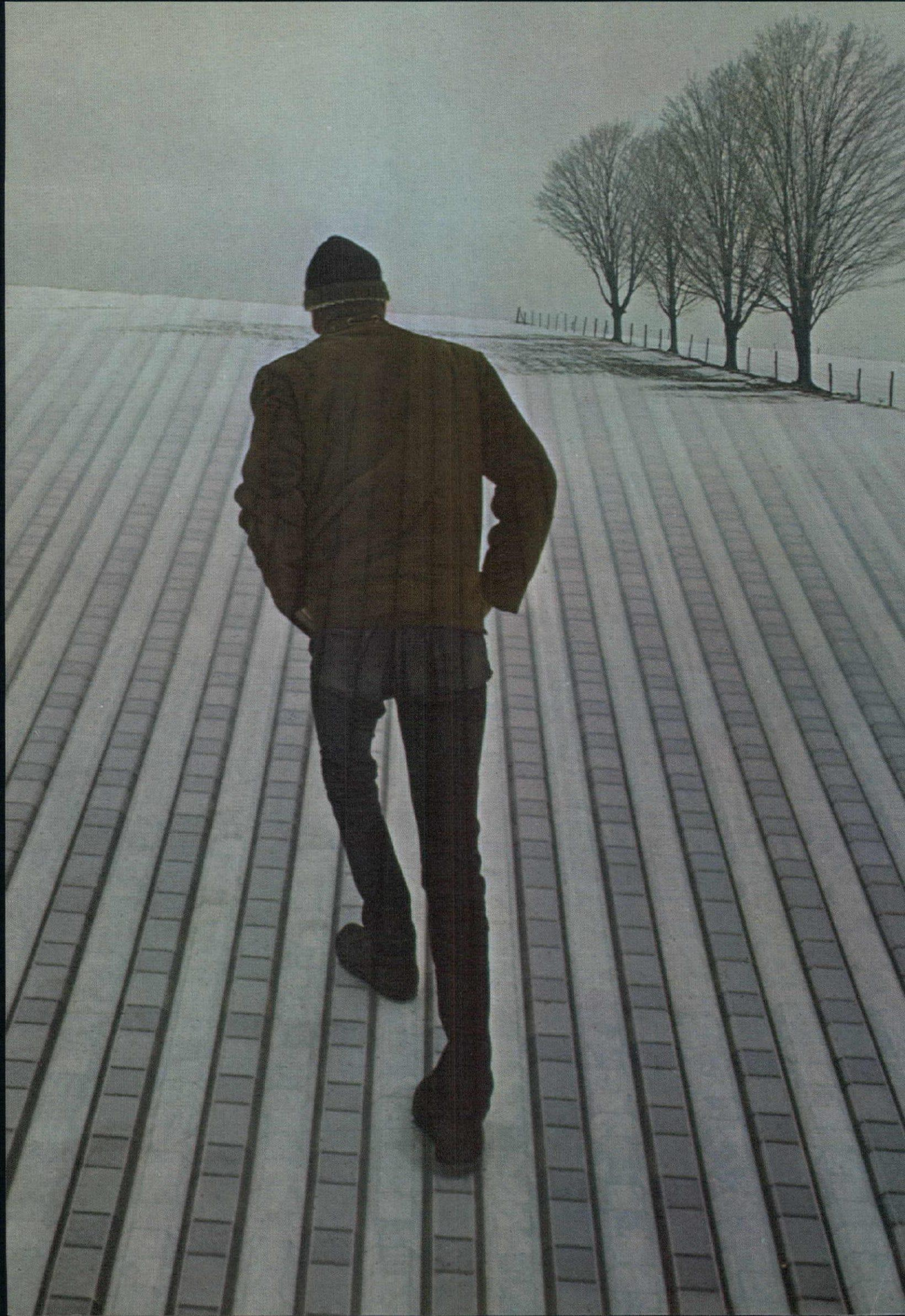
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COVER: French construction workers, sans hard hats, toil on the girders of a skyscraper in Fernand Léger's 1950 painting *The Constructors*. Like much of Léger's work, *The Constructors* epitomizes the artist's lifelong love of modern machinery—"I always preferred metal to wood"—and the "functional elegance" of factory workers. The painting is in the distinguished collection of Mr. and Mrs. Leigh B. Block of Chicago. Léger and his work are discussed in an article by John Russell beginning on page 86.



THE CITY

ITS ORIGIN: New light from the archaeologists, by John Pfeiffer (page 12)

ITS HEYDAY: The Paris of Proust, by Sanche de Gramont (page 20)

ITS FUTURE: Or what may replace it, by Irving Kristol (page 36)

Men began living in cities several thousand years ago, and they have been wondering ever since whether it is a good thing or not. To Lewis Mumford (not to mention Pericles) the city is "man's greatest work of art," the epitome of his most humane achievements. Mumford's very definition of the city—"the point of maximum concentration for the power and culture of a community"—is itself an eloquent tribute.

Yet for every man who feels the exaltation of cities there is another who finds them hideous blights. John Ruskin saw the city as a place "where summer and winter are only alternations of heat and cold [where] there is no interest or occupation for any of the inhabitants but the routine of counter or desk within doors, and the effort to pass each other without collision outside." To the Ruskins, city life is not liberating, it is stifling. How, then, explain the potent magnetism of cities? Why did humankind, after following an open nomadic life for millions of years, come to live in cities in the first place? This is the fundamental question that John Pfeiffer raises in his article.

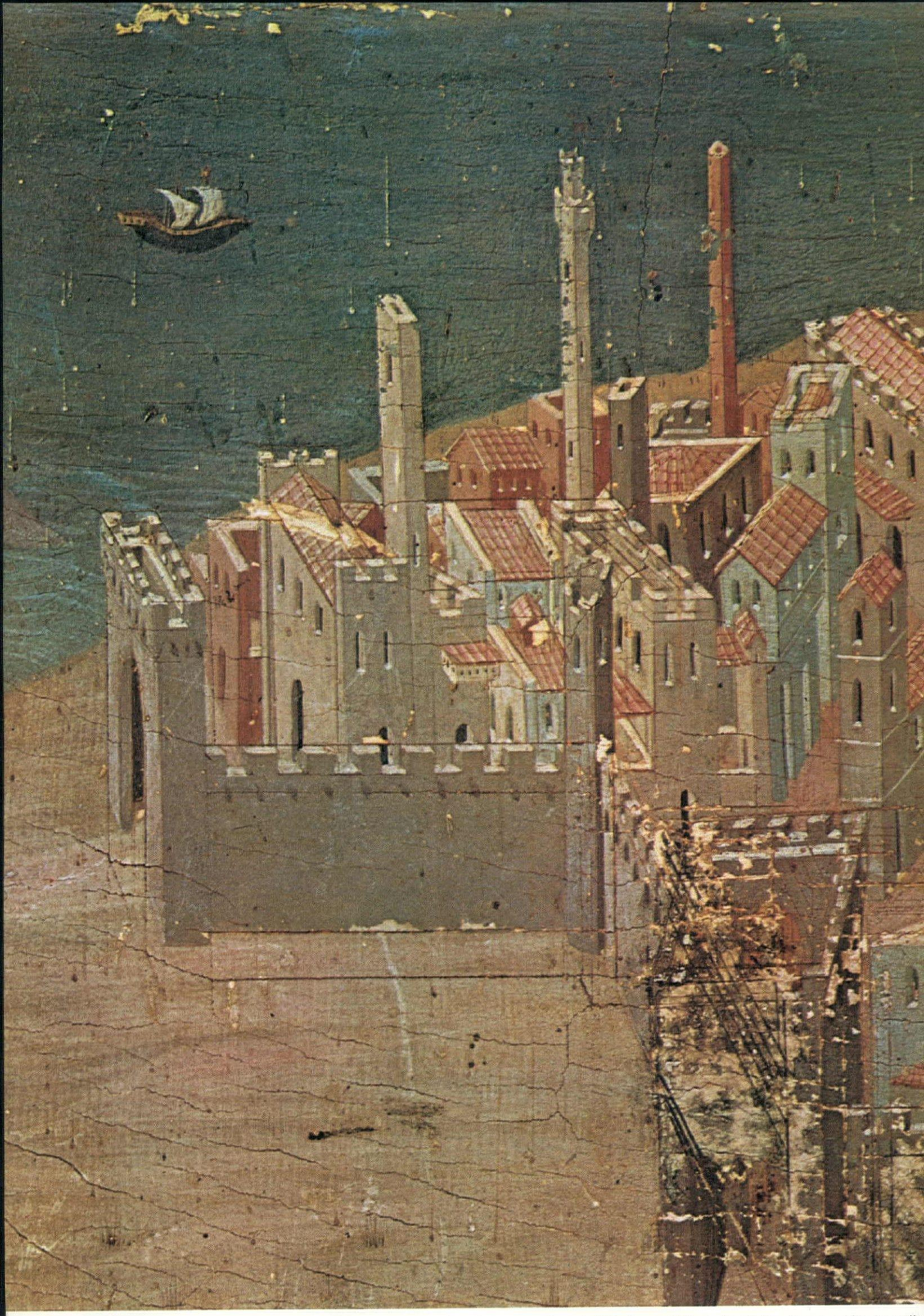
The history of cities leads from the earliest rude settlements of hunters through the tight little city-states of the Renaissance, like San Gimignano (right), to the cosmopolitan centers of modern Europe. As a prime example of a city in its glory, the city as a "work of art," Sanche de Gramont singles out Paris at the turn of the century, Paris in the era of Marcel Proust, when French culture was at its "maximum concentration."

The very term "civilization" derives from the Latin word for the city-dwelling citizen, and the classical equation of city and civilization is not often questioned. Irving Kristol argues, however, that the equation has become a false one. It may soon be possible, he believes, to have an authentic urban civilization without great metropolises. If so, the prospect is welcome, for the modern megacity may well be incurably ill. It is not only crime and fearfulness; even elementary social life has broken down. The notion that every city is really a congeries of "urban villages" holds true no longer as populations shift rapidly and neighborhoods crumble under the onslaught of highways and renewal projects. Like clumsy dinosaurs, great cities may yet turn out to be, in Proust's memorable phrase, "as fugitive, alas, as the years."

W.K.



The changing city: The compact Tuscan town of San Gimignano sits comfortably in the lap of its namesake in this fourteenth-century Sienese work. Opposite, a featureless skyscraper becomes an endless road for a weary modern man in Bill Binzen's double photograph.



Some time in the fourteenth century the Sienese painter Ambrogio Lorenzetti created this image of the medieval city. Secure within its walls,



mped and limited, but it is safe and comprehensible and completely human in scale: a setting for a life of obedience to God and one's prince.

PINACOTECA, SIENA—SCALA



The turn of the century was a time of urban brilliance in Europe, particularly in Paris. This photograph was taken near the Arc de Triomphe on



venue Foch: here, in the sunlight and clear air, promenaders go their way against a handsome backdrop. Who would have wished to be elsewhere?

COLLECTION G. SIROT, PARIS



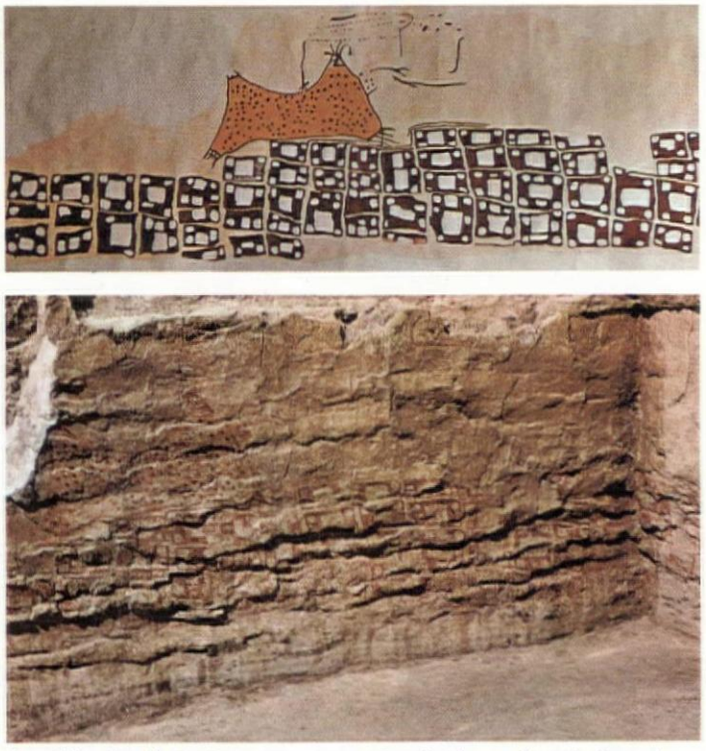
The rapidly growing city of São Paulo in Brazil has a population nearing seven million. Like many another modern city, it



anly—a thicket of powerful skyscrapers, each a monument to technology rather than man. Are our cities dwelling places, or threats?

ROBERT PHILLIPS

How Man Invented Cities



PROFESSOR JAMES MELLAART

Possibly the first cityscape ever painted, the wall painting shown directly above was found at Çatal Hüyük, an Anatolian community that flourished during the seventh millennium B.C. *As can be more clearly seen in the copy drawing reproduced at the top, the mural shows a cluster of houses, and behind them, an erupting volcano.*

The wonder is not that man could live without civilization but that he could learn to tolerate it. Why and how he went against his nature as a foot-loose primate is only beginning to be understood

By JOHN PFEIFFER

The most striking mark of man's genius as a species, as the most adaptable of animals, has been his ability to live in cities. From the perspective of all we know about human evolution, nothing could be more unnatural. For over fifteen million years, from the period when members of the family of man first appeared on earth until relatively recent times, our ancestors were nomadic, small-group, wide-open-spaces creatures. They lived on the move among other moving animals in isolated little bands of a few families, roaming across wildernesses that extended like oceans to the horizon and beyond.

Considering that heritage, the wonder is not that man has trouble getting along in cities but that he can do it at all—that he can learn to live in the same place year round, enclosed in sharp-cornered and brightly-lit rectangular spaces, among noises, most of which are made by machines, within shouting distance of hundreds of other people, most of them strangers. Furthermore, such conditions arose so swiftly, practically overnight on the evolutionary time scale, that he has hardly had a chance to get used to them. The transition from a world without cities to our present situation took a mere five or six millenniums.

It is precisely because we are so close to our origins that what happened in prehistory bears directly on current problems. In fact, the expectation is that new studies of pre-cities and early cities will contribute as significantly to an understanding of today's urban complexes as studies of infancy and early childhood have to an understanding of adolescence. Cities are signs, symptoms if you will, of an accelerating and intensive phase of human evolution, a process that we are only beginning to investigate scientifically.

The first stages of the process may be traced back some fifteen thousand years to a rather less hectic era. Homo sapiens, that new breed of restless and intelligent primate, had reached a high point in his career as a hunter-gatherer subsisting predominantly on wild plants and animals. He had developed special tools, special tactics and strategies, for dealing with a wide variety of environments, from savannas and semideserts to tundras and tropical rain forests and mountain regions. Having learned to exploit practically every type of environment, he seemed at last to have found his natural place in the scheme of things—as a hunter living in balance with other species, and with all the world as his hunting ground.

But forces were already at work that would bring an end to this state of equilibrium and ultimately give rise to cities and the state of continuing instability that we are trying to cope with today. New theories, a harder look at the old theories, and an even harder look at our own tendencies to think small have radically changed our ideas about what happened and why.

We used to believe, in effect, that people abandoned hunting and gathering as soon as a reasonable alternative became available to them. It was hardly a safe or reliable way of life. Our ancestors faced sudden death and injury from predators and from prey that fought back, disease from exposure to the elements and from always being on the move, and hunger because the chances were excellent of coming back empty-handed from the hunt. Survival was a full-time struggle. Leisure came only after the invention of agriculture, which brought food surpluses, rising populations, and cities. Such was the accepted picture.

The fact of the matter, supported by studies of living hunter-gatherers as well as by the archaeological record, is that the traditional view is largely melodrama and science fiction. Our preagricultural ancestors were quite healthy, quite safe, and regularly obtained all the food they needed. And they did it with time to burn. As a rule, the job of collecting food, animal and vegetable, required no more than a three-hour day, or a twenty-one-hour week. During that time, collectors brought in enough food for the entire group, which included an appreciable proportion (perhaps 30 per cent or more) of dependents, old persons and children who did little or no work. Leisure is basically a phenomenon of hunting-gathering times, and people have been trying to recover it ever since.

Another assumption ripe for discarding is that civilization first arose in the valleys of the Tigris, Euphrates, and Nile rivers and spread from there to the rest of the world. Accumulating evidence fails to support this notion that civilization is an exclusive product of these regions. To be sure, agriculture and cities may have appeared first in the Near East, but there are powerful arguments for completely independent origins in at least two other widely separated regions, Mesoamerica and Southeast Asia.

In all cases, circumstances forced hunter-gatherers to evolve new ways of surviving. With the decline of the ancient life style, nomadism, problems began piling up. If only people had kept on moving about like sane and respectable primates, life would be a great deal simpler. Instead, they settled down in increasing numbers over wider areas, and society started changing with a vengeance. Although the causes of this settling down remain a mystery, the fact of independent origins calls for an explanation based on worldwide developments.

An important factor, emphasized recently by Lewis Binford of the University of New Mexico, may have been the melting of mile-high glaciers, which was well under way fifteen thousand years ago, and which released enough water to raise the world's oceans 250 to 500 feet, to flood previously exposed coastal plains, and to create shallow bays and estuaries and marshlands. Vast numbers of fish and wild fowl made use of the new environments, and the extra resources permitted people to obtain food without migrating seasonally. In other words, people expended less energy, and life became

that much easier, in the beginning anyway.

Yet this sensible and seemingly innocent change was to get mankind into all sorts of difficulties. According to a recent theory, it triggered a chain of events that made cities possible if not inevitable. Apparently, keeping on the move had always served as a natural birth-control mechanism, in part, perhaps, by causing a relatively high incidence of miscarriages. But the population brakes were off as soon as people began settling down.

One clue to what may have happened is provided by contemporary studies of a number of primitive tribes, such as the Bushmen of Africa's Kalahari Desert. Women living in nomadic bands, bands that pick up and move half a dozen or more times a year, have an average of one baby every four years or so, as compared with one baby every two and a half years for Bushman women living in settled communities—an increase of five to eight babies per mother during a twenty-year reproductive period.

The archaeological record suggests that in some places at least, a comparable phenomenon accompanied the melting of glaciers during the last ice age. People settled down and multiplied in the Les Eyzies region of southern France, one of the richest and most-studied centers of prehistory. Great limestone cliffs dominate the countryside, and at the foot of the cliffs are natural shelters, caves and rocky overhangs where people built fires, made tools out of flint and bone and ivory, and planned the next day's hunt. On special occasions artists equipped with torches went deep into certain caves like Lascaux and covered the walls with magnificent images of the animals they hunted.

In some places the cliffs and the shelters extend for hundreds of yards; in other places there are good living sites close to one another on the opposite slopes of river valleys. People in the Les Eyzies region were living not in isolated bands but in full-fledged communities, and populations seem to have been on the rise. During the period from seven thousand to twelve thousand years ago, the total number of sites doubled, and an appreciable proportion of them probably represent year-round settlements located in small river valleys. An analysis of excavated animal remains reveals an increasing dietary reliance on migratory birds and fish (chiefly salmon).

People were also settling down at about the same time in the Near East —for example, not far from the Mediterranean shoreline of Israel and on the border between the coastal plain and the hills to the east. Ofer Bar-Yosef, of the Institute of Archaeology of Hebrew University in Jerusalem, points out that since they were able to exploit both these areas, they did not have to wander widely in search of food. There were herds of deer and gazelle, wild boar, fish and wild fowl, wild cereals and other plants, and limestone caves and shelters like those in the Les Eyzies region. Somewhat later, however, a new land-use pattern emerged. Coastal villages continued to flourish, but in addition to them, new sites began appearing further inland—and in areas that were drier and less abundant.

Only under special pressure will men abandon a good thing, and in this case it was very likely the pressure of rising populations. The evidence suggests that the best coastal lands were supporting about all the hunter-gatherers they could support; and as living space decreased there was a "budding off," an overflow of surplus population into the second-best back country where game was scarcer. These people depended more and more on plants, particularly on wild cereals, as indicated by the larger numbers of flint sickle blades, mortars and pestles, and storage pits found at their sites (and also by an increased wear and pitting of teeth, presumably caused by chewing more coarse and gritty plant foods).

Another sign of the times was the appearance of stone buildings, often with impressively high and massive walls. The structures served a number of purposes. For one thing, they included storage bins where surplus grain could be kept in reserve for bad times, when there was a shortage of game and wild plants. They also imply danger abroad in the countryside, new kinds of violence, and a mounting need for defenses to protect stored goods from the raids of people who had not settled down.

Above all, the walls convey a feeling of increasing permanence, an increasing commitment to places. Although man was still mainly a hunter-gatherer living on wild species, some of the old options no longer existed for him. In the beginning, settling down may have involved a measure of choice, but now man was no longer quite so free to change locales when the land became less fruitful. Even in those days frontiers were vanishing. Man's problem was to develop new options, new ways of working the land more intensively so that it would provide the food that migration had always provided in more mobile times.

The all-important transition to agriculture came in small steps, establishing itself almost before anyone realized what was going on. Settlers in marginal lands took early measures to get more food out of less abundant environments—roughing up the soil a bit with scraping or digging sticks, sowing wheat and barley seeds, weeding, and generally doing their best to promote growth. To start with at least, it was simply a matter of supplementing regular diets of wild foods with some domesticated species, animals as well as plants, and people probably regarded themselves as hunter-gatherers working hard to maintain their way of life rather than as the revolutionaries they were. They were trying to preserve the old self-sufficiency, but it was a losing effort.

The wilderness way of life became more and more remote, more and more

nearly irretrievable. Practically every advance in the technology of agriculture committed people to an increasing dependence on domesticated species and on the activities of other people living nearby. Kent Flannery of the University of Michigan emphasizes this point in a study of one part of Greater Mesopotamia, prehistoric Iran, during the period between twelve thousand and six thousand years ago. For the hunter-gatherer, an estimated one-third of the country's total land area was good territory, consisting of grassy plains and high mountain valleys where wild species were abundant; the rest of the land was desert and semidesert.

The coming of agriculture meant that people used a smaller proportion of the countryside. Early farming took advantage of naturally distributed water; the best terrain for that, namely terrain with a high water table and marshy areas, amounted to about a tenth of the land area. But only a tenth of that tenth was suitable for the next major development, irrigation. Meanwhile, food yields were soaring spectacularly, and so was the population of Iran, which increased more than fiftyfold; in other words, fifty times the original population was being supported by food produced on one-hundredth of the land.

A detailed picture of the steps involved in this massing of people is coming from studies of one part of southwest Iran, an 880-square-mile region between the Zagros Mountains and the Iraqi border. The Susiana Plain is mostly flat, sandy semidesert, the only notable features being man-made mounds that loom on the horizon like islands, places where people built in successively high levels on the ruins of their ancestors. During the past decade or so, hundreds of mounds have been mapped and dated (mainly through pottery styles) by Robert Adams of the University of Chicago, Jean Perrot of the French Archaeological Mission in Iran, and Henry Wright and Gregory Johnson of the University of Michigan. Their work provides a general idea of when the mounds were occupied, how they varied in size at different periods—and how a city may be born.

Imagine a time-lapse motion picture of the early settling of the Susiana Plain, starting about 6500 B.C., each minute of film representing a century. At first the plain is empty, as it has been since the beginning of time. Then the pioneers arrive; half a dozen families move in and build a cluster of mud-brick homes near a river. Soon another cluster appears and another, until, after about five minutes (it is now 6000 B.C.), there are ten settlements, each covering an area of 1 to 3 hectares (1 hectare = 2.47 acres). Five minutes more (5500 B.C.) and we see the start of irrigation, on a small scale, as people dig little ditches to carry water from rivers and tributaries to lands along the banks. Crop yields increase and so do populations, and there are now thirty settlements, all about the same size as the original ten.

This is but a prelude to the main event. Things become really complicated during the next fifteen minutes or so (5500 to 4000 B.C.). Irrigation systems, constructed and maintained by family groups of varying sizes, become more complex. The number of settlements shows a modest increase, from thirty to forty, but a more significant change takes place—the appearance of a hierarchy. Instead of settlements all about the same size, there are now levels of settlements and a kind of ranking: one town (7 hectares), ten large villages (3 to 4 hectares), and twenty-nine smaller villages of less than 3 hectares. During this period large residential and ceremonial structures appear at Susa, a town on the western edge of the Susiana Plain.

Strange happenings can be observed not long after the middle of this period (about 4600 B.C.). For reasons unknown, the number of settlements decreases rapidly. It is not known whether the population of the area decreased simultaneously. Time passes, and the number of settlements increases to about the same level as before, but great changes have occurred. Three cities have appeared with monumental public buildings, elaborate residential architecture, large workshops, major storage and market facilities, and certainly with administrators and bureaucrats. The settlement hierarchy is more complex, and settlements are no longer located to take advantage solely of good agricultural opportunities. Their location is also influenced by the cities and the services and opportunities available there. By the end of our hypothetical time-lapse film, by the early part of the third millennium B.C., the largest settlement of all is the city of Susa, which covers some thirty hectares and will cover up to a square kilometer (100 hectares) of territory before it collapses in historical times.

All Mesopotamia underwent major transformations during this period. Another city was taking shape 150 miles northwest of Susa in the heartland of Sumer. Within a millennium the site of Uruk near the Euphrates River grew from village dimensions to a city enclosing within its defense walls more than thirty thousand people, four hundred hectares, and at the center a temple built on top of a huge brick platform. Archaeological surveys reveal that this period also saw a massive immigration into the region from places and for reasons as yet undetermined, resulting in a tenfold increase in settlements and in the formation of several new cities.

Similar surveys, requiring months and thousands of miles of walking, are completed or under way in many parts of the world. Little more than a millennium after the establishment of Uruk and Susa, cities began making an independent appearance in northern China not far from the conflux of the Wei and Yellow rivers, in an area that also saw the beginnings of agriculture. Still later, and also independently as far as we can tell, intensive settlement and land use developed in the New World.



JERICHO EXCAVATION FUND

A skull, redecorated, from Jericho



DRAGOSLAV SREJOVIC—LEPENSKI VIR EXCAVATIONS

A cut-stone face from Yugoslavia



PEABODY MUSEUM, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Female figurine from Tepe Yahya, Iran

A variety of sites throughout the world have yielded astonishingly ancient objects created by men who farmed and built permanent dwellings. The plastered-over skull was made in Jericho, which was a settled community in the eighth millennium B.C. *Lepenski Vir, where Yugoslavian archaeologists unearthed the stone face, may have been contemporary. Tepe Yahya, where the stone figurine was found, was in contact with Susa before 4000* B.C.

The valley of Oaxaca in Mexico, where Flannery and his associates are working currently, provides another example of a city in the process of being formed. Around 500 B.C., or perhaps a bit earlier, buildings were erected for the first time on the tops of hills. Some of the hills were small, no more than twenty-five or thirty feet high, and the buildings were correspondingly small; they overlooked a few terraces and a river and probably a hamlet or two. Larger structures appeared on higher hills overlooking many villages. About 400 B.C. the most elaborate settlement began to appear on the highest land, 1,500-foot Monte Albán, with a panoramic view of the valley's three arms; and within two centuries it had developed into an urban center including hundreds of terraces, an irrigation system, a great plaza, ceremonial buildings and residences, and an astronomical observatory.

At about the same time, the New World's largest city, Teotihuacán, was evolving some 225 miles to the northwest in the central highlands of Mexico. Starting as a scattering of villages and hamlets, it covered nearly eight square miles at its height (around A.D. 100 to 200) and probably contained some 125,000 people. Archaeologists are now reconstructing the life and times of this great urban center. William Sanders of Pennsylvania State University is concentrating on an analysis of settlement patterns in the area, while Rene Millon of the University of Rochester and his associates have prepared detailed section-by-section maps of the city as a step toward further extensive excavations. Set in a narrow valley among mountains and with its own man-made mountains, the Pyra mid of the Sun and the Pyramid of th Moon, the city flourished on a gran scale. It housed local dignitaries an priests, delegations from other parts o Mesoamerica, and workshop neigh borhoods where specialists in the man ufacture of textiles, pottery, obsidia blades, and other products lived to gether in early-style apartments.

The biggest center in what is no the United States probably reached it peak about a millennium after Teo tihuacán. But it has not been recon structed, and archaeologists are jus beginning to appreciate the scale o what happened there. Known as Ca hokia and located east of the Missi sippi near St. Louis, it consists of cluster of some 125 mounds (includin a central mound 100 feet high an covering 15 acres) as well as a line o

mounds extending six miles to the west.

So surveys and excavations continue, furnishing the sort of data needed to disprove or prove our theories. Emerging patterns—patterns involving the specific locations of different kinds of communities and of buildings and other artifacts within communities—can yield information about the forces that shaped and are still shaping cities and the behavior of people in cities. But one trend stands out above all others: the world was becoming more and more stratified. Every development seemed to favor social distinctions, social classes and elites, and to work against the old hunter-gatherer ways.

Among hunter-gatherers all people are equal. Individuals are recognized as exceptional hunters, healers, or storytellers, and they all have the chance to shine upon appropriate occasions. But it would be unthinkable for one of them, for any one man, to take over as full-time leader. That ethic passed when the nomadic life passed. In fact, a literal explosion of differences accompanied the coming of communities where people lived close together in permanent dwellings and under conditions where moving away was not easy.

The change is reflected clearly in observed changes of settlement patterns. Hierarchies of settlements imply hierarchies of people. Emerging social levels are indicated by the appearance of villages and towns and cities where only villages had existed before, by different levels of complexity culminating in such centers as Susa and Monte Albán and Cahokia. Circumstances practically drove people to establish class societies. In Mesopotamia, for instance, increasingly sophisticated agricultural systems and intensive concentrations of populations brought about enormous and irreversible changes within a short period. People were clamped in a demographic vise, more and more of them living and depending on less and less land—an ideal setting for the rapid rise of status differences.

Large-scale irrigation was a highly effective centralizing force, calling for new duties and new regularities and new levels of discipline. People still depended on the seasons; but in addition, canals had to be dug and maintained, and periodic cleaning was required to prevent the artificial waterways from filling up with silt and assorted litter. Workers had to be brought together, assigned tasks, and fed, which meant schedules and storehouses and rationing stations and mass-produced pottery to serve as food containers. It took time to organize such activities efficiently. There were undoubtedly many false starts, many attempts by local people to work things out among themselves and their neighbors at a community or village level. Many small centers, budding institutions, were undoubtedly formed and many collapsed, and we may yet detect traces of them in future excavations and analyses of settlement patterns.

The ultimate outcome was inevitable. Survival demanded organization on a regional rather than a local basis. It also demanded high-level administrators and managers, and most of them had to be educated people, mainly because of the need to prepare detailed records of supplies and transactions. Record-keeping has a long prehistory, perhaps dating back to certain abstract designs engraved on cave walls and bone twenty-five thousand or more years ago. But in Mesopotamia after 4000 B.C. there was a spurt in the art of inventing and utilizing special marks and symbols.

The trend is shown in the stamp and cylinder seals used by officials to place their "signatures" on clay tags and tablets, man's first documents. At first the designs on the stamp seals were uncomplicated, consisting for the most part of single animals or simple geometric motifs. Later, however, there were bigger stamp seals with more elaborate scenes depicting several objects or people or animals. Finally the cylinder seals appeared, which could be rolled to repeat a complex design. These seals indicate the existence of more and more different signatures—and more and more officials and record keepers. Similar trends are evident in potters' marks and other symbols. All these developments precede pictographic writing, which appears around 3200 B.C.

Wherever record keepers and populations were on the rise, in the Near East or Mexico or China, we can be reasonably sure that the need for a police force or the prehistoric equivalent thereof was on the increase, too. Conflict, including everything from fisticuffs to homicide, increases sharply with group size, and people have known this for a long time. The Bushmen have a strong feeling about avoiding crowds: "We like to get together, but we fear fights." They are most comfortable in bands of about twenty-five persons and when they have to assemble in larger groups—which happens for a total of only a few months a year, mainly to conduct initiations, arrange marriages, and be near the few permanent water holes during dry seasons—they form separate small groups of about twenty-five, as if they were still living on their own.

Incidentally, twenty-five has been called a "magic number," because it hints at what may be a universal law of group behavior. There have been many counts of hunter-gatherer bands, not only in the Kalahari Desert, but also in such diverse places as the forests of Thailand, the Canadian Northwest, and northern India. Although individual bands may vary from fifteen to seventy-five members, the tendency is to cluster around twenty-five, and in all cases a major reason for keeping groups small is the desire to avoid violence. In other words, the association between large groups and conflict has deep roots and very likely presented law-and-order problems during the early days of cities and pre-cities, as it has ever since.

Along with managers and record keepers and keepers of the peace, there

were also specialists in trade. A number of factors besides population growth and intensive land use were involved in the origin of cities, and local and long-distance trade was among the most important. Prehistoric centers in the process of becoming urban were almost always trade centers. They typically occupied favored places, strategic points in developing trade networks, along major waterways and caravan routes or close to supplies of critical raw materials.

Archaeologists are making a renewed attempt to learn more about such developments. Wright's current work in southwest Iran, for example, includes preliminary studies to detect and measure changes in the flow of trade. One site about sixty-five miles from Susa lies close to tar pits, which in prehistoric times served as a source of natural asphalt for fastening stone blades to handles and waterproofing baskets and roofs. By saving all the waste bits of this important raw material preserved in different excavated levels, Wright was able to estimate fluctuations in its production over a period of time. In one level, for example, he found that the amounts of asphalt produced increased far beyond local requirements; in fact, a quantitative analysis indicates that asphalt exports doubled at this time. The material was probably being traded for such things as high-quality flint obtained from quarries more than one hundred miles away, since counts of material recovered at the site indicate that imports of the flint doubled during the same period.

In other words, the site was taking its place in an expanding trade network, and similar evidence from other sites can be used to indicate the extent and structure of that network. Then the problem will be to find out what other things were happening at the same time, such as significant changes in cylinder-seal designs and in agricultural and religious practices. This is the sort of evidence that may be expected to spell out just how the evolution of trade was related to the evolution of cities.

Another central problem is gaining a fresh understanding of the role of religion. Something connected with enormous concentrations of people, with population pressures and tensions of many kinds that started building up five thousand or more years ago, transformed religion from a matter of simple rituals carried out at village shrines to the great systems of temples and priesthoods invariably associated with early cities. Sacred as well as profane institutions arose to keep society from splitting apart.

Strong divisive tendencies had to be counteracted, and the reason may involve yet another magic number, another intriguing regularity that has been observed in hunter-gatherer societies in different parts of the world. The average size of a tribe, defined as a group of bands all speaking the same dialect, turns out to be about five hundred persons, a figure that depends to some extent on the limits of human memory. A tribe is a community of people who can identify closely with one another and engage in repeated face-to-face encounters and recognitions; and it happens that five hundred may represent about the number of persons a hunter-gatherer can remember well enough to approach on what would amount to a first-name basis in our society. Beyond that number the level of familiarity declines, and there is an increasing tendency to regard individuals as "they" rather than "we," which is when trouble usually starts. (Architects recommend that an elementary school should not exceed five hundred pupils if the principal is to maintain personal contact with all of them, and the headmaster of one prominent prep school recently used this argument to keep his student body at or below the five-hundred mark.)

Religion of the sort that evolved with the first cities may have helped to "beat" the magic number five hundred. Certainly there was an urgent need to establish feelings of solidarity among many thousands of persons rather than a few hundred. Creating allegiances wider than those provided by direct kinship and person-to-person ties became a most important problem, a task for full-time professionals. In this connection Paul Wheatley of the University of Chicago suggests that "specialized priests were among the first persons to be released from the daily round of subsistence labor." Their role was partly to exhort other workers concerned with the building of monuments and temples, workers who probably exerted greater efforts in the belief that they were doing it not for mere men but for the glory of individuals highborn and close to the gods.

The city evolved to meet the needs of societies under pressure. People were being swept up in a process that had been set in motion by their own activities and that they could never have predicted, for the simple reason that they had no insight into what they were doing in the first place. For example, they did not know, and had no way of knowing, that settling down could lead to population explosions.

There is nothing strange about this state of affairs, to be sure. It is the essence of the human condition and involves us just as intensely today. Then as now, people responded by the sheer instinct of survival to forces that they understood vaguely at best—and worked together as well as they could to organize themselves, to preserve order in the face of accelerating change and complexity and the threat of chaos. They could never know that they were creating what we, its beneficiaries and its victims, call civilization.

A French archaeological team here surveys part of the ruins of ancient Susa in Iran. This site and surrounding ones are yielding new evidence about the origins of urban life.

John Pfeiffer's most recent article for HORIZON *was "Man the Hunter" (Spring 1971). His most recent book was* The Emergence of Man *(Harper & Row, 1969).*



Proust's Paris

The fairest of cities,
in the fading light of its *belle époque,*
saturates the delicate
fabric of a literary masterpiece

By SANCHE DE GRAMONT

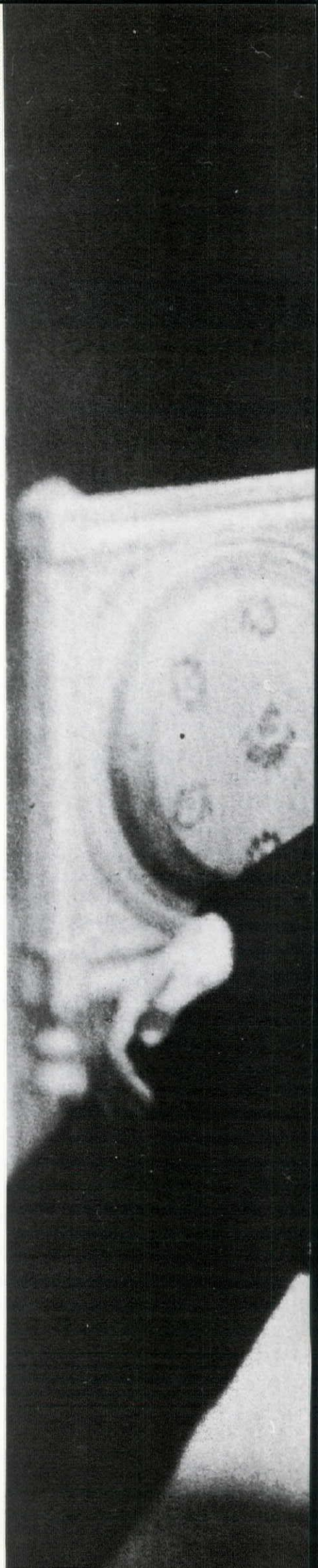
With the exception of summer vacations in Combray, when the narrator was a child, and in the Channel resort of Balbec, where as a young man he meets Albertine, later his fiancée, and of a short trip to Venice with his mother, all of *Remembrance of Things Past* takes place in Paris. The presence of the city saturates the novel the way moisture saturates the air and determines its atmospheric pressure.

I can think of one other city so present in a great modern novel, and that is Joyce's Dublin. But unlike Joyce, who delivers Dublin in a single day, Proust makes Paris unfold over a period of roughly forty-five years, from 1875 to 1920. To read Proust is to observe the flowering and decline of a period in the capital's history, for the debacle of 1870 and the horrors of the Commune were followed by years of determined amusement known as *la belle époque*. Those who had expected a wake found, instead, a celebration that was interrupted only by another war.

Proust was born in 1871 in a Paris already physically transformed by the Baron Haussmann, who destroyed entire neighborhoods to build long, straight thoroughfares like the rue de Rivoli, who crossed the Seine with five new bridges, and who built the Halles central market. The transformation continued during Proust's life. The avenue of the Opéra linked the rue de Rivoli with Garnier's opera house, inaugurated in 1874. The young Proust saw the Eiffel Tower go up, its four perforated iron legs rising from the green meadow of the Champ de Mars. In 1900 the Petit and Grand Palais were opened to the public. In the same year the first line of the Metro was inaugurated, and the fanciful wrought-iron entrances, with their orange lights and insectlike appearance, contributed to what became known as the "firefly" style of decoration.

And yet the capital of two and a half million people still resembled a collection of villages. The Champs Elysées remained unpaved until the twentieth century. The houses on the avenue du Bois (today's avenue Foch) still had private stables. Passy was a rustic suburb. Public transportation consisted mainly of horse-drawn omnibuses, despite the Metro, which Proust mentions only once.

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COLLECTION MANTE-PROUST

Marcel Proust was about twenty-five when this photograph was taken—a languid-looking young writer and man about town.



Electric street-lighting was still a novelty, so that the narrator, going to visit Mme Swann, the mother of Gilberte, was guided by the light in her living room, which shone like a beacon in the dark. Houses, even the houses of the rich, were badly heated. In the early spring Mme Swann received visitors with an ermine wrap over her shoulders and her hands in an ermine muff, like "the last patches of the snows of winter, more persistent than the rest, which neither the heat of the fire nor the advancing season had succeeded in melting."

The traditional coexistence of luxury and discomfort was tempered by new inventions. Thus, the narrator acquires a telephone. As he waits for a call from Albertine, he remarks: "The advance of civilisation enables each of us to display unsuspected merits or fresh defects which make him dearer or more insupportable to his friends. Thus Dr. Bell's invention had enabled Françoise [his maid] to acquire an additional defect, which was that of refusing, however important, however urgent the occasion might be, to make use of the telephone. She would manage to disappear whenever anybody was going to teach her how to use it, as people disappear when it is time for them to be vaccinated."

This, then, was the city the narrator inhabited, not a mere setting, or a series of useful addresses, but a source of daily nourishment for his senses. Its sounds reached him as he lay ill in his room: "On certain fine days, the weather was so cold, one was in such full communication with the street, that it seemed as though a breach had been made in the outer walls of the house, and, whenever a tramcar passed, the sound of its bell throbbed like that of a silver knife striking a wall of glass."

The street hawkers outside his window were "an orchestra that returned every morning to charm me." Their cries seemed like a recitative in an opera, "where an initial intonation is barely altered by the inflexion of one note which rests upon another . . ."



COLLECTION MANTE-PROUST

Proust, at right, and his brother Robert, probably in about 1882.

When he heard the cry "*Les escargots, ils sont frais, ils sont beaux . . . On les vend six sous la douzaine,*" it reminded him of parts of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. The practical Albertine interrupted his reverie to say: "Do make Francoise go out and buy some. . . . It will be all the sounds that we hear, transformed into a good dinner."

In counterpoint to the aristocracy with which *Remembrance* is mainly concerned, Proust shows us the little people of Paris, like the street vendors and the rouged lady called the "Marquise," who operates the public toilet on the Champs Elysées. Someone asks the Marquise why she does not retire, and she replies: " 'Will you kindly tell me where I shall be better off than here . . . my little Paris, I call it; my customers keep me in touch with everything that's going on. Just to give you an example, there's one of them who went out not more than five minutes ago; he's a magistrate, in the very highest position there is. . . . for the last eight years . . . regularly on the stroke of three he's been here, always polite . . . never making any mess; and he stays half an hour and more to read his papers and do his little jobs. . . . And besides . . . I choose my customers, I don't let everyone into my little parlours . . .' " The instinct for social stratification, Proust shows us, exists at every level.

Another of Paris's multiple functions is to evoke distant places where the narrator has never been, canceling the need to travel. He imagine "that the Seine, flowing between th twin semicircles of the span and th reflection of its bridges, must look lik the Bosporus." There was a room fror which he saw "across a first, a second and even a third layer of jumbled roof . . . a violet bell, sometimes ruddy sometimes too, in the finest 'prints which the atmosphere makes of it, c an ashy solution of black; which is, i fact, nothing else than the dome o Saint-Augustin, and which imparts t this view of Paris the character of som of the Piranesi views of Rome."

This room was Proust's own bed room on the boulevard Haussmann but the narrator, more elegant, and fo the requirements of the plot, lives i a wing of the Duc de Guermantes' town house, the address of which i never specified. "It was one of thos old town houses, a few of which ar perhaps still to be found, in which th court of honour—whether they wer alluvial deposits washed there by th rising tide of democracy, or a legacy from a more primitive time when th different trades were clustered round the overlord—is flanked by little shops and workrooms, a shoemaker's fo instance, or a tailor's . . ."

Just as Proust's Paris is more than a city, the Duc de Guermantes's town house is more than an address—it i the symbolic fortress of an inaccessible caste, for the Duc and Duchesse de Guermantes are the social leaders o the Faubourg Saint-Germain, which is less a location than a state of mind It is not limited to the fine old houses clustered around the boulevard Saint-Germain. The Guermantes town house for instance, is on the other side of the river, on the right bank. It has everything to do with belonging to the *ancien régime* aristocracy, still conscious of its privileges, still royalist certain of its superiority and contemptuous of outsiders, surviving thanks to an exclusiveness that makes it seem the custodian of a rare and desirable way of life, and to the rigid enforcement o a complicated social code.

TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

This view of the boulevard des Capucines, painted by Jean Béraud in provides a glimpse of the well-clad, fin-de-siècle *Paris of which Proust was*



The City That Proust Knew

So compelling is the sense of reality in Remembrance of Things Past *that its characters seem as authentic as the Paris streets in which they come and go. For readers of Proust, Paris is forever inhabited by Swann and Odette, Mme Verdurin, the Baron de Charlus, Albertine, Françoise. On the map at right Sanche de Gramont has pinpointed the sites of some of the events in the novel. Such a mixture of the imagined and the actual would surely have pleased Proust. His own central character, in love with Gilberte Swann, once his childhood playmate, "had always, within reach, a plan of Paris, which . . . seemed to me to contain a secret treasure"—for in it he can find the street where his beloved lives. Anyone who has grown infatuated with the Proustian cast of characters can use this map in the same way. He can imagine that he has been allowed to glance at Proust's* carnet, *or address book, where the novelist has jotted down some of the prominent landmarks of his vast work.*

The **Champs Elysées (1)** is where the narrator as a child becomes the playmate of Gilberte, daughter of Charles Swann and Odette de Crécy—themselves major characters in the novel. The children play on the lawns near the **Alcazar d'été (2).** Under century-old cedars, candy and soft drinks are sold from wooden booths. A little farther down stands the cast-iron public lavatory where the narrator's grandmother suffers the stroke that leads to her death. On the corner of the Champs Elysées, above the **rue de Berri (3),** the narrator, now grown up, sells a family vase to a Chinese curio shop for ten thousand francs, in order to buy flowers for Gilberte. On his way back from the shop, he sees Gilberte with a young man he cannot identify, and suffers pangs of jealous uncertainty. On the corner of the **rue Royale (4)** stands a photographer's stall, where the narrator's servant, Françoise, buys a snapshot of Pope Pius IX, while the narrator chooses one of the actress La Berma.

Swann, the rich aesthete, is invited to lunch at the **Elysée Palace (5),** on the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, with the president of France, Jules Grévy. It is an invitation that astonishes Doctor Cottard, one of the members of the "little clan," as Mme Verdurin's tacky, bourgeois salon is known. " 'What's that you say? M. Grévy? Do you know M. Grévy?' " asks Cottard, finding it hard to believe that someone he was having dinner with, and who held no official post, could be on friendly enough terms with the head of state to be invited for lunch at the Elysée.

The old **Trocadéro (6)** is described as a gingerbread castle "whose towers at twilight glowed so that they seemed covered with currant jelly like the towers pastrycooks make." It was torn down in 1937 to make way for the present Palais de Chaillot.

The musician Morel, who becomes the lover of the Baron de Charlus (the Duc de Guermantes's homosexual brother) and of Robert de Saint-Loup (Guermantes's nephew), is a member of the Conservatory on the **rue Bergère (7).**

On the **rue de Bourgogne (8),** the narrator's butler observes the Baron de Charlus spending an hour in a *pissotière,* recognizing him by his bright yellow trousers.

Mme Verdurin holds her salon on the **Quai de Conti (9),** in a building she claims is the former residence of the Venetian ambassadors.

The **Quai d'Orléans (10)** is where Swann lives as a bachelor. Odette, the lovely courtesan who will become his wife, considers the apartment musty and old-fashioned and the neighborhood inelegant because it is close to the Halle aux Vins, the wine market.

On the **avenue Gabriel (11)** a homosexual propositions the narrator's friend Sa Loup, who is dressed in his officer's form. Saint-Loup, shocked at the auda of the "clique," pummels the accoster agely, but is later found to be himse member.

To the **Halles (12),** or central market, narrator's servant, Françoise, goes to ch the ingredients for her famous *boeuf gelée,* "as Michelangelo passed e months in the mountains of Car choosing the most perfect blocks of ma for the monument of Jules II."

The **rue Rabelais (13)** is where the Joc Club still stands. Swann is a member, the Baron de Charlus, who goes there e evening at six. When the obscure Chau pierre is elected president over the Duc



ermantes, the Duc concludes that the son is his friendship with Swann, a Jew, time when the Jewish Captain Dreyfus been accused of treason and anti-Sem-m was raging. Guermantes would refer he Dreyfus case, " 'which has been re-nsible for so many disasters,' albeit he s really conscious of one and one only; own failure to become president of the key [Club]."

e Invalides (14) is the tomb of Napo-n I, to which the government invites the ncesse Mathilde, his niece, to welcome visiting Czar Nicholas of Russia. She ds the card back, saying that she needs invitation to go to the Invalides, since r place in the crypt, next to the emperor, reserved.

The pious Françoise has never been to the cathedral of **Notre Dame (15).** "In all the years she had been living in Paris, Françoise had never had the curiosity to visit Notre Dame. That was because Notre Dame was part of Paris, a city in which her daily life unfolded, and in which, consequently, it was difficult for our old servant to place the object of her dreams."

From the **Gare Saint-Lazare (16),** the narrator takes the train for the resort of Balbec where he spent the summers as a young man and where he meets Albertine, his next love after Gilberte. He enters "one of those vast, glass-roofed sheds... into which I must go to find the train for Balbec, and which extended over the rent bowels of the city one of those bleak and boundless skies, heavy with an accumulation of dramatic menaces, like certain skies painted with an almost Parisian modernity by Mantegna or Veronese, beneath which could be accomplished only some solemn and tremendous act, such as a departure by train or the Elevation of the Cross."

Before her marriage, Odette has a small house on the **rue La Pérouse (17).** Swann is courting her, and the mere mention of the street is enough to start his heart fluttering. In a conversation with an army general Swann says: " 'some fine lives have been lost . . . There was, you remember, that explorer whose remains Dumont d'Urville brought back, La Pérouse . . .' (and he was at once happy again, as though he had named Odette). . . .

'Oh, yes, of course, La Pérouse,' said the General. . . . 'There's a street called that.'

'Do you know anyone in the Rue La Pérouse?' asked Swann excitedly.

'Only Mme. de Chanlivault, the sister of that good fellow Chaussepierre. . . .'

'Oh, so she lives in the Rue La Pérouse. It's attractive; I like that street; it's so sombre.'

'Indeed it isn't. You can't have been in it for a long time; it's not at all sombre now; they're beginning to build all round there.' "

The narrator remarks on people "who look like their neighborhood, who carried on their persons the reflections of the Rue de l'Arcade, or the Avenue du Bois, or the Rue de l'Elysée." The passing reference to the **rue de l'Arcade (18)** is particularly interesting, for the male brothel that the Baron de Charlus frequents was based on Proust's experience in a similar establishment at 11 rue de l'Arcade, run by a former footman, Albert le Cuziat. Proust here is indulging his habit of dropping veiled hints about his secret aberrations. It was in Le Cuziat's brothel that young men posing as butchers' apprentices were brought for Proust, and that he watched rats being tortured. These activities are implicit in the innocent-appearing reference to the rue de l'Arcade.

The **rue Saint-Augustin (19)** is a reminder of the Baron de Charlus's complaint that Jews live in streets bearing saints' names, which he considers a sacrilege. He suggests they ought to live in a street " 'which is entirely conceded to the Jews, there are Hebrew characters over the shops, bakeries for unleavened bread, kosher butcheries, it is positively the Judengasse of Paris.' "

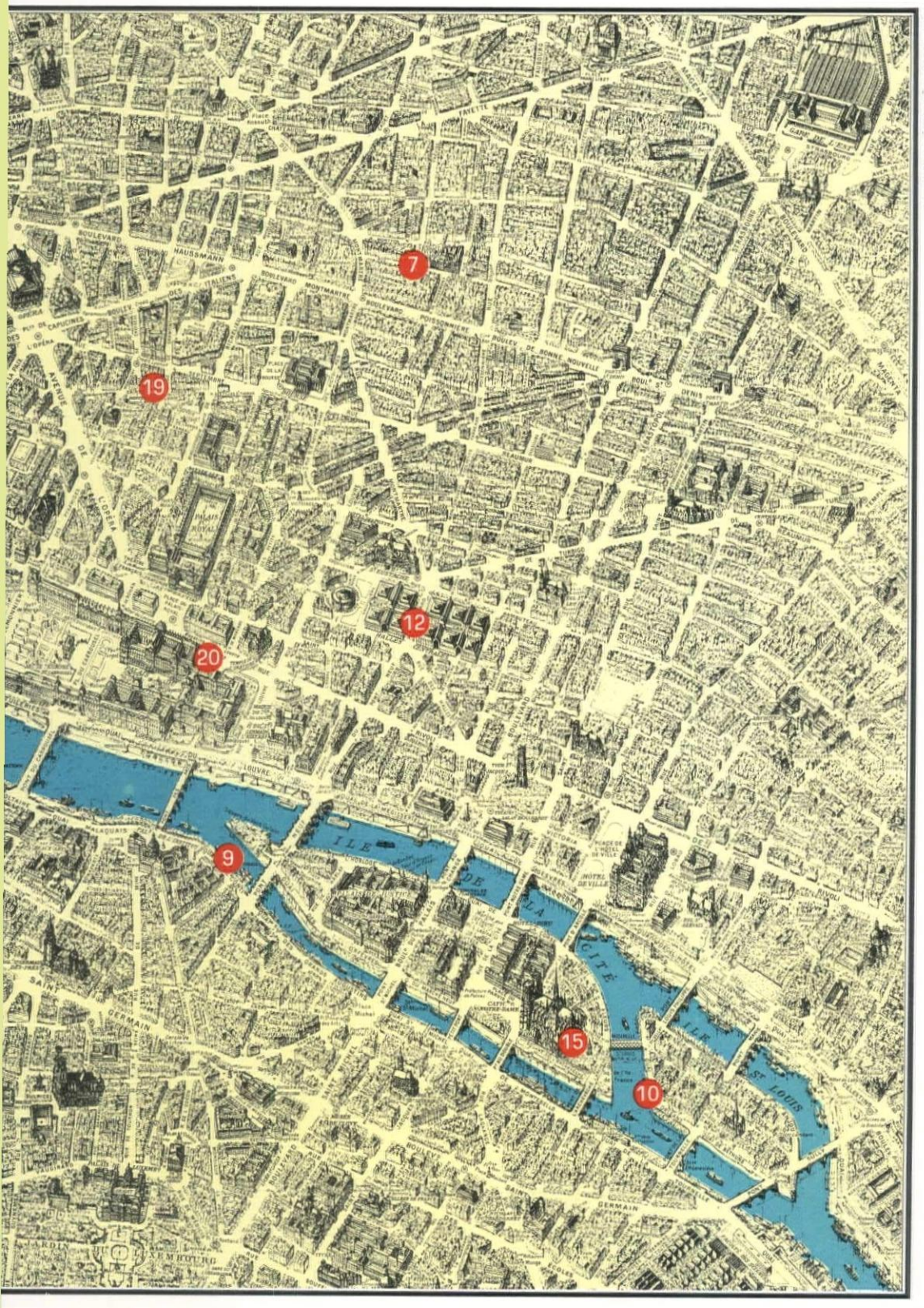
The **rue de Rivoli (20)** is the street of the Louvre. The Duchesse de Guermantes visits the museum to see Manet's *Olympia,* and comments: " 'Nowadays nobody is in the least surprised by it. It looks just like an Ingres! And yet, heaven only knows how many spears I've had to break for that picture, which I don't altogether like but which is unquestionably the work of *somebody.*' "

The narrator sees the **Eiffel Tower (21)** covered with searchlights, lit over wartime Paris in 1914 to detect German planes.

The **rue de Varenne (22)** is where the Prince and Princesse de Guermantes live, until they move to a new mansion on the **avenue du Bois (23),** today's avenue Foch.

To the **Orangerie (24),** in the Tuileries Gardens, the writer Bergotte, suffering from an attack of uremia, goes to see Vermeer's *Street in Delft,* on loan from The Hague Museum. A critic has written that a fragment of yellow wall in the painting could be considered a thing of perfect beauty, and against the advice of doctors, Bergotte goes out to see this fragment. "His giddiness increased; he fixed his eyes, like a child upon a yellow butterfly . . . upon the precious little patch of wall. 'That is how I ought to have written . . . My last books are too dry, I ought to have gone over them with several coats of paint, made my language exquisite in itself, like this little patch of yellow wall.' . . . he sank down upon a circular divan . . . he rolled from the divan to the floor, as visitors and attendants came hurrying to his assistance. He was dead."

This scene parallels one in Proust's life. Although mortally ill, Proust left his apartment for the last time, on the arm of his friend Jean-Louis Vaudoyer, to see this very Vermeer painting, which he considered "the most beautiful in the world." The exhibit opened in May, 1921. Proust died in November of the following year after finishing *Remembrance of Things Past.*



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TEXT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

The Baron de Charlus, the Duc de Guermantes's younger brother (that brothers should have different family names is one of the arcana of the Faubourg), says: "I know nothing outside the Faubourg Saint-Germain." Like the forbidden city of Peking, it is a closed, self-contained, self-sufficient society. Albertine, jealous of her fiancé's Faubourg friends (whom she will never meet), says: "Of course, whoever comes from the Faubourg Saint-Germain possesses all the virtues."

To the narrator, viewing it at first from afar, the Faubourg is a sublime enigma. He is incapable of imagining what it can be like, what these remote minor deities say to one another, what language they use. The guests arriving at the Duc de Guermantes's house "might have been made of some precious matter; they are the columns that hold up the temple." "Alas," he says, "those picturesque sites . . . I must content myself with a shiver of excitement as I sighted, from the deep sea (and without the least hope of ever landing there) like an outstanding minaret, like the first palm, like the first signs of some exotic industry or vegetation, the well-trodden doormat of its shore."

The narrator discovers, however, that the boundaries of the Faubourg are more flexible than he thought. A few outsiders are given "naturalization papers," little ways in which they know they have become accepted. Proust, like his narrator, gained access to the reputedly unapproachable world of the Faubourg because he was witty, kind, and solicitous, and above all, because he passionately wanted to. It is hard to resist true passion. After having been its distant admirer, the narrator becomes the chronicler of the Faubourg. The focus of Proust's Paris shifts, and centers on this tiny minority with an inflated sense of its own importance, absorbed in matters of rank and social exclusion, indifferent to the world outside its gates.



COLLECTION MANTE-PROUST

Remembrance of Things Past *is, among other things, a* roman à clef. *Proust (back row, center, with mustache) is seen amid friends, some of whom unwittingly served him as models: the Princesse de Brancovan (standing in front of Proust) became the elder Mme de Cambremer, Léon Delafosse (far right, standing), the pianist Morel.*

Familiarity makes the narrator lose the sense of ecstasy he felt when the Faubourg was out of reach. He becomes aware of the malice and foolishness that exclusiveness conceals. He tests the walls of the temple, and they give a hollow sound. The exquisite politeness is calculated: "The ladies of the Faubourg build up a credit of amiability in anticipation of the dinner and garden party where they will not invite you, and are particularly nice in prevision of the day when they will overlook you." The men are convinced that no greater honor exists than that of being accepted by them. Charles Swann, an outsider who has been thus honored, is by birth neither an aristocrat nor a Gentile. When the fate of Captain Dreyfus intrudes on the smugness of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, the Duc de Guermantes cannot understand how Swann, after having received a friendly reception from the Faubourg, can be sympathetic to the Jewish officer convicted of treason.

The elegance, the refinement, the courtliness, are screens that mask unfeeling hearts. The narrator, although still awed by the Faubourg's splendor, exposes its callousness, as in the famous scene where Swann arrives at the Guermantes town house and announces that he is dying to the Duchesse, who is late for dinner. "'What' that you say?' cried the Duchess, stopping for a moment on her way to the carriage, and raising her fine eyes, their melancholy blue clouded by uncertainty. Placed for the first time in her life between two duties as incompatible as getting into her carriage to go out to dinner and shewing pity for a man who was about to die she could find nothing in the code of conventions that indicated the right line to follow, and, not knowing which to choose, felt it better to make a show of not believing that the latter alternative need be seriously considered, so as to follow the first, which demanded of her at the moment less effort, and thought that the best way of settling the conflict would be to deny that any existed. 'You're joking,' she said to Swann."

The Faubourg carries within it the seeds of its decline. The narrator watches it founder, the victim of external circumstances such as the war, as well as of its inability to defend itself against the principal cause of infiltration—misalliances. When Robert de Saint-Loup, the Duc de Guermantes's nephew, marries Gilberte, the daughter of Odette and Swann, the Princesse de Silistrie complains that "there is no more Faubourg, Saint-Loup is marrying a Jew's daughter." The narrator, returning to Paris after a long absence, finds the Faubourg no longer exclusive: ". . . a thousand alien elements made their way in and all homogeneity, all consistency of form and color was lost. The Faubourg Saint-Germain was like some senile dowager now, who replies only with timid smiles to the insolent servants who invade her drawing rooms, drink her orangeade, present their mistresses to her."

Parisian society of la belle époque, *as Proust knew it, often convened in large, dressed groups such as the one shown in this painting, also by Béraud, of an evening*



Stunning reversals have hastened the Faubourg's decline. The Prince de Guermantes (cousin of the Duc), ruined by the war, his wife dead, has married the rich Mme Verdurin, the incarnation of bourgeois pretentiousness, whom no lady of the Faubourg, a few years earlier, would have received. The Faubourg's standard-bearers, the Duc and Duchesse de Guermantes, have more or less abandoned it. The Duchesse now frequents social groups much further down the social scale, and has become particularly fond of the company of actresses. The Duc has become hopelessly infatuated with Swann's widow, Odette, who has in the meantime been married to the Baron de Forcheville.

Thus Odette, who starts out a common courtesan, becomes in the end the wife of one member of the Faubourg and the mistress of another. The doddering Duc de Guermantes is so taken with Odette that he accepts in her home the presence of people he would in the past have disdained. Social boundaries have crumbled, and Odette shows off her relic of the Faubourg like a collector showing an antique. "All that seemed to be forever fixed is constantly being refashioned . . ." the narrator remarks.

Running parallel to the decline of the Faubourg as a social bastion is the decline of the narrator's friends caused by advancing years, and the transformation of the city owing to the war. On his way to a musical matinee at the Prince de Guermantes's, the narrator sees Charlus in the street, recovering from an attack of apoplexy, bent, his hair and beard gone completely white, his eyes glazed, hardly able to walk. At the matinee, he sees the men and women he had known young arriving like phantoms, imprisoned in the thousand bonds of the past, age having marked their faces the way geologic change marks the surface of the earth.

The men were now elderly white-haired hermits. Women's faces were crumbling like those of statues. Women who still seemed young from afar grew older as they were approached and one saw the wrinkles and the greasy spots on their skins, the deep erosion along their noses, the alluvial deposits on the edge of cheeks that filled the face with their opaque mass. Some faces seem covered by a plaster mask, others by a gauze veil. Gilberte, the narrator's first love, has become a fat lady whom he fails to recognize, and then mistakes for her mother, Odette.

Wartime Paris causes the same sense of dislocation. Planes circle the city, little brown specks against the sky. The museums are closed, and from the doors of shops hang handwritten signs saying they will be open at some remote time in the future. The blackout begins at nine thirty. Soldiers on leave fill the streets, looking into the windows of crowded restaurants and saying: "You'd never know there was a war on here." Sirens announcing a Zeppelin raid seem to the narrator "Wagnerian, so natural to announce the arrival of the Germans."

Although the Germans are an hour's drive from Paris, receptions and dinners continue to be given, and fashionable women attend them wearing bracelets made from shell fragments, while the men carry cigarette cases made from English coins. The narrator feels "the surprise of a foreigner who knows Paris well but does not live there, and who, upon returning to the city for a few weeks, sees in the place of a little theatre where he has spent pleasant evenings, that a bank has been built in its place."

The city's permanence is merely another illusion, for nothing lasts, in cities as well as in hearts, and the very streets can alter as quickly as a face ages. Paris's final function is to serve as the setting for Proust's inquiry upon the passage of time. As the narrator enters the Guermantes courtyard on his way to the matinee and trips on uneven paving stones, he experiences the happy rush of involuntary memory. Just as, earlier, the shell-shaped pastry called a madeleine brought back his childhood, the paving stones bring back his trip to Venice, for he had walked over uneven paving stones in the St. Mark's baptistery. Instead of joining the other guests, he retires to a library to savor this "veritable moment of the past."

He has stepped outside the flow of time and experienced a sensation that is not disappointing, for it is given to him whole, recaptured. Reality was disappointing because at the moment he perceived it he could not imagine it, "by virtue of the inevitable law that we can only imagine what is absent," and it was only through his imagination that he was capable of grasping beauty.

But now, thanks to the physical sensation in the present that has restored the past, reality and imagination are fused and allow the narrator to apprehend "a fragment of time in the pure state . . . A minute freed from the order of time has re-created in us, to feel it, the man freed from the order of time. And one can understand that this man should have confidence in his joy, even if the simple taste of a madeleine does not seem logically to contain within it the reasons for this joy, one can understand that the word 'death' should have no meaning for him; situated outside time, why should he fear the future?"

The privileged moment is brief, and once over, the narrator must return to the aging faces and the eroding landscape. And this is the final, melancholy lesson taught not only by Proust's characters but by the city streets they walk on and the buildings they live in, by the restless spirit of the great city: "The places that we have known belong now not only to the little world of space on which we map them for our own convenience. None of them was ever more than a thin slice, held between the contiguous impressions that composed our life at that time; remembrance of a particular form is but regret for a particular moment; and houses, roads, avenues are as fugitive, alas, as the years."

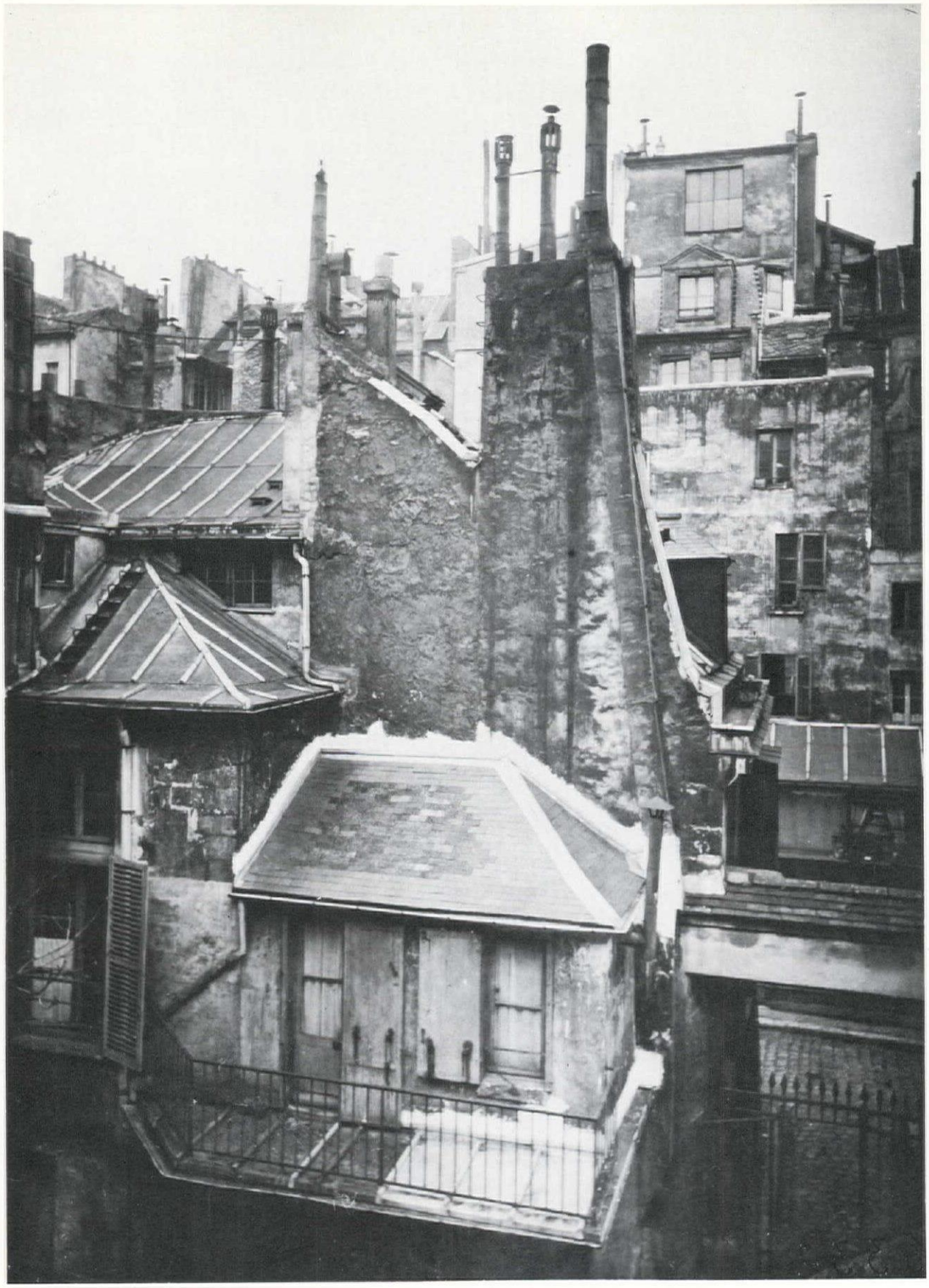
FOR ANOTHER VIEW OF PROUST AND HIS NOVEL, SEE "REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST" BY JOHN UPDIKE ON PAGE 102

Atget's Belle Epoque



ALL: MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, ABBOTT-LEVY COLLECTION

In Proust's Remembrance of Things Past *the narrator speaks one day of the "golden morning brightness of a Parisian sidewalk." At about the same time, another extraordinary observer named Eugène Atget was recording with his bulky camera the glints and shadows of a similar Paris scene, above. A failed actor and a failed painter by turns, Atget took up "art photography," as he called it, in 1898. His subject—and his passion—was Paris, the Paris of* la belle époque, *the era of Proust's great novel. Though Proust, the social-climbing aesthete, and Atget, the impoverished Bohemian, never met, their visions of the city have an uncanny similarity. It seems only natural, then, that the quotations accompanying the photographs on the following pages should come from* Remembrance of Things Past.



"It is not only in Venice that one has those outlooks on to several houses at once which have proved so tempting to painters; it is just the same in Paris. Nor do I cite Venice at random. It is of its poor quarters that certain poor quarters of Paris make one think, in the morning, with their tall, wide chimneys to which the sun imparts the most vivid pinks, the brightest reds; it is a whole garden that flowers above the houses, and flowers in such a variety of tints that one would call it, planted on top of the town, the garden of a tulip-fancier of Delft or Haarlem."



"I saw that what had appeared to me to be not worth twenty francs when it had been offered to me for twenty francs in the house of ill fame, where it was then for me simply a woman desirous of earning twenty francs, might be worth more than a million, more than one's family, more than all the most coveted positions in life if one had begun by imagining her to embody a strange creature, interesting to know, difficult to seize and to hold."



"'. . . I'm going to say something that's not quite proper . . . but he has a bedroom, and more especially a bed in it, in which I should love to sleep—without him! . . .'"



"I stopped my carriage and was going to get out and walk about a bit, when my attention was caught by the sight of another carriage . . . In it a man with staring eyes and bent shoulders was sitting, or, rather, was placed and was making a great effort to sit up straight, like a child who has been told to behave properly."



"I had been apprised . . . by hearing a barrel-organ playing, beneath the window, *En revenant de la revue,* that the winter had received, until nightfall, an unexpected, radiant visit from a day of spring."



"While as for her figure, and she was admirably built, it was impossible to make out its continuity (on account of the fashion then prevailing, and in spite of her being one of the best-dressed women in Paris) for the corset, jetting forwards in an arch, as though over an imaginery stomach, and ending in a sharp point, beneath which bulged out the balloon of her double skirts, gave a woman that year, the appearance of being composed of different sections badly fitted together . . . "



An Urban Civilizatio

The very idea sounds preposterous. How can there be such a thing as an urban civilization without cities? Is it not a contradiction in terms? These questions are inevitable—but not quite so unanswerable as they seem at first glance. A very good case can be made to the effect that much of what we call "the urban crisis" in the United States is really a misnomer for a historical, popular effort to create an urban civilization without cities. Indeed, it can be argued that the basic impulse throughout our history has been in this direction, and that what the textbooks call "the urbanization of America" is not at all the same thing as "the citification of America."

Before we can see this matter in clear perspective, we must rid ourselves of a couple of mischievous misconceptions. The first is that, as President Lyndon B. Johnson majestically proclaimed, we are today what we have never been before: "a nation of cities," with some 70 per cent of our population residing in what the Census Bureau calls an "urban place." What President Johnson did not mention—perhaps because he did not know it—is that the Census Bureau's definition of an "urban place" is any settlement with more than 2,500 residents. That definition may once have made some sense. Today it can only confuse us, as it apparently confused the President, by obscuring the distinction between the categories of "urban" and "city."

In fact, less than 30 per cent of the American population lives in places with a population of more than 100,000, which is what we ordinarily regard as a city. This is approximately equal to our "rural" population, living in settlements of fewer than 2,500 inhabitants. Moreover, the proportion of our population that lives in big cities, those of over 1,000,000, is the same as it was in 1920.

True, there has been an *absolute* increase in the big-city population, reflecting the overall growth of our total population. But even so, a good part of this absolute increase has *not* taken place in the big cities of yesteryear—the most troubled cities of today. New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Boston have not experienced any remarkable population growth in recent decades. (New York, in fact, has experienced no growth: its population today is almost what it was in 1950.) The increase in our big-city population is largely the consequence of the furious expansion of such new cities as Los Angeles and Houston. These are, as we shall see, very special kinds of cities in that they are by traditional standards not proper cities at all. Some critics have even called them "anti-cities," which is not far from the truth.

What the urbanization of America over the past half-century really amounts to, then, is the movement from the farm *toward smaller cities,* most of them clustered in metropolitan areas, i.e., areas in the center of which there is a city of at least 100,000 people. The urbanization of America is thus more accurately described as the *suburbanization* of America.

What hinders us from grasping the full import of this process is the conventional antisuburban bias of most writers on urban affairs. It is assumed that a suburban town is some kind of "satellite" of the central city—embittered critics would call it a "parasite"—and that it is not a serious urban phenomenon in its own right. This assumption might hold for the relation between most European cities and their suburbs, which is, in truth, where the idea comes from, but it has no application to the American experience.

Though many American suburbs begin as "bedroom suburbs," they very quickly move in the direction of self-sustaining communities. Only about 30 per cent of the working population of Westchester County, for instance, now commutes to a job in New York City, and this percentage is sliding steadily downward every year. Moreover, the suburbs of our newer cities never even pass through this kind of transformation. In Los Angeles or Houston the suburbs *are* the city, with the "inner city" being, in effect, one suburban area among others.

The second mischievous misconception obscuring America's actual urban condition is the notion that Americans would really prefer to live in the cities if only they were more attractive and agreeable. Behind most of the literature on city planning there lurks the conviction that Americans have been forced out of the city by circumstances beyond their control, that suburban living is for them *faute de mieux,* and that such things as picturesque shopping malls, efficient rapid transportation, and a civic cultural center will draw them back.

Most city planners certainly and sincerely love city living; they are authentic city types, which is, perhaps, as it should be and must be. But most Americans do not feel this way at all. In a 1968 Gallup Poll, only 18 per cent said they preferred to live in central cities; 25 per cent chose the suburbs; 29 per cent wanted to live in small towns; and 27 per cent actually said they wished they could live on a farm. In terms of the popular ideal, one could more accurately speak of an agrarian crisis than of an urban crisis.

It would be tempting to dismiss these

Without Cities?

By IRVING KRISTOL

expressed opinions as an ideological hangover, a case of "cultural lag," a futile nostalgia for an unavailable past. But that would be an error. These are no idle fantasies; they are genuine preferences—and Americans act upon them. Moreover, the evidence is overwhelming that Americans have always had a similar attitude toward cities. How else can we explain the extraordinary American decision, almost without precedent or parallel, that the capitals of our states should only rarely be the largest or most important cities? Such "peculiarities" are not mere oddities. They tell us much about the American way of life and about how it differs from the traditional European ways of organizing societies.

A city may exist for three types of reasons: (1) economic-commercial; (2) political-administrative; or (3) cultural-intellectual. In Europe, it has always been assumed that, ideally, a city should combine all three *raisons d'être;* and the outstanding European cities—a London, a Paris, a Madrid, a Budapest, a Vienna—do, in fact, combine them. Surely, too, one of the reasons Italy has so many memorable cities is that until national unification only a century ago, they were all capitals, combining the three urban purposes.

Such a combination gives a city a power of attraction that is close to irresistible. Europeans feel a possessiveness toward, and identification with, their major cities that is unknown in America. These cities are an integral part of their national identity; frequently, they antedate the national identity, and have played a crucial role in creating the nation itself. No Frenchman can imagine France without Paris, but it is not so hard to imagine the United States without New York—millions of Americans indulge in this fantasy every day, with no great pain.

Clearly, what we have here is an important difference in urban values. This difference reaches far back into American history and has deep roots in the American character. Unless we take this history and this character seriously, we are not likely to get very far in understanding why American cities are the way they are. Nor are we likely to understand why it is that Americans live most happily and contentedly in precisely those cities—Los Angeles, Houston, San Diego, Tucson, Las Vegas—that are the despair of any properly educated city planner.

For such an understanding, one must begin with a plain fact: Americans have always regarded their cities—with the unique exception of nineteenth-century Boston, an exception that proves the rule—from an utterly utilitarian perspective. The American city, unlike the European city, has never been thought of as a nucleus of civilization. As Professor Daniel Elazar of Temple University has emphasized, the American city has been regarded as, and has been treated as, a focus of economic activity—to put it bluntly, as a kind of service station. Americans have always *used* their cities, and more often than not, in a casual and even brutal way.

One service, in particular, has been of the utmost importance: the absorption and integration of rural immigrants—mainly, but not only, foreign—into American life. American cities have been very successful in performing this service and are still performing it quite well. But to evaluate this service, we must first understand what "success" means in American terms. It does *not* mean making urban citizens of these new immigrants. It does mean making them sufficiently urbanized—sufficiently acculturated, trained, and educated—that they can *leave* the city.

The American city is an entrepôt, importing people and exporting citizens, usually to the suburban towns and smaller suburban cities. That is why it is so misleading to try to measure the state of the blacks, the newest immigrants to the city, by looking exclusively at the conditions of life in the inner city. Such conditions always look bad, always are bad, because the inner city is mostly populated by people who have not yet succeeded. If we wish to know if the city is working, then we must, paradoxically, look at the rate of emigration to the suburbs. This rate is moving up sharply for the blacks today, and it will certainly continue doing so throughout the 1970's. We can then say that our cities have been functioning as they were intended to.

That *this* intention is radically different from the intention that city planners or most writers on urban affairs would ascribe to the city is another matter. The latter long desperately for a traditional kind of urbanity, for cities with grace, with style, with charm, with elegance—cities, in short, where cultivated persons like themselves can live in comfort. These people may even be right in believing that without such cities any civilization will be deficient and limited. But all this is not really relevant. It is quite impossible for the city to be a processing depot for immigrants and at the same time strive for a traditional European kind of urbanity. The wear and tear is enormous; urban life is inevitably too messy and turbulent and more than a little sordid. One cannot say that Americans *like* this process; but it is obvious enough that they are willing to use up their

Put a bunch of Americans on a desert island and the first thing they will do is enter into a new Mayflower Compact, draw up a constitution, and form a P.T.A. . . . It is this instinct for voluntary community that, more than anything else, explains the American suspicion of cities . . .

cities in order to achieve this purpose.

The common explanation of this callous, utilitarian attitude toward cities is in terms of frontier individualism; it is seen as an anachronistic survival of a time when each American dreamed of having land, lots of land, underneath the Western skies, and when he scorned those effete conformists who could live their routine lives cooped up behind city walls. There is something in this, of course—but less than meets the eye that has seen too many Western films. Americans are individualistic, to be sure, but one of the ways they express their individualism is by setting up voluntary communities and associations.

Put a bunch of Americans on a desert island and the first thing they will do is enter into a new Mayflower Compact, draw up a constitution, and form a P.T.A. The American West was explored by rugged individuals, but it was settled by communities that were more or less identical in their legal and social structures. All of this is but another way of saying that the instinct of American individualism is *also* an instinct for voluntary community. Americans are unquestionably a nomadic people—one in five moves every year. But these nomads move from one interchangeable and nearly identical community to another, and the speed with which they sink roots in their new communities is astonishing. These roots may be—more often than not, must be—shallow; yet they are nonetheless real, and it is important to the individual that they exist.

It is this instinct for voluntary community that, more than anything else, explains the American suspicion of cities, big cities especially, as good places to live in. Cities are by their very nature involuntary and haphazard *aggregations* of people. These people are anonymous—it is an important aspect of the city's "free" life style that they be so. The city is, and always has been, the place where people go when they wish to escape from community and its confining conventions, its precise definition of one's identity in terms of family, friends, and neighborhood. The city is the place where one mixes with strangers; where one experiences excitement and risk; where one is liberated from the bonds of conventional thinking and conventional morality. The city is very much like the frontier in that it permits, even encourages, a kind of uninhibited individualism. But while the frontier is a disordered preliminary to community, the city is a standing challenge and alternative to it.

True, the city has its own kind of "society," but society is not community. It is no accident that Robert Park, the founder of urban sociology at the University of Chicago, could write: "Urbanity is a charming quality, but it is not a virtue. We don't ever really get to know the urbane person, and hence never know when to trust him." This is a typically American sentiment, expressing a traditional antiurban bias. At least, we are inclined today to think of it as a bias, but it is really something much more than that—both more authentic and more important. For behind this antiurban impulse, this preference for community over society, there lies a theory, a political philosophy. It is a *republican* political philosophy, as distinct from a merely *democratic* one, and that distinction is anything but academic.

The democratic political ethos celebrates the sovereignty of the popular will, and there is nothing inherently antiurban in it. The republican ethos, in contrast, *defines* this sovereignty in terms of individual participation in popular government. For such participation, a relatively small, self-governing community is needed, not a large, bureaucratically governed society. A big city may be democratically governed, but from Aristotle to the black militants of Harlem it has been generally agreed that no big city can be governed in a republican way. The anonymous multitude that inhabits a city cannot give birth to a republic, in which the individual citizen is personally involved in the tasks of self-government. Indeed, the people who live in large cities rarely think of themselves as "citizens" of those cities; the term seems inappropriate and is rarely used—because, one suspects, it *is* inappropriate.

This republican tradition has shaped all of American social thought, whether it be conservative, liberal, or radical. Washington and Jefferson were at one in their distrust of big cities, as were Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, Henry George and Henry Adams, William Jennings Bryan and Calvin Coolidge, John Dewey and Herbert Hoover. Our greatest architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, despised them, as have many of our novelists, poets, and playwrights. It is the power of this tradition that makes American cities so American—which is to say, so lacking in urbanity as compared with the cities of Europe.

Some fifteen years ago there was a movement—much favored by regional and city planners—to enlarge the dominion of the city, to incorporate the suburbs within its political boundaries to bring their financial resources within reach of the city's budget makers. This idea had strong support among members of the new upper-middle class created by post-World War II pros-

perity, who felt entitled to the kinds of urban amenities that European cities offered. These people—more numerous than ever before, wealthier than ever before, and frustrated as never before—also wanted chic downtown shops, a glittering cultural center, fine restaurants and convivial cafés.

Since they dominated the mass media, in which so many of them make their professional careers, they were for a time able to impose their perspective upon public opinion. "Urban renewal" was their battle cry; the "revival of downtown" their declared purpose; the "good urban life" in the European style their ultimate dream. For a while it looked as if they would have their way—but only for a while. Their dream was punctured by the bristling realities of American life; and no reality was more destructive than the republican ethos itself, which experienced a powerful and quite unexpected revival, both in the nation at large and *within* the city.

Today, the demand is not for greater urbanity but for participation by the individual citizen in the decisions that affect his life. Such participation is almost impossible to achieve in a big city—simply because it is so big and because there are so many decisions, the consequences of which are remote and yet intertwined. Moreover, such participation is death to the idea of an urbane city—we do not get opera houses or concert halls or subsidized theatres by a popular referendum of the neighborhood they are to be built in. These institutions have to be imposed by nonlocal governments, as is the case in Europe. There, the imposition has been of such long standing that popular opinion accepts it as natural, can even take a kind of civic pride in it. Here, it is seen simply as an imposition from above, is resented, and in the end is defeated.

The problem of American cities today is not how to consolidate their civic powers for urbane purposes but how to prevent them from falling apart under the impact of a revived republican ethos. It is the centrifugal forces that predominate, not the centripetal ones. And even among the upper-middle classes the impulse to urbanity has faltered and become uncertain of itself. Back in 1952 a committee of the American Political Science Association reported that the merger of cities and suburbs into new political units ("metropolitan governments") was desirable and probably inevitable. Fifteen years later, the newly elected president of the association, in his inaugural address, vigorously challenged the idea that humane and responsible government was possible in a political community of more than 200,000 people.

Simultaneously, the idea of "community control," both of neighborhoods and of governmental programs as they affect neighborhoods, has become enormously popular and is finding embodiment in more and more legislation. Community control certainly increases the number of people who are involved in the decision-making process, and makes for far greater participation in self-government; but it also creates perpetual conflict within the city and the near impossibility of any large-scale planning.

These political developments are taking place at a time when the economic significance of the central city is steadily declining. Manufacturing has been moving out of the central city for the past thirty years, and the trend is as strong today as it was in 1950. The garment industry in New York City, once the city's single largest source of employment, is only a shadow of its former self, and the shadow daily grows paler. As a transportation hub, the central cities are declining along with the railroads, which were their vital arteries. And the advent of containerization in sea transport is also bad news for the old central cities, many of which came into existence as ports. (Containerization requires vast areas of "back-up" space, which is difficult to provide in New York.)

It is true that during the 1950's and 1960's there was an extraordinary movement of corporation headquarters, with all of the jobs necessary to their functioning, into the central cities. But this movement has by now reversed itself, and more corporate headquarters are leaving than are coming in. Our nation's greatest metropolis, New York City, today stands on three precarious economic pillars: financial services (above all, the stock market), the media (television, book publishing, national magazines, advertising), and the older, declining industries. It is not hard to imagine circumstances in which financial services and media-associated activities will find it sensible to emigrate from Manhattan to more pleasant and less troublesome locations.

Should this occur, the inner city would become something akin to an Indian reservation, with part of the population being paid by the government to provide necessary services (medical, social, educational) for the rest, who are dependent on welfare and social security. Indeed, in New York City at the present time about one-third of the population is either employed by the government or is dependent on welfare and/or social security.

Politically weakened and economically enfeebled, the central city is also in the process of declining as a center for cultural activity. In this case, the movement is not toward the suburbs or smaller cities but toward the thousands of university campuses throughout the country. The writer-in-residence, the artist-in-residence, the composer-in-residence—all are familiar figures on the college campus of the 1970's. These people used to be regarded as intrinsically urban types; they still are urban types—only they no longer live and work in an urban setting. Bohemia itself, the urban artistic milieu par excellence, now tends to be a campus and off-campus phenomenon rather than a unique inner-city phenomenon. If we could envisage such a census, we would surely discover a larger population of Bohemians in Berkeley than in Greenwich Village. And the off-Broadway

theatre flourishes nearly as successfully at Yale and on other university campuses as it does in New York.

The "natural" configuration of the American city today is revealed by such new cities as Houston and Los Angeles. Though these cities provoke apoplexy among city planners and are not without their problems, they are nevertheless successful in the most elementary and primitive sense of that term: the people who live in them are disinclined to leave, and more people are moving in than are moving out.

The shape of these cities is that of a doughnut. Each has a hollow center in which are located official buildings (city hall, the courts, state and federal agencies), some corporate headquarters, and perhaps a cultural center (with a museum, concert hall, and theatre). Around this hollow center are concentric rings of inner suburbs, quasi-suburbs, suburbs, and exurbs. It is in these rings that everyone lives and most people work, do their shopping, and find entertainment. "Downtown" is where you sometimes have to go; it is really just another suburb, centrally located and with high-rise buildings. Even the urban poor no longer live there in large numbers. They have their own suburbs in which to be miserable.

What is happening is that our urban areas are taking up more and more space, but are becoming steadily less densely settled. According to Professor Lee Rainwater of Harvard University, the population per square mile in urbanized areas will have decreased from 6,580 in 1920 to around 3,800 in 1985. We are not, as some commentators on the city seem to be saying, all being squeezed into a constricted urban space. On the contrary, each of us is getting more space than he ever had before. (Even in the New York metropolitan area the average resident today has more square footage of living space than he did ten years ago!) But the space we are getting is a new and special kind of space. It is an *urbanized* space, with an urbanized life style and an urbanized mode of thought. (Needless to say, the word "urbanized" here means something rather different from what we usually mean by "urbane.")

> There is one eventuality that is too utopian to expect in the twenty years or so ahead of us. This is the revival of the central city as the nucleus of American urban civilization.

Though Americans were certainly first attracted to the suburbs because they felt they were getting closer to the "grass roots," and though many Americans doubtless are still of this mind, the crucial fact is that our suburbs and exurbs are inexorably being transformed into what Melvin M. Webber calls "undifferentiated urban space." The evidence of this transformation is nowhere more evident than in the family-style television serial. Patty Duke and Dennis the Menace were popular folk heroes of only yesterday; but they and their families are already of another world—distant, quaint, archaic. One can say, in retrospect, that they represented the last, desperate, and ultimately futile efforts of an older "provincial" culture to withstand a newer, "metropolitan" culture.

The den mother of yesteryear now trots off to see *Hair* when a traveling troupe or the students of a nearby college make it available to her. The den father of yesteryear now ponders, not whether he should build a new porch, but whether there might be something worth looking into in this new idea of "swinging couples" who indulge in occasional mate-swapping. Their neighbors used to be families; now a colony of "swinging singles" is likely to be nearby. Americans have been fleeing their cities to find refuge in a more traditional style of American living—only, ironically, to find themselves captives of what has been called "the tradition of the new."

This liquidation of the older, provincial American culture is probably the decisive event of twentieth-century history. If anything can be described a America's coming-of-age, this is it. Th two cultures whose conflict and ten sions had been the fundamental experi ence of the American arts—the tradi tional "square," provincial, more o less philistine culture and the urban, so phisticated, avant-garde, elite culture— have coalesced in the past ten years.

The catalyst for this event has bee the enormous expansion of higher edu cation—or, to be more precise, o college attendance—which brough masses of young people together, ex posed them to "the tradition of th new," and encouraged them to creat a "youth culture" that was both urban sophisticated and popular. The pros perity of the postwar years also per mitted these young people to suppor this new cultural mode (movies and th record industry are now "consumed" mainly by younger audiences) an eventually to impose it on the nation a a whole. It is not, in some respects, particularly attractive popular culture but then, neither was the popular cul ture it replaced. On purely aesthetic grounds, it is not easy to choose be tween *Candy* and Patty Duke. Tha choice, however, is no longer offered us; it has been made for us by the de velopments of the postwar years.

The question that confronts us, there fore, is: how do you combine an urban life style and an urban culture with small-city and suburbanized popula tion? No civilization in history has eve had to address itself to this question and we ought not to be overdepressed if we find it a hard question to answer One's instinctive response—that such combination is impossible—is almos certainly wrong. After all, fifteen year ago one's instincts would have been to

assert that it was impossible for such a question to arise.

There are already a few signs of the direction in which things *might* drift. It seems to be the case, for instance, that the republican ethos has been suffusing the arts themselves, which until now have been dominated by a talented elite who subscribed to "high" standards. One of the most striking tendencies of the present age is the desire of large numbers of people, especially young people, to participate in the arts instead of merely enjoying or experiencing them. There is an urge to make one's own movies rather than simply attend movies; there is, similarly, an urge to make one's own music, write and read aloud one's own poetry, write one's own plays and put on one's own production of them, and so on.

That such amateur efforts are almost invariably inferior to the best professional efforts is not regarded as all that important. People, it is said, get more out of participating in artistic activities, no matter how amateurish, than out of being spectators of the most polished and expert performances. Whether this is true is open to argument. (The fact that it *sounds* plausible to American ears, and utterly absurd to Europeans, is not decisive one way or the other.) What is not open to argument is that this kind of thinking corresponds closely to the new urban condition of so many Americans. In a smaller city or on a college campus you will either make a virtue of amateurism or be deprived of culture altogether—and this deprivation is no longer tolerable, as it once was.

There are other possible developments we can contemplate—though we cannot attach a specific degree of probability to them. For example, it is not unthinkable that *new* nuclei of cultural activity will emerge in our undifferentiated urban space. Yesterday's suburban shopping center—serving several towns at once—is being transformed into today's suburban mall: a place for shopping, to be sure, but also a place where young people informally congregate, where there is likely to be a cinema and a paperback bookstore, and where there could easily be a small concert hall, library, and theatre. This is one prospect that cannot be dismissed out of hand. Another, and at the other extreme, is that our culture will be completely democratized as well as republicanized; that informal, amateur activity will come to be regarded as the only proper kind of cultural life; and that the very idea of polished professionalism in the arts will become repugnant.

But whatever turn events take, there is one eventuality that is too utopian to expect in the twenty years or so ahead of us. This is the revival of the central city as the nucleus of American urban civilization. No doubt more civic centers and museums and attractive shopping malls will be built downtown, in a heroic effort to reverse the existing trend. But we have already had enough experience on this score to say with some certainty that though these schemes may work in a few cities, they are not likely to be universally successful, and even where they do work, they may have only a temporary success.

Lincoln Center in New York may be a nice addition to the city, and those of us who live in the city, and who also like operas and concerts and repertory theatre, are grateful for its presence. But we are becoming fewer and fewer with each passing year. If the circulation of *The New York Times* in the central city drifts downward every year—as it is doing—the attendance at Lincoln Center cannot be far behind. The *Times* is trying to counter this trend with an appeal to suburban readers, just as Lincoln Center is now appealing for suburban subscribers to its various programs. But fewer and fewer suburbanites find the idea of a trip to New York—of an expensive (and perhaps dangerous!) evening "in the city"—so overwhelming in its appeal. By contrast, Shea Stadium, located, like practically all new stadiums, on the border of the suburbs, is a resounding success. The trend seems to be unmistakable.

A candid recognition of this trend will not come easily. Not only are there powerful business and political interests that still have a stake in the central city, but our mass media are populated by upper-middle-class people—incipient patricians, as it were—who have an authentic longing for the more traditional kind of city and the more traditional kinds of urban amenities. They all adore London; as well they might, since it is in truth an adorable city. But the United States has never had a London, and though it was widely assumed that at some point we would be "mature" enough to have one, history has prescribed otherwise.

This makes for disappointments and frustration and for a shrill insistence that we do something big and expensive about our "urban crisis." But it is close to impossible to do anything big and expensive when each neighborhood and each activist group participates in its version of community control. The sad history of urban renewal—a term in such disfavor that it is already passing into disuse—is sufficient testimony to this point. And even if it were possible to do something big and expensive, there are good reasons for thinking it would not be very effectual. The trauma of our central cities has such deep, organic causes that the proposed therapies seem trifling.

It is just possible that in the distant future our central cities will assume a more significant role in American life—even if we cannot now imagine what kinds of cities these would be or who would live there. But in the foreseeable future, we can say with fair certainty that we are moving toward an urban civilization without great cities—and that this movement is so without precedent that prophecies of doom or hopes of utopia are both premature.

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Monsters of Chaos

Current forecasts that the world will end in an ecological disaster are only the latest in a series of doomsday visions that have haunted men's thoughts since prehistoric times

By NORMAN COHN

In the past twenty-five years one prospect of annihilation after another has been held up to us. First it was to be through nuclear war. Then that idea faded and was replaced by another: the end was expected through a population explosion and mass starvation. Currently a new obsession prevails: the final disaster will be an ecological one. The soil is being irrevocably eroded; vegetable life is wilting; birds, beasts, and even fishes are vanishing; the very temperature of the globe is changing.

The speed with which these forecasts succeed one another, the eagerness with which each in turn is accepted, should surely give us pause. Can it be that, irrespective of their scientific merits, they speak to some deep emotional predisposition in ourselves? I believe they do. It is a fact that in many diverse societies, in many widely different epochs, people have been obsessed by a sense of threatening chaos, of vast destructive forces held precariously at bay.

My first inkling that this was so came some thirty years ago. Europe really was threatened then by total chaos, but that was not what set me thinking about the emotional meaning of chaos. It was, instead, a set of heroic legends collected by philologists in the nineteenth century and published in Russia. These legends were the creations of nomadic Tartars in the valley of the Abakan, a tributary of the River Yenisei in southeastern Siberia, and they proved to be works of extraordinary beauty and power. At the time I was serving in the British Army, and at odd moments I found relaxation in translating these forgotten tales into English. One of them includes, embedded in a tale of warriors, a myth concerning monstrous beings that threaten the survival of life on earth:

It is said
there is a land
far, far off from our own land
where sun and moon sink down into the
flowing sea
where the iron mountain stands.
Yedai Khan lives upon the mountain
Yedai Khan has seven dogs
keeps them on strong chains of iron.
If the seven dogs break loose
if once they bark and howl
the end of all things is at hand
the end of men and beasts and birds.

The dogs, then, have only to bark and the world is destroyed; the legend tells how two successive keepers prevent them from doing this. The first, Yedai Khan (Copper Khan), a supernatural being, becomes involved in a fight with a young warrior, Ala Kartaga (Dappled Hawk). After a struggle lasting thirty years, Yedai Khan is thrown and killed. Ala Kartaga becomes the keeper of the seven dogs—and at once this hero, who had started life as a very human child, acquires supernatural characteristics. So long as the dogs stay with him he can never die. When he gallops on his stallion,

the lands are rocked like cradles
the seas beside his path rock to and fro.

The dogs' guardian must be supernatural because the dogs themselves are supernatural. "Iron-tongued, iron-pawed," they never need to eat or drink; the only way Ala Kartaga can keep them under control is by shutting them up inside a golden mountain, behind doors of golden rock. In the end, by ceaselessly scratching with their iron claws, they work their way through the golden door and run back to their



The beast and the seven-headed dragon of Revelation terrorize man in a seventeenth-century Biblical illustration.

first home, the land of Yedai Khan—the land on the edge of the world, "where the sea joins with the sky." Ala Kartaga gallops after them, and at the very moment they are about to bark, strikes off their heads. So the world survives.

The happy ending seems an artificial afterthought; in the original myth the dogs would surely have stayed alive, forever scratching with their claws, forever threatening the existence of life on earth. This supposition is confirmed by an Estonian folk tale, where the myth appears in its simplest form. A poor shepherd boy runs away to seek his fortune. He comes to a great mountain, where he finds a man who offers him a very special job. In a cellar inside the mountain, behind a threefold door of iron, three dogs are trying to scratch their way out. If they succeed, they will destroy every living creature on earth, and even the sun will have shone for the last time. The boy is shown a huge pile of rocks. Each time a dog manages to claw a hole in the door, he must roll another rock across the hole. Meanwhile, he has to visit the mountain three times each day and once each night, to make sure the door is still intact.

There is no hint here that the threat has been left comfortably behind, somewhere in the remote past; it is ever-present. This is made clearer still in a related folk tale from the Caucasus. In 1836 an officer in the Russian Army, called Von Turnau, was conducted to a mountain peak at the western end of the range. The guide pointed to a gaping hole. "This is a terrible spot for any man alive," he said. "Down there lies the giant Dakhkal, bound with seven iron chains. His sword lies near but he can't reach it. That's why he rattles his chains and makes the earth shake all the way from one sea to the other. But one day his time will come, he will grasp his sword and break his chains, and go out to kill off all mankind."

The Caucasus is volcanic, but this giant is not simply a personification of a volcano. Like the dogs of the Abakan Tartars or the Estonians, he is a chaos monster, who, if once he breaks loose, will destroy the world. Unlike the dogs, he cannot be fended off forever; sooner or later his day will come. Even more vividly, he embodies a great human fear, that in the end chaos will burst forth.

These dogs and giants in their mountain prisons are little known, but they have illustrious relatives: the serpents, dragons, and sea monsters that figure in some of the major religions of Asia and Europe. These, too, symbolize the forces of chaos—suppressed, but still striving to break free and devastate the world.

It is likely that all these monsters originated in seasonal rituals, in which a god defeated a dragon, thereby enabling the year to proceed. But with the development of a more speculative habit of mind, the combat between god and chaos monster took on a new meaning. It was imagined as having taken place at the beginning of time, and the world was created in the process.

Most of the religions of the ancient Near East included a variant of this basic myth. In the Sumerian world view, the god Ninurta overthrew and bound the monster Asag, who caused the subterranean waters to rise and threaten the land. Ninurta set a protective wall of mountains around the land and confined the unruly waters

between the banks of the Tigris. The other great Babylonian civilization, the Akkadian, produced several versions of the myth. Here the god Marduk vanquishes a marine monster, sometimes identified as a female being called Tiamat, sometimes as a raging dragon with six or seven heads.

Greece, too, knew a derivative of the myth. Hesiod and Aeschylus tell how Zeus overcame a dragon called Typhon. This monster had a hundred heads, all breathing fire. It lived by the sea, where it caused storms and squalls. Eventually, it challenged the sovereignty of Zeus and set out to make itself lord of gods and men. But Zeus smote it with a thunderbolt and imprisoned it under Mount Etna, where —like the Caucasian giant—it continues to struggle against its bondage, causing volcanic rumblings.

Behind all these stories is a creation myth in which a god binds the forces of chaos, symbolized by the raging waters, and so enables a stable world to come into being. The Hebrew creation myth, as given in Genesis, is, of course, quite different; yet many hints of the struggle between god and chaos monster are to be found in the Old Testament, too. Here the hero-god is Yahweh; as for the chaos monster, it is variously called Leviathan, Tannin, and Rahab. Three examples will show how, at least by the sixth century B.C., Hebrew religion had absorbed the idea of the binding of the waters:

> Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab, and hath wounded the dragon? Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep?
>
> —ISAIAH 51:9–10

> Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength: thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters. Thou brakest the heads of Leviathan in pieces . . . Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood: thou driedst up mighty rivers . . .
>
> —PSALMS 74:13–15

> Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if



Monster of Elam: the lion-demon

> it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment
> thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling band for it . . . and set
> bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no
> further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?
>
> —JOB 38:8–10

All these myths are designed to explain how things came to be as they are, not what lies in store; in technical language, they are cosmogonical, not eschatological, myths. Yet they are not exclusively concerned with the past. The chaos monster remains in being; though defeated, though imprisoned, it is still what it was—a watery waste underneath and around the earth, where no light shines, a realm of everlasting night. The cosmos, the god-won order, is always threatened by it. Even now, the chaos monster is relentlessly at work. All disasters that occur are its doing: hurricane and flood, earthquake and volcanic eruption, and also famine, war, disease, and death.

Most of the civilizations of the ancient Near East viewed time as cyclic; but the myth acquired a new dimension when it was incorporated into world views that interpreted time as unilinear, progressive. Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity—all viewed history as moving toward a preordained end, which would be the fulfillment of the divine intention for the world. To fit into such a view, the myth of the primal struggle had to be projected forward, to the end of the present dispensation. If this world was created in a struggle with the chaos monster, then the chaos monster must rise again when it ended. True, the monster will be cast down, this time forever—but not before it has brought anguish and desolation upon mankind.

The apocalyptic literature produced by the Jews between the second century B.C. and the first century A.D. is largely concerned with the final overthrow of the Devil by Yahweh, which is to inaugurate the Messianic age. The Devil as such is more than the primordial chaos monster; but the chaos monster is still there, and it appears either as an aspect of the Devil or as the Devil's confederate.

Sometimes Yahweh is described as beheading a dragon, or as carving up Leviathan for the Messianic banquet. And in certain chapters of the great Christian apocalypse known as the Book of Revelation the chaos monster occupies the very center of the scene—adapted, of course, to this new context, but with all its original traits still clearly recognizable. First a great, red, seven-headed dragon appears in the heavens, and with its tail casts down a third part of the stars; then a beast rises out of the sea and takes power over the whole world. In the end, both are defeated by angels who are also warriors and cast out of a regenerated cosmos forever.

The original meaning of these beings was no doubt quite unknown to the author of Revelation, yet it colors his final version: "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea." The chaos monster, identified with the unruly waters underneath and around the earth, has been annihilated.

Revelation inspired a number of other apocalypses. Thanks to this corpus of prophetic writings, medieval Christendom took it for granted that immediately before the Second Coming, enormously destructive forces would be loosed upon the world. These forces would be hostile to Christ and his followers, forces deployed by Satan

in a last, desperate effort to frustrate God's plan and prevent Christ's final triumph. They were symbolized by Antichrist and by the hosts of Gog and Magog. But these beings still bore the lineaments of the archaic chaos monster.

Antichrist was a complex figure, constructed out of various prophecies in the Old and New Testaments. Revelation identifies this figure with the beast that rises from the sea—and so Antichrist becomes endowed with all the destructive power traditionally ascribed to the chaos monster.

The story of the struggle between Antichrist and the prophet Elijah shows very clearly what a chaos monster Antichrist became. As Elijah was taken up to heaven alive, the possibility of his return to earth had always been reckoned with. The Old Testament prophets expected him to return to prepare the way for the Messiah by his preaching. In Revelation he will return to preach against Antichrist and will be martyred by him. Out of this, popular imagination composed a prophecy in which Antichrist, in effect, destroys the cosmos. Here Elijah fights with the beast and overthrows it, but not before it has wounded him; as his blood drips to the ground, the soil catches fire, and the fire spreads until everything is consumed.

Antichrist has the hordes of Gog and Magog as allies. They appear in the Old Testament as tribes; Ezekiel prophesies that one day they will come "out of the uttermost parts of the north . . . all of them riding upon horses." Originally, the idea may have been an echo of the devastating inroads of the Scythians in the seventh century B.C.; but, like the figure of Antichrist himself, it was given a new meaning by the Book of Revelation.



A sea monster devours a Renaissance galleon.

Here there are two visions that, although they occur in different chapters, obviously belong together. One describes how the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet send messengers to all the kings of the earth, summoning them to bring their hosts to battle at a place called Armageddon. The other vision tells how, at the bidding of Satan, "the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog . . . the number of whom is as the sand of the sea," gather together to attack "the camp of the saints."

Gog and Magog are no longer particular peoples; they stand for all the powers except the tiny Christian community of the first century—and those powers are regarded as demonic. Even if, as is likely, Armageddon was originally Megiddo in Palestine, the siege itself is no mere military operation but is part of the prodigious drama of the Last Days. Moreover, the outcome is settled by God himself: lightning comes down from heaven and devours the invading hordes, and Satan and Antichrist are annihilated.

Along with Antichrist, Gog and Magog passed into the world view of medieval Christendom. And they also emerged, more and more clearly, as a new version of the age-old chaos monster. It is characteristic of the chaos monster that, some time in the past, he was defeated by a hero and bound and imprisoned under a mountain. From the fifth century onward it was believed that Alexander the Great had built a huge gate in the Caucasus to contain the peoples of Gog and Magog; and he did this not as a pagan king but as a worshiper and instrument of God. Gog and Magog strive incessantly to break through the gate, but in vain, for Alexander has also provided ingenious devices for keeping it intact. Only just before the end, God will allow the terrible destroyers to break out and to devastate the world, until he annihilates them in their turn.

The prophecies concerning the coming of Antichrist and of Gog and



BRITISH MUSEUM

Demons drag Antichrist to Hell.

Magog made it possible to bring the chaos monster into relation with contemporary affairs. The monster could be recognized in a specific tyrannical regime or a specific hostile power. Already in Revelation, the beast from the sea is identified with the Roman Empire. During the Middle Ages dissident sects often decided that the pope, or even the papacy itself, was Antichrist. The habit was continued by some of the Protestant reformers; and the engravings and woodcuts that accompany their propaganda show that when they talked of the Antichrist-pope, what floated before their inner eye was indeed a chaos monster. As for Gog and Magog, they were identified in turn in each of the many peoples that invaded Europe from the east.

Antichrist has already come, chaos has broken loose, the end is at hand . . . In times of exceptional disorientation and anxiety, the conviction could become so intense that it generated mass movements in the most literal sense: masses of people moved. This happened, for instance, in the early fifteenth century. The Turks were advancing in the Balkans and threatening to invade western Europe, while western Christendom itself was divided between two rival popes, each of whom claimed the obedience of Christians throughout the world and denounced the other as a heretic.

In 1396 the Spanish Dominican Saint

The Art Journal, 1855



As chaos descends, frightened people flee the "wrath of the Lamb," after the Opening of the Sixth Seal. This illustration for an episode in Revelation was done by Francis Danby in 1828.

Vincent Ferrer had a vision of the approaching Last Days and began to journey through country after country, preaching. In 1412 he sent an urgent warning to Pope Benedict XIII: Antichrist had been born nine years before and must shortly reveal himself—from which it followed that the end was to be expected "speedily, very speedily, very soon indeed." The saint records how on his travels he was followed by great crowds, all crying that the time of Antichrist was at hand and imploring people to prepare themselves for the final struggle. He added that almost all those who heard the call "were pierced to the heart and broke out into weeping and lamentation."

In fact, Ferrer's followers took to beating themselves; and he found himself leading processions of flagellants, covered with bruises and blood, through Spain, southern France, and Italy. One of his disciples even marched into Rome at the head of hundreds of Lombard artisans, intent on waging war against Antichrist. This had disquieting implications; and after twenty years of preaching, Ferrer was asked by the Council of Constance to stop encouraging such dangerous tendencies.

Similar fantasies recurred in the days of the French Revolution, when the very survival of Christianity seemed, for the first time, to be in doubt. The anxiety that this produced in many devout souls was expressed by Heinrich Jung-Stilling, a German oculist who was also an occultist. In two books, published in 1796 and 1799, Jung-Stilling proclaimed that the world was witnessing the final struggle between Antichrist and the Holy Spirit. Born in France, Antichrist was based in Revolutionary Paris, and was advancing eastward, spreading atheism and materialism. The true Church must flee back to her eastern birthplace—specifically, to Samarkand. Messengers were even now traveling both west and east, he said, baptizing people for the last crusade.

Jung-Stilling's appeal was heard both in Germany and in Russia. He was received in audience by Czar Alexander I, who granted an area in Bessarabia as a refuge for the true Church. It was not Samarkand, but viewed from Germany it at least lay in the right direction; and multitudes of Germans, mostly members of dissenting Protestant sects, migrated there. Indeed, the greater part of the large German colonies in southern Russia stem from that collective effort to counter the assault of the western chaos monster.

In the context of politics the same basic fantasy has persisted into modern times. The propaganda of the First World War shows that the war was felt on both sides, to be Armageddon; it is no accident that many British war memorials show Saint George piercing a furious dragon. Later, the same imagery came naturally to Hitler. "The Jew goes his fatal way," he wrote in *Mein Kampf,* "until the day when another power stands up against him and in a mighty struggle casts him, the heaven-stormer, back to Lucifer." Here the Jew is, unmistakably, the chaos monster rising from the abyss.

Such talk, like the statuary on the war memorials, seems old-fashioned today. That is something to be glad of—but does it mean that we have outgrown the age-old fantasy at last? It seems, rather, that half of it has dropped out of sight, while the other half remains as potent as ever.

In the past, people believed that though the ascendancy of the dragon would be a great disaster, it would end when the hero killed the dragon. They looked forward to Armageddon with dread, but also with hope; for at Armageddon the forces of chaos were to be destroyed. Even in the Christian view, where the world does indeed end once and for all, the end is brought about not by Satan or Antichrist but by God, and is followed by an eternity of blessedness for the righteous. The present trend is different. No generation has seen more prophecies of the imminent destruction of civilization, of mankind, of the globe itself; but the vision of ultimate salvation has faded. We may largely have outgrown the fascination of hero-saviors, whether individual or collective. Chaos monsters, on the other hand, clearly fascinate us still.

As director of the Columbus Centre for research in collective psychopathology Dr. Cohn, of the University of Sussex may know as much as anyone alive about the care and feeding of chaos monsters



MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

Monstrous emissaries of the Devil, these creatures tear at their enemy Saint Anthony in a late-fifteenth-century engraving by Martin Schongauer.



MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI'S *L'AVVENTURA*

Antonioni's film *is* an adventure story, though not the sort that movie-goers are accustomed to. "In a cosmos devoid of absolutes," it says, "the only thing that human beings have is themselves, faults and all"

In 1960, the year it was finished, *L'Avventura* was shown at the Cannes Film Festival and was loudly booed. In 1962 it was voted one of the ten best films of all time in an international poll conducted by a British cinema journal. In those intervening two years, audiences in Europe and, more slowly, in America had begun to perceive that Michelangelo Antonioni's film is a major work. Since then, it has not only influenced other film makers and the taste of the public, it has come to be seen as a milestone. Its stature testifies to the expected attributes of a fine artist, but in Antonioni's case there is an added attribute: courage.

Even when advanced and advancing ideas have been accepted in, say, book-reading and theatregoing circles, it is still an act of courage to take those ideas, without compromise, into the world of film, a medium of immensely wider reach (and greater expense). Of all the memorable works in film history, only a relative few have pioneered in this way, and shining among those few is *L'Avventura*.

By the late 1950's the dominant postwar intellectual climate had been crystallized in the novels and plays of Sartre and Camus, Pavese and Beckett, among others. The first fully committed, mature film in this general vein was made by Antonioni. But his work is much more than a me-too tail wagging after an accepted dog; its very existence as film makes it new. If different art forms are more than different containers into which identical concepts can be poured, then *L'Avventura* is an original chapter in the testament of an age.

Antonioni is a northern Italian, born in Ferrara in 1912. He took a degree in economics at the University of Bologna, where he also did amateur theatre and film work. In 1939 he went to Rome, worked at various jobs, including some writing for a film journal, and entered the national film school. After only three months he made a short film that won him a first-class diploma. Then he found odd bits of film work, writing and assisting, was drafted into the army, and was given leave to work on a film in France as assistant to Marcel Carné. When he returned to Italy, still in the army, he found time and means to make a short documentary.

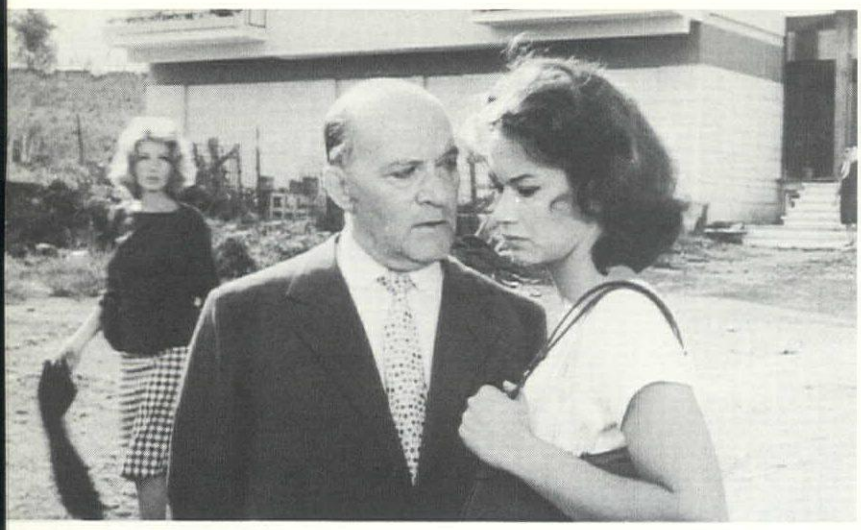
After the war he wrote film criticism, made some more short films, worked at such other film jobs as he could get, and translated some French books into Italian, including novels by Gide and Chateaubriand. In 1950, at the relatively late age of thirty-eight, he got the backing for his first feature film; by 1957 he had made four more. None of them was notably successful (only one was shown in the United States), although some critics recognized from the start that a unique talent was becoming manifest.

Then aged forty-five, increasingly determined to do only what he wanted to do and finding it increasingly difficult to get backing because he had no ringing success behind him, he spent two years before he raised the money even to begin *L'Avventura*. The subject, as usual, was his own and was worked out with the aid of the novelist and poet Tonino Guerra, assisted by Elio Bartolini. The picture was finished under extremely difficult conditions—the location shooting was hard and the money often scarce.

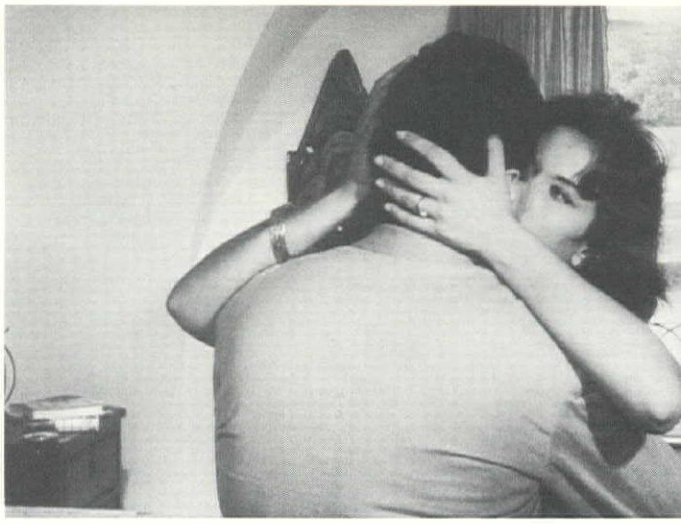
The hostile public reception at Cannes was, in a noncynical sense, one proof that Antonioni had succeeded in his ambition to break new ground. Right after the disastrous première a group of directors and critics signed a statement supporting Antonioni, and within months the picture was launched on its troublesome, troubling, significant career.

Exterior two-shot, director and star: Michelangelo Antonioni and Monica Vitti, on location in the countryside around Rome.

By STANLEY KAUFFMANN



1.

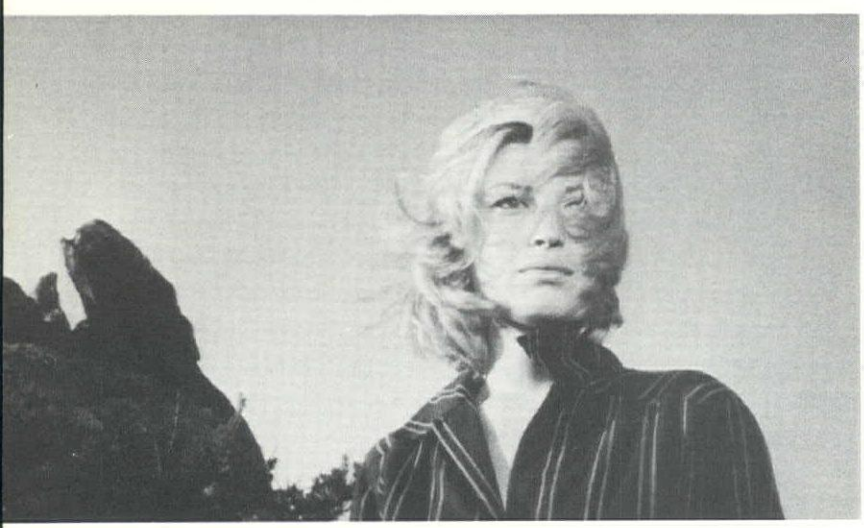


2.

The trio at sea: Anna, having raised a cry of "Shark!" while swimming, confesses to Claudia that it was a false alarm (1), and impulsively gives her a blouse, an act that hints at the women's "interchangeability." The yacht approaches a rocky island (2) and the passengers go ashore, but Anna quarrels with Sandro (3). Some time after this, her companions discover that she is missing.



1.

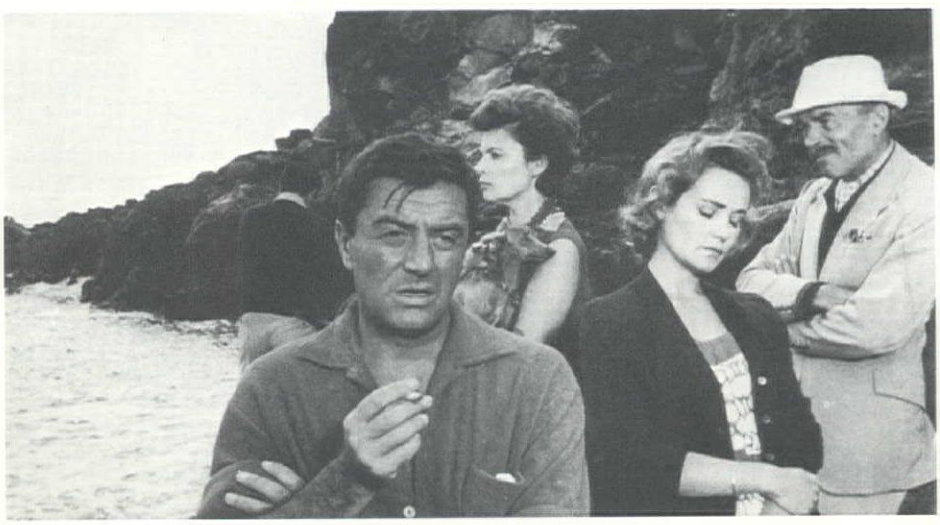


1.



2.

The mystery deepens: The searchers rest uneasily (1), preoccupied by grim speculations. But the hunt goes on (2), choreographed for the camera like a ballet, as policemen from Sicily join in (3), under the gaze of the island's lone inhabitant, an old shepherd. Claudia, still hoping that Anna is playing a trick, decides to look for her in Sicily, and Sandro goes there with her.



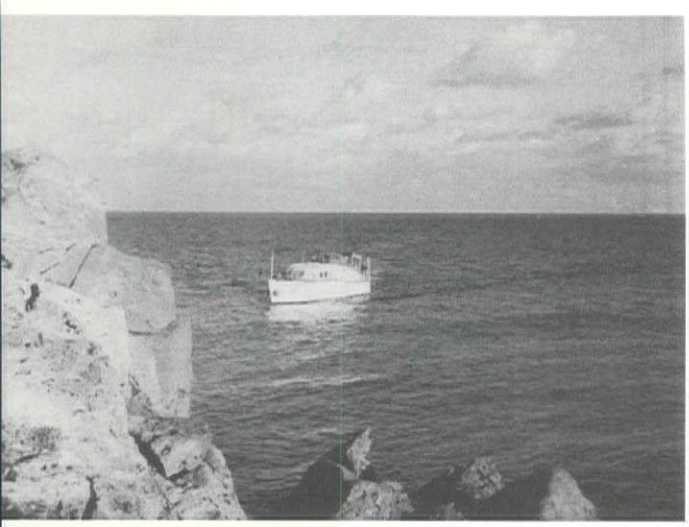
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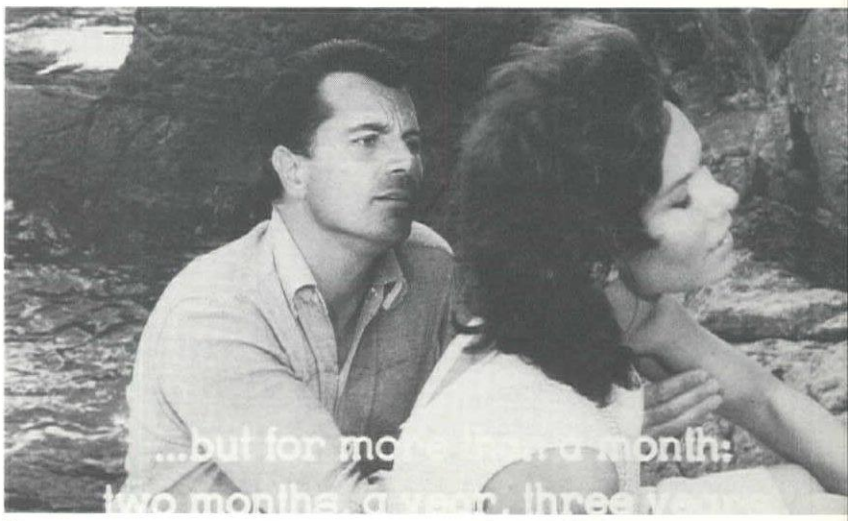
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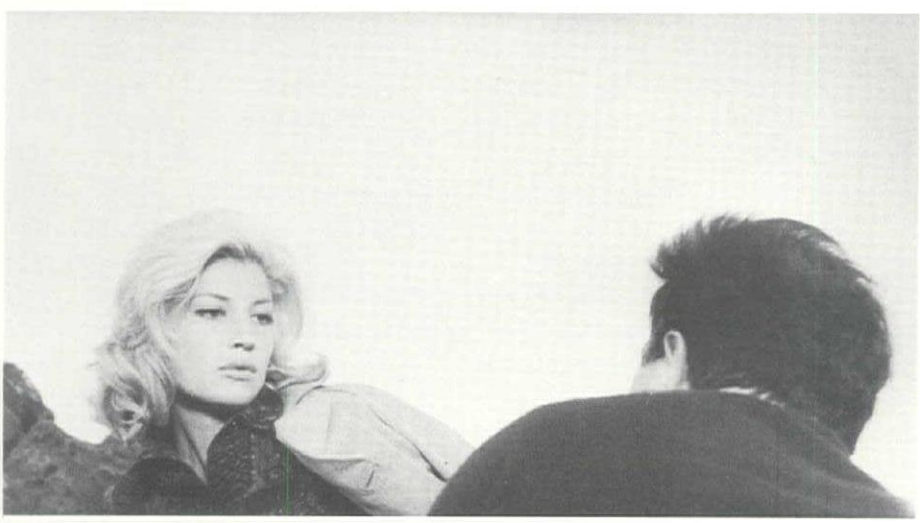
3.

The adventure begins: The restless Anna (Lea Massari) takes leave (1) of her diplomat father (Renzo Ricci) to go on a cruise with, among others, her friend Claudia (Monica Vitti), in the background. Stopping to pick up her architect lover, Sandro (Gabriele Ferzetti), Anna insists on making love (2) as Claudia waits outside. On the yacht (3), Claudia relaxes, unlike her troubled friend.



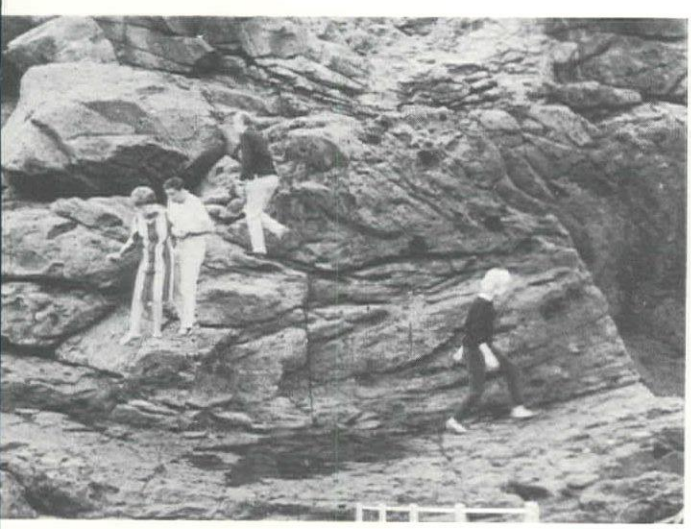


3.



3.

Search and discovery: Claudia (1), with other members of the party, begins to look for Anna—and begins to supplant her as the heroine of the film. At one point, she despairs of finding her friend (2), but then resumes the search. When she stumbles on a rock, Sandro catches her, and at his touch she feels an attraction (3)—unwelcome and out of place—to her missing friend's lover.





3.

The story seems simple. Anna, a wealthy young Roman, is a guest on a yachting cruise off Sicily. She has been accompanied by her lover, Sandro, a successful architect in his forties, and by Claudia, a girl friend of hers, apparently the only one on the cruise who is not well-to-do.

The yacht stops for a bit at a small rocky Aeolian island, and Anna disappears. A slight clue leads to Sicily, where she might have gone, in secret whimsy, by boat. The yacht sails to Sicily. After an inconsequential police inquiry, Sandro and Claudia begin a private search for Anna—with increasing laxness, as in a very few days *they* become lovers.

Soon they rejoin their yachting friends in a luxury hotel. That night Claudia retires alone, and comes down early next morning, to find Sandro making love with a girl he has picked up. After her shock—and after his—Claudia is reconciled to Sandro's behavior, and also to her own acceptance of it.

Antonioni's first great act of daring is in this "simple" story. Look at three examples of that daring. To begin with, the story affronts conventional audience expectations by starting with one heroine and abruptly switching to another before the film is one-third along. The story of Anna and Sandro becomes the story of Claudia and Sandro, and what is more, the disappearance of Anna is never explained. This development follows the caprice of life rather than rigid plotting rules.

Second, the audience is asked to sympathize with a girl who replaces her friend as a man's mistress within a few days of the first girl's disappearance, and to sympathize with the man who is the lover of both. Claudia's actions are based on an honesty rarely found in private life, let alone in popular art.

Third, at the end the audience is asked to accept Claudia's relatively quick acceptance of Sandro's infidelity. This acceptance is the explosion that forces the consequences of the film's adventure, the moral adventure of the title, into the characters' consciousness.

The story, then, rests basically on radical candor, the recognition of moral change, of dissolution and a new resolution. Such a director as Jean Renoir had shown, in *La Grande Illusion,* the poignancy of a certain Western ethos burning to its end in the fires of World War I, as the bases of that ethos shriveled. Now, after World War II, Antonioni is showing us a generation stripped even of poignancy. His film is about people looking for ways to live and relate in a moral landscape burned clean even of pathos. Anna, in her discontent at the opening, Claudia, even Sandro, are people refusing to despair of decency because they no longer have ideals to cuddle them, ideals that, as the film implies, had been imposed on human reality and now lack even a comforting poetry.

"Existentialism" has become a cheapened word, but it is an increasingly serious idea: the belief that human beings can find a rationale, a morality, *in the living of their lives,* rather than huddling under a canopy of doctrine constructed to reassure. Man, says Sartre, "is nothing else but the sum of his actions, nothing else but what his life is. . . . Our aim is precisely to establish the human kingdom as a pattern of values . . ." And he adds that in this pursuit "it is not only one's self that one discovers . . . but those of others, too." Claudia and Sandro, thrown into a situation where they might once have behaved otherwise because of prettily fabricated moralities, try to act with such truth as they can find in themselves and in each other.

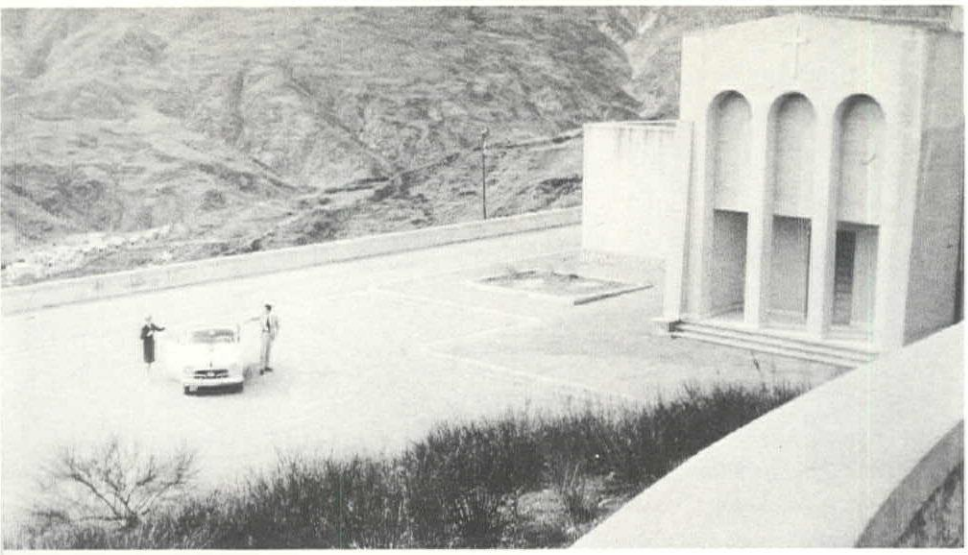
But it would be an immense disservice to suggest that *L'Avventura* is a tract, demonstrating a thesis. This is a major film, not because of its ideas, but because it is a fine artwork embodying those ideas. The way it is made is *part of what it is about.*

That is Antonioni's second, and inseparable, great act of daring. His filmmaking is in itself part of the revolution in consciousness that is the film's subject. He has used methods of composition, of action, and of editing that disregard the traditions of film fiction even of film realism, in order to internalize the work, to make its style consonant with the honesties of the story and the characters' inner quandaries.

The film opens with Anna walking toward the camera as she leaves home for the cruise. At the front gate she meets her father and is speaking with him when Claudia arrives to join her. The camera remains on Anna and her father as Claudia crosses the background. Claudia enters the film peripherally, just as she enters the story. Antonioni is prefiguring the shift of the picture's center, with the seeming heroine in the foreground and the real heroine in the background, thus in his very composition making an ironic comment on the surprises that life has in store. When we first see *L'Avventura* we cannot be conscious of the irony at the moment, but it has a retroactive effect. When we see it again—and like any good work, this film grows with acquaintance—that peripheral entrance strikes the first unconventionally truthful note.

Then Anna and Claudia go to pick up Sandro at his apartment, and at first Anna rather sullenly postpones going upstairs to see him after they get there. When she does go up, she surprises us by insisting on going to bed with him at once while Claudia waits below in the piazza. Antonioni handles this odd situation, with editing and camera angles, to show that the patient Claudia infers what is causing the delay; in an oblique way he implicates her in the world of sex with Sandro, as a subtle preparation for her direct involvement to follow.

All three go off on the cruise, and while the yacht is at sea Anna plunges in for a swim. Soon she cries "Shark!" After considerable alarm, she is rescued. Later, below, she and Claudia are changing, and she confesses that she lied, there had been no shark. The pointless lie further deepens the sens



In Sicily, Claudia and Sandro come to a new town eerily empty of inhabitants—in terms of the film, a "visual metaphor of everyday mystery." Soon after this, the two become lovers.

of her instability, her inexplicable restlessness. More delicately, Antonioni uses the scene between the two undressed girls to evoke an attar of sex—not lesbianism, but almost interchangeability, as if one could serve for the other. He underscores this by having Anna give Claudia a blouse. Claudia wears it later, after Anna disappears, thus shocking Anna's distraught father and also furthering the suggestion of inheritance. She replaces Anna and inherits her position vis-à-vis Sandro.

Uniquely as these subtle matters have been handled by the camera, it is only on the island that we first meet the crucially different element in Antonioni's style: his use of time. The search for the lost Anna is carried out with disregard for traditional editing, the mechanical acceleration of pace within a sequence. Antonioni is not simply trying to replace condensed "screen" time with lapsed "real" time; he is destroying stock methods, replacing them with fidelity to mood and thought, making time a visible balance in his structure.

He choreographs the searchers, individually and in small groups, to produce at least two effects. First, there is a gradual infusion of seriousness, the realization that the longer Anna is missing, the more likely she is dead—just as when we see someone go underwater for five seconds, it is a dive, but if for five minutes, it is a drowning. Second, the ballet of the search over the rocks becomes a transitional passage, like a suspended chord in music in which some notes are held and new ones are added to change their color. (Sounds, literally, are important in this sequence. The wind and the sea are handled almost as components of the dialogue.)

The tonal center finally shifts when Claudia slips on a rock and Sandro catches her arm. There is a quick glance between them and a quick withdrawal of her arm, but it is a moment of shock. We have just seen a flash of naked feeling that is, by conventional rules, grossly out of place here and now.

Sandro kisses Claudia aboard the yacht, less than a day after Anna has disappeared. After a moment's hesitation, she breaks away. The first time they really kiss is a few days later in Sicily during their search for Anna, and here again Antonioni uses the element of time to enrich his material. He prolongs the encounter, pressing with different close-ups, as the pair lie on the ground, kissing. So deliberately are we made to watch that we look past the event to what it signifies. Sandro, the somewhat jaded, somewhat frightened middle-aged man, kisses Claudia as if this were the only rite he knows to assure himself that he is still living, as if he must have someone whom he thinks he loves, without even a three-day gap, just as he would have to eat and drink in three days. Claudia embraces him with an air of admission, of release: as if she had always loved him, had been jealous of Anna, and is now so intoxicated by the disturbances in her life that she can confess these things unconventionally soon.

Scenes such as these can be called novelistic cinema so long as the term does not imply that Antonioni is literary but uncinematic. He is here transmuting into film terms, completely, one of the functions of the novel: suspension of time to luxuriate in character resonance and mood.

Another example of this novelistic approach occurs just before the kissing scene. Sandro and Claudia are driving and come to a town newly built but completely deserted. They stop and try, without success, to find some inhabitants, then, with a slight shiver, drive on. Presumably it is a new settlement built to house people who have not yet moved in, but this is never explained. Its emptiness is the very quality that Antonioni wants, a visual metaphor of everyday mystery. Significantly, the only times in the whole film that the camera moves independently, not following someone or something, are just before this scene, as it goes to meet the arriving pair, and just after, as it glides down the street they have left. These independent movements underscore harmonically the abstracted feeling of the scene.

The final sequence of *L'Avventura* is surely one of the key moments in modern film. After Claudia's ruthless honesty with herself about her love for Sandro, after he has, in fact, proposed marriage, she discovers that he has immediately been unfaithful—and, one may say, idly so, just because the chance was offered. In the space of a few minutes Antonioni then encompasses a small revolution.

Look at this whole sequence in terms of its images, because it is the epitome of Hegel's definition of beauty: "the sensuous appearance of the Idea." It opens with a close-up of Claudia's hand as she lies in her hotel bed. Restlessly she gets up in her white nightgown and wanders around the room,



1.



2.



4.



5.

trying to distract herself, making faces in a mirror, scribbling on a magazine. Clearly she is disturbed by the fact that Sandro has not yet returned from downstairs, and this disturbance is itself a symptom of her unease at the situation she has found herself in, so quickly yet so willingly. Again Antonioni insists on our watching. Nothing of importance happens; much of importance is conveyed.

We cut to gray daybreak seen through her balcony window, and Claudia walks into the shot in a black dress. The different light and color change the time and intensify the mood. Sandro has not yet returned.

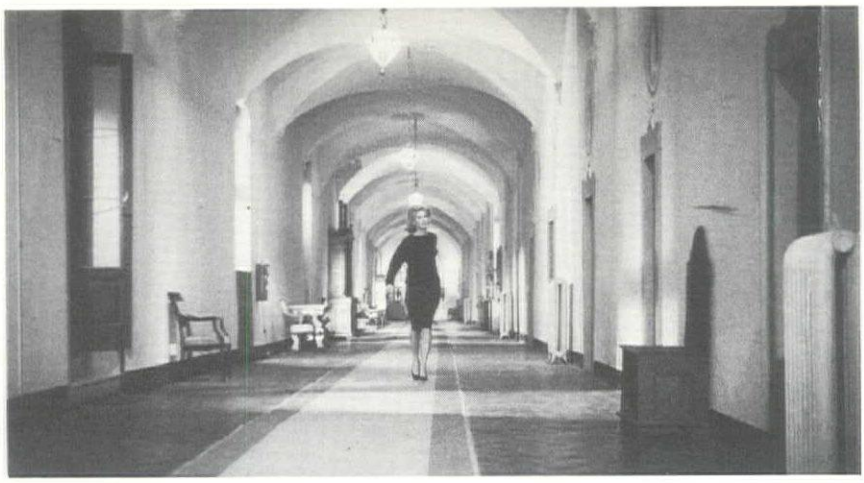
A cut, then, to a floor-level shot, something rarely used in this picture—a long shot of Claudia running toward us down an empty hotel corridor. It is like a nightmare beginning to be realized. She stops in the suite of a married couple she knows, to ask them if they have seen Sandro. They have not. For a moment, Claudia and her friend Patrizia are seen, heads close, in a shot that distills the idea of female communion.

Claudia continues her search, which is worked out in a kind of large geometry, seen in long shots, as she moves through the great deserted lounges of the early-morning hotel. There is a kinetic "echo" here, a reminder of the search for Anna on the island, only this search is for the lover of both girls and this search is successful.

The only sound is Claudia's footsteps. Indeed, from this point to the end neither Claudia nor Sandro speaks a word. She is running away from us toward the far end of a large room when she turns and, on a sofa, discovers something that we cannot see. Instantly we cut to a shot over her shoulder, looking down on Sandro and a girl on that sofa. The swift change of view is like a sharp catastrophic chord. To see Claudia from a distance, a small figure in the universe, and then to be plunged instantly into the shock at the center of her universe—that is film art.

Dazedly she walks out into an open square, railed, which overlooks a view. It is not yet morning; the light seems suspended. Soon Sandro appears, but he does not go to her. He sinks onto a bench nearby, facing away from her. He has come out to accept whatever she has for him, to make himself present, his presence the only apology he can offer. We see his face, tears running down his cheeks, and the truth—the terrible truth—is that the tears are real. He *is* sorry; and we also know that he is helpless, he can make no promises about different futures.

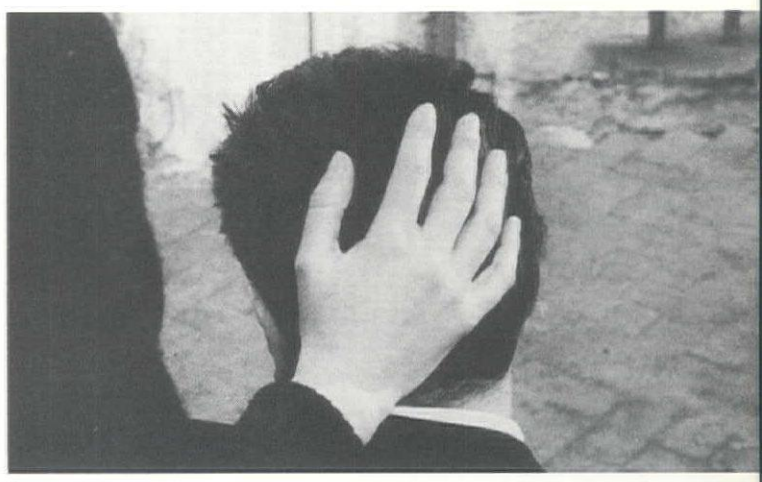
We feel this because Claudia feels it. Her sobbing stops. She walks to him, and stands behind him. In close-up her face looks down on him. Her tears have stopped; the future has begun, whatever it is to be. There is a close-up of her hand—the hand with which the whole final sequence began—trembling toward the back of his head. Then, after a moment, the hand goes up and



3.

Disillusionment and affirmation: Claudia and Sandro arrive at their hotel (1). Tired, Claudia stays in her room while Sandro goes downstairs, but cannot sleep and stares into a mirror (2). At dawn, alarmed, she goes in search of Sandro (3), and finds him making love with a girl he has picked up (4). Stunned, she runs outside (5); Sandro follows her and slumps on a bench (6). Claudia forgives him (7), her gesture implying that "life, without illusions, can be lived."





7.

touches his head. The last view is a long shot of them from behind, against the graying light. Together, her hand on him.

Thus Antonioni tells us through images that in a cosmos devoid of absolutes the only thing that human beings have is themselves, faults and all; that the possibility of love depends on our not making impossible demands on each other. This is the revolution in relations. Claudia takes Sandro for what he is, not for what he ought to be by some synthetic standard, knowing that he sees himself clearly, knowing that she herself is the woman who so quickly replaced Anna. This is a moment of figurative marriage between two people who can ache for perfection without insisting on it and who have the courage to embrace life *im*perfect.

The three principal actors utterly fulfill their roles. In a sense, Lea Massari, as Anna, has the most difficult job because her part is shortest and she must be unforgettable. So she is—sexually implosive, racked with ambivalences. Gabriele Ferzetti, the Sandro, who resembles Laurence Olivier, has exactly the right, nearly overripe appeal and the air of uncomfortable self-knowledge. But the film hangs on Monica Vitti, as Claudia, mature yet relatively innocent compared with the society she is now moving in. The main transition in the film is hers, the greatest change, and it is perfectly realized.

The society Antonioni has chosen consists of upper-middle-class and aristocratic people, luxurious and discontent. He contrasts them with others: an old shepherd who clings to the small rocky island, a pair of Sicilian servants on a train, a sourly married druggist and his new wife; but that upper-class society is his medium. He knows, as Chekhov did, that it lives closer to the border of moral changes that eventually affect a whole culture.

We can see now that by examining love in this society, Antonioni has examined everything. He has understood that all the secrets in us—our desires, our dreads, our gods—are entailed in the words "I love you." Essentially, the film asks how we can still say those words, how they can still be true for a world so profoundly changed since the world that invented love.

To ask those questions was to face the austerity of the answers. For this toweringly important task, Antonioni had the requisite gifts and courage. Yet, though this is far from a film of easy uplift, the very asking of those questions is, fundamentally, an act of affirmation. Gravely yet reliantly, Claudia and Sandro affirm a truth today—the truth that life, without illusions, can be lived.

L'Avventura can be rented, in 16 mm. form with Italian dialogue and English subtitles, from Janus Films, 745 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10022. The screenplay, with many photographs and much commentary, is published in a paperbound edition by Grove Press.



CAMOËNS

The one-eyed author of *The Lusiads* wrote–and lived–the national epic of Portugal. But his countrymen missed the moral: that the paths of imperial glory lead to the grave of the spirit

"O *Glory* of *Commanding*! O *vain* Thirst
"Of that same empty *nothing*, we call *Fame*! . . .
"What new *disaster* dire intendest *Thou*
"To lead these *Kingdoms*, and these *Folk* into?
"What *deaths*, what *Horrors* must they swallow now,
"Under pretence to spread *Religion* true? . . .

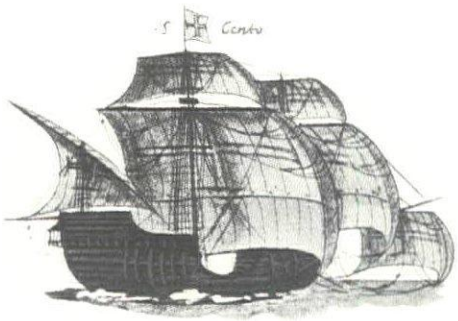
—*Luiz de Camoëns*, The Lusiads, *Canto IV, 95, 97*

To the contemporary American taste, Camoëns is probably the least readable among the schoolroom classics of Western literature. He comes surprisingly alive, however, if one rereads him in his native Lisbon, the seat of the West's first overseas empire, which has now become the last, defiant, though somehow dejected, bastion of Western colonialism. The tragic, beautiful city, scarred by so many disasters, where the poet was probably born and where he unquestionably lived out his years after a long, adventurous, unprofitable career as a colonial swashbuckler, is haunted by the delusions and lucidities of his genius in almost the same way the passions and afflictions of a syphilitic haunt his descendants.

Camoëns is present, if only by allusion, in the multiple strains and frustrations that an anachronistic sense of historic mission projects upon the daily life of the Portuguese capital. There are echoes or reflections of his prophetic warning in the curiously dispirited bustle of the Lisbon street scene; in the contrast between the deceptive prosperity of the high-rise apartment houses springing up in the newer residential quarters and the discreet but all-too-real squalor of the working-class districts; in the look of chronic sadness on the soft Mozarab faces of the capital's humbler citizens; in the harsh, incessant witch cries of the lottery-ticket vendors, mocking the hopes of an easier life that their hands hold out for sale.

The Camoëns inheritance is even more directly apparent in the troopships, packed with young conscripts in jungle green, steaming down the estuary of the Tagus en route to the guerrilla battlefields of Angola and Mozambique; in the monotonously familiar press communiqués of rebel body counts and villages pacified; in the repetitious propaganda blowups of the Christian Occident bringing the true religion of hydroelectricity to the Dark Continent; in the newsreels of white-starched colonial administrators inaugurating in the African brush dams and bridges and schools and dispensaries that the national budget cannot provide funds for at home.

Directly or indirectly, all these things are symptoms of the obsessive attachment to a dream of vanished grandeur that Camoëns warned against yet was himself largely responsible for planting in the Portuguese national psyche. Indeed, it might be said, in a somewhat more than purely metaphoric sense, that it was Camoëns, some four centuries ago, who simultaneously enjoined on his nation the dogged rearguard action against history that Portugal is waging today below the equator and foretold the disasters it would inevitably lead to.



The tradition that Camoëns was blind in one eye is reflected in the portrait opposite. In 1553 he sailed for India aboard the São Bento, *above.*

Undoubtedly, the enduring spell that Camoëns appears to have cast over the minds—and even, it would seem, the essential personality—of his countrymen is above all a tribute to his gifts as a poet (disparaged by some modern critics but vouched for by such sophisticated judges as Gilberto Freyre and Jorge Luis Borges). His masterwork, *The Lusiads (Os Lusíadas)*, a neo-Virgilian epic celebrating the great Portuguese maritime explorations and colonial conquests of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, definitely has sweep, whatever else may be said of it.

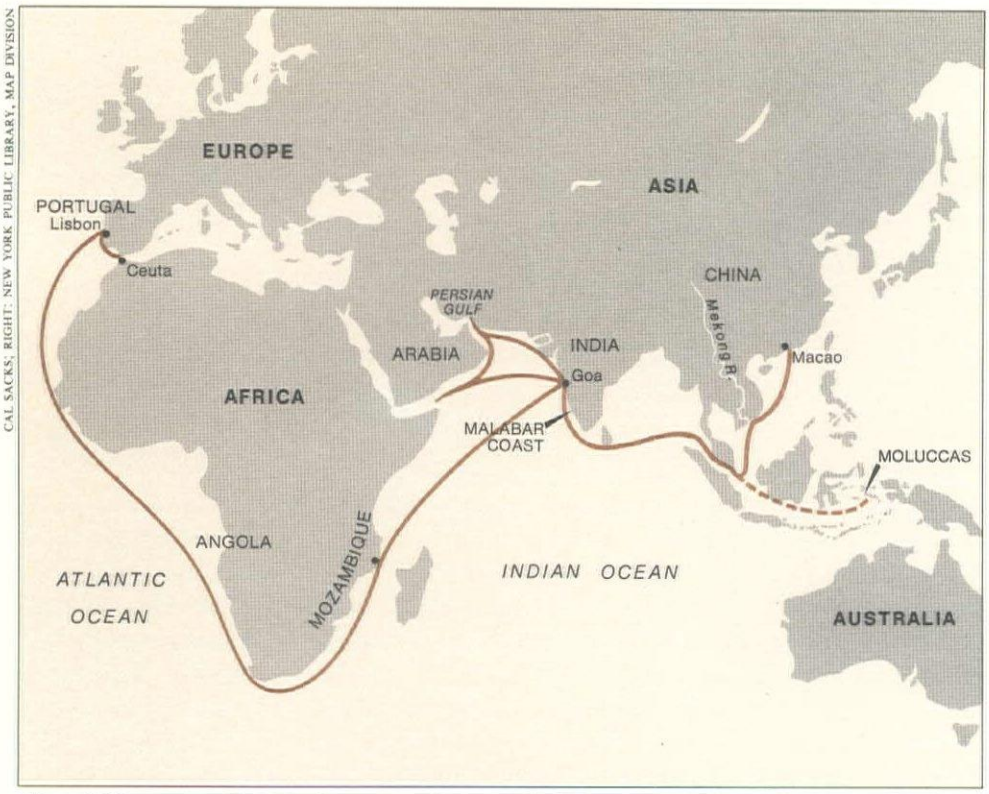
There are occasional glimpses of warm human flesh underneath all the neoclassic rhetorical finery, flashes of moral insight along with the patriotic bombast and religious fanaticism. (They even come through here and there in translation, more often, on the whole, in Sir Richard Fanshawe's somewhat loose seventeenth-century version than in several later, more scholarly ones.) In terms of its thematic content the poem, as we shall see, is relevant not only to Portuguese history but to the successes and failures of modern civilization generally, which goes some way toward justifying its conventional standing as a literary classic.

To the Portuguese themselves, *The Lusiads* is more than great literature. It has become not merely a national epic, or even *the* national epic, but as a noted Portuguese scholar once remarked, the "Lusitanian Bible," in which the nation's deepest cultural values have been preserved from generation to generation. It has also often been—and still is—a political force.

When Portugal rediscovered its imperial vocation in the second half of the nineteenth century and a public fund-raising campaign was launched to build a modern navy, the first cruiser commissioned was named the *Adamastor*, after the mythological giant who is a dramatic and symbolically important figure in the poem. And when England in 1890 blocked the ambitious Portuguese plan for linking Mozambique and Angola across the heart of Africa by a continuous band of territory, tearful Lisbon students draped in black the statue erected to Camoëns in 1867. Particularly under the Salazar regime, the anniversary of the poet's death—June 10, 1580—was solemnly observed each year as a major public holiday.

Camoëns himself is a sort of modern Portuguese culture hero, rather than simply a national poet in the sense that Shakespeare, for example, is the English national poet. His biography has become a Portuguese folk myth, which

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CAL SACKS; RIGHT: NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY, MAP DIVISION

The solid line traces Camoëns's voyages; he may also have gone to the Moluccas (broken line).



Camoëns lived on the crest of a historic upsurge—the furious overseas expansion of the Portuguese, inventors of the caravel. As the emblem above, from a map of 1516, attests, the Portuguese saw themselves as Christian crusaders, bringers of civilization. Glorying in heroic enterprise, Camoëns himself (see the map at left) fought Moors in Morocco, sacked a village on the Malabar Coast, was shipwrecked near the Mekong River, and wrote poetry in the city of Macao.

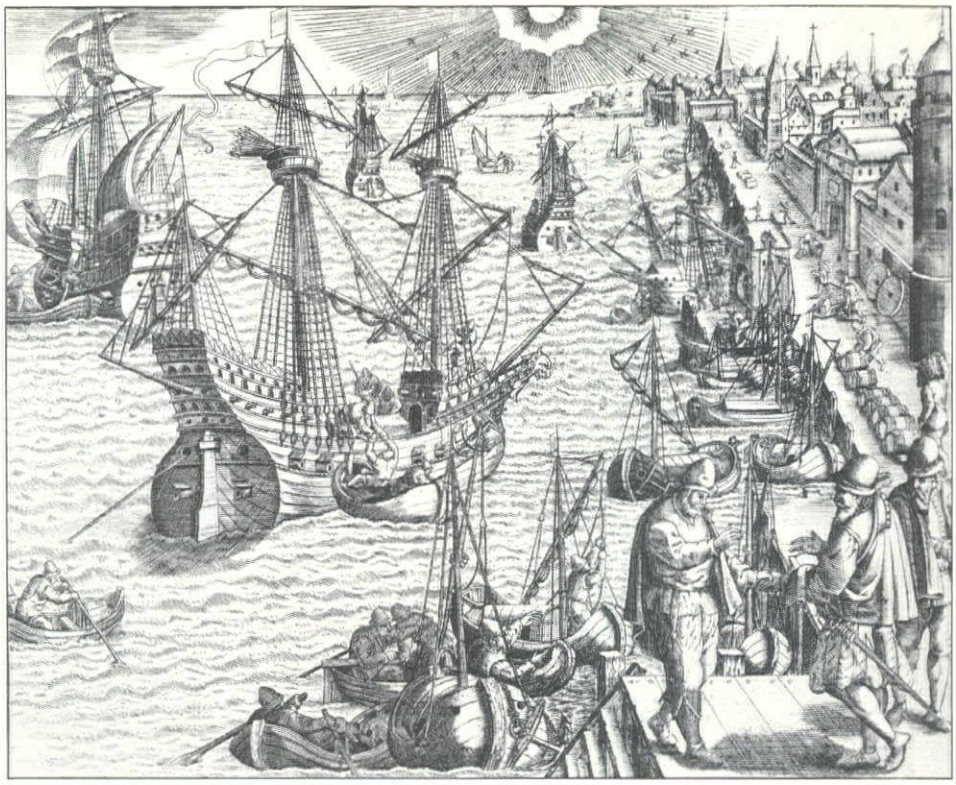
has to be studied in its own right, along with the epic he wrote, to understand his role in molding the national character and in crystallizing the national self-image. Particularly in the last century, the Camoëns myth, based on the somewhat hazy but undeniably romantic circumstances of his life, has both inspired and been enriched by novels, poems, a major film, and countless learned, if usually hagiographic, studies.

One especially revealing illustration of the Camoëns cult in present-day Portugal is a pictorial biography, in gaudily colored comic-book format, which the writer happened on during a visit to the country shortly after the close of the Salazar era. This publication, evidently aimed at a semiliterate public that one would not normally expect to take much interest in the career of a sixteenth-century classic poet, had brightened newsstands throughout the Portuguese empire since 1966, no doubt with the enthusiastic imprimatur of an authoritarian and almost dementedly imperial-minded regime.

The garish front cover shows the poet upholding the cause of Western civilization in East India, but in his military rather than his literary capacity. He is engaged in single combat, crusader's sword against heathen spear, with a turbanned, scimitared Oriental, seemingly of high rank but torpid disposition. The defensive, almost listless posture of his foe contrasts with his own savage élan. Camoëns's breastplate, ragged red beard, and black eyepatch give him an almost piratic look (the kind of pirate, however, who might be reclaimed by a good woman's love). The back cover, though no less heroic in mood, puts more stress on the cultural aspect. Camoëns is struggling in a wild sea amid bits of floating wreckage. His right hand, held high out of the water, clutches a manuscript: the nearly completed text of *The Lusiads,* with which, according to popular legend, he swam ashore after his ship had been wrecked on the Indochina coast.

Between the two covers the principal, or at least the most colorful, episodes of Camoëns's life are presented in 116 consecutive lithographs, with brief explanatory texts resembling the captions in early silent films. The images—especially the feminine ones—are typical pop art idealizations, but there are few purely fanciful touches. In the main, the story follows faithfully enough the traditional Portuguese version of Camoëns's biography, based upon the accounts of two early Camoënsian commentators, Manuel de Faria e Sousa and Manuel Corrêa, supplemented by the reminiscences of the sixteenth-century chronicler Diogo do Couto, who claimed to have been a lifelong friend of Camoëns. These ancient, largely undocumented sources are the historical foundations of the Camoëns myth as it exists today, and since it is precisely its mythical aspects that are most important in terms of its influence on the national character, it is instructive to trace the poet's career (or supposed career) through several of the traditional stages that the comic book does, noting in passing where modern scholarship raises a skeptical eyebrow or dispels an earlier incertitude.

Luiz Vaz de Camoëns (Camões in his native Portugal) was a distant kinsman of the famous oceanic explorer Vasco da Gama, discoverer of the sea route from Europe to India, who serves as protagonist-narrator of *The Lusiads.* His own family appears to have been impoverished gentry, and according to tradition, his father was a sea captain who died in the Indies. Camoëns was born near the apogee of Portugal's brief golden age as a world empire. His



WILLIAM L. CLEMENTS LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, ANN ARBOR

Portuguese caravels sail into the port of sixteenth-century Lisbon, queen of a global empire.

most recent American biographer (H. H. Hart, *Luis de Camoëns and the Epic of The Lusiads,* 1962) affirms that he was born in Lisbon in 1524, the year of Da Gama's death, though in a slightly more recent study the French historian Jacques Fressard, like several earlier authorities, appears less confident about the exact date and place.

Camoëns is supposed to have studied at the University of Coimbra. In the absence of contrary evidence, we are entitled to believe that as a young man he was brilliant, wild, and handsome, and that he became a gay though penniless young roisterer-at-large in the capital. He had—or at least sang about—numerous love affairs, and his mistresses ranged from servant girls to court beauties. A presumably Platonic flirtation with Princess Maria, daughter of King Manuel the Fortunate, is part of the legend, and has been given credence by some scholars.

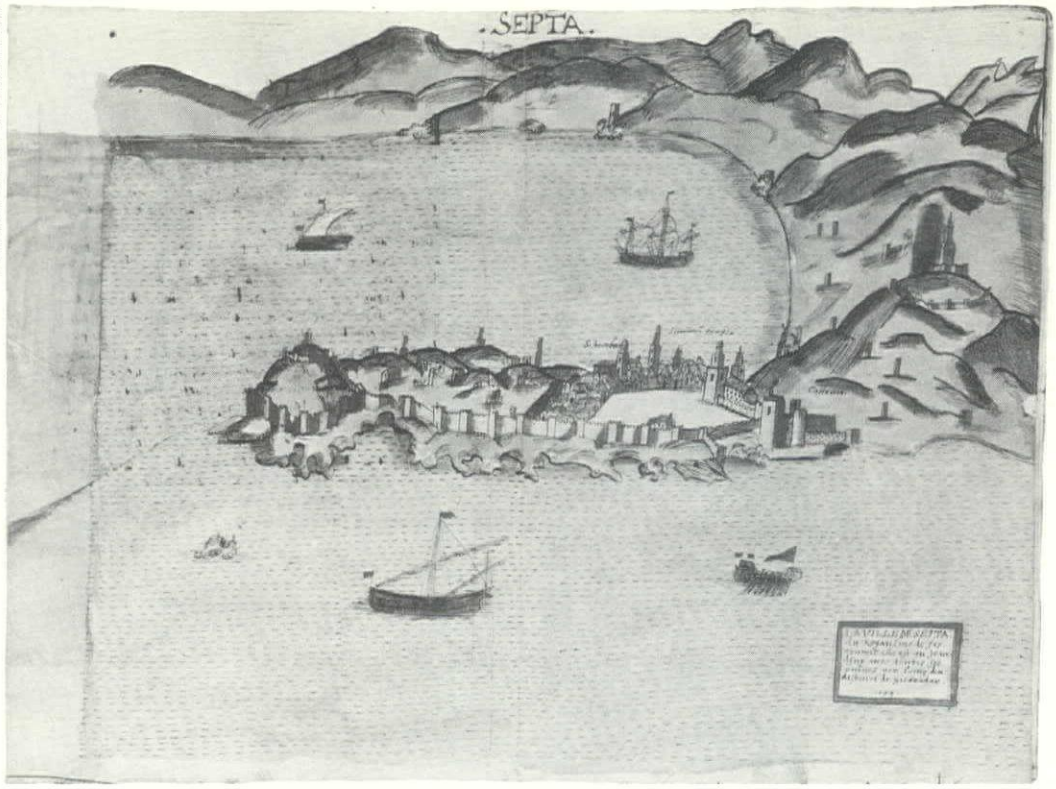
Camoëns undoubtedly frequented what can be termed court circles and was beginning to achieve some reputation as the author of clever comedies in the currently fashionable neoclassic style. One of his plays was performed at court—in any case in the palace of a high court official—sometime between 1544 and 1547. Soon afterward, however, Camoëns, for reasons that have never been established, was banished from the capital. He subsequently enlisted for overseas duty as a common soldier and embarked for Ceuta, the principal Portuguese bastion on the North African coast. Its capture from the Moors more than a century earlier had inaugurated the era of modern European colonial expansion, and the intermittent skirmishing with the hated infidels that had been taking place along the perimeter of the Ceuta beachhead ever since was looked on by the Portuguese as a permanent crusade.

Camoëns's service as a neocrusader in North Africa contributed an essential, though somewhat conjectural, prop to his legend: the black patch over his right eye, presumably blinded in action against the enemy. While the possibility of a tavern brawl cannot be entirely ruled out, historians generally allow the eye wound as a service-connected disability, differing mainly on whether it was suffered in a naval or a land fight. (The only portrait of Camoëns sketched from life, painted by Fernando Gomes in 1570, shows him with the eye half-closed but unpatched.)

Back in Lisbon after his demobilization, Camoëns soon got into trouble again. This time it was because of a confused, probably drunken street fracas in which he had the bad luck to wound a gentleman of rank. He spent some months in jail, but was eventually pardoned by King John (João) III after having been forgiven by his adversary and having signed up once more for military service in the colonies. He sailed for Goa, the capital of Portuguese Asia, in 1553.

The comic book mentioned earlier depicts Camoëns's military career in the East as a succession of furious melees on land or on sea, usually involving fearful odds and always with the poet in the forefront, slashing, thrusting, hacking, his way through the barbaric hordes of Asia like a new Richard the Lion-Hearted. That undoubtedly corresponds to the popular image of Camoëns as a soldier, and of sixteenth-century Portugal's civilizing mission in Asia. Historians, whether Portuguese or foreign, have done little to dispel it.

The reasonably well established facts, apart from the usual disagreements about exact dates and places, are that on at least two occasions Camoëns was



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

The Moroccan port of Ceuta, shown here as it was in the sixteenth century, fell to Portugal in 1415.

listed in the ranks of a Portuguese force engaged in combat. The first was a typically colonialist operation against a village on the Malabar Coast that appears to have come off splendidly: huts and crops were burned, and all the natives in sight, including children and pregnant women, were massacred. The second affair was a bit more strenuous. A fleet of more than thirty-five Portuguese ships, with Camoëns serving on one of them, searched the Arabian coast for enemy vessels and trapped sixteen Turkish galleys, heavily laden with cargo, near the mouth of the Persian Gulf in 1554 (or 1555, according to some). Six of the enemy vessels were captured in boarding operations and their crews slaughtered to a man. Some modern writers believe that Camoëns also saw action in the Moluccas. There is no record of how his superior officers rated his performance as a soldier.

When his three-year term of enlistment was up, Camoëns remained in the East in various capacities for eleven years more, partly in Goa, partly in the recently established Portuguese trading post of Macao, off the South China coast. It was probably during this period that he started *The Lusiads*. According to legend, he worked in a grotto in Macao that is today a sort of shrine to his memory. He also wrote a play satirizing Portuguese colonial society, and a number of lyrics, including his famous sonnets, or *redondilhas* (an octosyllabic Portuguese verse form), addressed to Dinamene, the presumably Chinese mistress he had in Macao, and to Barbara, a slave girl he loved in Goa. These lyrics suffice to validate Camoëns as an authentic poet in the eyes of most modern critics, even those who are dubious about the epic; and the two exotic muses who inspired them are culturally significant, as well as intensely romantic, features of the Camoëns myth.

Barbara is particularly interesting. Though traditionally identified as Indian, she seems more likely to have been African. Her skin, as the poet makes plain, was "dark indeed," a definite attraction in his eyes. Whether or not such erotic "melanism" and the accompanying lack of color prejudice have been the general trait of Portuguese colonialism throughout the centuries that Freyre somewhat peremptorily argues they were, both were marked in certain of Camoëns's lyrics (they are less evident in *The Lusiads*). "Gentle in all ways is she," the poet says of his dusky love-object. "And with sweet reason well endowed."

A poet is expected to experience vicissitudes, but Camoëns exceeded the normal quota. In Macao, where he held a government job traditionally described as administrator of the property belonging to deceased or absent members of the Portuguese community (though Fressard says that the latest researches raise some questions about the exact nature of his appointment), he was accused of malversation and recalled in disgrace to Goa. On the way his ship was wrecked at the mouth of the Mekong River, if an oblique allusion in *The Lusiads* can be relied upon. Camoëns's friend Do Couto added several dramatic touches to the story: the manuscript saved, Dinamene lost. (That Dinamene perished at sea is corroborated by the internal evidence of one of Camoëns's best-known lyrics.) Somehow, Camoëns eventually got back to Goa, where he was tried and acquitted of the felony charge.

For several years he experienced alternate poverty and relative material comfort, official favor and disfavor. In 1567 he decided to return home. The trip ordinarily took over six months,

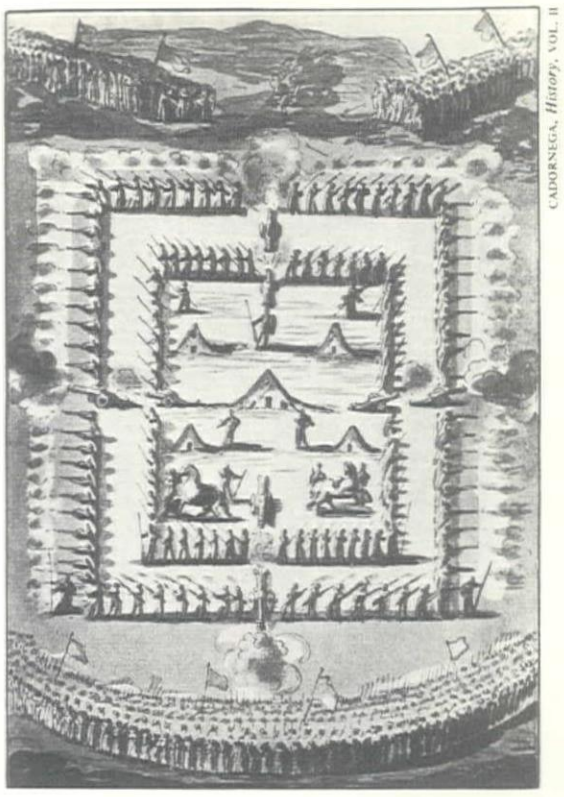


A Portuguese woman served by Africans



BRITISH MUSEUM

African image of a colonizer



CADORNEGA, *History*, VOL. II

Portuguese troops in formation against Angolans

By the time Camoëns reached Ceuta (opposite), about 1547, Portugal had been outward bound for more than a century. Its troops and traders were entrenched from India to Africa to Brazil. In Angola (far right) what attracted the Portuguese was not only the idea of a holy crusade against Islam but the rising profits of the slave trade. The greed and insolence of his compatriots (like the lady in the sedan chair above) filled Camoëns with scorn. For him imperialism was justified only by the heroism it inspired.

but at first Camoëns could find (or afford) transportation only as far as Mozambique, on the east African coast. He was stranded there for nearly two years, living on charity. One gathers it was not a pleasant experience. It probably enabled him, however, to complete *The Lusiads* (save for a few finishing touches added in Lisbon), together with a collection of lyrics and longer philosophical poems he entitled *Parnaso*. The latter manuscript mysteriously disappeared during the passage from Mozambique to Lisbon (which Do Couto and another literary friend helped pay for). It was in all likelihood the most grievous loss Camoëns suffered in his tormented existence—perhaps the most grievous one ever suffered by a poet. One can imagine his state of mind when he debarked in April, 1570, to find the capital still funereal from the great plague that had ravaged it a year earlier.

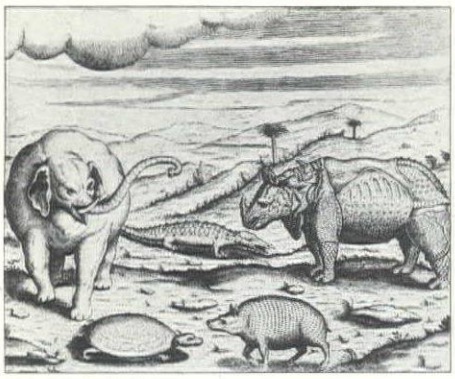
Two years later *The Lusiads* appeared in print. It brought Camoëns a meager royal pension—the equivalent of something like $150 a year—a degree of recognition as a major poet that could not yet be called fame, and a shower of critical abuse for debasing the language with uncouth innovations.

During his last years Camoëns eked out his pension with such hackwork as copying psalms, and according to popular legend spent his evenings carousing with fishermen or sailors in the waterfront taverns of Lisbon's old Moorish quarter, where he lived. He tried to be an Establishment poet, but during his lifetime could never quite make it—in part, perhaps, because he was a real poet. Ideologically conformist, by temperament he belonged to the race of accursed poets, founded by François Villon and later rendered romantic by the likes of Chatterton, Poe, Baudelaire, and Verlaine. He died during a new outbreak of the plague in 1580, and was buried in a mass grave along with other victims.

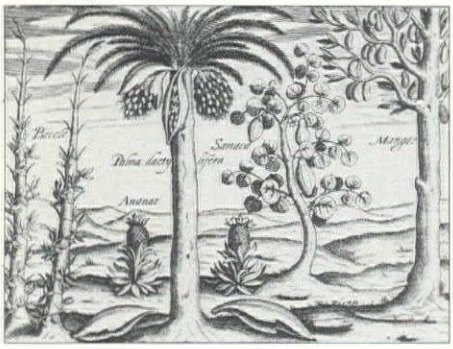
It was during the sixty years of Portugal's so-called Spanish Captivity (1580–1640), when the nation lost its independence and came under the Spanish crown, that Camoëns began to be recognized as the national poet. According to C. R. Boxer, his epic went through eleven editions in that span. An attempt to locate Camoëns's remains was made in 1595. A more systematic one took place in 1836. Nineteen years later an official commission appointed for the purpose reported that the burial site had been identified. A number of bones, assumed to include the poet's, were dug up, put in a sealed casket, and installed in the choir of the Church of Santa Ana. Finally, in 1880, the tricentennial of Camoëns's death, as Portugal was stirring again to dreams of imperial grandeur, the casket was solemnly transferred to the monastery of the Jerónimos, Portugal's equivalent of Westminster Abbey, and placed in a tomb near that marking the equally conjectural remains of Vasco da Gama.

Camoëns might be said to have foreseen his posthumous apotheosis. His "repercussive Lyre," he prophesied in the stanza of *The Lusiads* alluding to his shipwreck, would one day be *"renowned* more than *Fortunate."* He thus makes himself one of the offstage but essential personages of his epic—the inspired bard chanting his nation's glories, among which he naturally counts *The Lusiads*. And why not? Since Homer, few single poems have more effectively crystallized the deepest emotions, aspirations, and delusions of a whole people—even, perhaps, of an epoch.

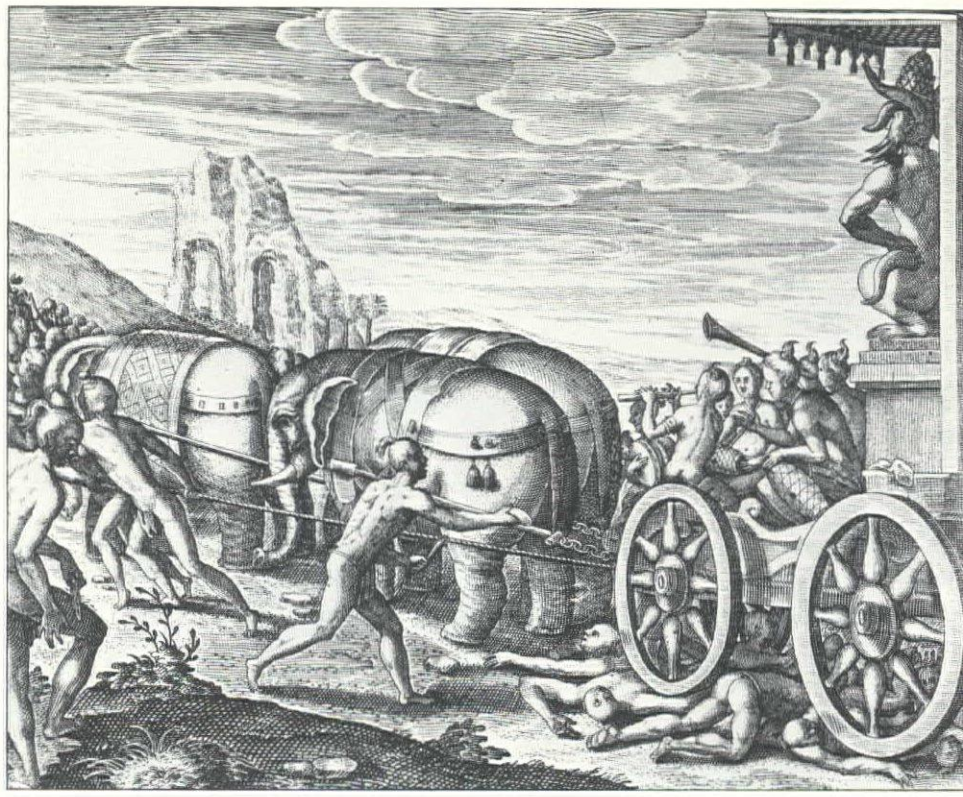
Though *The Lusiads* ostensibly re-



India's beasts, according to De Bry



Its trees, including pineapple and mango



A Chinese idolaters' cart, elephant-drawn, rolling over some innocent bystanders

lates the history of the Portuguese race from its origins in the legendary Lusus, the son or companion of Bacchus, it focuses largely upon the overseas expansion of the preceding century. Some passages are almost journalistic reportage, packed, as Freyre has noted, with geographic, anthropologic, and biological data and what today we would call local color. Part of Camoëns's genius lay in his perception that this intensely contemporary raw material could be molded, without sounding grotesque, into the stately ottava rima cadences and embellished with the gilded fretwork of classical allusion that the Renaissance considered proper to the epic form. By so handling it, he transmuted history into a myth.

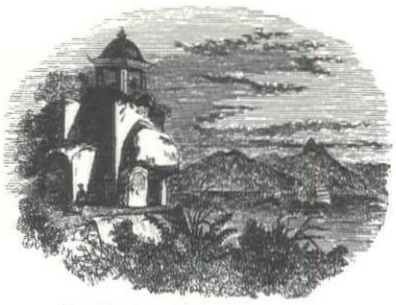
The heroics of early maritime exploration, and even of plain colonial seafaring, are perhaps what still come through best in *The Lusiads*. Sixteenth-century terrors of the sea are depicted vividly; one suspects that Camoëns, apparently a fearless swashbuckler ashore, was himself appalled by them. He had reason to be. Out of the armada of five ships in which he first sailed to Goa, only the one on which he happened to have embarked reached port —a ratio, at the time, about par for the course. Storms and shoals were not the mariner's only hazards. Camoëns describes with gruesome accuracy the symptoms of scurvy, which regularly decimated crews on the long South Atlantic leg of the voyage from Lisbon to Goa. (With help from syphilis, malaria, and dysentery, it normally killed at least 15 to 25 per cent of a ship's complement on the round trip.) It is not too much to say that Camoëns has given Columbus, though there is no direct allusion to him in the poem, Da Gama, Magellan, and the rest the epic they unquestionably deserved.

(Camoëns's battle scenes are sometimes stilted, but he is good on the sheer physical ordeal of colonial soldiering: the heat, the thirst, the hunger, the weariness of effort, in a tropical climate. He tells the Portuguese at home about these distant hardships somewhat as Kipling more than three centuries later told the English about those of life in India, and it is a new note in literature.)

The Promethean spirit of the Renaissance man, forever inciting him to "undertakings of high and sacrilegious daring," is one of the major themes of *The Lusiads*. "No contemporary work," declares Hernani Cidade, the leading Portuguese authority on Camoëns, "expresses so eloquently the proud euphoria of the century that Taine called the greatest in history." *The Lusiads* is the epic not only of Portuguese imperialism but of the new, complex, kinetic civilization that was being founded by the Western tribes of man, conquering the oceans and the continents by daring themselves to do so, and then summoning the conquered peoples of the world to share in the West's worship of its own audacities.

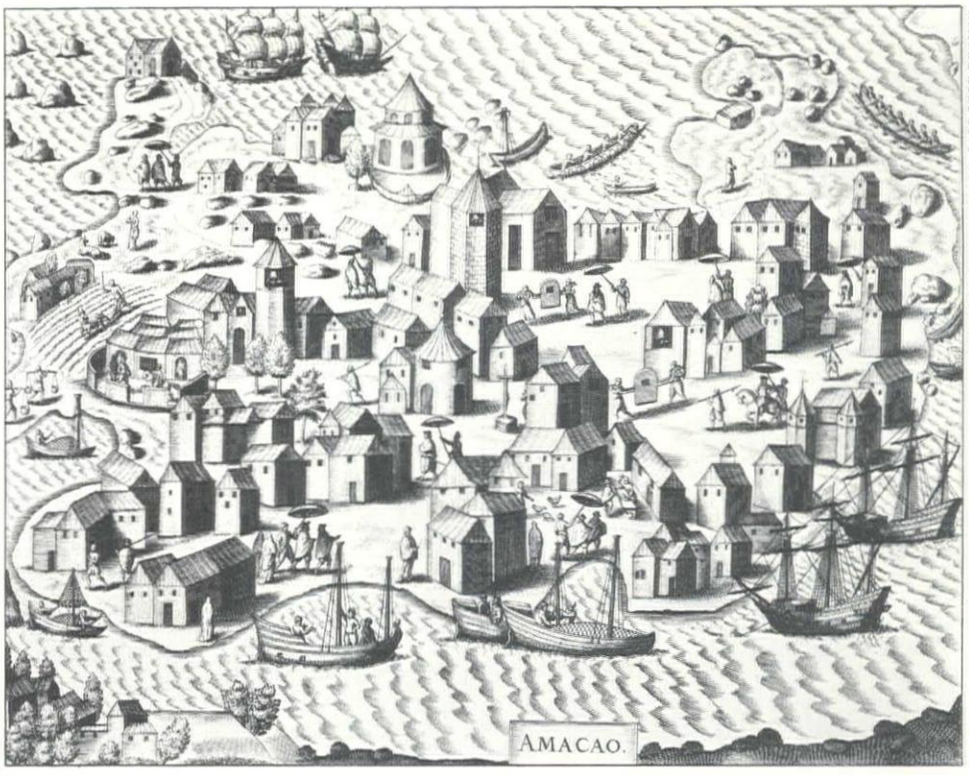
The Portuguese in *The Lusiads* epitomize the general European vocation of conquest over man and nature. Of course Camoëns assumed an intra-European hierarchy of achievement. It is indicated in Canto II, when Da Gama briefs his African host, the friendly king of Malindi, on European geography. In the great mariner's perspective, Europe's head, if you hold the map as any God-fearing Christian naturally holds it, was "noble Spain," whose conquests in the West are generously acknowledged in a later passage. Then, "Plac't as the *Crown* upon fair EUROPE's Head," comes Da Gama's—and the poet's—native land Portugal.

While some Europeans are thus more



Camoëns's grotto at Macao

Theodore de Bry was one of several sixteenth-century publishers who flooded Europe with accounts of wondrous Asia. With engravings like the three opposite, he showed his readers that the East had more imposing animals, more succulent fruits, more vicious customs, than any yet dreamed of in Europe. As Portugal expanded into these mysterious realms, it was Camoëns's genius to see in this adventure the materials for a new epic. He wrote part of this epic, The Lusiads, *in the city of Macao, supposedly in the grotto (today it is a shrine) shown in the engraving above.*



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The Chinese port of Macao, as depicted by De Bry in 1598, was already a Portuguese colony.

European than others, the continent is the general fatherland of conquering heroes. Its civilization, which "surpasses and eclipses all others," is Christian, even when heretical, but Camoëns's Europe, unlike Dante's, is not just Christendom. His very use of Europe—that "humanists' word," to quote a French authority—marks him as a precursor. ("As a word," says Pierre Chaunu, "Europe was born in the seventeenth century.") Camoëns's Europe is Christendom magnified by its own growth and dialectically energized by the rediscovery of pagan antiquity. Its children are descendants of the Crusaders and the heirs of Rome. Empire, like victory, is in their blood.

In the history of modern colonialism, the symbolic Da Gama of *The Lusiads* marks an evolutionary link between the early generations of colonial crusaders (or pseudocrusaders) and the lordly nineteenth-century white man with his assumed innate superiority of character and his accelerating technology of conquest. This hybrid might be called the Invincible European. His concept of what a later age would term the civilizing mission (before it became the white man's burden) is rudimentary, but the compulsion to spread his way of life, along with "Religion true," throughout the world is evident.

Already, he exhibits an embryonic sense of racial superiority, though not, so far, of obsessive color prejudice. He does not yet think of India as being peopled by "natives"—to Camoëns they are Brahmans, idolaters, or Gentiles—but he detects what might be termed prenativistic tendencies in their behavior: their superstitions, their "treachery," and their unspeakable sex habits (which, of course, are much spoken about, between guffaws but not always with scientific accuracy, in every sixteenth-century Portuguese version of the colonial noncom's mess or on the verandahs that will one day become those of the Planters' Club). Similarly, Africans, though not despised for being black, are looked down on as "savages."

Oddly enough, despite its typical colonialist prejudices and self-glorifications—and despite the official cult of Camoëns in modern Portugal—*The Lusiads* is not a propaganda tract for Portuguese colonialism. Camoëns appears to have no doubts that colonialism was good for the colonized, but very serious ones about whether it was good for the colonizers. Like certain later travelers in the East, he tended to blame the degeneration of European character that he had observed there—and perhaps experienced there in himself—on the corruptions of Asia rather than on those of power, but he was consistently outspoken in denouncing it. It was the existential rewards of the colonial adventure that he most valued, and he laments their decay into cynical hedonism:

"*Men* have not *now* that *life*, and gen'rall *gust*,
"Which made them with a cheerful countenance
"Themselves into perpetual *Action* thrust. . . .

Camoëns likewise came to realize that the continuous emigration of vigorous young males from the metropolis to the colonies, especially under the murderous conditions of sixteenth-century sea travel and life in the tropics, was a demographic hemorrhage that was ruining the nation's health. He knew that Manuel the Fortunate's strategy of economic warfare against Islam had failed, and that Arab merchants throughout the Indian Ocean were gradually recovering a share of the spice trade—sometimes with local Portuguese connivance. His own misfortunes had sensitized him to the in-



PICTORIAL PARADE

Africa, 1961: Portuguese-trained Angolans attack a rebel compatriot with long-bladed knives.

More than ten years ago Angolan nationalists rose up against colonial rule. They failed, but sedition smolders yet. The Portuguese, clinging to the remnants of their empire, have made Camoëns their national hero. In the comic-strip version of his life, opposite, sold on Portuguese newsstands, Camoëns appears as a swashbuckling muscleman defending civilization against assorted barbarians. In this day of vanishing empires Camoëns, the poet of empire, has become a part of his countrymen's dreams.

justices, even from the Portuguese point of view, of a colonial system that enriched a hoggish vested minority while the living standards of the general population at home were declining. There are even hints in *The Lusiads* that the poet was sickened in retrospect by the atrocities of colonial warfare he had witnessed, perhaps himself committed.

Camoëns's doubts about the moral and practical validity of Portuguese colonialism in his day, and his prescience of more tragic evils to come, are expressed through the Cassandra mouth of an old man standing in the crowd watching Da Gama's departure for the Orient. (This is the famous passage in *The Lusiads* from which the verses at the beginning of this article are excerpted.) Pointedly, the old man asks whether the national disasters that he foresees arising from the great adventure, along with the toil and sacrifices of the empire builders themselves, are not too high a price to pay for styling oneself (as Manuel I had done) "Lord of Conquest, Navigation, and Commerce in Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia, and India." Such delusive grandeurs are

"The *secret miner*, and the *open Grave*,
"Of *Patrimonies, Kingdoms, Empires* vast! . . .

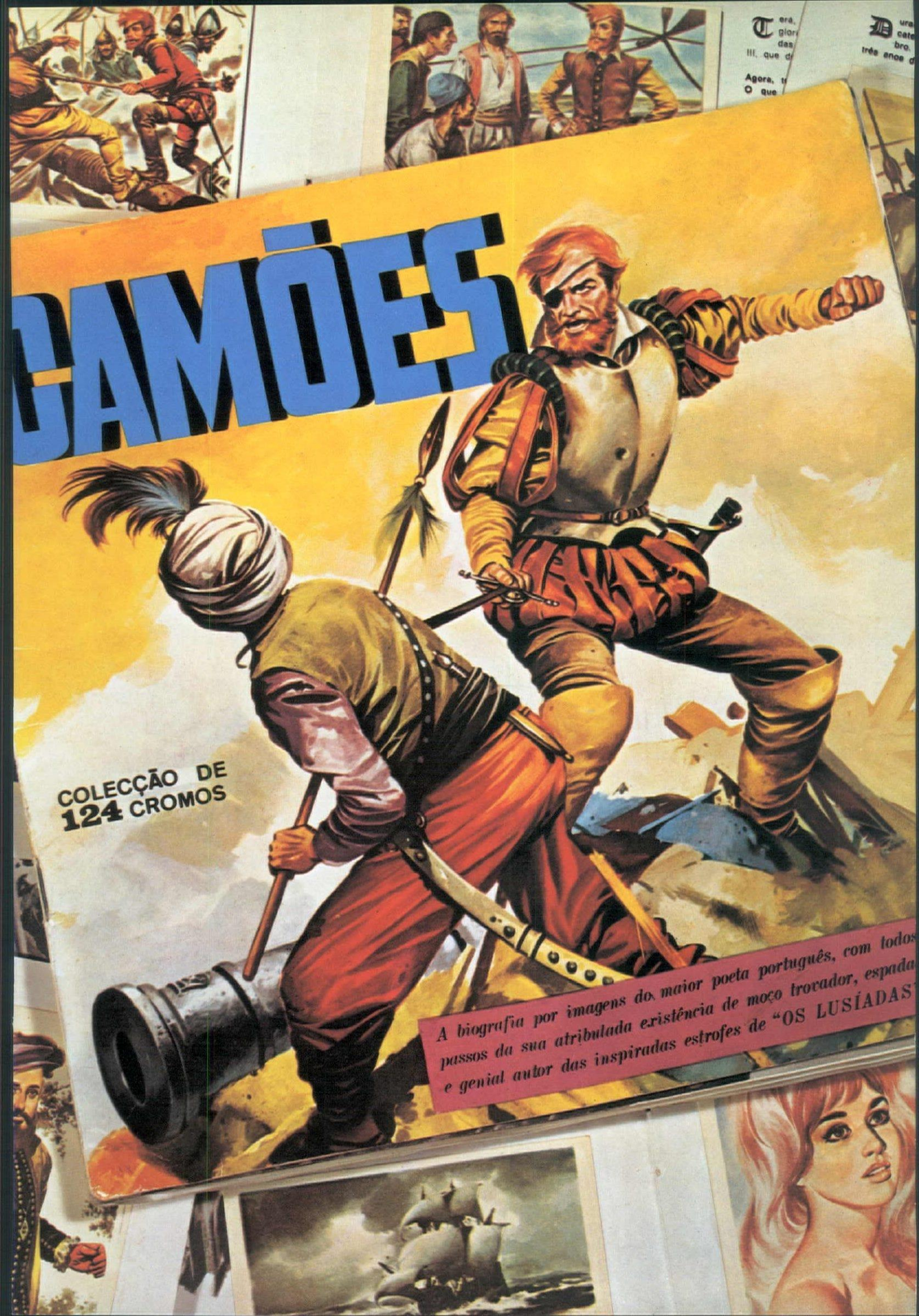
As a critique of Portuguese colonial policy, the old man's speech seems even more pertinent today than it was four centuries ago.

Unfortunately, Camoëns's warning, though certainly more than a poetic convention, was not the principal message of *The Lusiads*. The old soldier-poet's eye was relatively clear when he surveyed the colonial landscape, but his emotions were trapped in the new mythology of heroism and empire that his own genius had created. Those of his countrymen remain so entrapped today. The almost idolatrous worship of Camoëns and *The Lusiads* in present-day Portugal is at once a symptom and a cause of the national obsession.

For a while, immediately after the disappearance from the Portuguese political scene of the former dictator, Dr. Oliveira Salazar, there seemed to be a chance that Portugal would finally achieve the reconciliation with contemporary world reality that the other Western colonial powers had come to, one after the other, some years earlier. But recent developments in Portugal's African colonies—which Lisbon persists in calling overseas provinces of the Portuguese nation—indicate little progress in that direction. Trustworthy European correspondents who have visited Portuguese Africa in the past few years report that despite Portuguese military successes in containing the nationalist guerrillas who have been in revolt against colonial rule since 1961, there is seemingly no prospect of permanently stamping out the revolutionary movement, supported as it is by neighboring African states.

Meanwhile, these observers say, the systematically encouraged inflow of white settlers is helping to aggravate interracial tensions and to develop unavowed but unmistakable racist attitudes among the ruling white minority to a degree rare in the history of Portuguese colonialism. Those fictitious "provinces" of an anachronistic colonial empire camouflaged as a modern nation could someday prove to be the final grave, not merely of Portuguese imperialism, but of what up to now has remained a Christian and noble civilization—that of Portugal itself Camoëns's own.

A well-known historian who has recently written for HORIZON *on Trotsky and on May Day, Edmond Taylor is now preparing an ambitious study of imperialism*


CAMÕES
COLECÇÃO DE
124 CROMOS
A biografia por imagens do maior poeta português, com todos
passos da sua atribulada existência de moço trovador, espada
e genial autor das inspiradas estrofes de "OS LUSÍADAS"



BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE SERVICE PHOTOGRAPHIQUE; MS. FR. 86



The World of Froissart

Though presumably he made neither love *nor* war, he thoroughly approved of both and took them as subjects for his *Chronicles,* that grand and noble history of his time, the waning Middle Ages



By MORRIS BISHOP

As English and Scottish armies clash, the historian Jean Froissart records the events. This miniature and those on pages 73–79 come from fifteenth-century versions of Froissart's Chronicles of England, France, and Spain *in the Bibliothèque Nationale and the British Museum. The drawings above and on the next five pages are from the decorative borders of the Paris manuscript.*

Jean Froissart, a jolly tosspot poet-priest, has imposed upon most of us, indirectly, our concept of the later Middle Ages. What concept may we conceive of that maker of concepts?

He was born in 1337, evidently to a middle-class family, in Valenciennes, now on the edge of northern France but then in the independent county of Hainault. Thus he inherited French as his native language and also the Netherlander's linguistic readiness, cosmopolitanism, and tradition of observant neutrality in the wars of nations. The greatest Hainaulter of the time was Philippa, queen of Edward III of England and a kindly patron of her own people. Froissart, after vainly attempting to reconcile clerical duties with poetry, the dance, and amorous gallantry, took ship for England, where he presented to Queen Philippa his own verse chronicle of recent events. Appointed private secretary to the queen and court chronicler, he remained five years in England, with a long visit to Scotland. He then joined Edward, the Black Prince, on his punitive expedition into Spain. He also made a trip to Milan and Rome.

Queen Philippa died in 1369, and Froissart returned to Belgium, where he found a princely patron and a comfortable church living. He had probably begun his *Chronicles* in England, as a mere day-to-day factual record; now his purpose became more definite. He says: "I have set myself to work at my forge, to produce new and notable matter relative to the wars between France and England and their allies, which excellent materials, through the grace of God, I shall work upon as long as I live." And so he did. He had found his task, his burden, his joy.

He was first of all a sports reporter,



an analyst of joust techniques—spear handling, swordsmanship, horsemanship. He took the easy step to the status of war correspondent, knowledgeable about tactics, logistics, fortification, weaponry, psychological warfare. His ambition was even higher: to review the governments and judge the rulers of his world, to be the John Gunther of the late fourteenth century, writing the first *Inside Europe*. Riding his mare Grisel and holding his white greyhound in leash, he made long journeys to interview eminences and to check on battle terrains. He revisited England, bearing to King Richard II a book of his verse, bound in crimson velvet richly worked with silver-gilt studs and roses. "What does the book treat of?" asked the king. "Love!" replied the poet.

Love, for his poetic mood, war, for his prose—what other subjects could a man wish? "All joy, all honor, come from arms and love," he wrote:

Toute joie et tout honour
Viennent d'armes et d'amour.

But both arms and love were forbidden to him as a cleric. He must needs be a reporter of others' feats in the lists of Mars and Venus. He did not repine. For the literary mind, the search for truth and the recording of it can be as satisfying as participation in sweaty battles, sweaty loves. Describing his own endless note-taking, he says: "There is no memory equal to writing . . . I have taken infinite pains to seek out the truth of what was passing in my day, and have traveled through many a kingdom and over many countries for this purpose." The historian's first duty, he recognized, was to seek out the truth and to describe it scrupulously and impartially; then he might allege causes, make judgments, award praise and blame, draw lessons. Froissart had a high view of history and of himself as a historian. "If I were merely to say such and such things happened at such times, without entering fully into the matter, it would be a chronicle, but no history. I might, to be sure, skip over it; but that I will not



do, but relate fully the fact, if God grant me life, abilities, and leisure . . . I will speak the truth and go straight forward, without coloring one side more than the other."

He strove to be impartial—a quality beyond human attainment, beyond even the reach of Jove and Jehovah. Doing his dogged best, going straight forward, taking notes, rewriting, he produced his *Chronicles of England, France, and Spain*, a compendium of his own stormy times. It is an enormous book of well over a million words, even counting out the several variant rewritings. Its characters are sharply defined—as, for instance, Edward, the Black Prince, "who had never been weary or sated with war since the first time he bore arms . . . He was of a high overbearing spirit, and cruel in his hatred." However, the book is weak on economics, sociology, and the concerns of the modern philosophical historian. (Froissart was, nevertheless, fascinated by national characteristics; he admired the French, but found the Germans avaricious, cruel, and crafty, the English haughty and quarrelsome, affable to no nation but their own. He applauded, surprisingly, the Arabs of Africa, who are gallant soldiers and never break their word.)

Chiefly the book is precious as a picture of a superbly pictorial period—the declining Middle Ages. The time masked misery with magnificence. War was permanent; that segment of Anglo-French hostility that we call the Hundred Years' War lasted formally from 1337 to 1453. War was accompanied (at least until World War I) by drums and brazen music, parades, banners and proud horses daintily stepping through their drill. Froissart could never get enough of such shows. Of the embattled French army at Auray

1364 he writes: "it was a fine thing to see and reflect on; for there were banners and pennons flying, and the richest armor on both sides. The French were so handsomely and grandly drawn up it was great pleasure to look at them." And at Navarrete, in Spain, three years later: "When the sun was risen it was a beautiful sight to view these battalions, with their brilliant armor glittering to its beams."

Surely it was a beautiful sight, with new-polished armor glittering, horses curvetting, banners fluttering. (The banners were necessary as rallying points, for identification of friend and enemy in the melee.) Froissart was delighted by the courtly formalities of noble enemies, prompting and justifying the display. Very commonly, opposing generals would agree on a time and place for battle. The king of Castille wrote to the Black Prince inquiring which Pyrenean pass he proposed to use for his invasion of Spain, so that the defender might be sure of encountering the invader. At the siege of Bourdeilles, in southwest France, the French defenders opened the gate to admit the English, so that they could fight more commodiously. The French then drove out and pursued the interlopers, but ran into a prepared ambush, which cut off the French from their base. The French "performed such feats of arms as were marvelous to behold. This combat lasted upwards of two hours, and they annoyed their enemies so much and behaved so gallantly that the English lords were much delighted with them." Well, naturally; the French were all killed, or captured to be held for ransom. Again, at the siege of the city of Afrique, in Barbary, a Saracen champion stood forth and hailed the commander: "Christian, are you a gentleman?" On the commander's assurance of his noble genes, the paynim proposed to settle the war by the conflict of ten gentlemen on a side. The Christians rejected this proposal as improper, and were soon after overwhelmed in disaster.

Such courtesy often yielded to weightier considerations of advantage. King Edward III of England carried on a long, expensive siege of Calais; the French king Philip VI appeared with an army to raise the siege. Finding Edward in an impregnable position, he sent four heralds to complain: "His Majesty has come to give you battle, but he cannot reach you; so please indicate a spot where a general combat may take place." The boorish Englishman refused, and Philip marched away in disgust. Thus the gentleman's code of sportsmanship in war was often infringed, especially at the promptings of greed. A French squire, after surrendering, was killed for the sake of his beautiful armor. "This made many good men angry."

Battlefield etiquette did not go very deep—no deeper than most etiquette. The commanders took their game seriously and played to win. An Art of Medieval War could be compiled from Froissart's pages. He is very good on tactics; his descriptions of the battles of Crécy and Poitiers are much-quoted minor classics. He is well aware of the importance of terrain, weather, timing, food supply, and especially, weaponry —the English longbow, the Genoese crossbow, the Spanish sling. He refers often to cannon, used as siege weapons. Their discharge made it seem that all the devils in hell had broken loose. He tells us that in 1342 the cannon fired bundles of iron bolts at mounted men. (This is very early; could the "cannon" have been mere ballistae, giant slings?)

Especially is Froissart good on the physical background of army routine. He describes the English invasion of Spain in 1367. No rain fell after the beginning of April; the heat was intolerable; the English burned and blistered under their steel and leather. "The English ate plentifully of grapes wherever they found them, and to quench their thirst drank of the strong





wines of Castille and Portugal. But the more they drank the more they were heated, for this new beverage inflamed their livers, lungs, and bowels, and was in its effect totally different from their usual liquors. The English, when at home, feed on fresh meats and good rich ale, which is a diet to keep their bodies wholesome; but now they were forced to drink hard and hot wines, of which they were not sparing, to drown their cares. The early part of the night is warm, from the great heat of the day, but toward sunrise it is very cold, which afflicted them sorely, for they slept without covering and quite naked, from the heat of the weather and the wine, so that when morning came they were chilled by the change of air, which checked all perspiration and flung them into fevers and fluxes, so as to carry them off instantly to their graves. Thus died very many of the barons and knights, as well as of the lower ranks; for these diseases spared none."

Fighting is, of course, the best of sports, and armies are the best of playthings. A commander cannot bear to see his darlings unemployed. The Earl of Hainault in 1340 sent heralds to the Duke of Normandy "to say he was ready for battle, and it would be a very great shame if such fine armies should separate without an engagement." The alternative to fighting is a lowering of morale and mere boredom, the curse of soldiering. Froissart tells us that it was unbecoming for men-at-arms to idle in their garrison without attempting some feat of arms. If they could not fight for profit, they would fight for fun. At the siege of Rennes in 1357 the famous Bertrand du Guesclin performed against the English champion,

with the walls serving as grandstands. "The two knights behaved most valiantly. They were seen with pleasure by both armies."

There is chivalry in action. Froissart is the celebrator of chivalry, the code of knightly conduct. The code comprises humble faith, fidelity to one's worldly and spiritual masters, adoration of womanhood, acceptance of honor as one's guide to behavior. Chivalry imposed innumerable forms, impressive and symbolic, on action, social behavior, dress, and speech. (Some relics of the forms persist even today, as in our "company manners.") Such manifestations were Froissart's joy; he describes them with loving detail. As a cleric, he could not join the game; he must content himself with watching and recording. One senses his regret; he would have loved to be one of the forty young knights bachelor of his home town, Valenciennes, each of whom wore an eye patch, having vowed to the ladies not to doff it until he should perform some notable deed of valor.

How Froissart loved a good show! He describes with emotion the entry of a new French queen, Isabella of Bavaria, into Paris in 1389. The Porte St. Denis was transformed into a heaven, housing the Virgin and Child; fountains spurted claret and honeyed wine, which were dispensed by beautiful girls. A battle with Saracens was enacted. (The Christians won.) And a ropewalker, bearing two lighted torches, pirouetted on a rope strung from the tower of Notre Dame to the tallest house on the bridge of St. Michel.

Jousts were Froissart's particular joy. He could never have enough of them. Rich nobles would proclaim an open joust to honor a lady, and professional champions would gather from near and far. Or an ardent youth would make a vow to fight, to enhance his lady's fame, and with perhaps an eye to his own. He must then find an opponent, to "deliver him from his vow." Such a deliverer would present himself, for his pleasure or with some



glimpse of advantage, not from any personal animus.

Let the procedures of two mighty jousts serve for all. During the English invasion of Spanish Galicia, a herald arrived from the headquarters of the hostile French. He sought out the eminent sportsman Sir John Holland and presented to him a letter from the equally eminent Sir Reginald de Roye. Sir John "read that Sir Reginald de Roye entreated him, for the love of his mistress, that he would deliver him from his vow, by tilting with him three courses with the lance, three attacks with the sword, three with the battle-axe, and three with the dagger." He proposed to bring an escort, or perhaps a cheering section, of thirty companions. Sir John was delighted to do such a kind act, and cleared the matter with his chief, the Duke of Lancaster, who bade him make out a passport for thirty-one French gentlemen with retainers. The king of Portugal got wind of the affair. "In the name of God," he said, "I will be present at it, and so shall my queen and the ladies." The king and queen, with the Duchess of Lancaster, journeyed to the English base, and soon after came Sir Reginald de Roye with 120 French horsemen. Lists, well sanded, were prepared, with grandstands for the lords and ladies.

On the great day the combatants were dressed and armed, a long process. "Their spears, battleaxes, and swords were brought them, and each, being mounted on the best of horses, placed himself about a bowshot distant from the other; but at times they pranced about on their horses most gallantly, for they knew every eye to be upon them. All was now arranged for their combat, which was to include everything, except pushing it to extremity, though no one could foresee what mischief might happen, nor how it would end; for they were to tilt with pointed lances, then with swords, which were so sharp that scarcely a helmet could resist their strokes; and these were to be succeeded by battle-axes and daggers, each so well tempered that nothing could withstand them. Now consider the perils those run who engage in such combats to exalt their honor; for one unlucky stroke puts an end to the business.

"Having braced their shields and examined each other through the visors of their helmets, they spurred on their horses, spear in hand. Though they allowed their horses to gallop as they pleased, they advanced on as straight a line as if it had been drawn with a cord, and hit each other on the visors, with such force that Sir Reginald's lance was shivered into four pieces, which flew to a greater height than they could have been thrown. All present allowed this to be gallantly done. Sir John struck Sir Reginald likewise on the visor, but not with the same success, and I will tell you why: Sir Reginald had but slightly laced on his helmet, so that it was held by one thong only, which broke at the blow, and the helmet flew over his head, leaving Sir Reginald bareheaded. Each passed the other, and Sir John bore his lance without halting. The spectators cried out that it was a handsome course."

On the second course the champions came together at full gallop, each striking fire from his adversary's helmet. Sir Reginald was again unhelmed. "Ha!" cried the English to the French, "he does not fight fair! Why is not his helmet as well buckled on as Sir John's?" "Hold your tongues!" said the Duke



of Lancaster. "In arms everyone takes what advantage he can. If Sir John thinks there is anything to be gained by thus loosening the helmet, he may do the same. But for my part I would lace my helmet as tight as possible; and eighty knights out of a hundred would be of my way of thinking." (The point is, of course, that a direct blow on a tight-laced visor might warp the helmet or cause concussion.) The several combats on foot followed, ending in a draw, without serious wounds to either champion.

A few years later the indomitable Sir Reginald de Roye and two other French knights issued a general challenge to all comers during thirty days. They set up three vermilion-colored tents at St. Inglevert, near Calais. On each pavilion hung the occupant's painted shield; one had only to tap it to bring forth the inmate, like a disturbed insect. The challenge attracted a swarm of contenders and sports enthusiasts from England. First in line, naturally, was Sir John Holland. For a month the tourney continued, with much unhelming, shivering of lances, rearing of horses, and whacking of steel against steel. The evenings were spent in critical reviews of the day's encounters. No one was killed or mortally wounded.

But such games were likely to end in blood. During a lull in the wars, a party of Englishmen descended at an inn near the castle of Olivier de Clisson, Constable of France. The bored Constable sent to propose a joust, and to make sure the English would not default, put them all under arrest. In the joust an Englishman's spear struck a Frenchman on the upper part of the breast; the point slipped off the breastplate and entered the ill-protected gap between breastplate and helmet, piercing the neck and causing instant death. Everyone felt and expressed the deepest regret. But the Constable soothed the English with the assurance that such mishaps did occur. "It has turned out unfortunately for our squire, but the Englishman could not help it. Come, come to dinner, for it is ready."



The gentleman's lordly disregard of prudence is magnificent, the pictures, in prose or in illuminated manuscripts, gay and brilliant. But there is a certain ugliness half hidden, a certain smell beneath the bedizenment. A professional jouster could make a very good thing of conflict. The winner of a joust took his opponent's horse, often his arms; sometimes he held the loser for ransom. Chivalry involved a good deal of pretense and self-interest. Froissart indicates that knights, in their idle conversation, talked mostly of money and of good tricks, including murder, to gain it. A knight poor in land and without high patronage had no means of support except pillage, ransoming captives, and even accepting bribes for disloyalty. Most of these opportunities occurred in a state of war. Peace was a calamity for the gentleman.

But for the commoner the times were evil. After a series of bad harvests in the early fourteenth century the peasants reaped only famine. The bubonic plague, the Black Death, disembarked in Italy and France in 1348, and killed a third of Europe's population before it receded. Some modern historians point to the brighter side of the plague: it reduced the population, increased the size of farm holdings, elevated the returns of labor, raised wages in proportion to the cost of living. (Thus Economics can be pictured consoling Death and Bereavement.) Froissart averted his look from the ugly plague; he barely mentions it.

War declared no holiday; Calais was finally captured by the English in December, 1348. The devastation of war added to the devastation of plague—abandoned, infected villages, untilled fields, where horrid flies rose from the bloated bodies of farm animals. The flames of burning cottages perhaps annihilated some of the plague bacilli. The destruction of villages was a legitimate act of war. Edward III of England vowed to reduce Brittany to such a state that it would not recover for forty years. France went him one better, proposing to so ravage Hainault that it would lie waste forever. Pillage was the soldier's right—indeed, his necessity, for he was expected to "live off the country." Savage soldiers added torture and rape to mere destruction. If the victims complained, they were beaten or killed. "We'll pay when we return from England!" joked the French foragers, and the peasants replied: "Go, go to England, and may never a one of you return!"

Atrocities were normal. The marauding armies had no facilities for guarding and feeding prisoners; the sure and simple procedure was to kill them, unless they looked ransomable. A city guilty of long resistance was punished by the murder of all survivors—men, women, and children. Three thousand thus fell before the Black Prince at Limoges. A favorite trick of besiegers was to decapitate the prisoners before the walls and catapult the severed heads into the city. Cruelty was necessary for government, said theorizers. "A man must be feared and dreaded, even renowned for cruelty," opined a Flemish despot, Pierre du Bois, to Philip van Artevelde, ruler of Ghent. "It is thus that the Flemings wish to be governed, and among them men's lives should be no more valued and they should receive no more pity than swallows or larks, which are caught in the proper season for the table." Philip van Artevelde thought the advice good, and beheaded ten of the town troublemakers.

The permanent war and the acceptance of pillage as war's concomitant



blurred the distinction between chivalrous soldier and heartless robber. The distinction was not clear even to Froissart, who salutes as gallantry what we might take as bold villainy. The robber baron gained a certain place in society and a certain immunity, for there were few who could bring him to book for his misdeeds. Froissart describes such a man's rise to eminence. He would lead a band of twenty or thirty into a small town or somnolent castle at daybreak and set fires here and there. The inhabitants, thinking a general attack was being leveled by the enemy, would usually flee. After looting the portables, the robbers would offer the stronghold for ransom, or they would demand protection money, volunteering to go away for a fee. Or they would keep the place as a base for future depredations. Thus they might become very rich and very respectable.

As an illustrative example we take the career of Aymerigot Marcel, a small gentleman of the Limousin. He was in English territory, but he could shift allegiance in a moment. His specialty was capturing castles by surprise and psychology rather than by bloody, precarious violence. He took a valuable castle by seizing the castellan's father and mother and preparing, with much deliberation, to behead them before the donjon. The castellan's nerves gave way and he surrendered. Entering another castle by surprise, Aymerigot was checked when the governor locked the castle gates behind him and retired to the donjon, securing himself with the castle keys. Thus the invaders could neither finish their attack nor retreat. "Aymerigot came to the tower, and, addressing the governor, said: 'Giradon, give us the keys of the castle gate, and I promise you we will leave it without doing any mischief to the castle.' 'Indeed!' replied Giradon; 'but you will carry off all my cattle! How can I believe you?' 'Give me your hand,' said Aymerigot, 'and I swear to you on my faith that you will not suffer the smallest loss.' Upon this, he, like a fool, came to a small window in the tower,



and offered his hand for him to pledge his faith on; but the moment Aymerigot got hold of it he pulled it to him, squeezing it very hard, and called for his dagger, swearing he would stick his hand to the wall unless he gave up all his keys." Recognizing that this was an oath Aymerigot would keep, Giradon passed over the keys. The invader surrendered the castle to its owner for five thousand francs in hard money.

By such devices Aymerigot became very rich, though his expenses were high. Under pressure from his English overlords he renounced robbery, though with regret. He said to his cronies: "There is no pleasure or glory in this world like that which men-at-arms, such as ourselves, enjoyed. How happy were we, when, riding out in search of adventures, we met a rich abbot, a merchant, or a string of mules, well laden with draperies, furs, or spices, from Montpellier, Béziers, or other places! All was our own, or at least ransomed according to our will. Every day we gained money. The peasants of Auvergne and Limousin loved us, and provided our castle with wheat, meal, baked bread, litter for our horses, oats, hay, good wine, fat beeves, sheep, and all sorts of poultry. We lived like kings, and when we went abroad, the country trembled. Everything was ours, both in going and returning!"

The old companions, who had now wasted all their wealth, were much moved by the remembrance of happy days and urged Aymerigot to take to the roads again. At their exhortation he took over a half-ruined castle on the line between English Limousin and French Auvergne. Many stout lads joined him, asking no pay other than



loot. But the French gentry sent an appeal to their king, and he responded by sending a strong punitive force. Aymerigot seems to have lost his nerve. He appealed vainly to the king of England; he tried to entice a cluster of nobles to a conference in his castle, promising great rewards but actually intending to capture his guests and hold them as hostages. In the end he was taken captive—by treachery, fittingly. He was transported to Paris and convicted of treason. He was carried in a cart to the great marketplace, where his crimes were read aloud. "His head was cut off, and his four quarters affixed over four different gates of Paris." Thus he received a kind of honor in death. Treason is a noble crime; division into five pieces is the punishment of a gentleman. A commoner would have been hanged and left to the birds.

Here, as elsewhere, Froissart reveals his inborn snobbishness. The poor, the mass of humanity, bored him. Indeed, their role in history is obscure and anonymous. They fight, suffer, and die, and reappear only as units in statistics. Occasionally, but rarely, Froissart expresses pity for the poor, the robbed, starved, tortured, and murdered. Mostly he does not notice them. He passes off the rebellion of the *Jacquerie* in a few paragraphs. While he shows some sympathy for the rebels of Wat Tyler's uprising, he dismisses the spokesman, John Ball, as "a crazy priest," which he was not.

At least Froissart tried to tell the truth, within the limits set to his comprehension by his background, profession, and associations. It is no easy thing to tell the truth without falling into a morass of self-doubt and doubt if truth be attainable or if it exists. Froissart had no such doubts. "When I shall be dead and rotten," he wrote, "this grand and noble history will be much in fashion, and all noble and valiant persons will take pleasure in it and gain from it augmentation of profit."

All noble and valiant persons, please take note.

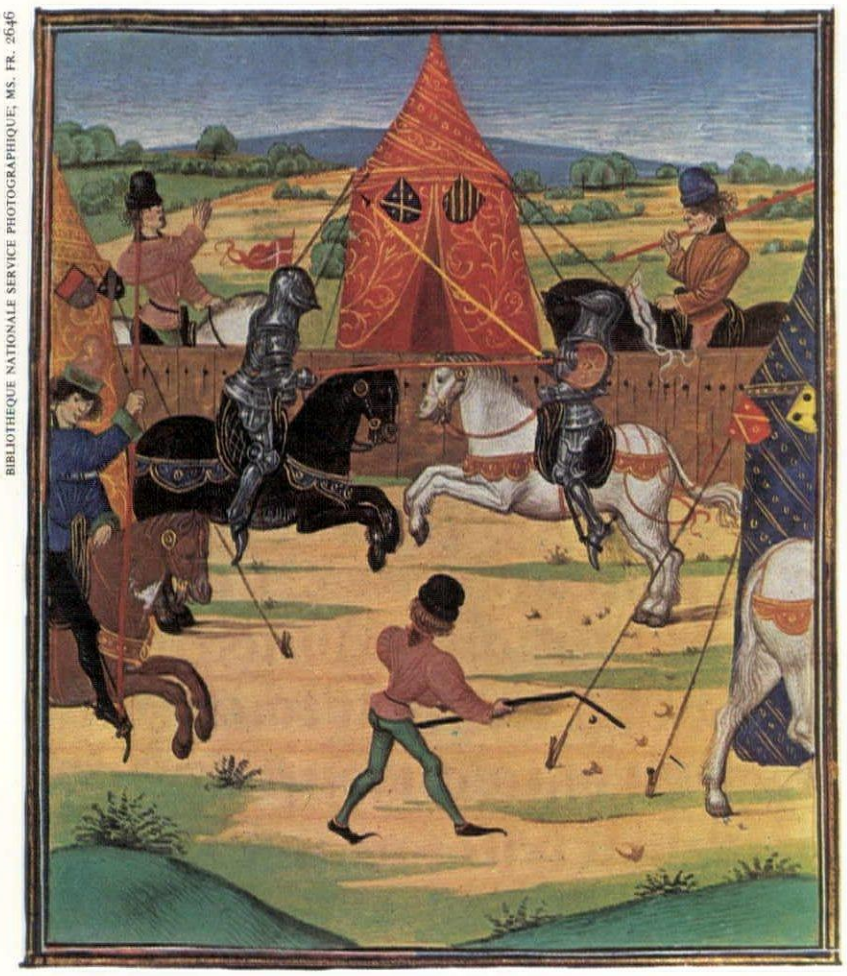
Brutal Twilight of an Age



BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE SERVICE PHOTOGRAPHIQUE; MS. FR. 2643

Froissart's *Chronicles* were avidly read in the fifteenth century, for his subject was war, and he cast it in the heroic mold his highborn readers expected—the mold of chivalry and derring-do. In the process he recorded the violent ending of the Middle Ages. "The real object of this history," Froissart explained, is "to relate the great enterprises and deeds of arms" being carried out in the wars between England and France. The occasion of the wars was a disputed French throne, a dispute in which Isabella, queen of England, shown above entering Paris, played a key part. When her brother Charles IV of France died in 1328 without an heir, Isabella and her son Edward were the two closest claimants to the throne. Ignoring both, the peers of France crowned Philip of Valois. With that, England's kings had a permanent pretext for war and feudal lords an opportunity for "deeds of arms." These deeds Froissart believed to be almost without parallel, scarcely noticing they were almost without purpose.

Blood Sports



BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE SERVICE PHOTOGRAPHIQUE; MS. FR. 2646

Next to waging war, Froissart's heroes liked nothing better than a well-run joust, and for true chivalric spirit, few tournaments matched the jousts of St. Inglevert, near Calais, above, held because three French knights undertook "to maintain the lists against all comers" in the "charming month of May," 1390. "Desirous of renown," scores of English knights crossed the Channel to tilt with the French champions, who unhorsed several, bloodied a few, and gave every Englishman his turn. According to Froissart, the notable success of one of the Frenchmen was due to his being "smitten with love for a young lady that made all his affairs prosper."



"This battle was very murderous and horrible," said Froissart of the sea fight, right, between the French and English (the fleur-de-lis and the lion, respectively), near the Flanders port of Sluys on June 24, 1340. On that day, Edward III, king of England, was sailing for Flanders to help an ally when he saw French warships blocking his way. Edward, who had not yet fought the French directly, decided the time had come: "they have done me so much mischief, that I will be revenged." He was. At the end of the brutal day, "the French were completely defeated, and all . . . were killed or drowned." What made sea fights "more destructive" than land fights, explained Froissart, was that "it is not possible to retreat or flee." That even chivalric knights would occasionally flee from battle Froissart never denied. Describing the Battle of Crécy, he noted that when the king of Germany "saw that things were going badly for his side he turned and left. I do not know which way he went."



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Royal Diversions



BRITISH MUSEUM, MS. HARL. 4380

To amuse the French king at a wedding feast, one of his retainers conceived a fateful "pleasantry." The young king, Charles VI, and five other knights were to secretly dress themselves in linen coats covered with flax to resemble a hairy pelt. "This masquarade pleased the king greatly," Froissart reports. At midnight the "savages" appeared in a group before the wedding guests, but Charles could not resist leaving the others in order to sport with the ladies, "as was natural to his youth." Just then the king's brother, eager to get a better look, approached the inflammable masqueraders with a torch. In an instant, as the miniature above shows, the pranksters went up in flames, four of them burning to death. Only youthful vanity and "the providence of God" had saved the king's life.

"On Sunday the 20th day of June, in the year of our Lord 1389, there were such crowds of people in Paris, it was marvelous to see them." Queen Isabella of Bavaria, bride of Charles VI, was publicly joining him in Paris for the first time, as depicted in the scene at right. Before reaching the royal palace, the procession, led by the young queen in a litter, with her ladies and lords of the realm, had wound its way slowly through canopied streets. En route were splendid pageants and displays: Christians fighting mock Saracens; a toy castle where "twelve young maidens" enacted an allegory of justice; a fountain running claret, attended by girls "who sang sweetly" and offered wine in golden cups "to all who chose to drink." Mounted knights, damsels in "chaplets of gold," uniformed subjects lining the streets—for one day at least, life for Froissart's noblemen had become that authentic pageant of chivalry and romance they so ardently wished it would be.





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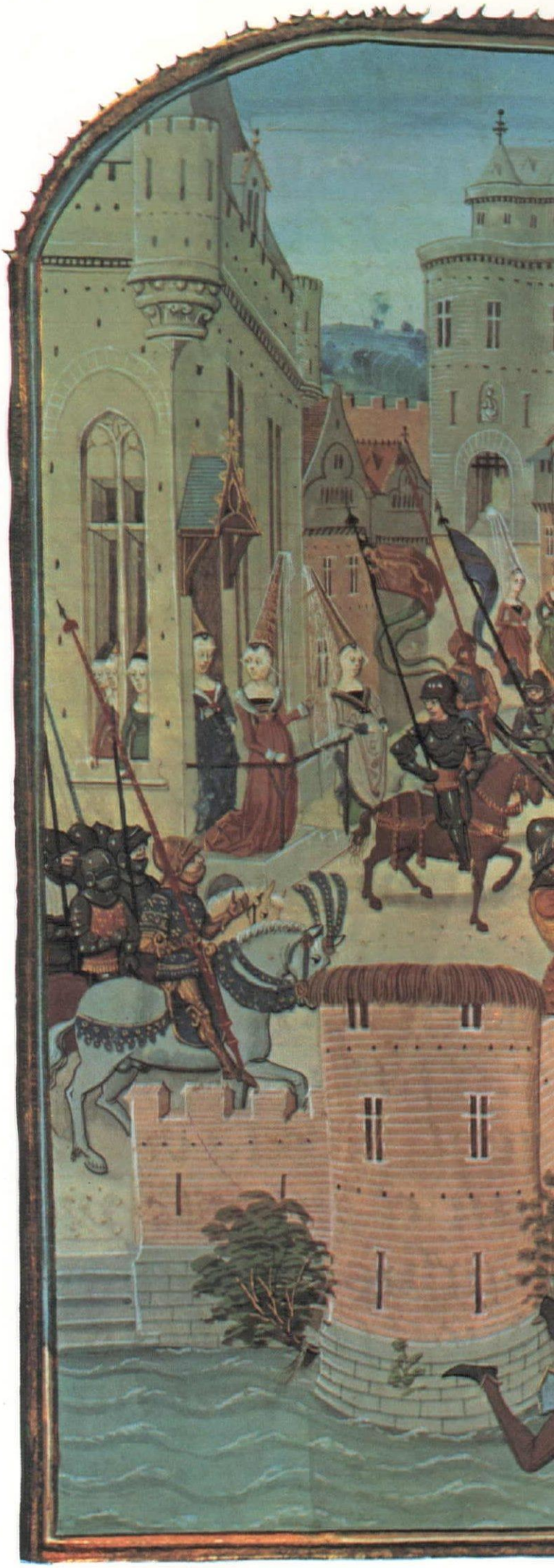
A World in Turmoil



BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE SERVICE PHOTOGRAPHIQUE; MS. FR. 2644

The gallant deeds that Froissart so relished were mere pinpoints of light in a dark era of anarchy and rapine. Bonds between men were breaking. Armed knights, throwing off the ties of fealty to their lords, formed themselves into "Free Companies" and pillaged and sacked on their own. At times, said Froissart, it was impossible for anyone to travel without being attacked. All social classes were at loggerheads. In Flanders the townsmen of Ghent, calling themselves "white hoods," created an army to fight the Count of Flanders, besieging their nominal lord at Dendremonde, above, and burning and looting his castles. In a few years, said Froissart, "well cultivated" Flanders was laid to waste.

Chivalric or otherwise, violence perpetually bred violence in Froissart's world. In 1358 desperate French peasants, resolved to "destroy all the nobles and gentlemen of the world," rose up in a mad fury. Known as the *Jacquerie,* they were termed by Froissart "wicked people without leader and without arms" who "plundered and burnt all the houses they came to, murdered every gentleman and violated every lady and damsel." With nine thousand Jacques at their heels, the gentry fled to Meaux, outside Paris, and there the rebels met their bloody end. The armed troops of two noblemen attacked them inside the walls of the town, as shown at right, "striking them down like beasts" and flinging them "in great heaps into the river." Yet killing rebellious peasants could not save the feudal order, whose ruin Froissart unwittingly chronicled in the fond illusion that he was describing its finest hour.





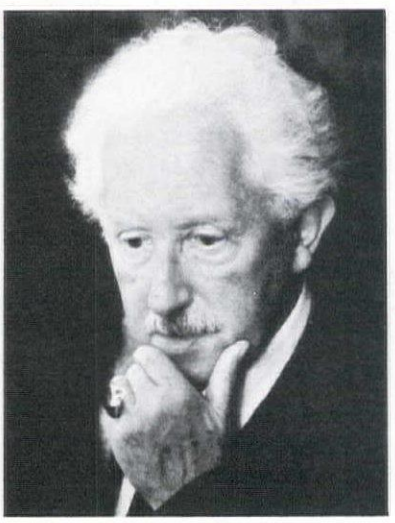
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Erikson Among the Indians

What made the Sioux so brave? What made the Yuroks so clean and so greedy? An eminent psychiatrist tells how his lifework was shaped by the study of child rearing in two American tribes

Many an anthropologist, it seems, has a deeply personal and enduring relationship to the culture or territory that he studied first. There his identity as a researcher became irreversibly attuned to the uniqueness of the environmental setting as well as to that of the value system of a tribe or a people. I have always considered it decisive for my comprehension of the human environment that I had the good fortune within the space of a few years to accompany two anthropologists to their "favorite" tribes: first H. Scudder Mekeel to a Sioux Indian reservation on the Great Plains, and then the venerable Alfred Kroeber to the Yurok Indians on the Pacific coast of northern California.

The immediate purpose of the first trip was to investigate the difficulties encountered in the education of Sioux children in the prairie schools maintained by the U.S. Indian Service. As for the Yuroks, Alfred Kroeber had always been interested in understanding aspects of their behavior and their mythological imagination, which, it appeared, had a certain weird similarity to the magic and phobic preoccupations of compulsive and obsessive individuals studied in our culture. In both instances, however, my anthropologist friends and I soon found ourselves discussing the powerful influence of the human environment, and that means the natural setting as perceived and transformed by a culture, and the values and virtues that have proved "fitting."



OLIVE PIERCE

Erik H. Erikson in 1970

In the past four decades, as a psychoanalyst, teacher, and writer, Erik H. Erikson has contributed new theories of child development, introduced the concept of the identity crisis, and cultivated the psycho-historical approach to biography. Dr. Erikson's study of the Sioux and Yurok Indians late in the 1930's helped him formulate his basic ideas. This article is abridged from a new anthology, *Arts of the Environment*, edited by Gyorgy Kepes and published this year by George Braziller, Inc. Here, Dr. Erikson reviews observations of Indian child-rearing practices first published in 1950 in his classic, *Childhood and Society*.

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The Sioux were belligerent nomads, roaming the northern Central Plains in loosely organized groups in the pursuit of "dark masses of buffalo." Their economic concepts were dominated by the conviction that "you can't take it with you"—either in this world or the next. Their possessions were few and changed hands readily. Generosity—as expressed in ceremonial giveaway feasts—and fortitude in hunt and battle were their cardinal virtues.

The Yuroks, on the other hand, lived in a narrow, densely wooded river valley that descends steeply into the Pacific. They were sedentary and peaceful to the point of ignoring warring neighbors. They gathered acorns, fished along the river, and prepared themselves spiritually for the annual miracle of the salmon run. They owned "real estate" along the river, cultivated virtues that led to the storage of wealth, and gave monetary value to every named item in their small world. For me, the sharp-eyed Plains Indian and his endless horizons had served to reinforce the original image of "the Indian" acquired in my childhood days. Now I had to adapt myself to Indians who would point solemnly to a hardly

By ERIK H. ERIKSON

discernible pit in the ground and call it their ancestral home.

By then both the Sioux and the Yuroks had ceased to function as living cultures and had become American minorities of a special historical and sociological kind. Remnants of their old value systems and of their child-training methods had been compromised by attempts at acculturation and federal education. But these remnants, whether still practiced or scarcely remembered, were all that would ever be known. For in the past, child training had been an anthropologist's no man's land. Even discerning early observers preferred to assume—with contempt or with elation—that Indian children were "untrained animals"; and, indeed, otherwise well-informed white educators quickly revealed strong private prejudices of long standing.

The Indians in the meantime had silently clung to fragments of traditional values that, as questioning disclosed, were of great emotional importance to them. In order to understand the remaining values of ancient child-training systems, which we now reconstructed, and to compare them with the modern values unsuccessfully imposed by the government, we found it necessary to review some of the successive images of themselves and of one another that the two Indian groups and their white caretakers had developed since they had first met.

The original image of the Sioux is that of the warrior and hunter, endowed with manliness and mobility, cunning and cruelty. But for a long time the Sioux had been beset by an apocalyptic sequence of catastrophes, as if nature and history had united to declare total war on their all-too-manly offspring. Only a few centuries before the whites settled among them, the Sioux had left their original home territory further east and had adjusted their hunting methods and their daily lives to one creature: the buffalo.

But the whites, eager for trade routes and territory, had upset the hunting grounds and slaughtered buffaloes by the hundred thousand. In search of gold, they swarmed into the Black Hills, the Sioux's holy mountains and winter refuge. Eventually forced to become cowboys, the Sioux soon found their grasslands destroyed by erosion, their herds decimated, and their markets menaced by selling booms and depressions. In the end, nothing was left but abhorred homesteading within the confines of the reservations—on some of the poorest land in all the states. When the buffaloes died, it was said the Sioux died.

The Sioux found themselves in a cultural vacuum. It seemed only yesterday that the three inseparable horsemen of their history's apocalypse had appeared on their horizon: the migration of foreign people, the death of the buffalo, and soil erosion. Somehow they still seemed to expect that tomorrow the bad dream would be over. They asked the United States Supreme Court to give them back the Black Hills, the buffaloes, the gold—or to pay for them. Someday, they expected, there would be a notice on the bulletin board at the agency announcing that the court had heard them and had made them rich.

In the meantime, why learn to farm? Time for them, one gathered, was empty waiting, except for those vivid moments of the present in which the Indian could be his old self, exchanging memories, gossiping, joking, or dancing, and in which he again felt connected with the boundless past, where there was no one but himself, the game, and the enemy. The space where he could feel at home was still without borders, and allowed both for voluntary gatherings from all "corners" of the prairie and for sudden expansion and dispersion. He had been glad to accept such items of white culture as the horse and the gun, but he had little comprehension of the kind of men who were sent from mysterious Washington to re-educate him.

And, indeed, the very world image implicit in the Sioux Indian's tradition forced us to study the structure of the environment and the values of "our" administrators and teachers. They, of course, had not come as students; nor had most of them come to stay. On the contrary, their passing contact with the Indians had been dictated largely out of consideration for careers that would eventually lead them elsewhere. All the more did they cling to the world image they had brought along. They preached with defensive righteousness a life plan with their own, localized goals: home, real estate, bank account—all of which receive their meaning from a sense of time in which the immigrant past must be overcome and in which the full measure of fulfillment in the present must be sacrificed to an increasingly higher standard of living in the ever distant future.

In trying to understand the grievances of both races, we encountered resistances that were not based on malice or entirely on ignorance, but rather on anachronistic *fears of extinction* and on the *fear of loss of group identity*. The Indian could not part with a past that provided him with the last cultural synthesis he was able to achieve, and he could not identify with a white system that offered no new synthesis. We learned that virtues originally designed as measures of self-preservation become rigid under the pressure of anachronistic fears of extinction and the anxiety aroused by threatened identity loss, and can render a people unable to adapt to changed necessities.

Most whites thus found it difficult to face a minority problem that endangered what synthesis their dearly won status in a federal bureaucracy seemed to promise. The very training of an effective and dependable government employee tended to exclude automatically the ability to tolerate certain classes of people, their standards and habits—unless, of course, special training or special insight helped him to identify with the environment and the values of his clients.

Without such empathy, however, the

passive fortitude of Indian children seemed as infuriating as it was incomprehensible. Their misconduct rarely erupted into open "juvenile delinquency" but smoldered in the form of a general and intangible passive resistance against any further and more final impact of white standards on the Indian conscience.

To fathom the genius of a culture, it is necessary to trace the implanting of the dominant value system into each newborn member of a primitive community; and sensitive, older Indians knew very well what we were looking for. As the guardians of an old-world image, they, too, were aware of the fact that through its agents, the parental persons, a culture establishes in the young and very young a basic social grammar that is rooted in early bodily experience. At the very beginning, the maternal persons follow a sequence and alternation of indulging and denying, of accelerating and inhibiting, infantile wishes and aspirations. The ever-expanding readiness of mouth and eyes, of sensory equipment, and of musculature comes to interact with the administrations of those who attend, train, and judge: thus, basic cultural variations are established in the universal set of infantile experiences.

Indeed, the Sioux child's preverbal conditioning can be seen as an ingenious arrangement that would first secure in him a safe combination of undiminished self-confidence and trust in the availability of food supply, and then an ever-ready anger in the face of interference, for both trust and aggression seem necessary for the functioning of a hunter democracy. The most basic of developmental facts, of course, is that the newborn must learn to know the world by receiving and accepting both food and warmth in closeness to the mother, and then must learn to let go of her: the individual's loss of paradise.

Even before the Sioux child was born, his mother's relatives and friends gathered the prairie's best berries and herbs and prepared a juice in a buffalo bladder that would serve as the baby's first nursing bottle. After his birth, an expert woman stimulated his mouth with her finger and fed him the juice while other women sucked the mother's breasts until they were ready to give the real stuff of life instead of the less digestible colostrum. Once the baby had begun to enjoy the mother's breast, he was nursed whenever he whimpered: the Sioux did not believe that crying would make a baby strong, although they considered temper tantrums in the older child desirable. Boys in particular, and especially the first boy, were breast-fed generously for a period of from three to five years, during which time the father was to refrain from making sexual advances to the mother; intercourse was said to spoil the milk. The eventual advent of a new baby, however, did not totally preclude access to the maternal breast: even where he had already learned to depend on other food, the Sioux child was permitted to draw an occasional sip from his mother or (for that matter) from any other available woman.

This paradise of a long and generous feeding history, however, contained a forbidden fruit. Older Sioux women recount the trouble they had with these indulged babies when they began to teethe and bite. The mother would "thump" the infant's head and he would fly into a rage. The women's habitual amusement with these tantrums was justified with the assertion that rage makes a child strong. One might wonder how well the Sioux infant was able to "abreact" rage while still strapped in the traditional cradleboard. While this tight container permitted the newborn to find a comfortable approximation of the fetal state, it may also have inhibited in the infant the muscular expression of provoked rage and thus helped establish a lasting reservoir of aggression that contributed to the much described "trait" of anger and cruelty in the Sioux character.

But such matters are by no means to be understood as a one-way "conditioning" of the individual child: only pervasive cultural values can give meaning to such items in child training. Thus (to follow this one trend) the generosity manifested in the mother's initial treatment of the child was continued in the family's respect for the child's possessions. While an adult Sioux could not refuse another's request for a gift, he could refuse to give away his child's things, for much honor would come to the child when he, of his own accord, would later relinquish his property on ceremonial occasions. And it should be noted in passing that the child was not taught primarily by being told that property was "bad," but by being given an example of extreme generosity by his elders. Under disintegrating conditions, such prescribed virtues can, of course, become economic vices. At the time of my observations, to the trader's horror, parents were willing to let a child buy sweets and toys with money that was desperately needed for basic supplies.

The first strict taboos expressed verbally, and made inescapable by a tight net of shaming, applied to the relationship of brother and sister. After the sixth year of life, brother and sister were not to address each other directly anymore. The girl would be urged to confine herself to female play and to stay near the tepee, while the boy was encouraged to join the older boys in hunting games. From then on, the daily patterns for boys and girls differed radically. The boy was to become restless, brave, and reckless; the girl, reticent, industrious, and chaste. While intrusive and sadistic tendencies were cultivated as masculine, corresponding inhibitions were invoked in the girl, as is typical of cultures catering to an extreme masculine ideal.

Girls were taught to sit modestly, to walk in small, measured steps, later to sleep with their thighs tied together and not to go beyond a certain radius around the tepee or camp. It was understood by both sexes that older girls who habitually overstepped such restrictions might be raped by the boys

with impunity. Functioning cultures, however, cannot afford to distort the self-image of women and to take chances with their capacity to integrate their social and personal lives—if for no other reason than that they must continue to support fully and effectively the development of well-functioning boys and girls. We have seen how the mothers were made to feel that to them fell the task of laying the foundation for the Sioux's basic attitudes toward the world as a whole. Such consciousness of a mission may have given female functions and modes equality in cultural and economic importance with those of men, and may have prevented the vast majority of women from resenting their restricted participation in the more spectacular male activities.

But in addition, the girl who learned to conform to these restrictions knew that, as an adult, her brother would be obliged to bring to her the best of what he could hunt or catch. She would butcher the buffaloes and on occasion mutilate an enemy he had killed. At certain ceremonies she would sing of his bravery, and in the Sun Dance she would assist him during prescribed self-torture. This is an example of the way in which homogeneous cultures—here a culture with an extreme elaboration of male fortitude and female solicitude—attempt to pay in the currency of prestige for whatever exploitation they have come to impose.

Let us now compare the environment and the virtues of the Sioux with those of the Yuroks. The Yuroks lived largely in or at the mouth of a narrow, mountainous, densely forested valley, and as if making a virtue out of a geographic pattern, confined themselves within strict territorial borders. To them "the world" was a disk of about 150 miles in diameter, cut in half by the Klamath River and defined by cardinal directions: there was an "upstream" and a "downstream," a "toward the river" and an "away from the river," and then, at the end of the world, an elliptic "in back and around." The Yuroks ignored the worlds beyond and ostracized as "of ignoble birth" anyone who showed a marked tendency to venture into alien territories. Instead, they "cried" and prayed to their horizons, which they thought contained the supernatural regions from which generous spirits sent the stuff of life to them: above all, salmon.

Within this restricted radius of existence, extreme localization took place. Ancestral pits in the ground retained a family's name for generations. In fact, the whole environment was noteworthy only insofar as mythological events had given names to circumscribed locations. Yurok myths do not mention the gigantic redwoods that overshadow their towns and fishing places, but they do refer to certain undistinguished rocks and trees as being the "origin" of the most far-reaching events. This localization found its economic counterpart in a monetization of values. Every person, relationship, or act could be exactly valued, and became the object of pride and ceaseless bickering. Thus, when I asked a venerable shaman woman to tell me how she happened to become a shaman, she quickly and seriously said, "This cost twice a dollar." The acquisition and retention of possessions was, above all, what the Yuroks thought about, talked about, and prayed for. This was one "primitive" tendency the Yuroks did not need to forget in the white world.

The well-defined Yurok world seen as a whole seemed to have its "mouth open" toward the ocean and toward the yearly, mysterious appearance of salmon, which enter and climb up the river, and, usually leaving an abundant food supply in the Yuroks' nets, continue upriver to spawn and die. Some months later their diminutive progeny descends the river and disappears in the ocean—to come back two years later as mature salmon and climb (as if driven by a "homing instinct") back to their birthplace, in order to fulfill their life cycle. From direct observation, the Yuroks could only know that before entering the river the salmon stop eating and therefore when caught have empty stomachs. As they ascend the river their sexual organs mature, while their fat content begins to diminish. At the pink of their condition and nutritional value the salmon have ceased eating and have not yet commenced procreating. To gain sympathetic power over their prey the Yurok fishermen made a special point of purifying themselves from contact with women and of abstaining from food.

The Yurok "environment," it seems, is magically conceptualized on the basis of (1) observations of the geographic and biological environment, that is, the lower part of a river valley, and a mysterious periodic supply of a prey with a particularly dramatic biology; and (2) experiences of the human body as a slowly maturing organism with periodic needs. In the nonmagic sphere the Yuroks reached a certain degree of logic and technique, as do all human beings. Magic thought and behavior, however, seemed indicated whenever mysterious food sources beyond the Yuroks' power and comprehension needed to be influenced, and whenever vague human impulses and fears needed to be alleviated, in which cases the Yuroks tried to understand nature around and within them by blending bodily and geographic configurations into one geographic-anatomical environment. Thus, the periodic affluence of the waterway has a functional interrelation with the periodicity of vital juices in the body's nutritional and procreative systems, and therefore the Yuroks' main magic concern is that vital channels in nature be kept open by the strict regulation of such bodily events as eating and defecation, menstruation, intercourse, and childbirth.

One example of such primitive synthesis is the pervading importance of the "tube" configuration in Yurok thinking. According to Yurok mythology, the Klamath in prehistoric times flowed up on one side of its bed and

down on the other. Now, it flows only in the downward direction, and salmon ascend upward. I will never forget the old shaman woman's apocalyptic apprehension when, from her home high up on a dune, she saw a small whale enter, play about in, and leave the mouth of the Klamath. The river could safely serve only one vector of animal motion, that of ascending salmon.

Both salmon and river dislike food to be eaten on a boat. Deer will stay away from the snares if deer meat has been brought in contact with water. Salmon demand that women on a trip up or down river leave the boat at specified places and walk around a sacred rock. Salmon also dislike the man who is full of food; and money will leave the house if intercourse takes place in its vicinity. What the Yuroks call "clean" living, then, is an attempt to keep vectors clear and channels unobstructed, and also to avoid the "wombs" of the world—including the lake upriver, from which the waters of the Klamath flow; the place across the ocean, where salmon originate; and the beaches up the coast, where shell money is collected.

In the Yurok world there are two kinds of houses, the living house and the sweat house. Both are sunk into the ground, with their roofs a few feet above it. The "doors" consist of oval openings that admit one creeping human being at a time. The living house, however, has only one such opening, while the sweat house has two, a bigger and a smaller one. The living house is dominated by the activities shared by men and women; it is full of food and utensils, crowded with babies, and is for sleeping—and sleeping together. Living house and woman are thus associated: after contact with either, the man has to pass the "test" of the sweat house. This he enters through the normal-sized door; but he must leave it through the very small opening, which will let only those men slip through who are moderate in their eating habits and supple with the perspiration caused by the sacred fire. The men must then



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This Sioux brave learned to hunt and fight fearlessly on the plains he surveys in Edward Curtis's 1905 photograph, above. As a child, he was rewarded for aggressive behavior.

conclude the purification by swimming in the river. The conscientious fisherman passes this test every morning, giving, as it were, daily rebirth to himself through a man-made womb.

Once a year the whole system of magic avoidances is set aside and superior, mechanical invention takes over. Following complicated ceremonies, a strong dam is built, which obstructs the ascent of the salmon and permits the Yuroks to catch a rich winter supply. The dam building, according to Kroeber, is the largest mechanical enterprise undertaken by the Yuroks or for that matter any California Indians, and the most communal. After ten days of collective fishing, orgies of ridicule and sexual freedom take place, reminiscent of ancient European spring rites.

We have referred to the contribution made by the Sioux infant's early training to the dominant virtues as well as the dominant images of the Sioux world. What, in comparison, happens in Yurok infancy?

Breast-feeding begins with typical Indian generosity. However, there is a definite weaning time around the sixth month—the teething period. This acceleration of weaning seems to be part of a general tendency to encourage the baby to leave the mother and her support as soon as this is possible and bearable—and not to return. Weaning, in fact, is called "forgetting the mother," and if necessary, is enforced by the mother's going away for a few days. As for muscular development, the baby's legs (in the Yurok version of the cradleboard) are left uncovered from his twentieth day on, and are massaged by the grandmother; creeping is encouraged.

However, there also remains a lifelong and later minutely ritualized preoccupation with food and a capacity for a nostalgia utilized in ritual "crying." At the "sense" stage (that is, when the child can repeat what he has been told) he is admonished to eat slowly, not to grab food, never to take it without asking for it, never to eat between meals, and never to ask for a second helping—an oral puritanism rarely equaled among other Indians. During meals, a strict order of placement is maintained, and the children are taught to eat in prescribed ways: to put only a little food on the spoon, to lift the spoon slowly, to put it down again while chewing the food—and to think of becoming rich during the whole process. Nobody speaks during meals so that everyone can keep his thoughts on money and salmon. (The adult Yurok during meals was supposed to make himself see money hanging from trees and salmon swimming in the river during the off season.) Thus a maximum of avarice and nostalgia is first provoked by early weaning (not only from the breast but also from contact with the mother) and then "tamed" and used for the development of such "ideal" attitudes as will, to the Yurok mind, assure fate's favor.

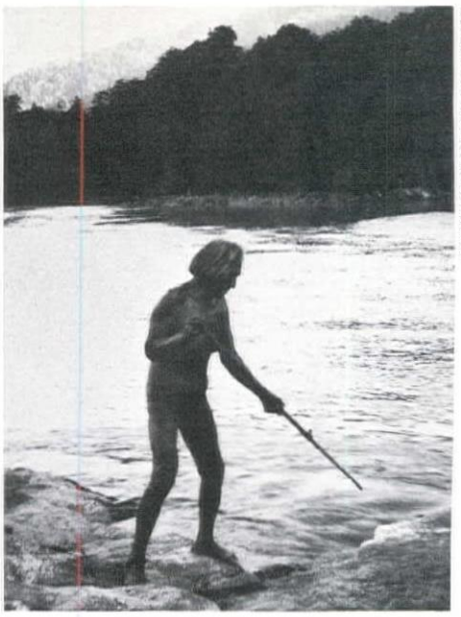
The groundwork for the Yurok's sexual attitudes, too, is laid in the child's earlier conditioning, which teaches him to subordinate drive to economic considerations. The Sioux man, in his pronounced masculinity, was more phallic-sadistic, in that he pursued whatever roamed: game, enemy, woman. The Yurok was more phobic-compulsive; he cultivated avoid-

ances, such as not being "snared" by the wrong woman or at the wrong time or place—"wrong" meaning under any circumstances that would compromise his assets as an economic being, so he could buy a worthwhile wife. If he were to make an unworthy girl pregnant, he would have to marry her. In the sweat house he had to learn the strange feat of thinking of money and of *not* thinking of women.

Within these basic limits, however, sexuality was viewed with leniency and humor. The fact that sexual contact necessitated purification seemed to be considered a duty or a nuisance, but did not reflect either on sexuality as such or on women in general. It was the body's inner system of fluid ways that, by implication, was avoided, when the menstruating young girl was constrained to bathe alone; the surface of the human body aroused no shame, and everybody was free to bathe in the nude.

But the girl knew that virtue, or shall we say an unblemished name, would gain her a husband who could pay well, and that her status and that of her children and her children's children would depend on the amount her husband would offer her father when asking for her. Weakness of character or habitual deviancy was usually attributed to the delinquent's mother or grandmother not having been "paid for in full." This, it seems, meant that a woman and a man became involved prematurely and had to marry on a down payment and then maybe were unable to pay the installments. Such people were not "clean."

A few glimpses into the dynamics of what could be reconstructed as a Sioux and a Yurok value system have now shown us examples of how the "primitive" consciousness of being human coincides with an exclusive image of being a "strong" Sioux or a "clean" Yurok. Each tribe was dominated by the conviction that its virtues marked it as *the* people in *the* world. Each attempted to create a unique and exclusive way of life pleasing to its own



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Patterns of bodily control learned in infancy helped this Yurok fisherman to gain magic power over his prey. Here, he is shown fishing in a posed photograph, about 1900.

supernatural powers, superior to any other way of life, and at least matching the ethological adaptation of the animal world. By a magic unification, what is known (and not known) of the human body's workings is integrated with what is known (and not known) of the ecology of the environment. The human propensity to invent, to plan, to "grow" appropriate virtues, becomes part of a *cultural style* that pervades the whole ensemble of designs, from the weaving of a blanket to the telling of stories, and from mythologizing to ceremonial behavior. Thus, truly one world is presented to the growing individual at every step.

Let me come back to the question of why the logic of primitive ideation and behavior so often seems to resemble the hidden logic of neurotic behavior in our own culture. A clinician could claim to recognize in the Yuroks' ceremonial obsession to cleanse themselves from contact with "the woman's inside" a parallel to the phobic avoidance of dirt, the abhorrence of sexuality, the "washing ceremonials" of neurotic individuals in modern society. Or he could suspect behind the boisterous exhibitionism of the Sioux brave a hidden fear for his masculinity, comparable to the unconscious "castration fear" in some of our most outspoken masculinists.

But it must be clear by now that it is not the "savage" in his unified and communal world who resembles our neurotics, but rather modern neurotics who, in their failure to master discrepancies in their environment and in their values, become lonely caricatures of our primitive ancestors. That is, neurotic symptoms are not only partial regressions to infantile stages, they are also diffuse retrogressions to mental and emotional mechanisms belonging to mankind's more magic and more homogeneous past.

All of us are apt to consciously romanticize or abhor primitive ways. Men and women in those early cultures seem to have an innocent and direct physical relation to the sources of food. Their tools and weapons are extensions of the human body, their magic is a projection of the logic of the body. Children participate in technical and magic pursuits; body and environment, childhood and culture, may be full of dangers, but they are all one world. In contrast, the expansiveness of our civilization and its social stratification and technical specialization make it almost impossible to base any personal synthesis on more than a section of society. Machines, far from remaining an extension of the body, destine whole classes to become extensions of machinery, and the ruthless arbitrariness of man-made systems (rather than the will of moody and yet comprehensible gods) determines man's "environment."

No wonder that on a collective level we unconsciously grasp for magic solutions. Such mechanical child training, for example, as for a time was one of the prevailing patterns in Western civilization may be seen as a magic attempt to master a mechanized world by becoming more like machines, in analogy to the Sioux's identification with the buffalo of his hunting grounds, and the Yurok's with the river and the salmon. Thus, we, too, carry ancient forms of magic adaptation into our technological present.

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Léger's The Mechanic *seemed in 1920 to signal a new and happier industrial age.*

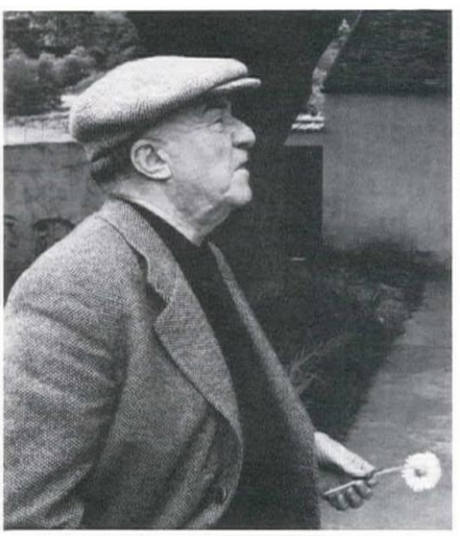
The Master of the Machine

Who was Fernand Léger to be
scared of a billboard in a meadow? Or of factory girders
or women with cast-iron breasts?

Every so often there surfaces in art an image that is so compelling, so absolutely true to one particular moment in history, that it puts the historians out of business. One such image is evoked by *The Mechanic* (opposite) Fernand Léger's painting of 1920 that fixes once and for all the idea that the life of the industrialized masses need not be without dignity, nor the individual massman turned into a disinherited cipher.

Léger believed this, with all his heart. If he makes us believe it, too, it is because he was not only a master of plain statement but a man to whom doubt and compromise and equivocation were abhorrent. He believed that the conveyor belt and the assembly line had changed life for the better, and that the industrialized working man would have his full share of the benefits of his hard work. It was a matter of faith with him that the mechanic was the New Man, the man for whom the machine was not a tyrant but the instrument of social liberation.

This could have led to a sententious, Stalin-type imagery of the Heroic Worker. But Léger's mechanic is not at all like that, despite his bulging muscles. He is a man with a mind of his own. No faceless abstraction, he is distinctively a Frenchman of the 1920's, with his nautical tattoo, his sleeked-down hair and heavy mustache, his cigarette at the ready and rings on his well-fleshed finger. But there is also something very grand and quite timeless about him. Léger in 1919 had been in and out of the newly reopened Egyptian and Assyrian rooms in the Louvre, and he gave his mechanic a look of ancient art in the severe frontal pose of the torso and the right-angled turn of the head on the neck. The mechanic meets us both head-on and in profile, as he might in an Assyrian relief.



GALERIE LOUISE LEIRIS, PARIS

Fernand Léger: Communist as country squire

Behind him, in terms of geometric flat planes and brilliant color, is the ideal place of work: the factory that never was. Looking at the casquelike cut of his forehead and cheekbones, we see immediately that this man is at one with his machines and could wish for no greater fulfillment than to be in charge of them.

Léger himself was not of industrial origins, and he never in his life worked in a factory. The son of a cattle breeder, he was born in 1881 and grew up on his father's farm in Normandy. His father was a giant of a man, and quick to come to blows when crossed. If he had not died suddenly while Fernand Léger was still in school, there would never have been any question of his son being allowed to stray from the family business. Léger got started in Paris as an art student in 1903 and made a meager living as an architect's draftsman, to begin with, and as a retoucher for a portrait photographer. He impressed his friends in Paris by the inherited solidity of his build; with his abundant red hair, his countrified freckles, and his general air of rude health and good spirits, he was very much the farmer's son.

His was an accepting nature. He took change for granted, and welcomed it. That a new world should produce a new kind of art seemed to him not merely natural but axiomatic. Old-style aesthetes might wince to see red and yellow billboards set up among the halftones of the French countryside; Léger thought it was the best thing that could happen. New sights,

By JOHN RUSSELL

new idioms, and new responses were what he lived by. "Modern man," he said in 1914, "has to take in a hundred times as many impressions as came his way in the eighteenth century. Is it surprising that our language is full of diminutives and abbreviations? If modern paintings are highly condensed, and if the forms with them are taken apart and redistributed, it's for the same reason."

Léger by that time was a friend of poets like Apollinaire and Cendrars, and a friend and prized colleague of painters like Robert Delaunay and Le Douanier Rousseau. Like Picasso, Braque, Derain, Vlaminck, and Juan Gris, he showed his work in Paris at D. H. Kahnweiler's little gallery near the Madeleine. He stood apart from the others, even so, in that when he tried his hand at a major work—the *Nudes in the Forest* of 1909–10—he instinctively chose a subject that involved people at work: naked woodsmen hacking away at tree trunks. It was a difficult, gloomy, almost monochromatic painting: the result of a long struggle, a "battle of volumes" as he said himself, to build the third dimension on flat canvas. "I wasn't ready for color," he said later.

Yet color was fundamental to modern life. The dynamic of that life, said Léger, was on the side of the poster in the street and the advertisement that lit up at night. "Post No Bills" was a ridiculous formula, well worthy of the society that sponsored it. "It's the taste of the middle class that's against posters," he went on. "The peasant is made of stronger stuff. Look how he likes a strong contrast of color in his clothes! A man like that isn't going to be scared by a billboard in a meadow."

Machinery had new color, too. Léger never forgot how he went to a pioneer aviation show in Paris with Marcel Duchamp and Brancusi. As they walked among the prehistoric aircraft, with their exposed machinery and huge wooden propellers, Duchamp grew more and more silent. Suddenly he said: "Painting's finished. How can we possibly compete with those propellers?" "I preferred the motors, myself," Léger would say as he told the story, "but then I always preferred metal to wood."

Léger had his fill of metal when he was drafted into the French army in 1914. Both as an artilleryman, from 1914 to 1916, and later as a stretcher-bearer on the Verdun front, he saw as much as anyone of the horrors of war. But he never discussed them. What moved him was the human quality of his fellow soldiers and the immediate, unaffected beauty of the guns that he had to fire. He had been on the very edge, in 1912 and 1913, of a purely abstract art: an art based on contrasted forms that had no reference to the visible world. No sooner was he in the army than activity of that kind began to seem to him both petty and futile.

"There I was," he said later, "on an equal footing with the totality of the French people. My new comrades were miners, laborers, metalworkers, woodcutters . . . What faces they had! What a shrewd, lively, and completely down-to-earth understanding of everything that went on! They were true poets in their everyday speech, so vivid and so inventive in their slang. And then the sight of the open breech of a 75 mm. cannon! The magic of the light on that white metal! One taste of all that, and I forgot about abstract art."

Léger was gassed at Verdun, and at the end of 1917 he was let out of the hospital and discharged from the army. But to the day of his death, in 1955, he never forgot the strength, the endurance, the total realism, the quick wit, and the uncomplaining good sense of his comrades-in-arms. Nor did he stop believing that civilian life would one day reward them for their offhand and undeceived heroism. If his paintings could bring that day nearer, or if they could indicate the conditions in which it would come about, so much the better. He was, however, very careful at the start not to sentimentalize the working man, or to assign him a more important place in the cities of the future than he would actually occupy.

In the great metropolitan paintings that Léger produced in 1919 and 1920 —above all, in *The City* (pages 90–91) —human beings play a subordinate part. Objects among other objects, they are not individualized: individuality was kept for moments when, as in *The Mechanic,* the working man was off duty and could smoke a cigarette. But he was not diminished, in Léger's eyes, by his objecthood. Rather, it raised him to the same level—that of a functional elegance, a stripped-down beauty without precedent—that was the mark of every other element in the new metropolitan scene.

Not everyone, of course, looked with such favor on the first machine age. In the early 1920's Karel Čapek's *R.U.R.* was welcomed in theatres all over the world for its defeatist preview of robot society. In 1932 René Clair's *A Nous La Liberté* was enormously popular for its portrait of the dehumanizing effect of industrialization. Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936) is a further and definitive example of this same disenchantment. But Léger did not stand alone in his optimistic approach to the problems of the postwar world. In the social strivings of the 1920's the machine had a fundamental, and it was hoped a benevolent, part to play.

Léger made new friends who agreed with him on these issues—especially the great architect Le Corbusier, who in 1925 gave him his first opportunity as a mural painter. Léger also involved himself in film-making, stage design, and book illustration. He had a sure instinct for the people with whom it would be most worthwhile to collaborate: Darius Milhaud in music, André Malraux as a beginner in literature, Abel Gance and Man Ray in the cinema. What he did in association with them reached, as often as not, only a small audience, but he never quite lost the expansionist dream—the notion of a world in which art would be for everyone and everyone would be for art.

By 1924, it seemed to him as though

that world was almost in sight, if only people would acknowledge it. There was no limit to the potential of the machine as a creator of beauty. There was no reason why, not only the shop-windows and billboards, but the entire architecture of the city street should not be a carnival for the eye. The automobile shows of the mid-1920's would have emptied the museums and bankrupted the theatres, in Léger's view, if it were not for what he called "the hierarchical prejudice." *"There are no hierarchies in art,"* he said over and over again; it was for the skilled craftsman to realize that what he produced was more beautiful than most of what people went to see in the Louvre.

The role of color in all this was primordial, and Léger never lost an opportunity of listing the benefits that would follow from the liberation of color in everyday life. He told Trotsky about them, when he and Trotsky met in Montparnasse during World War I. He told his students about them, when he lectured at Yale in 1938. And, quite rightly, he took a great pride in the fact of his own influence in the matter. "In 1919, I painted 'The City' with pure colors laid flat on the canvas. It was a revolutionary step. I proved that a painter could discard chiaroscuro and discard modulation and yet still have depth in the picture. The advertising agencies soon took my point. My pure blues and reds and yellows were lifted from 'The City' and put to work in posters and store windows, and by the side of the road, and in signals of every kind. Color had been set free. It was a reality in itself. It could act in itself and by itself, independently of all the objects which had previously had to contain or to carry it . . ."

Léger had been to the United States for the first time in 1931. By October, 1940, when he arrived there as a refugee, he knew his way around. Adaptable by nature, he thoroughly enjoyed himself in New York, and in the country near Lake Champlain, and even at La Guardia Field, where he liked to watch the aircraft come and go. He was polite and constructive in all his comments on America, and he acknowledged that certain of his dreams for society as a whole had been fulfilled there: in the spectacle of New York by night, for example. But he was quick to get back to France, in the winter of 1945, and once there, he set about renewing his lifelong love match with the French working class. He also let it be known that he had joined the French Communist Party.

It would be difficult at the present time to find a more conservative body of men—one more dependent, that is, on the status quo—than the French Communist Party. (This was made particularly clear in May, 1968, when it was palpable to all that the last thing the French Communists wanted was to get power.) But in 1945 Léger thought quite sincerely that his adherence to the Party might bring nearer the day when the working classes would have the leisure to develop the new style of life that was theirs for the asking—and, in fact, he remained a Party member for the rest of his life. It had been very disagreeable for Léger to stand up in front of working-class audiences at the time of the Popular Front, in 1936–37, and be greeted with shouts of "You only work for the rich! Who wants to listen to you?" (It was not, however, so traumatic as to cause him to refuse a commission from Nelson Rockefeller the next year.) Perhaps in a changed France all that could be changed, too?

It never was, really. If he was booed, it was no longer, admittedly, by the working class. I well remember the uproar that broke out in the stalls when Léger appeared in 1949 on the stage of the Opéra in Paris at the first performance of Milhaud's *Bolivar,* for which he had designed the scenery. Aesthetic prejudice no doubt played a part in this, but the basic sound was that of the propertied classes baying for the Party member's blood. The big commissions, however, still came from traditional sources: the Roman Catholic Church, above all. ("Nobody else asked me," he would say, when taxed with escapism, "and I did so want to make big decorations.") When he made paintings on the scale of epics, it was for himself primarily; and in his seventies he completed two huge complementary paintings on working-class themes—*The Constructors* in 1950 (see cover), and *The Great Parade* in 1954 (pages 94–95).

These paintings do honor to Léger as a man: for his energy, his ambition, his largeness of heart. Léger had loved the circus all his life, and he tried to sum up his feelings for it in *The Great Parade; The Constructors* is a last salute to the children and grandchildren of the men with whom he had served in World War I. But there is a great difference between a painting that corresponds to an urgent social need—to something that *has* to be said—and one that does not. The two late paintings relate to a France that had already passed into history. They are descriptive, and by implication sentimental, in a way that Léger would never have permitted himself thirty years earlier. The style aspires to grandeur, but without the radical invention that marked the *Three Women* of 1921 (pages 92–93). "I'm a painter," Léger once said. "I'm not in the description business."

If in these two late paintings he ended up in "the description business," it was because that particular simplistic view of the working classes was no longer valid. The machine had not, after all, turned out to be the instrument of social liberation; and in just about every country in the world the hard-hat had become the henchman of reaction. Neither at work nor at play did the construction worker of the 1950's match up to the New Man Léger had put on canvas thirty years earlier. That specific impulse—and that specific art—had had its moment of validity in the 1920's. Art was the poorer for its disappearance; mankind, also.

Art critic for the London Sunday Times *and author of many books, John Russell is well known on both sides of the Atlantic.*



In The City *(1919), Léger gave the dimensions of epic to the modern metropolitan scene, portraying*



PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART, THE A. E. GALLATIN COLLECTION

s of bright, flat color, simplified engineering forms, and staircases that climbed straight into the sky.



Léger, in his Three Women *of 1921, tried to show the monumental simplicity of the human form. The inter*



MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK, MRS. SIMON GUGGENHEIM FUND

h his amiable giantesses take their ease offers a foretaste of the decorative style now known as "1920's modern."



To the end of his life, the artist regarded the French fête foraine, *with its traveling circus and outdoor orchest*



THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM COLLECTION

quintessence of uncomplicated festivity. His Great Parade *of 1954 was a majestic farewell to this favorite theme.*

PALAZZO VECCHIO, FLORENCE



Grasping hands and a secretive half-smile mark Santo di Tito's portrait of Machiavelli, probably painted after the Florentine's death.

MACHIAVELLI

Would you buy a used car from this man?

Machiavelli—the most hated man who ever lived: charged, down the centuries, with being the sole poisonous source of political monkey business, of the mocking manipulation of men, of malfeasance, misanthropy, mendacity, murder, and massacre; the evil genius of tyrants and dictators, worse than Judas, for no salvation resulted from *his* betrayal; guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost, knowing Christianity to be true, but resisting the truth; not a man at all, but Antichrist in apish flesh, the Devil incarnate, Old Nick, with the whiff of sulphur on his breath and a tail hidden under his scarlet Florentine gown.

Machiavelli is the one Italian of the Renaissance we all think we know, partly because his name has passed into our language as a synonym for unscrupulous schemer. But Niccolò Machiavelli of Florence was a more complex and fascinating figure than his namesake of the English dictionary, and unless we ourselves wish to earn the epithet Machiavellian, it is only fair to look at the historical Machiavelli in the context of his age.

He was born in 1469 of an impoverished noble family whose coat of arms featured four keys. Niccolò's father was a retired lawyer who owned two small farms and an inn, his mother a churchgoer who wrote hymns to the Blessed Virgin. Niccolò was one of four children; the younger son, Totto, became a priest, and the idea of a confessional occupied by a Father Machiavelli is one that has caused Niccolò's enemies some wry laughter.

Niccolò attended the Studio, Florence's university, where he studied the prestigious newly-discovered authors of Greece and Rome. Like all his generation, he idolized the Athenians and the Romans of the Republic, and was to make them his models in life. This was one important influence. The other was the fact that Florence was then enjoying, under the Medici, a period of peace. For centuries the city had been torn by war and faction; but now all was serene, and the Florentines were producing their greatest achievements in philosophy, poetry, history, and the fine arts.

This point is important, for too often we imagine the Italian Renaissance as a period of thug-like *condottieri* and cruel despots forever locked in war. We must not be deceived by the artists. Uccello and Michelangelo painted bloody battles, but they were battles that had taken place many years before. If we are to understand Machiavelli, we must picture his youth as a happy period of civilization and peace: for the first time in centuries swords rusted, muscles grew flabby, fortress walls became overgrown with ivy.

In 1494, when Machiavelli was twenty-five, this happiness was shattered. King Charles VIII of France invaded Italy to seize the kingdom of Naples; Florence lay on his route. In the Middle Ages the Florentines had fought bravely against aggressors, but now, grown slack and effete, they were afraid of Charles's veterans and his forty cannon. Instead of manning their walls, they and their leading citizen, Pietro de' Medici, meekly allowed the French king to march in; they even paid him gold not to harm their country.

This debacle led to internal wars, to economic decline, in which Niccolò's father went bankrupt, to much heart-searching, and to a puritanical revolution. Savonarola the Dominican came to rule from the pulpit. Thundering that the French invasion was punishment for a pagan way of life, he burned classical books and nude pictures and urged a regeneration of Florence through fasting and prayer. The French just laughed at Savonarola; he lost the confidence of his fellow citizens and was burned at the stake in 1498.

In that same year, Machiavelli became an employee of the Florentine Republic, which he was to serve ably as diplomat and administrator. Machiavelli scorned Savonarola's idea of political regeneration through Christianity; instead, he persuaded the Florentines to form a citizen militia, as was done in Republican Rome. In 1512 Florence's big test came. Spain had succeeded France as Italy's oppressor, and now, at the instigation of the Medici, who had been exiled from Florence in 1494 and wished to return, a Spanish army of five thousand marched

By VINCENT CRONIN

against Tuscany. Four thousand of Machiavelli's militia were defending the strong Florentine town of Prato. The Spaniards, ill-fed and unpaid, launched a halfhearted attack. The Florentines, instead of resisting, took to their heels. Prato was sacked, and a few days later Florence surrendered without a fight. The Medici returned, the Republic came to an end, Machiavelli lost his job and was tortured and exiled to his farm. For the second time in eighteen years he had witnessed a defeat that was both traumatic and humiliating.

In the following year an out-of-work Machiavelli began to write his great book *The Prince*. It is an attempt to answer the question implicit in Florence's two terrible defeats: what had gone wrong? Machiavelli's answer is this: for all their classical buildings and pictures, for all the Ciceronian Latin and readings from Plato, the Florentines had never really revived the essence of classical life—that military vigor and patriotism unto death that distinguished the Greeks and Romans. What then is the remedy? Italy must be regenerated—not by Savonarola's brand of puritanism, but by a soldier-prince. This prince must subordinate every aim to military efficiency. He must personally command a citizen army and keep it disciplined by a reputation for cruelty.

But even this, Machiavelli fears, will not be enough to keep at bay the strong new nation-states, France and Spain. So, in a crescendo of patriotism, Machiavelli urges his prince to disregard the accepted rules of politics, to hit below the belt. Let him lie, if need be, let him violate treaties: "Men must be either pampered or crushed, because they can get revenge for small injuries but not for fatal ones"; "A prudent ruler cannot, and should not, honor his word when it places him at a disadvantage and when the reasons for which he made his promise no longer exist"; "If a prince wants to maintain his rule he must learn how not to be virtuous."



MUSEE DE VERSAILLES, ARCHIVES PHOTOGRAPHIQUES

The invader: Charles VIII of France caused the downfall of the Florentine Republic.

Machiavelli develops his concept of a soldier-prince with a couple of portraits. The first, that of the emperor Alexander Severus, is an example of how a prince should not behave. Alexander Severus, who reigned in the third century, was a man of such goodness it is said that during his fourteen years of power he never put anyone to death without a trial. Nevertheless, as he was thought effeminate, and a man who let himself be ruled by his mother, he came to be scorned, and the army conspired against him and killed him. Machiavelli scorns him also: "Whenever that class of men on which you believe your continued rule depends is corrupt, whether it be the populace, or soldiers, or nobles, you have to satisfy it by adopting the same disposition; and then *good deeds are your enemies.*"

Machiavelli's second portrait is of Cesare Borgia, son of Pope Alexander VI, who carved out a dukedom for himself and then brought it to heel by appointing a tough governor, Ramiro. Later, says Machiavelli, Cesare discovered that "the recent harshness had aroused some hatred against him, and wishing to purge the minds of the people and win them over . . . he had this official [Ramiro] cut in two pieces one morning and exposed on the public square . . . This ferocious spectacle left the people at once *content and horrified.*"

The words I have italicized show Machiavelli's peculiar cast of mind. He grows excited when goodness comes to a sticky end and when a dastardly deed is perpetrated under a cloak of justice. He seems to enjoy shocking traditional morality, and there can be little doubt that he is subconsciously revenging himself on the Establishment responsible for those two profound military defeats.

Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* for Giuliano de' Medici. He hoped that by applying the lessons in his book, Giuliano would become tough enough to unite Italy and drive out the foreigner. But Giuliano, the youngest son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, was a tubercular young man with gentle blue eyes and long sensitive fingers, the friend of poets and himself a sonneteer. He was so soft that his brother Pope Leo had to relieve him of his post as ruler of Florence after less than a year. Preparations for war against France taxed his feeble constitution; at the age of thirty-seven he fell ill and died. Machiavelli's notion of turning Giuliano into a second Cesare Borgia was about as fantastic as trying to turn John Keats into a James Bond.

This fantastic element has been overlooked in most accounts of Machiavelli, but it seems to me important. Consider the *Life of Castruccio Castracani,* which Machiavelli wrote seven years after *The Prince.* It purports to be a straight biography of a famous fourteenth-century ruler of Lucca, but in fact only the outline of the book is historically true. Finding the real Castruccio insufficiently tough to embody his ideals, Machiavelli introduces wholly fictitious episodes borrowed from Diodorus Siculus's life of a tyrant who really was unscrupulous: Agathocles. As captain of the Syracusans, Agathocles had collected a great army, then summoned the heads of the Council of Six Hundred under the pretext of asking their advice, and put them all to death.

Machiavelli in his book has Castruccio perform a similar stratagem. Just as in *The Prince* the second-rate

Cesare Borgia passes through the crucible of Machiavelli's imagination to emerge as a modern Julius Caesar, so here a mildly villainous lord is dressed up as the perfect amoral autocrat. In both books Machiavelli is so concerned to preach his doctrine of salvation through a strong soldier-prince that he leaves Italy as it really was for a world of fantasy.

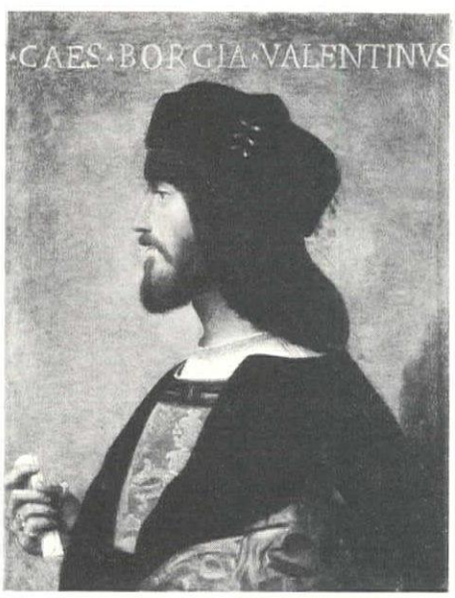
Machiavelli had a second purpose in dedicating *The Prince* to Giuliano de' Medici (and when Giuliano died, to his almost equally effete nephew Lorenzo). He wished to regain favor with the Medici, notably with Pope Leo. This also was a fantastic plan. Machiavelli had plotted hand over fist against the Medici for no less than fourteen years and was known to be a staunch republican, opposed to one-family rule in Florence. Pope Leo, moreover, was a gentle man who loved Raphael's smooth paintings and singing to the lute; he would not be interested in a book counseling cruelty and terror.

How could a man like Machiavelli, who spent his early life in the down-to-earth world of Italian politics, have yielded to such unrealistic, such fantastic hopes? The answer, I think, lies in the fact that he was also an imaginative artist—a playwright obsessed with extreme dramatic situations. Indeed, Machiavelli was best known in Florence as the author of *Mandragola*. In that brilliant comedy, a bold and tricky adventurer, aided by the profligacy of a parasite, and the avarice of a friar, achieves the triumph of making a gulled husband bring his own unwitting but too yielding wife to shame. It is an error to regard Machiavelli as primarily a political theorist, taking a cool look at facts. *The Prince* is, in one sense, the plot of a fantastic play for turning the tables on the French and Spaniards.

What, too, of Machiavelli's doctrine that it is sometimes wise for a prince to break his word and to violate treaties? It is usually said that this teaching originated with Machiavelli. If so, it would be very surprising, for the vast majority of so-called original inventions during the Italian Renaissance are now known to have been borrowed from classical texts. The Florentines valued wisdom as Edwardian English gentlemen valued port—the older the better.

In 1504 Machiavelli wrote a play, which has been lost, called *Masks*. It was in imitation of Aristophanes' *Clouds*, the subject of which is the Sophists, those men who claimed to teach "virtue" in a special sense, namely, efficiency in the conduct of life. The Sophists emphasized material success and the ability to argue from any point of view, irrespective of its truth. At worst, they encouraged a cynical disbelief in all moral restraints on the pursuit of selfish, personal ambition. Florentines during their golden age had paid little attention to the Sophists, preferring Plato, who accorded so well with Christianity and an aesthetic approach to life; but after the collapse in 1494 it would have been natural for a man like Machiavelli to dig out other, harder-headed philosophers.

The source for his doctrine of political unscrupulousness may well have been the Sophists as presented in Aristophanes' play. The following sentence from one of Machiavelli's letters in 1521 is close to many lines in *The Clouds:* "For that small matter of lies," writes Machiavelli, "I am a doctor and hold my degrees. Life has taught me to confound false and true, till no man knows either." In *The Prince* this personal confession becomes a general rule: "One must know how to color one's actions and to be a great liar and deceiver."



PALAZZO VENEZIA, ROME

The Prince: Cesare Borgia combined the qualities of the lion and the fox—and became the model for Machiavelli's ideal ruler.

How was it that an undisputably civilized man like Machiavelli could advise a ruler to be cruel and deceitful and to strike terror? The answer lies in the last chapter of *The Prince*, entitled "Exhortation to liberate Italy from the barbarians." Often neglected, it is, in fact, the most deeply felt chapter of all and gives meaning to the rest. "See how Italy," Machiavelli writes, "beseeches God to send someone to save her from those barbarous cruelties and outrages"—he means the outrages perpetrated by foreign troops in Italy, a land, he goes on, that is "leaderless, lawless, crushed, despoiled, torn, overrun; she has had to endure every kind of desolation."

Machiavelli is a patriot writing in mental torment. He seldom mentions the deity, but in this chapter the name of God occurs six times on one page, as an endorsement for this new kind of ruler. Machiavelli really believes that his deceitful prince will be as much an instrument of God as Moses was, and this for two reasons. First, Italy is an occupied country, and her survival is at stake; and just as moral theologians argued that theft becomes legitimate when committed by a starving man, so Machiavelli implies that deceit, cruelty, and so on become legitimate when they are the only means to national survival.

Secondly, Machiavelli had seen honest means tried and fail. Savonarola had hoped to silence cannon by singing hymns; Machiavelli himself had sent conscripts against the Spaniards. But the Italians had been then—and still were—bantams pitted against heavyweights. They could not win according to the rules, only with kidney punches. And since they had to win or cease to be themselves—that is, a civilized peo-

ple as compared with foreign "barbarians"—Machiavelli argues that it is not only right but the will of God that they should use immoral means.

We must remember that *The Prince* is an extreme book that grew out of an extreme situation and that its maxims must be seen against the charred, smoking ruins of devastated Italy. The nearest modern parallel is occupied France. In the early 1940's cultivated men like Camus joined the Resistance, committing themselves to blowing up German posts by night and to other sinister techniques of *maquis* warfare. Like Machiavelli, they saw these as the only way to free their beloved country.

But the most original and neglected aspect of Machiavelli is his method. Before Machiavelli's time, historians had been the slaves of chronology. They started with the Creation, or the founding of their city, and worked forward, year by year, decade by decade, chronicling plague, war, and civil strife. Sometimes they detected a pattern, but even when they succeeded in doing so, the pattern was *sui generis*, not applicable elsewhere. Machiavelli was the first modern historian to pool historical facts from a variety of authors, not necessarily of the same period, and to use these facts to draw general conclusions or to answer pertinent questions.

He applies this method notably in his *Discourses on Livy*, and among the questions he answers are these: "What causes commonly give rise to wars between different powers?" "What kind of reputation or gossip or opinion causes the populace to begin to favor a particular citizen?" "Whether the safeguarding of liberty can be more safely entrusted to the populace or to the upper class; and which has the stronger reason for creating disturbances, the 'have-nots' or the 'haves'?"

Machiavelli does not wholly break free from a cyclical reading of history—the term Renaissance is itself a statement of the conviction that the golden age of Greece and Rome had returned. Nor did he break free from a belief in Fortune—what we would now call force of circumstance—and he calculated that men were at the mercy of Fortune five times out of ten. Nevertheless, he does mark an enormous advance over previous historical thinkers, since he discovered the method whereby man can learn from his past.

Having invented this method, Machiavelli proceeded to apply it imperfectly. He virtually ignored the Middle Ages, probably because medieval chronicles were deficient in those dramatic human twists, reversals, and paradoxes that were what really interested him. This neglect of the Middle Ages marred his study of how to deal with foreign invaders. Over a period of a thousand years Italy had constantly suffered invasion from the north; the lessons implicit in these instances would have helped Machiavelli to resolve his main problem much better than the more remote happenings he chose to draw from Livy. For example, at the Battle of Legnano, near Milan, in 1176, a league of north Italian cities won a crushing victory over Frederick Barbarossa's crack German knights. The Italians didn't employ duplicity or dramatic acts of terrorism, just courage and a united command.

So much for Machiavelli's teaching and discoveries. It remains to consider his influence. In his own lifetime he was considered a failure. Certainly, no soldier-prince arose to liberate Italy. After his death, however, it was otherwise. In 1552 the Vatican placed Machiavelli's works on the Index of Prohibited Books, because they teach men "to appear good for their own advantage in this world—a doctrine worse than heresy." Despite this ban, Machiavelli's books were widely read and his political teaching became influential. It would probably have confirmed him in his pessimistic view of human nature had he known that most statesmen and thinkers would seize on the elements of repression and guile in his teachings to the exclusion of the civic sense and patriotism he equally taught.

In France several kings studied Machiavelli as a means of increasing their absolutism, though it cannot be said that he did them much good. Henry III and Henry IV were murdered, and in each case on their blood-soaked person was found a well-thumbed copy of *The Prince*. Louis XIII was following Machiavelli when he caused his most powerful subject, the Italian-born adventurer Concini, to be treacherously killed. Richelieu affirmed that France could not be governed without the right of arbitrary arrest and exile, and that in case of danger to the state it may be well that a hundred innocent men should perish. This was *raison d'état*, an exaggerated version of certain elements in *The Prince*, to which Machiavelli might well not have subscribed.

In England Machiavelli had little direct influence. England had never been defeated as Florence had been, and Englishmen could not understand the kind of desperate situation that demanded unscrupulous political methods. The political diseases Machiavelli had first studied scientifically were in England called after his name, rather as a physical disease—say Parkinson's—is called not after the man who is suffering from it but after the doctor who discovers it. Machiavelli thus became saddled with a lot of things he had never advocated, including atheism and any treacherous way of killing, generally by poison. Hence Flamineo in Webster's *White Devil*:

> O the rare trickes of a Machivillian!
> Hee doth not come like a grosse plodding slave
> And buffet you to death: no, my quaint knave—
> Hee tickles you to death; makes you die laughing,
> As if you had swallow'd a pound of saffron.

The eighteenth century, with its strong belief in man's good nature and reason, tended to scoff at Machiavelli. Hume wrote: "There is scarcely any maxim in *The Prince* which subsequent experience has not entirely refuted. The errors of this politician proceed, in a

great measure, from his having lived in too early an age of the world to be a good judge of political truth." With Hume's judgment Frederick the Great of Prussia would, in early life, have agreed. As a young man Frederick wrote an *Anti-Machiavel*, in which he stated that a ruler is the first servant of his people. He rejected the idea of breaking treaties, "for one has only to make one deception of this kind, and one loses the confidence of every ruler." But Frederick did follow Machiavelli's advice to rule personally, to act as his own commander in the field, and to despise flatterers.

Later, Frederick began to wonder whether honesty really was the best policy. "One sees oneself continually in danger of being betrayed by one's allies, forsaken by one's friends, brought low by envy and jealousy; and ultimately one finds oneself obliged to choose between the terrible alternatives of sacrificing one's people or one's word of honor." In old age, Frederick became a confirmed Machiavellian, writing in 1775: "Rulers must always be guided by the interests of the state. They are slaves of their resources, the interest of the state is their law, and this law may not be infringed."

During the nineteenth century Germany and Italy both sought to achieve national unity, with the result that writers now began to play up Machiavelli's other side, his call for regeneration. Young Hegel hails the author of *The Prince* for having "grasped with a cool circumspection the necessary idea that Italy should be saved by being combined into one state." He and Fichte go a stage further than Machiavelli: they assert that the conflict between the individual and the state no longer exists, since they consider liberty and law identical. The necessity of evil in political action becomes a superior ethics that has no connection with the morals of an individual. The state swallows up evil.

In Italy Machiavelli's ideal of a regenerated national state was not perverted in this way and proved an important influence on the *risorgimento*. In 1859 the provisional government of Tuscany, on the eve of national independence, published a decree stating that a complete edition of Machiavelli's works would be printed at government expense. It had taken more than three hundred years for "a man to arise to redeem Italy," and in the event the man turned out to be two men, Cavour and Garibaldi. Both, incidentally, were quite unlike the Prince: Cavour, peering through steel-rimmed spectacles, was a moderate statesman of the center, and Garibaldi a blunt, humane, rather quixotic soldier.



BRITISH MUSEUM

The mercenary soldier: an Italian condottiere *appears here in a drawing by Leonardo.*

Bismarck was a close student of Machiavelli, but Marx and Engels did not pay much attention to him, and the Florentine's books have never exerted great influence in Russia. In contemporary history Machiavelli's main impact has been on Benito Mussolini. In 1924 Mussolini wrote a thesis on *The Prince*, which he described as the statesman's essential vade mecum. The Fascist leader deliberately set himself to implement Petrarch's call quoted on the last page of *The Prince:*

Che l'antico valore
Nell' italici cor non è ancor morto.

Let Italians, as they did of old,
Prove that their courage has not grown cold.

After a course of muscle building, Mussolini sent the Italian army into Ethiopia to found a new Roman Empire. He joined Hitler's war in 1940, only to find that he had failed to impart to modern Italians the martial qualities of Caesar's legions. The final irony occurred in 1944, when the Nazis were obliged to occupy northern Italy as the only means of stopping an Allied walkover, and Italy again experienced the trauma of 1494 and 1512. Mussolini's failures discredit, at least for our generation, Machiavelli's theory that it is possible for one man to effect a heart transplant on a whole people.

What is Machiavelli's significance today? His policy of political duplicity has been found wanting in the past and is probably no longer practicable in an age of democracy and television. His policy of nationalism is also beginning to date as we move into an era of ideological blocs. His insistence on the need for military preparedness has proved of more durable value and is likely to remain one of the West's key beliefs. His technique for solving political problems through a study of the past is practiced to some extent by every self-respecting foreign minister of our time.

Was Machiavelli, finally, an evil man? He made an ethic of patriotism. In normal times that is a poisonous equation, but defensible, I believe, in the context of sixteenth-century Italy. Machiavelli wrote on the edge of an abyss: he could hear the thud of enemy boots, had seen pillage, profanation, and rape by foreign troops. Imaginative as he was, he could sense horrors ahead: the ending of political liberty and of freedom of the press, which put the lights out in Italy for 250 years. He taught that it is civilized man's first duty to save civilization—at all costs. Doubtless he was mistaken. But it is not, I think, the mistake of an evil man.

Vincent Cronin, the author of two histories of the Renaissance and several biographies, contributed an article on the Humanists to the Winter, 1971, HORIZON.

Remembrance of Things Past

The book is a clue to the central mystery of France itself,
and a work of consolation
for all mortals caught in the coils of time

By JOHN UPDIKE

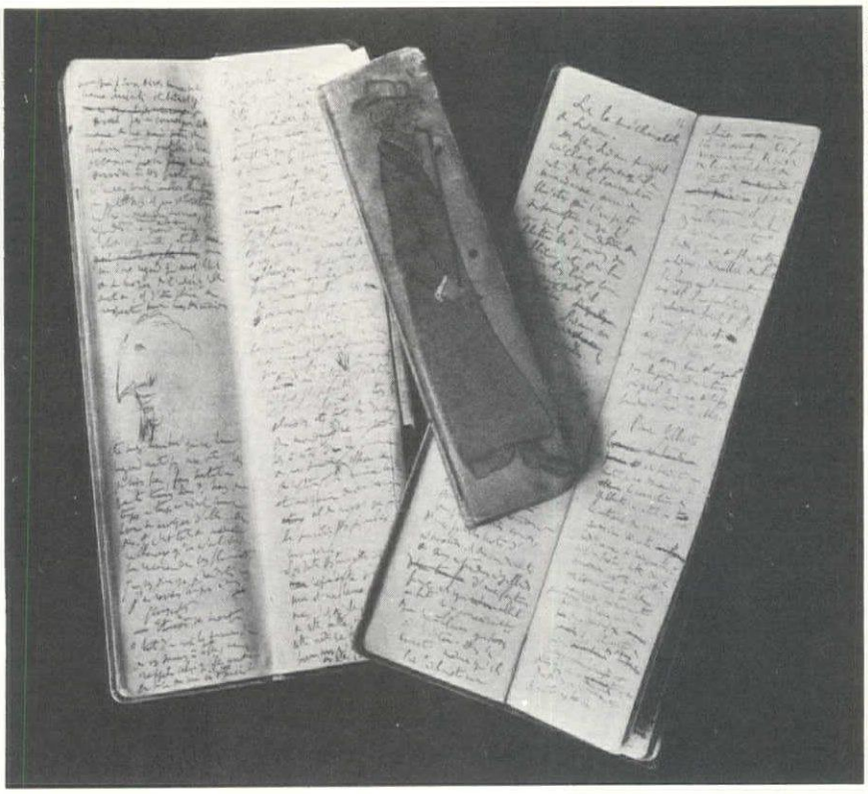
"Only three or four books in a lifetime," Swann says in *Remembrance of Things Past,* "give us anything that is of real importance." For a book to be great in a reader's life it is not enough for the book to be great; the reader must be ready. I began to read Proust the first months I lived in Manhattan, on Riverside Drive. I was twenty-three, newly a father, newly employed. Since boyhood I had wanted to live in New York. I had wanted to work for the magazine that now I did work for. I had wanted to be a writer and now a few poems and short stories were being published. In this atmosphere, then, of dreams come true, I opened my wife's tattered college copy of *Swann's Way;* she used to read under a sun lamp, and the cover was stained by a spot of oil. While our baby cooed in her white, screened crib, and the evening traffic swished north on the West Side Highway, and Manhattan at my back cooled like a stone, and my young wife fussed softly in our triangular kitchen at one of the meals that, in the magical way of marriage, regularly appeared, I would read:

> . . . if my aunt were feeling "upset," she would ask instead for her "tisane," and it would be my duty to shake out of the chemist's little package on to a plate the amount of lime-blossom required for infusion in boiling water. The drying of the stems had twisted them into a fantastic trellis, in whose intervals the pale flowers opened, as though a painter had arranged them there, grouping them in the most decorative poses. The leaves, which had lost or altered their own appearance, assumed those instead of the most incongruous things imaginable, as though the transparent wings of flies or the blank sides of labels or the petals of roses had been collected and pounded, or interwoven as birds weave the material for their nests. A thousand trifling little details—the charming prodigality of the chemist—details which would have been eliminated from an artificial preparation, gave me, like a book in which one is astonished to read the name of a person whom one knows, the pleasure of finding that these were indeed real lime-blossoms, like those I had seen, when coming from the train, in the Avenue de la Gare, altered, but only because they were not imitations but the very same blossoms, which had grown old. And as each new character is merely a metamorphosis from something older, in these little grey balls I recognised green buds plucked before their time; but beyond all else the rosy, moony, tender glow which lit up the blossoms among the frail forest of stems from which they hung like little golden roses—marking, as the radiance upon an old wall still marks the place of a vanished fresco, the difference between those parts of the tree which had and those which had not been "in bloom"—shewed me that these were petals which, before their flowering-time, the chemist's package had embalmed on warm evenings of spring. That rosy candlelight was still their colour, but half-extinguished and deadened in the diminished life which was now theirs, and which may be called the twilight of a flower. Presently my aunt was able to dip in the boiling infusion, in which she would relish the savour of dead or faded blossom, a little madeleine, of which she would hold out a piece to me when it was sufficiently soft.*

A thousand other passages equally wonderful could be quoted from the four thousand pages of Proust's novel. Everyone knows of the madeleine from whose long-forgotten taste the whole of Combray sprang into renewed being; the paragraph I have quoted gives

*As rendered in C. K. Scott Moncrieff's very fluent and ornate translation. Looking, since, at Proust in French, I am struck by how often Proust is terse—less Proustian, indeed, than he is in English. The few proof sheets in the Harvard collection show his alterations to be often (unlike those of Joyce, who usually added) shortenings and simplifications. Yet, that Moncrieff caught the essential magic and perfume I do not doubt. —J.U.

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Proust filled hundreds of slim notebooks like these while drafting his famous novel.

us the tea direct, as it was fed by Aunt Léonie to little "Marcel." Hemingway would have rendered this action in twenty words; Balzac, in a hundred and made us feel the chemist's shop, and hear the ring of francs on the counter. Proust's tendrilous sentences seek out an essence so fine the search itself is an act of faith. It was a revelation to me that words could entwine and curl so, yet keep a live crispness and the breath of utterance. I was dazzled by the witty similes—the vanished fresco, the book holding the known name—that wove art and nature into a single luminous fabric. This was not "better" writing, it was writing with a whole new nervous system.

The passage encapsulates the work's great theme: the metamorphoses wrought by Time. This sense of metamorphosis—tied to Proust's neurasthenically keen sense of the organic, especially of botany—carries into the tragic, temporal dimension Proust's peculiar sensitivity to *changing perspectives*. Perspectives change in space (the steeples at Martinville), in the heart (Swann's views of Odette), in society (Mme Verdurin's rise; Swann as seen in Combray and in Paris). External reality is but a cluster of moments no two of which subtend the same angle. This is impressionism, but impressionism on the move, whether the moving object is the narrator's life or the "little train" to Balbec:

> . . . but, the course of the line altering, the train turned, the morning scene gave place in the frame of the window to a nocturnal village, its roofs still blue with moonlight, its pond encrusted with the opalescent nacre of night, beneath a firmament still powdered with all its stars, and I was lamenting the loss of my strip of pink sky when I caught sight of it afresh, but red this time, in the opposite window which it left at a second bend in the line, so that I spent my time running from one window to the other to reassemble, to collect on a single canvas the intermittent, antipodean fragments of my fine, scarlet, ever-changing morning, and to obtain a comprehensive view of it and a continuous picture.

Einstein used moving trains to illustrate the special theory of relativity, propounded in 1905. Also in 1905, Proust's mother died, releasing him to final loneliness and earnest search for entrée into his own endowment, his precocious powers of evocation. In his relativity Proust is a modern, though the modern most lavish with old-fashioned virtues—characterization, ambitious scale, idealistic rapture, stylistic confidence. *Remembrance of Things Past* is to nineteenth-century novels as a magic lantern is to little landscape models with plaster hills, matchstick houses, and trees of green sponge. Proust abolished the nagging contradiction between the author as God and the author as nebulous character, as reader's confidant. In Proust's cosmos, Marcel (so called only once, in an elaborately hedged aside) is both the most supine of witnesses and the mightiest of Creators. There is no "outside" to the firmament of his skull. His perceptions are not derived from substance; they *are* substance. And the plot is not what connects the images and gestures and masks; their enclosure within one field of perception *is* the plot, the drama. Our excitement as we traverse these thousands of pages has to do with their providential coherence: microcosmically, with the dissecting delicacy of each sentence and the ecology of mutual assistance the tender images extend toward one another; and macrocosmically, with the thrilling leaps of far-flung continuations (Vinteuil's manifestations, for example, or De Forcheville's reappearance, after three thousand pages, to marry Odette) and a





COLLECTION HALEVY, PARIS; LEFT: COLLECTION G. SIROT, PARIS

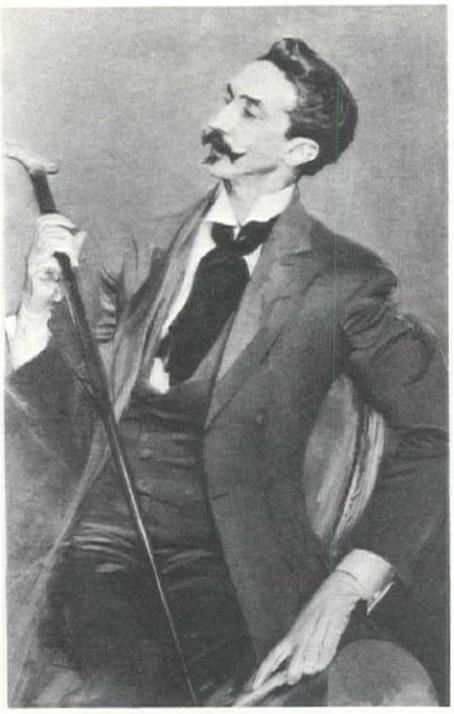
The Princesse de Caraman-Chimay, above, was a victim of Proust's penchant for using real people in his novel. One of his characters calls her "my dishonored cousin."

Mme de Chevigné, left, was a model for Proust's Duchesse de Guermantes.

grand architectural completeness (the Swann side, in Gilberte, unites with the Guermantes side, in Saint-Loup, to produce a daughter who, we are told casually, "later on married an obscure man of letters"). As in a cathedral, organic profusion is subdued to a design. It might be said that by deviating from his original design (circa 1909) of two Testamental volumes, the way of innocence and the way of experience, to insert the immense dirge to Agnostelli (d. 1914) that comprises the Albertine books, Proust created a Flamboyant rather than a Romanesque cathedral. Yet, without those sometimes monotonous stretches of misty Albertine, how much would be diminished the culminating effect of vastness, of dizzying height? *Time Regained* ends with acrophobia. Like Marcel, the reader turns "giddy at seeing so many years below and in me as though I were leagues high." Among other writers only Dante lifts us to such an altitude.

Like Dante, Proust lives in one work. There is a great dropping off elsewhere. We read *Jean Santeuil* or *Contre Sainte-Beuve,* or try to, much as we read Proust's nattering letters, or criticism of him—for the lover's pleasure of being with Proust and being reminded of the raptures he has given us. No other twentieth-century writer has inspired such a bulk of appreciation and analysis; the shelves at Widener Library include the bound bulletins of *La Societé des Amis de Marcel Proust et des Amis de Combray.* In English the Proust chapters by Edmund Wilson in *Axel's Castle* and by Harry Levin in *The Gates of Horn* show omnivorous critics sagaciously digesting; the small books by Howard Moss and Roger Shattuck with special affection polish and refocus some of the lenses of Proust's panopticon; and the brilliant two-volume biography by George Painter in one sense offers more adventure than *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* itself, since in Painter's account we see Proust journeying toward the mastery that the novel possesses from the very first page. There are also Samuel Beckett's somewhat bleak essay and, in translation by Elsie Prell, a memoir by François Mauriac combining a young writer's awe at the "sudden occupation of the literary heaven by the Proustian constellation," a generous appraisal from a Catholic viewpoint of the corrosion and stagnation felt to overtake the latter half of the masterpiece, and a vivid personal recollection of "that gloomy room on the rue Hamlin, that black den, that bed where an overcoat served as a blanket, that waxy mask through which it could have been said our host watched us eat, and whose hair alone seemed living." Proust is not only the greatest modern creator of characters; he is among modern authors the most amusing character, the most self-dramatizing (see his letters) and bizarre, whose cork-lined room has become the very symbol of hypertrophied aestheticism. In 1971 the hundredth anniversary of his birth was observed in the American literary press with tributes, by such writers as Melvin Maddocks and William Gass, surprisingly grudging and irritated in tone, even jeering—as if in these distributors of contemporary relevance had been reborn those *fin de siècle* smarts, the Comte de Montesquiou and his peers, who could not believe that "little Proust," that sickly parasite and queer half-Jew, had vaulted over them into immortality.

American readers in general, I suspect, have been put off by the unwieldy, intimidating twin-elephant Random House edition of *Remembrance of Things Past.* Better to read it in the seven Modern Library volumes, now



MUSEE NATIONAL D'ART MODERNE, PARIS

Comte Robert de Montesquiou, above, was a source for the notorious Baron de Charlus.



Proust's Jewish grandmother, Adèle Weil, became Marcel's grandmother in the novel.

Charles Haas, shown at right in an 1867 painting, was the chief inspiration for the dilettante Charles Swann.



HACHETTE; LEFT: COLLECTION MANTI-PROUST

reprinted in a Vintage paperback edition, and better still to obtain the charming twelve volumes of the English edition by Chatto & Windus (this edition has recently been disfigured by the insertion of totally insipid pencil illustrations by Philippe Jullian, but they can be excised with a razor blade). The pagination of the Chatto & Windus edition (and, but for *Swann's Way*, the Modern Library edition, which was a photograph of it) fits the extremely useful index-guide compiled by P. A. Spalding, which serves not only as a memory freshener as one reads along but as a way to extract all the references to, say, Hawthorn, Heredity, or Victor Hugo from their vast matrix.

Americans also, perhaps, in their zeal for practical instruction tend to expect too much of Proust as a social critic. Satire of snobs and anatomizing of society occur, of course, and Proust was a climber in his day; but a personal obsession should not be confused with an artistic one. He writes about aristocrats, in their banality and glamour, their vanity and gallantry, because they are there: *were* there, in the life he has ceased to live, the life that lostness has bathed in paradisiacal colors. As soon call Proust an anti-snob as a gargoyle-carver anti-devil; hatred is swallowed in an art of homage. Proust would take the entire living population of France as a *trésor trouvé*, a paleontological imprint left by the past, a clue to the central mystery of France herself, with her cathedrals, her blossoms, her place names. As the hero, aging, discovers deceit everywhere and absurdity everywhere, only two things remain worth loving: Marcel and France, which are everything. The book is not a tract but a religious travail.

In those August and September Manhattan days, themselves now paradisiacal, when I first read Proust, I also began to read Kierkegaard. College had left them out of my education; now I embraced them. I was not only a would-be writer but a would-be Christian. I was happy, but happiness, as Harold Brodkey observed in a short story from those same 1950's, makes us afraid. And Proust and Kierkegaard seemed (though both had been petite men) two giant brothers, whose bullying and showing-off I forgave because between them I could walk safely down the street, the street of my life. The remorseless pessimism of Proust's disquisitions on the heart, the abyss he makes of human motives, the finality of all our little deaths, did not appall me; morbid myself, I only trusted morbidity. In the interminable rain of his prose, I felt goodness. Proust was one of those men—increasingly rare, as faith further ebbs—who lost the consolations of belief but retained the attitudes and ambitions of a worshiper. For all his biochemistry, Proust emphasizes the medieval duality of body/spirit: "the body imprisons the spirit in a fortress." For all the disillusion and cruelty it depicts, *Remembrance of Things Past* is, like the Bible, a work of consolation. Einstein's relativity developed its formulas from the recognition of an absolute, the speed of light. Marcel, having experienced—in the madeleine, in the uneven paving stones—"a sense of eternity," vows to "leave this behind me to enrich others with my treasure." The next sentence goes on to uncover in his momentary "sense of eternity" a strangely modest secret, a kind of Godless Golden Rule and the germinating principle of art:

> My experience in the library which I wanted to preserve was that of pleasure, but not an egotistical pleasure, or at all events it was a form of egoism which is useful to others—for all the fruitful altruisms of Nature develop in an egotistical mode.

Quotations from Chairman Blake

Long before our time this visionary believed that Christianity was a revolutionary faith and poetry a radical art, and that the poet's duty was to speak for the slave, the captive, and the poor

William Blake [is] an unfortunate lunatic, whose personal inoffensiveness secures him from confinement . . . the poor man fancies himself a great master, and has painted a few wretched pictures, some of which are unintelligible allegory, others an attempt at sober character by caricature representation, and the whole "blotted and blurred," and very badly drawn. These he calls an Exhibition, of which he has published a Catalogue, or rather farrago of nonsense, unintelligibleness, and egregious vanity, the wild effusions of a distempered brain.

—THE *Examiner*, 1808

Yesterday's lunacy has a disconcerting way of becoming today's wisdom: more than 160 years have passed since this unsigned review (probably the work of Leigh Hunt's brother, Robert) appeared in the *Examiner* magazine, and in the meanwhile William Blake's wild effusions have acquired an almost Biblical authority. Had he been a Catholic, he might have been canonized by now. It is not just that he was once thought mad and is now adjudged sane, beautiful, and prophetic, but that his vision, dazzling and hyperbolic, suddenly seems so applicable (let us eschew "relevant") to our heaviest problems of the here and now: how to live, what to do, mental space, utopian possibilities, who owns the park . . . I know some young revolutionaries in London who are drafting their manifesto on the basis of Blake's writings; they want theirs to be a "nonhindering" and mind-expanding revolution. ("Hindering another" was the one great crime in Blake's book.)

What would be useful is a little red book of *Quotations from Chairman Blake* to help the masses understand the dimensions of his thought. Although he was very conscientious about being a prophet, and made it his business "to speak to future generations by a Sublime Allegory . . . address'd to the Intellectual Powers," his nuggets are buried in a vast and rather rambling mother lode, which takes up nearly a thousand pages of small print in the standard Oxford edition of his complete writings. A Blake chrestomathy would demonstrate the extent to which he had important things to say on issues of concern to the Age of Earthmanship, and the neatly aphoristic way he had of expressing them, in a style often reminiscent of haiku, Laotse, and certain of the Chinese calligraphic poets. And then there is his gift for anticipating everything. He knew long before Einstein that "Energy is the only life," long before Marx that "Without Contraries [there] is no progression," and long before Frantz Fanon that "The Whole Creation Groans to be deliver'd." Here are some other examples:

ON SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: The poet's allegiance is to "the slave grinding at the mill, and the captive in chains, & the poor in the prison, & the soldier in the field." His allies are "all the gentle Souls who guide the great Wine-Press of Love."

ON THOUGHT CONTROL: His struggle is directed against "Those who, having no Passions of their own because No Intellect, Have spent their lives in Curbing & Governing other People's." The intellectual battle consists of "Striving with Systems to deliver Individuals from those Systems."

ON MEDITATION: "I rest not from my great task . . . to open the immortal Eyes Of Man inwards into the Worlds of Thought."

ON COMPLACENCY: "It is an easy thing to rejoice in the tents of prosperity: Thus could I sing & thus rejoice: but it is not so with me."

ON SELF-DETERMINATION: "No bird soars too high, if he soars with his own wings."

ON DISSENT: "Opposition is true Friendship."

ON CRUELTY: "A Robin Red breast in a Cage puts all Heaven in a Rage."

ON CULTURAL REVOLUTION: "Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead."

ON PROPAGANDA: "He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars. General Good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite, & flatterer."

ON SEXUAL FREEDOM: "I cry: Love! Love! Love! happy happy Love! free as the mountain wind!" so that man and woman can be united in "lovely copulation, bliss on bliss."

ON WOMEN'S LIBERATION: "Must she drag the chain of life in weary lust . . . driv'n to madness, bound to hold a rod over her shrinking shoulders all the day, &

By FREDERIC V. GRUNFELD

all the night to turn the wheel of false desire?"

ON THE FUNCTION OF THE ORGASM: "The moment of desire! the moment of desire! The virgin that pines for man shall awaken her womb to enormous joys in the secret shadows of her chamber."

ON POLLUTION: "Pestilent fogs round cities of men" must cease, "and the happy earth sing in its course."

ON AMERICA: "Swelling, belching from its deeps red clouds & raging fires . . . America faints! . . . With myriads of cloudy terrors, banners dark & towers surrounded: heat but not light went thro' the murky atmosphere."

ON URBAN RENEWAL: Drastic changes are due "in the central Cities of the Nations where Human Thought is crush'd beneath the iron hand of Power."

ON POVERTY PROGRAMS:

> Is this a holy thing to see
> In a rich and fruitful land,
> Babes reduc'd to misery,
> Fed with cold and usurous hand?

ON ART AND ARTISTS: "A Poet, a Painter, a Musician, an Architect: the Man Or Woman who is not one of these is not a Christian. You must leave Fathers & Mothers & Houses & Lands if they stand in the way of Art."

ON PRUDERY: "Art can never exist without Naked Beauty displayed."

ON WAR AND PEACE: "To Extirpate a nation by means of another is as wicked as to destroy an individual by means of another individual"; "For everything that lives is Holy. Life delights in life."

ON ORGANIZED RELIGION: "Go, tell them that the Worship of God is honouring his gifts in other men."

ON THE OLD LEGITIMIZING GOD OF THE CHURCH MILITANT:

> Then old Nobodaddy aloft
> Farted & belch'd & cough'd
> And said, "I love hanging & drawing & quartering
> Every bit as well as war & slaughtering."

Even this handful of abbreviated quotations should suffice to show that Blake had a knack for coming to grips with problems that other, more conventional poets simply overlooked. While they were busy writing about Greek shepherdesses, this one small Englishman—he was less than 5 feet 6 inches tall—was sweating in the "furnaces of affliction" and wondering whether a new Jerusalem could be built here, "Among these dark Satanic Mills." Yet he was both a social realist and a mystic. As a poet he could be a leviathan maunderer when he wanted to be (which was often enough), but at the same time, like the early English folk poets, he could achieve prodigies of verbal compression. He had the power, so rare in that prolix age,



NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON

William Blake was fifty when Thomas Phillips painted this portrait of him in 1807.

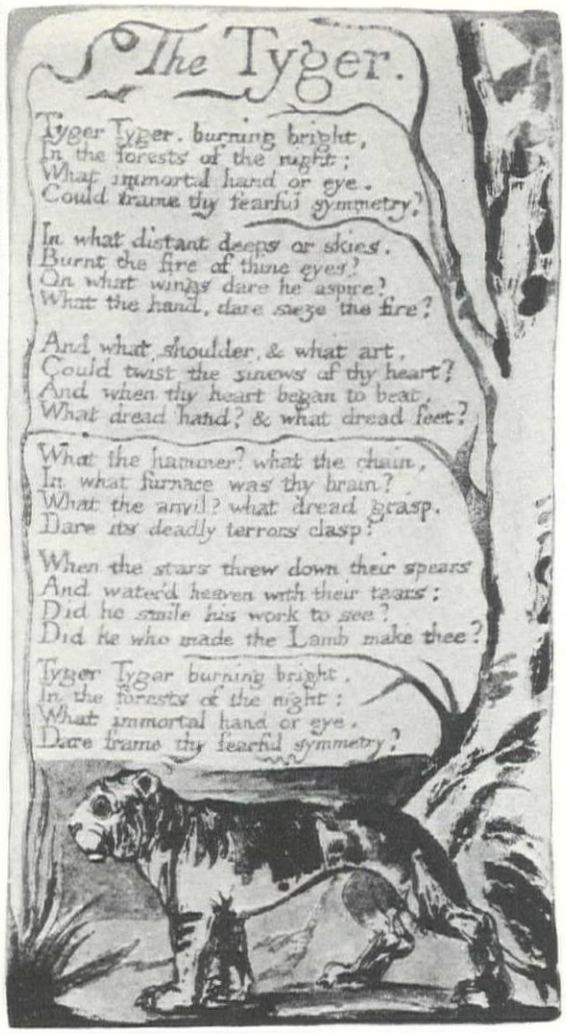
> To see a World in a Grain of Sand
> And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
> Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
> And Eternity in an hour.

He was, indeed, a kind of folk artist transposed into the urban mode; the English equivalent of a phenomenon better known in Germany—the beekeeper or shoemaker mystic, like Jacob Boehme, who was one of Blake's models. As a painter, too, he belongs to the "naive" folk tradition of which Le Douanier Rousseau is the outstanding representative. Unless we see his works in this light, many of his drawings and prints would suggest that he was a bit daft. Nothing came easily to him: Blake visibly struggles with his material even when, as he frequently does, he adopts the forms of a more relaxed or facile draftsman, like Fuseli. This awkwardness is a quality we have latterly learned to appreciate through the works of the expressionists Munch and Ensor, who deliberately emphasized a certain heavyhandedness that is very close to Blake's, and is also related to compassion as one of the leitmotifs of art.

T. S. Eliot said that Blake's work had the *unpleasantness* of great poetry because it was the product of a kind of terrifying honesty. Blake had never been spoiled by a formal academic education, Eliot argued, and since "he was not compelled to acquire any other education in literature than he wanted, or to acquire it for any other reason than that he wanted it," he was able to confine himself to essentials. "He approached everything with a mind unclouded by current opinions. There was nothing of the superior person about him. This makes him terrifying."

There was nothing in Blake's life, for that matter, to make even his friends suspect that they were entertaining an angel unawares. He lived for nearly seventy years and spent all but three of them in London, more or less in deliberate obscurity. "I am hid," he said of himself laconically when he was at the height of his powers. He may have lived the most intense inner life of any man of his time, but it was outwardly an uneventful existence: his adventures were all of the mind. He was born on November 28, 1757 (the year after Mozart), and the London of his boyhood was a city of still manageable size, where the open country began just north of Oxford Street; hence his lifelong affection for all the place names that are chanted like mantras in his poetry, villages that were once verdant and have since become grimy components of Greater London. In the golden

BOTH: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, ROSENWALD COLLECTION



This famous page, with its not so very fearsome-looking tiger, is from the Illuminated Book, *completed in 1794.*

age of his boyhood, Blake remembered afterward,

> The fields from Islington to Marybone,
> To Primrose Hill and Saint John's Wood,
> Were builded over with pillars of gold,
> And there Jerusalem's pillars stood.

His father was a hosier by trade, but the young Blake showed such an aptitude for art that he was sent at the age of ten to a drawing school in the Strand. At fifteen he was indentured as an apprentice to an engraver, James Basire, who gave Blake's talent a decided Gothic twist when he assigned him to make drawings of royal monuments in Westminster Abbey. At twenty-two he was admitted to the Royal Academy as a student, but he must have been difficult to teach. Years later he remembered becoming incensed when the keeper, Michael Moser, told him to study Rubens and Le Brun instead of Raphael and Michelangelo: "How I did secretly Rage! I also spoke my Mind. . . . I said to Moser, 'These things that you call Finish'd are not Even Begun; how can they then be Finish'd? The Man who does not know The Beginning never can know the End of Art.'"

He married Catherine Boucher, a Battersea market-gardener's daughter, whom he taught to read and write so that she could have opinions of her own and aid him in his work. She prepared his colors and sometimes ran his plates through the press: "she draws, she engraves, and sings delightfully," a friend noted. One of the things that helped make it a happy marriage was that she believed implicitly in all his visions. "I have very little of Mr. Blake's company," she once told a visitor. "He is always in paradise." After they had moved into their house at Lambeth, a patron arrived one day to find them both sitting naked in the summerhouse at the bottom of their garden. "Come in!" cried Blake. "It's only Adam and Eve, you know!" They had been reading parts of *Paradise Lost* to each other, in character, with the back yard serving as the Garden of Eden.

Blake tried running a print shop and, predictably, failed. Instead, he set about earning a precarious living as an engraver and illustrator of other people's works. In 1788 he began publishing his own poetry, using the elaborate technique of "illuminated printing," which was revealed to him in a dream by his younger brother Robert, who had died of consumption. With the exception of the early *Poetical Sketches,* which were set in ordinary type, all of the books that Blake published during his lifetime were printed by this laborious process, in which the handwritten texts as well as the drawings were etched on stereotype plates. After being run through the press, each sheet was hand-colored according to his mood of the moment, with the result that no two copies of a Blake-printed book are exactly alike.

He never found out how to make money with his work. "Money flies from me," he decided ruefully. "Profit never ventures upon my Threshold, tho' every other man's doorstone is worn down into the very Earth by the footsteps of the fiends of commerce."

But the books themselves are beyond price. There is nothing quite like this interplay of word and image in the whole history of European art. It is as though he had reverted to the magical images of preliterate societies, before painting and poetry had taken their separate forks in the road of communication. Some of his pages derive their power from the unity of opposites: mystical verses illustrated in a style suitable for cooky molds. His

> Tyger! Tyger! burning bright,
> In the forests of the night,
> What immortal hand or eye,
> Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

is represented in some copies by a sort of smiling Cheshire feline, more Tigger

than Tyger. Elsewhere Blake uses the elongated figures he learned from Fuseli, arranged in improbable poses —flying, floating, falling, diving—to symbolize his impatience with the law of gravity and all such earthbound Newtonian concepts. In these wild effusions, Blake exemplifies not so much the "rational animal" of the classical philosophers as the *animal symbolicum* of Ernst Cassirer's philosophy of forms, which postulates "man the symbolizer" as the originator of myth, religion, art, language, and even science. Blake, too, conceived of his art as embracing the whole spectrum of human knowledge and activity: "Art is the Tree of Life."

During the 1780's Blake and his wife belonged for a time to something called the Great Eastcheap Swedenborgian Society, which taught a fusion of mysticism, science, and morality. Though Blake soon outgrew the society, his reaction to Swedenborg's *Wisdom of Angels* and *Heaven and Hell* led directly to his most astonishing book, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,* which is a revolutionary attempt to overthrow the existing order of good-versus-evil morality. "Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence . . . Energy is Eternal Delight." Here again, as in *The Tyger,* Blake's central thought is expressed in the form of an unanswered question:

How do you know but ev'ry Bird that cuts
the airy way,
Is an immense world of delight, clos'd by
your senses five?

But during these same years, political events abroad were drawing Blake's attention to other imminent utopias. He was in his early twenties during the American Revolution, and not yet thirty-two when the French Revolution broke out. As David Erdman has shown in a fascinating piece of literary detective work, *Blake: Prophet against Empire,* his poetry and painting were profoundly affected by both revolutions. In *America, A Prophecy,* his yearning for freedom reaches out toward the western continents:

On my American plains I feel the struggling
afflictions
Endur'd by roots that writhe their arms into
the nether deep.
I see a Serpent in Canada who courts me to
his love,
In Mexico an Eagle, and a Lion in Peru;
I see a Whale in the South-sea, drinking my
soul away . . .

Like other British radicals, including the unruly Thomas Paine, Blake welcomed the French Revolution as the dawning of a new age that would see "the old mountains of France, like aged men, fading away." In his fragmentary poem *The French Revolution* (stillborn owing to the pressures of censorship) he expresses the fervent wish

That the wild raging millions, that wander
in forests, and howl in law blasted wastes,
Strength madden'd with slavery, honesty
bound in the dens of superstition,
May sing in the village, and shout in the
harvest . . .
And the saw, and the hammer, the chisel,
the pencil, the pen, and the instruments
Of heavenly song sound in the wilds once
forbidden . . .

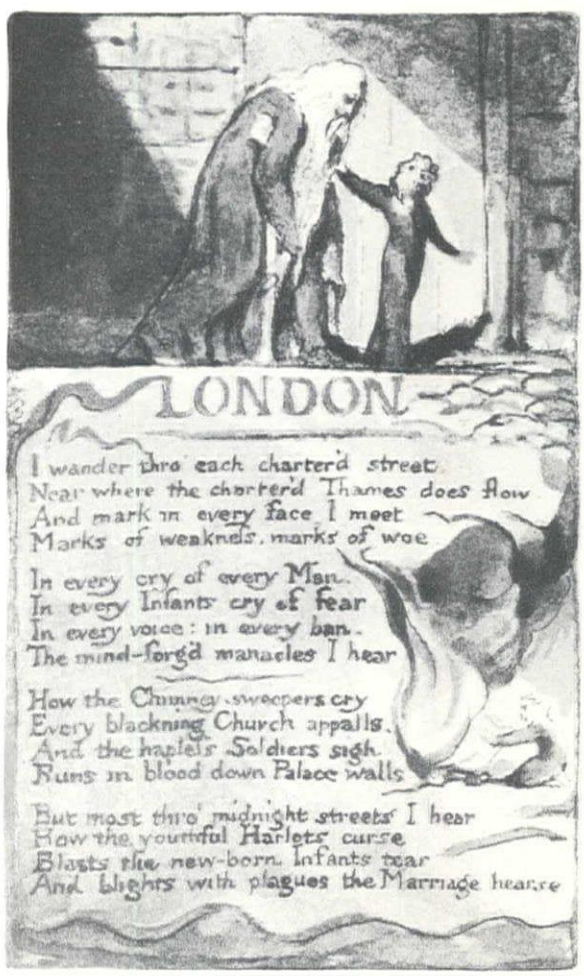
Later, when he saw that his ideals of justice were not to be fulfilled, Blake gradually shifted his focus from Energy to Love as the foundation of the golden age to which he aspired. He was appalled by the slaughter and misery of the Napoleonic Wars:

The Rhine was red with human blood,
The Danube roll'd a purple tide,
On the Euphrates Satan stood,
And over Asia stretch'd his pride.

Again and again his theme is compassion for the victims of war, for children "sold to trades of dire necessity," and even for the soldiers themselves:

We were carried away in thousands from
London & in tens
Of thousands from Westminster & Mary-
bone, in ships clos'd up,
Chain'd hand & foot, compell'd to fight
under the iron whips
Of our captains, fearing our officers more
than the enemy.

He realized, decades before Marx, that the demands of factory produc-



Also from the Illuminated Book, *"London" speaks movingly of the suffering caused by the Industrial Revolution.*

tion, accelerated by the war, were alienating the worker from his traditional tools and skills. One of this visionary's most remarkable "prophecies" is the way he analyzes the process that was turning farm workers and artisans into the laboring poor:

Then left the sons of Urizen the plow & harrow, the loom,
The hammer & the chisel & the rule & compasses.
They forg'd the sword, the chariot of war, the battle ax . . .
And all the arts of life they chang'd into the arts of death . . .
And in their stead intricate wheels . . . invented, Wheel without wheel,
To perplex youth in their outgoings & to bind to labours
Of day & night the myriads of Eternity, that they might file
And polish brass & iron hour after hour, laborious workmanship,
Kept ignorant of the use that they might spend the days of wisdom
In sorrowful drudgery to obtain a scanty pittance of bread . . .

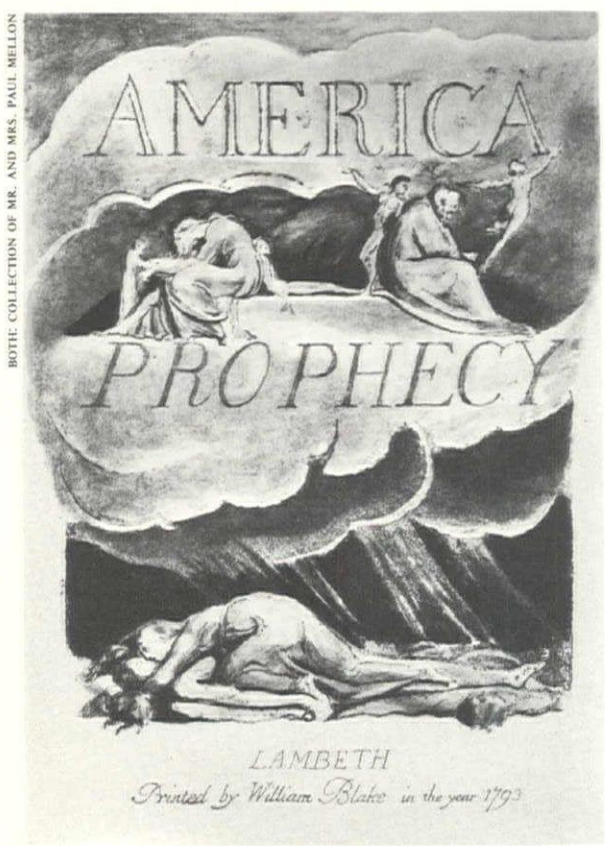
After 1800 Blake himself grew dissatisfied with the conditions of life in London, and he was persuaded to exchange the "dirty streets" and "dirty Thames" for "the sweet air & the voices of winds, trees & birds, & the odours of the happy ground" of Felpham, a seaside village in Sussex, about sixty miles south of London. The move was made at the urging of a well-intentioned but utterly pedestrian poet, William Hayley, who lived in a "marine villa" at Felpham and supplied the Blakes with a variety of engraving jobs. He also found them a thatched cottage, which Blake decided was "a perfect Model for Cottages . . . Nothing can be more Grand than its Simplicity & Usefulness. Simple without Intricacy, it seems to be the Spontaneous Effusion of Humanity, congenial to the wants of Man."

But the relationship to Hayley proved increasingly irksome: Blake felt himself being patronized and resented the intrusion on his private world. "Mr. H. approves of My Designs as little as he does of my Poems," he wrote to Thomas Butts, "and I have been forced to insist on his leaving me in both to my own Self Will; for I am determin'd to be no longer Pester'd with his Genteel Ignorance & Polite Disapprobation. I know myself both Poet & Painter, & it is not his affected Contempt that can move me to any thing but a more assiduous pursuit of both Arts."

Only by returning to London, he decided, would he be able to carry on his visionary studies unannoyed, and "converse with my friends in Eternity, See Visions, Dream Dreams & prophesy & speak Parables unobserv'd & at liberty from the Doubts of other Mortals." In London Blake did, in fact, produce a series of increasingly visionary—and to other eyes, decreasingly comprehensible—works. The autobiographical *Milton* was written and etched between 1804 and 1808, "To Justify the Ways of God to Men" in forty-three plates: it calls on the young men of the new age to set their foreheads against the "ignorant Hirelings" of camp, court, and university. *Jerusalem The Emanation of The Giant Albion,* completed in 1820, is a still more stupendous vision, set forth on ninety-nine tightly-worded plates. In the earlier *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* he had been the most exquisite of lyric poets, but now he deserted conventional lyric forms to become what he called an "Orator" and prophet. Written in a kind of Biblical free verse, his prophecies constantly shift their cadence and meter in accordance with the method he describes in the preface to *Jerusalem:*

Every word and every letter is studied and put into its fit place; the terrific numbers are reserved for the terrific parts, the mild & gentle for the mild & gentle parts, and the prosaic for inferior parts; all are necessary to each other. Poetry Fetter'd Fetters the Human Race. Nations are Destroy'd or Flourish in proportion as Their Poetry, Painting and Music are Destroy'd or Flourish!

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, most of the later poems were considered (as the 1911 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* still has it) "so far wanting in the quality of sanity as to be without a logical coherence." Thanks to Joyce, Pound & Co., we now have other standards of coherence; but most of Blake's contemporaries (insofar as they knew his work at all) were understandably puzzled by these spellbinding incantations and great hectoring screeds, peopled with a cast of strange characters who represent



BOTH: COLLECTION OF MR. AND MRS. PAUL MELLON

To Blake, the New World symbolized rebirth. On this title page, appropriately, a woman revives a dead man.

psychic states in Blake's self-made mythology: Urizen, Orc, Luvah, Urthona, Enitharmon, Oothoon, Los, Theotormon, Rintrah, Palamabron, and scores of others, whom now, at least, one can find duly catalogued and explained in S. Foster Damon's *Blake Dictionary*. Without the benefits of hindsight and Damon, it was no wonder that the London literati thought Blake a lunatic. In Crabb Robinson's diary for 1811 there is a characteristic item about the poet Robert Southey, who had ventured to pay Blake a visit. "Southey . . . admired both his designs & his poetic talents at the same time that he held him for a decided madman. Blake . . . showed S. a perfectly mad poem called *Jerusalem*. Oxford Street is in Jerusalem."

William Wordsworth told Robinson, after reading the *Songs of Innocence and of Experience:* "There is no doubt this poor man was mad, but there is something in the madness of this man which interests me more than the sanity of Lord Byron and Walter Scott!" An Anglican divine, the Reverend Thomas Dibdin, arrived at a similar conclusion after a visit from Blake, who wanted to talk to him about literary subjects. "Never were such 'dreamings' poured forth as were poured forth by my original visitor:—his stature mean, his head big and round, his forehead broad and high, his eyes blue, large, and lambent . . . This extraordinary man sometimes—but in good sooth very rarely—reached the sublime; but the sublime and the grotesque seemed, somehow or other, to be for ever amalgamated in his imagination."

Only rarely did anyone try to understand the nature of Blake's visions, which he managed without the benefit of drugs. As he repeatedly explained, they were intellectual visions, the products of a well-developed imagination. He never recognized an objective visual reality: after all, no two people see alike. And he writes in his *Vision of the Last Judgment:*

"What," it will be Questioned, "When the Sun rises, do you not see a round disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea?"

"O no, no, I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty.' I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would Question a Window concerning a Sight. I look thro' it & not with it."

He told the painter George Richmond that his visionary gift was so strongly developed that he could look at a knot in a piece of wood until he was frightened by it. And in the descriptive catalogue of his historic one-man show of 1809 he challenged his critics to a kind of trial-by-vision: "A Spirit and a Vision are not, as the modern philosophy supposes, a cloudy vapour, or a nothing: they are organized and minutely articulated beyond all that the mortal and perishing nature can produce. He who does not imagine in stronger and better lineaments, and in stronger and better light than his perishing and mortal eye can see, does not imagine at all."

That was the state of the controversy as Blake left it, to be decided by future generations on the merits of his art. Yet in the last years before his death the light of comprehension began going on here and there: a group of young romantic artists, including the gifted painter Samuel Palmer, were more than willing to see things his way. "I remember Blake, in the quiet consistency of his daily life, as one of the sanest, if not the most thoroughly sane man I have ever known," Palmer wrote later.

It was gall-bladder trouble that finally ended Blake's exertions in the hither world: his illness made him feel "very weak & an Old Man, feeble & tottering, but not in Spirit & Life, not in The Real Man The Imagination . . ." He died on August 12, 1827 (the same year as Beethoven), three months before his seventieth birthday. But he died as he had lived. According to George Richmond, "Just before he died His countenance became fair—His eyes Brighten'd and He burst out in Singing of the things he saw in Heaven." If this was madness, what a price we have to pay for trying to be sane!



A human soul ecstatically reunites itself with God in Blake's illustration for his epic poem Jerusalem.

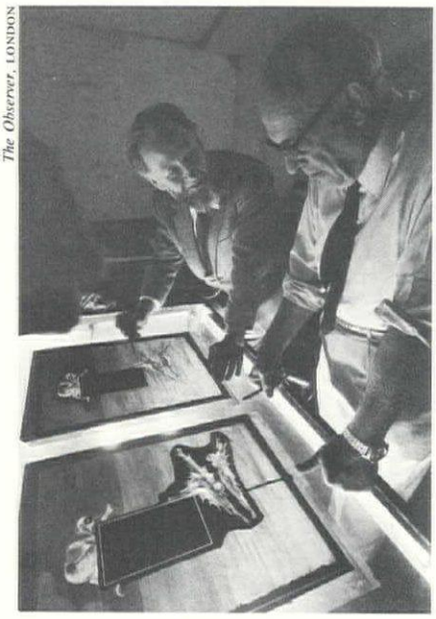
Blake: Lost and Found

HORIZON presents, for the first time
in America, one of the major art rediscoveries of recent years:
Blake's illustrations for the poems of Thomas Gray

By ARNOLD FAWCUS

It is a rare event when 116 water colors by a major artist such as Blake are rediscovered. These missing pictures, illustrations for poems by Thomas Gray (eight of which HORIZON reproduces on the following pages), were not on view even in Blake's lifetime. The sculptor John Flaxman commissioned them about 1797 as a gift for his wife, Ann, and Blake dedicated the series to her. We know from a letter she wrote in 1805 that they were not "wantonly shewn to anybody." Obviously, she was trying to protect Blake: the Gray illustrations are full of his republican and antiwar views—views that had already led to a trial for sedition. Happily, Blake had been acquitted.

After Flaxman's death the water colors were sold, and eventually "disappeared" uncatalogued into the Duke of Hamilton's library, where they were, in fact, "lost" for more than seventy-five years. After their rediscovery, they were seen by only a few scholars until recently, when they became the property of the collector Paul Mellon, who is also Associate Trustee of the William Blake Trust of London. Mr. Mellon lent them to my firm, Trianon Press, so that we could reproduce them. Eighteen craftsmen worked for four years to produce four hundred facsimiles, which the Blake Trust, a nonprofit organization, is offering to museums and collectors. The subscription price for each set of three leather-bound volumes will be $1,378. They are available from Trianon Press, 125 Avenue du Maine, Paris 14eme.



The Observer, LONDON

At Trianon Press, Arnold Fawcus (left) and a craftsman prepare the plate for "Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat."

The marriage of Blake's romantic imagination to Gray's classic poetry produced designs of great beauty. The originals, together with the Trianon Press facsimiles, had their first public showing last year at the Tate Gallery, where they were widely acclaimed. The art critic of the London *Times* described them as "full of Blake's great imagination.... clear and ringing as Blake's words."

In an opening couplet on the verso of the title page, opposite, Blake warns the reader that he intends to expand Gray's themes.

> Around the Springs of Gray my wild root weaves
> Traveller repose & Dream among my leaves.

Many of the designs contain elements that would have surprised Gray. In the plate on page 114, titled "Yet see how all around them wait/The vultures of the Mind," taken from "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," Blake has created a Bosch-like scene of the "sinful passions" in store for the innocent boys (and girls!) of Eton. The figure of Jealousy is on the left, entwined with a snake, and behind him is Gluttony (an improbable-looking hog), then Avarice clutching a running boy, and Pride in a lion's mane. Despair enfolds a little girl with a doll, while overhead the vulture of Lust reaches for the boy with a cricket bat; the snake of Flattery is at the right of the text.

The title page for "Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat Drowned in a Tub of Gold Fishes," on page 115, illustrates Gray's line, "Midst the tide/Two Angel forms were seen to glide." The goldfish have become demonic creatures enticing a lascivious-looking figure into a Blakean "sea of Experience." She is a far cry from Gray's "demure" tabby gazing into a china vase.

In the next plate, "The Seals and Maces danced before him," from "A Long Story," Blake has transformed Gray's lines into an antiaristocratic political cartoon. He shows Sir Christopher Hatton, Lord Keeper of the Seal for Elizabeth I and her presumed lover, observing the dance of his Seal and his Mace, personifications of his power. The Seal has a sting in her tail, and the Mace a crown on his head; he carries a bishop imprisoned at the tip of his staff. Blake reveals Hatton's evil nature by giving him a spiky ruff; the rose is an allusion to his equivocal relationship with the queen.

In the following plate, "Out of the window whisk they flew," also from "A Long Story," two highborn young ladies who had come to cast a magic spell on Gray exercise their supernatural powers by flying out of the window in a flash of lightning. Since the poet was not at home, they have left a note on a corner of the table.

In the series illustrating Gray's best-known poem, "Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard," Blake shows himself at variance with Gray's theme of contemplative resignation. The design for "Oft did the Harvest to their sickle yield," shows a lusty peasant at work while his daughter brings refreshment in a small barrel.

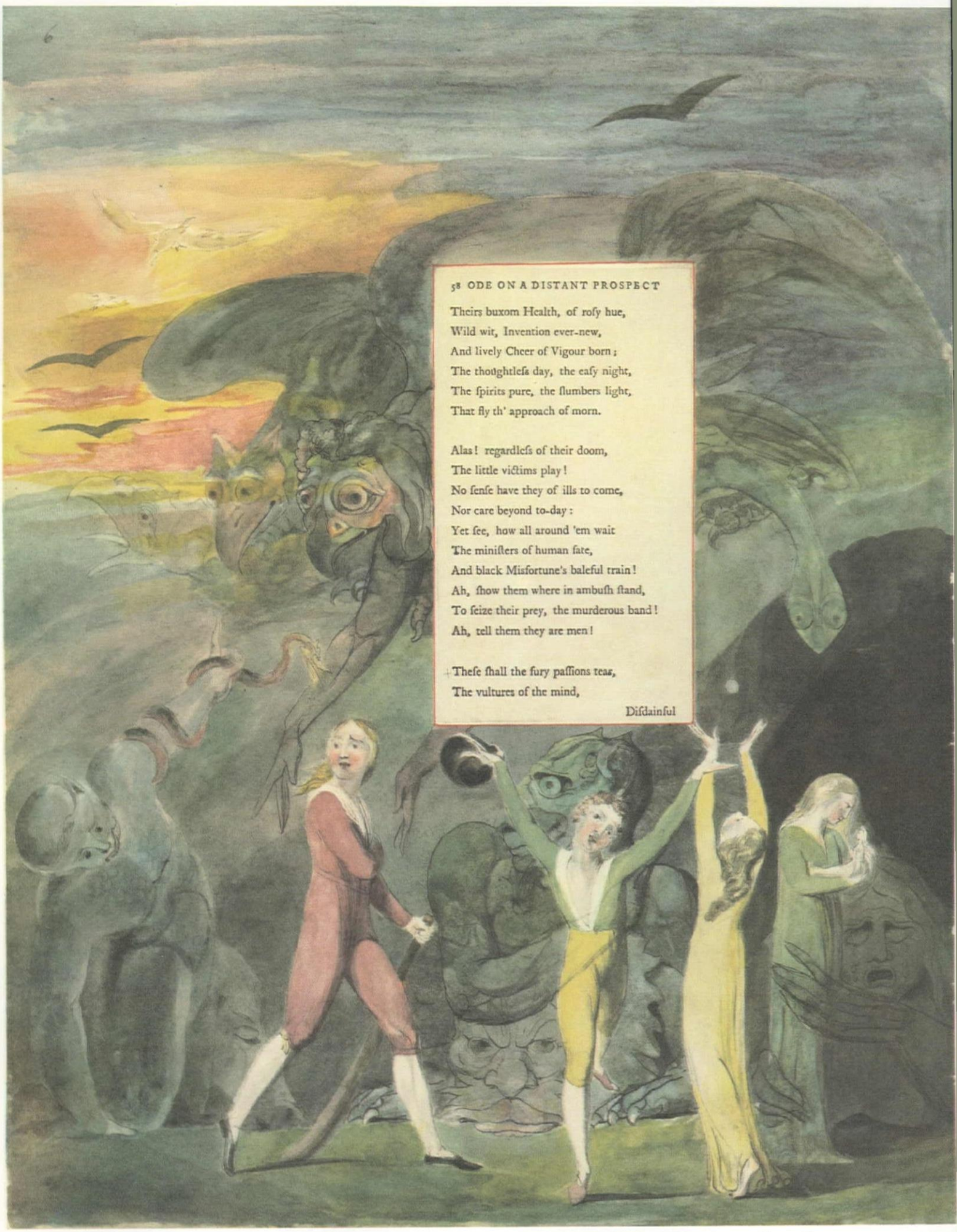
In the next plate, entitled "The Bard weaving Edwards fate," a bearded poet, at once oracle and wizard, curses King Edward and his descendants, who have exterminated the Welsh bards. The bloody harpstrings he touches represent the warp of Edward's fate.

In the final plate, from "The Progress of Poesy," entitled "Hyperion's march they spy/& glittering shafts of war," a dazzling Hyperion aims the arrow of Intelligence against the terrifying specters of Night and Ignorance.

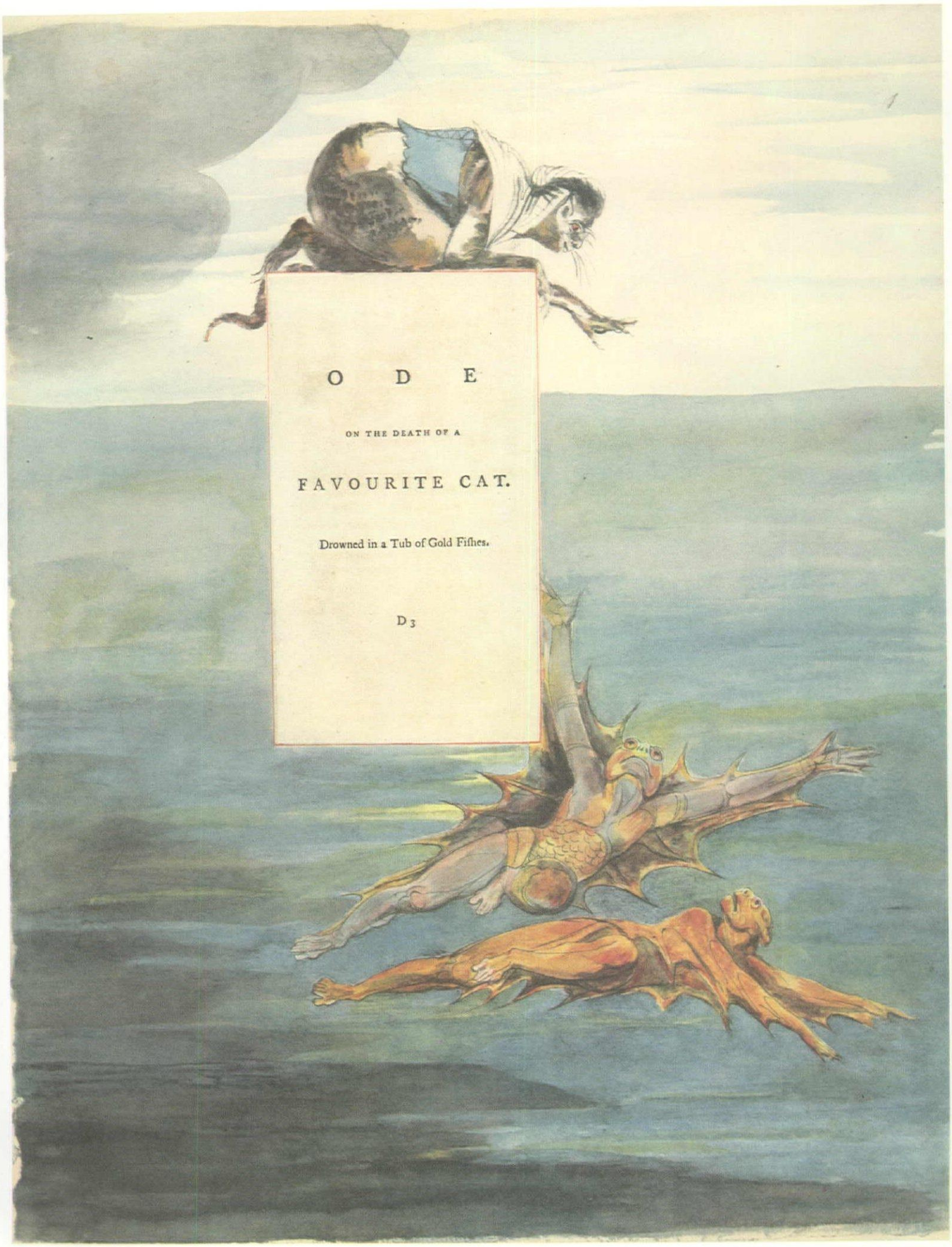


TITLE PAGE OF BLAKE'S *Gray*—*"The Pindaric Genius receiving his Lyre"*

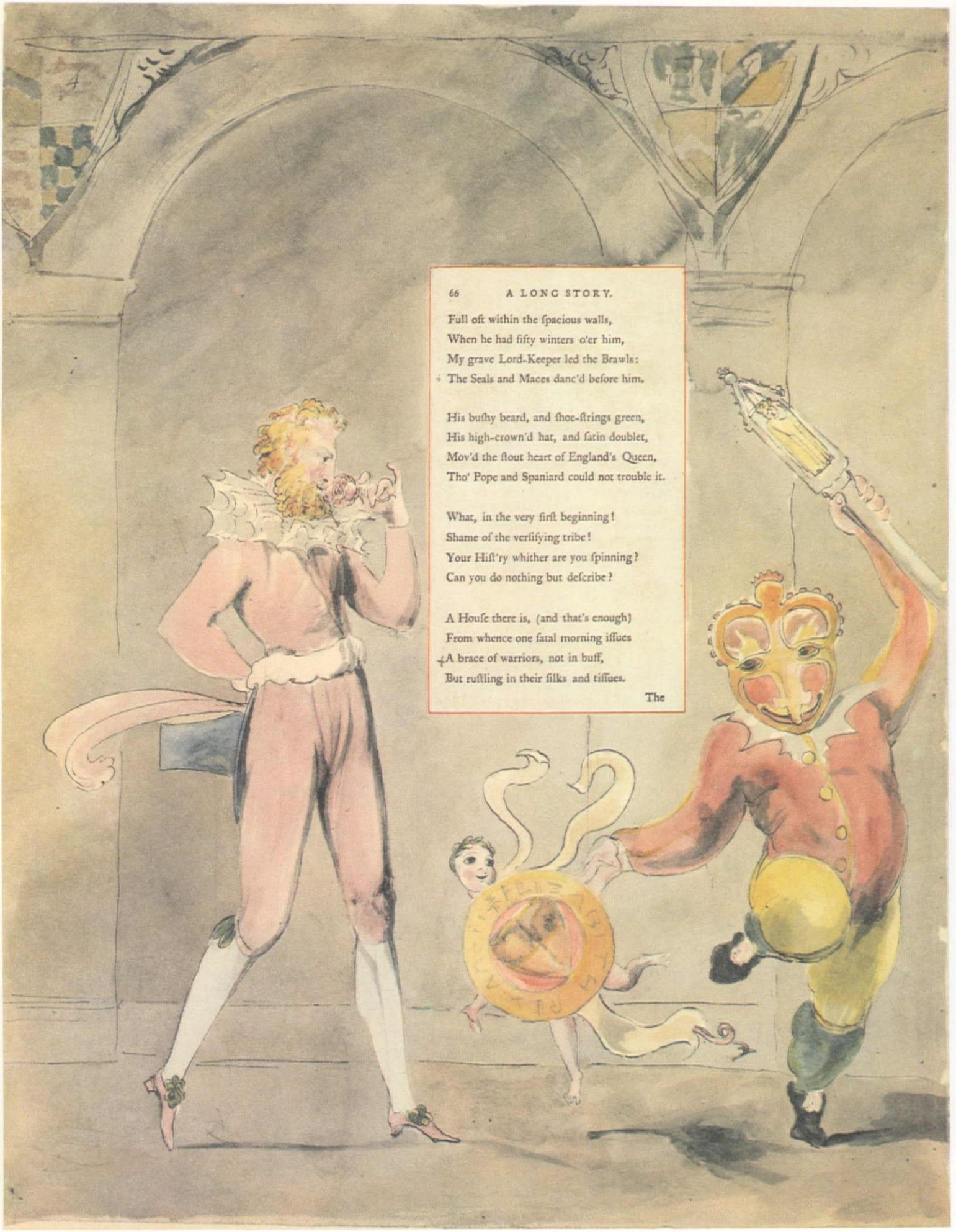
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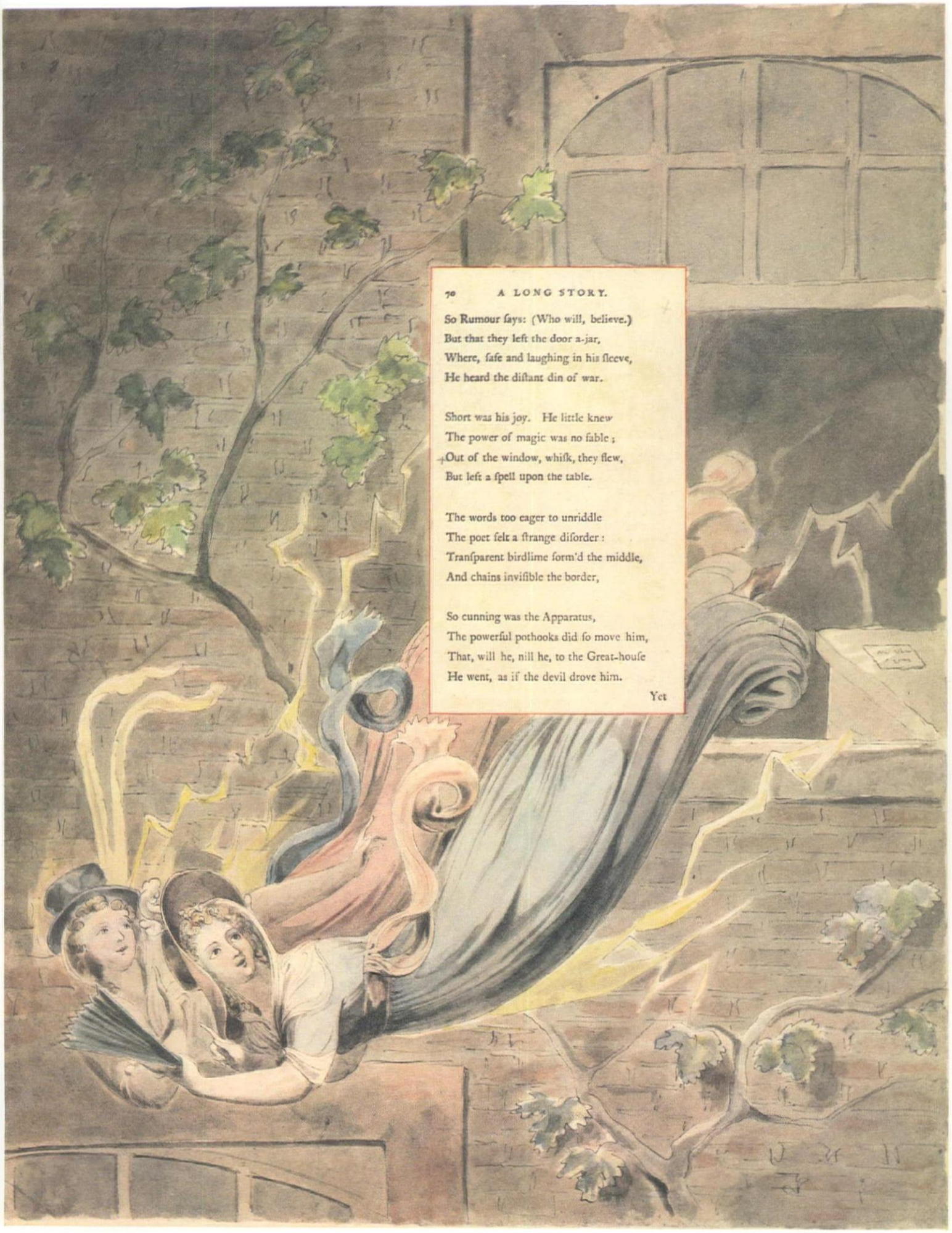
"Yet see how all around them wait/The vultures of the Mind"—FROM ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE



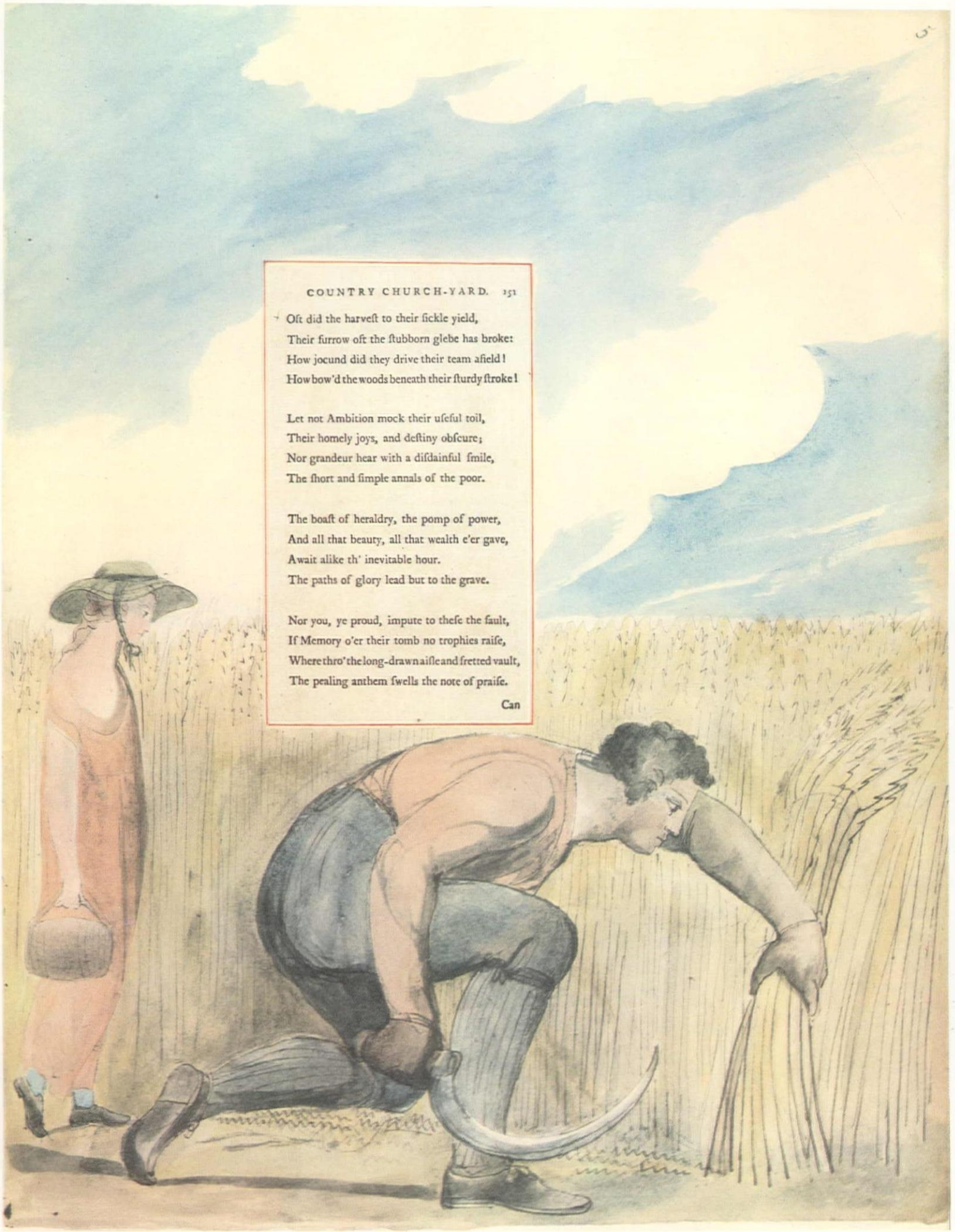
"Midst the tide/Two Angel forms were seen to glide"—FROM ODE ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT DROWNED IN A TUB OF GOLD FISHES_



"The Seals and Maces danced before him"—FROM A LONG STORY



"Out of the window whisk they flew"—FROM A LONG STORY



"Oft did the Harvest to their sickle yield"—FROM ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD



THE

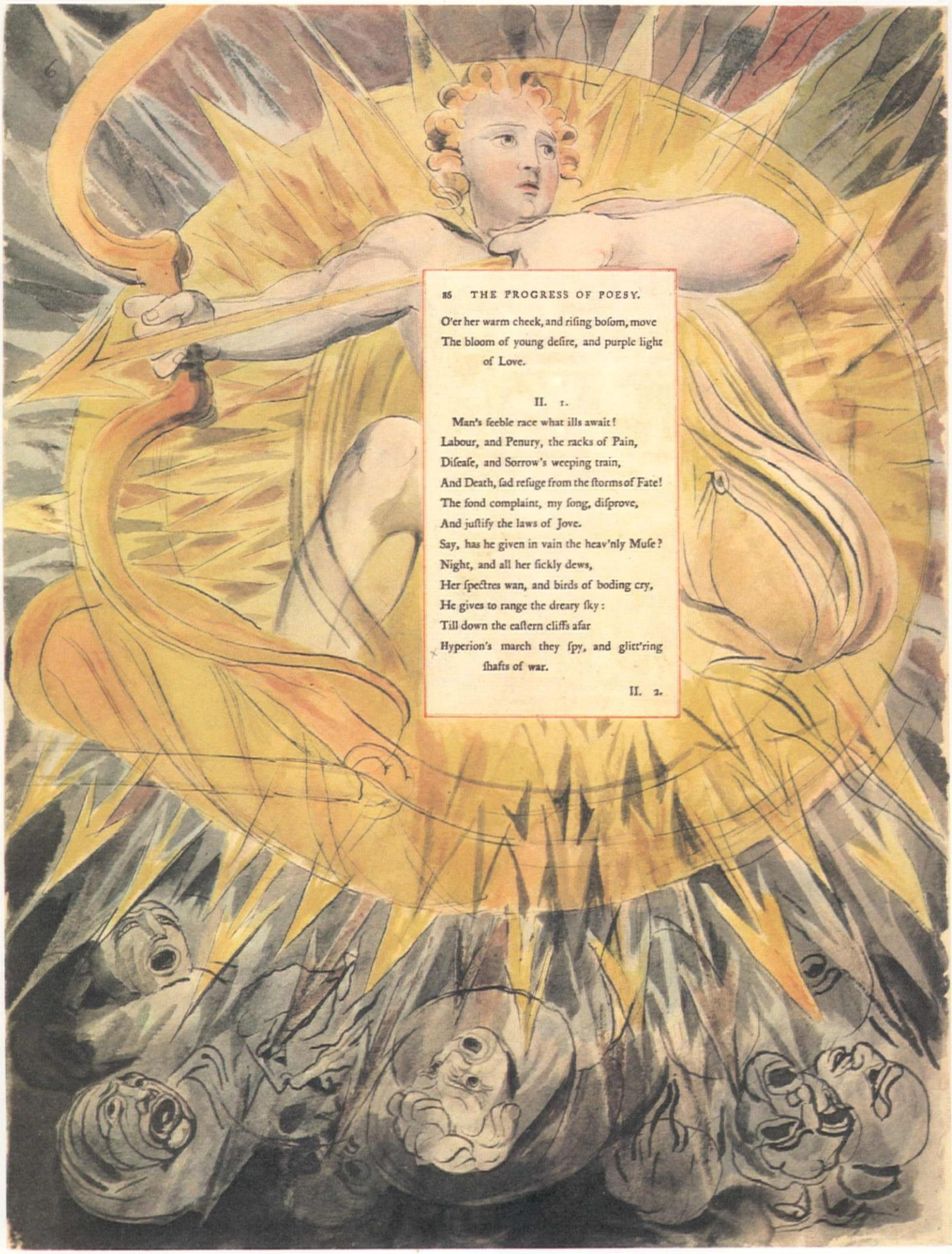
BARD.

A PINDARIC ODE.

I. 1.

'RUIN ſeize thee, ruthleſs King.
'Confuſion on thy banners wait;
'Tho' fann'd by Conqueſt's crimſon wing,
'They mock the air with idle ſtate!
'Helm, nor Hauberk's twiſted mail,
'Nor even thy virtues, Tyrant, ſhall avail

"The Bard weaving Edwards fate"—FROM THE BARD



"Hyperion's march they spy/& glittering shafts of war" FROM THE PROGRESS OF POESY