

Winter 1-1-1986

San José Studies, Winter 1986

San José State University Foundation

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/sanjosestudies_80s

Recommended Citation

San José State University Foundation, "San José Studies, Winter 1986" (1986). *San José Studies, 1980s*. 19.

https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/sanjosestudies_80s/19

This Journal is brought to you for free and open access by the San José Studies at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in San José Studies, 1980s by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@sjsu.edu.

Winter 1986

San José Studies

San Jose State University
Journal of the Arts,
Humanities, Social Sciences,
Sciences, and Business.

\$5.00

SAN JOSE STUDIES

SAN JOSE STUDIES

Volume XII, Number 1

Winter, 1986

ARTICLES

Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth

Paul Lauter 6

We and Kafka

Robert Wexelblatt 20

Limiting Factors and the Survival of Populations

Howard Shellhammer 45

Observation in Cuba

Kent Schellenger 73

POETRY

Adrienne Rich	
Edges	33
Blue Rock	34

Macushla Nugent	
Deathlings	36
Man in Search of War	38
Pigeons	40
"In the midst of life . . ."	41

J. B. Goodenough	
Days of Plague	42
Reductio	43
Hill Settlement	44

SHORT STORY

Silence and Slow Time	
Laurie Kaplan	55

ART

Impressions of Latin America	
Betty LaDuke	67

SAN JOSE STUDIES

Volume XII, Number 1

Winter, 1986

EDITOR

Fauneil J. Rinn, *Political Science and American Studies, San Jose State University*

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Billie B. Jensen, *History, San Jose State University*

Harold J. DeBey, *Chemistry, San Jose State University*

Allison Heisch, *English and Humanities, San Jose State University*

EDITORIAL BOARD

Garland E. Allen, *Biology, Washington University*

John A. Brennan, *History, University of Colorado, Boulder*

Hobert W. Burns, *Philosophy, San Jose State University*

Lee Edwards, *English, University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

Richard Flanagan, *Creative Writing, Babson College*

Robert C. Gordon, *English and Humanities, San Jose State University*

Richard Ingraham, *Biology, San Jose State University*

Richard E. Keady, *Religious Studies, San Jose State University*

Jack Kurzweil, *Electrical Engineering, San Jose State University*

Lela A. Llorens, *Occupational Therapy, San Jose State University*

Richard A. Scott, *Business, University of Arizona*

Jules Seigel, *English, University of Rhode Island*

Robert G. Shedd, *English and Humanities, University of Maryland, Baltimore County*

Dwight Van de Vate, Jr., *Philosophy, The University of Tennessee*

Ellen C. Weaver, *Biological Sciences, San Jose State University*

COMMITTEE OF TRUSTEES

Jean Beard

Marshall J. Burak

Charles Burdick

Selma R. Burkom

John A. Galm

John B. Gruber

Elsie Leach

Arlene Okerlund

Rose Tseng

O.C. Williams, Chairman

BUSINESS ASSISTANT

Emi Nobuhiro

GRAPHIC CONSULTANTS

Al Beechick

Laura Chau

ARTICLES

Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth

Paul Lauter

The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is in conformity between the old and the new. Whoever has approved this idea of order, of the form of European, of English literature will not find it preposterous that the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past. And the poet who is aware of this will be aware of great difficulties and responsibilities.

T. S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent"

There's a man goin' round takin' names,
There's a man goin' round takin' names,
He has taken my brother's name,
And left my heart in pain,
There's a man goin' round takin' names.

Traditional, as sung by Paul Robeson

THESE are times which may not yet try our souls, but surely they tempt our spirits. The chairman of the federal agency dispensing opportunity to humanists initiates a public campaign to reestablish as the basis of humanistic study a five, or maybe a two-and-a-half foot shelf of great books. These would, presumably, teach us, or at least the youth consigned to us, the central virtues: to quote William Bennett, "Not to betray your friends, your God or your country." Across Washington, the National Institute of Education issues a report suggesting that American

higher education suffers from a deep head cold which, if it is not treated, could easily develop into pneumonia. The treatment, among other things, an expansion of the liberal arts, perhaps a return to old-fashioned general education and distribution requirements. Dutifully pursuing the theme, reports of prestigious private organizations like the Association of American Colleges sound the trumpet of reform.

And now, as if in answer to these calls, the President has appointed a humanist, an academic, the very initiator of this campaign to revive the humanities and the study of Western Civilization as Secretary of Education. And not, or so it would seem, simply to preside over the dismemberment of that federal department, but to reestablish in education traditional American virtues.

Five or eight years ago it would have seemed a humanist's dream, this federally-sanctioned campaign to restore the importance of our disciplines, to "place at the heart of the college curriculum" the "study of the humanities and Western civilization,"¹ and a colleague in high place to put money behind the mouth. And besides, for many of us the very notion of reviving general education requirements, and especially the study of Western civilization, is itself appealing, regardless of money or power. So perhaps it would seem best not to look a gift horse too closely in the mouth, even if the emerging winds bring more than a whiff of sectarian values. For our survival as humanities and social sciences faculty may depend on recapturing from pre-professional programs, from our colleagues in accounting and computers and hotel management, at least a modicum of student time and credits. And, not to be altogether mercenary about it, do we not have a responsibility to educate students about values, about culture, about our "monuments of unaging intellect"? We do, indeed, I believe, nor is there anything wrong in trying to survive and to help our younger colleagues get and maintain jobs. Where, then, is the rub?

Consider Mr. Bennett's injunction, reasonable enough in its outer garb, "not to betray your friends." But who are our friends? In Central America, among the main friends of Mr. Bennett's boss are what the administration calls "freedom fighters," "contras," the majority of whose victims in Nicaragua have been innocent peasants and teachers, nurses, doctors, community development workers. Are such thugs our friends? Is our friend in the Philippines the president whose chief of military staff was put on trial for rubbing out the Marcos' regime's main enemy, Benigno Aquino? The plot, then, thickens, for it seems that learning involves distinguishing friend from foe, and just who they are may well appear different if it is *The Republic* that focuses our thoughts, or W. E. B. DuBois' *The Souls of Black Folks*, Hawthorne's "My Kinsman, Major Molineaux" or Richard Wright's "Bright and Morning Star," *Leviticus*, 1984, or *The Dream of a Common Language*.

Curricular Reform Not an End Itself

My point, to emerge from this trope, is that curricular reform, a movement back to broad, humane study as the basis for college education, is by no means an end in itself. All curricula are political. So are the most innocent-seeming of academic choices. The curriculum, like the law, embodies a set of generally-unexamined values, social priorities, definitions of legitimate personal aspiration. The yeast is only now being added to the dough of curricular reform, but now, even now, is the time to ask what is being baked (or half-baked) and for whom.

If the undergraduate curriculum is to be reformed, if the ideas of general education and the humanities are to be revived, what shall be the goals, the values, the content expressed in that revival? I want to suggest where some of the conflicts lie in answering such questions and to point in certain directions which may, I believe, yield more fruitful answers for us. To say this another way: it would be fatal to stand in the way of creative change in the liberal arts curriculum; but it would be foolish not to inquire deeply about the directions in which change shall proceed.

I think it is useful, first, to view the currently-emerging movement for reform in historical context. Many of you were, like me, educated in what seem—only in retrospect—less conflicted times. Men were men; they knew how to act the part, and if they sometimes wondered, they had Hemingway and Faulkner to instruct them—or, with a different clientele, John Wayne and Ronald Reagan—or was it Hopalong Cassidy? At any rate, we placidly took and some of us eventually taught courses in the western heritage with titles like “Great Men and Great Ideas” or “The Origins of Christian Civilization.” We felt, perhaps, slightly fraudulent in such courses, some of us, but we consoled ourselves with the reflection that if we did not precisely “belong,” we were at least learning to fit, more or less naturally, into our charcoal gray suits. The steady post-war expansion of the economy, the G.I. Bill, the response to the threat perceived in Sputnik, the pressure for equal educational opportunity emerging from the youthful civil rights movement—these and other factors produced the huge expansion of colleges and universities in the late 50s and 60s, which brought many of us our jobs and reasonably decent standards of living.

That expansion also brought to colleges very different student constituencies and, to some degree as well, their faculty counterparts. They found an educational system that did not seem to serve them well. The curriculum left them out: western civilization was all very well, but what if your ancestors were dragged from Africa as slaves to the “civilized” westerners, or if your ancestors had developed a mighty culture while westerners still roamed the wilds of Prussia in wolf skins? Faulkner and Dilsey were all very well, too, but maybe Richard Wright and Bigger had a bit more to tell us about 1965. But even such curricular

questions were largely irrelevant to the majority of citizens historically by-passed by higher education. To many of these citizens, it seemed you *already* had to be party to white upper middle-class culture, had to be able to leap its hurdles, pass its tests, in order even to be admitted to the collegiate precincts of cultural apprenticeship. Perhaps admissions should be “open,” access to the higher learning independent of previous conditions of intellectual servitude. And besides, when it came to certain requirements, these courses in general education—whatever *they* meant by *that*—the pros themselves weren’t much interested. They were too busy with their specialties, because that’s the way they got ahead. Anyway, they didn’t seem to agree very much about what courses like that *ought* to contain, much less what a high school graduate ought to know. One said *Samson Agonistes*, another insisted on Cardinal Newman, a third opted for *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and some young turk tossed in *Seize the Day*, altogether a sticky apple of discord.

The cultural consensus, in brief, began to come unstuck, a victim of increasing diversity in the university, as well as of mounting conflict over values and priorities in the society.

Now I would argue that the dissolution of the 1950s consensus—and I want to be clear that this is the thinnest of sketches of that process—was on the whole a good thing. To be sure, the elimination of most requirements helped to produce students who in many respects knew not their right hands from their left; who wrote no tongue but English, and that indifferently or worse; who claimed they already had the education and needed from us only the degree. It also exacerbated the 1970s job crisis in the humanities by helping dry up the pool of students who came to us, however indifferently, to satisfy writing and general education requirements.

Yet and still, that 1950s consensus *was* narrow, of a piece with Jewish quotas at Columbia; the exclusion of blacks from Ol’ Miss; the misogynist indifference even at Wellesley and Smith to women’s history, writing, creativity; the insistence, at Indiana, Berkeley, and Yale alike that studying French and German was necessary but that Spanish was a language of lower degree. It was the cultural consensus of a small portion of North American society, white, male, British or North-European in ancestry, not perhaps the Tom Buchanans of the world, but certainly the Nick Carraways. They looked for intellectual guidance to New Critics or their gurus, like Allen Tate, who claimed that the role of “the man of letters in the modern world” was to sustain the purity of language and the sanctity of received tradition against collective society and mass culture. They—perhaps the more appropriate pronoun of a quarter century ago is “we”—We, then, agreed that ideology was, indeed, at an end, together with fundamental social conflict; that poverty, “Gentlemen’s Agreements,” and “separate but equal” were disappearing with the

expansion of mature capitalism; that in any case, socialism and capitalism would drift into marriage over the course of time; and that we would leaven, with the power of true classics, the bland but essentially healthy dough of (upper) middle-class America.

Outline of Proposals

Do I draw a cartoon of the 50s? Even if I do, the picture retains a strong and not altogether nostalgic appeal, as the response to Mr. Bennett's proposals—not to speak of the election—indicate. Let me outline these proposals, as they appear in "To Reclaim a Legacy," the essay Mr. Bennett produced in November, 1984, when he was still chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. I shall not reproduce here the paper's documentation of the decline in humanistic study; Lord knows, we are all sufficiently familiar with that reality of our lives. But I need to pause for an instant at Mr. Bennett's contention that a major contributing factor to that decline—indeed the only *cause* he mentions in his introductory summary—is "a failure of nerve and faith on the part of many college faculties and administrators. . . ." We have met the enemy and, in Mr. Bennett's view, he—or she—is us. Thus his paper can be taken as an effort to reinvigorate our nerve and faith, in particular our faith in the virtues of traditional approaches to the teaching of the humanities and western civilization. His rubric for our salvation involves three components: first, the humanities and western civilization are central to collegiate education because they voice the basic values around which American society is organized; second, a broad consensus exists about the core of humane study—about the "canon" of the humanities, the group of books, novels, essays, poems, with which an educated person should be familiar; and third, teaching that core of books and authors will enable us, given a reasonably vital pedagogy, to fulfill the functions humane study is designed to accomplish in the university.

Let us begin, then, with the initial question, Mr. Bennett's and ours: why study the humanities? His answers, spread across many parts of "To Reclaim a Legacy," are propositions with which many of us would agree: The humanities, to quote the essay, "tell us how men and women of our own and other civilizations have grappled with life's enduring, fundamental questions." What are these? "What is justice? What should be loved? What deserves to be defended? What is courage? What is noble? What is base? Why do civilizations flourish? Why do they decline?" (p. 5) And, lest these goals seem altogether too grand for Humanities 1B, Mr. Bennett has added as a kind of coda in a *Washington Post* op ed piece that the humanities also lead to business success. "Take the time to make mankind your business," he advises students; "you will find that the humanities and other liberal arts will help you succeed, and

profit, in any career or endeavor" (January 28, 1985).

Perhaps we should, then, simply be toasting to fun and profit with the humanities. Unfortunately, I'm also one of those serious fellows interested in what "deserves to be defended," "what should be loved"; I'm interested in justice, civilization, decline, and similar weighty matters. I find little evidence that these questions are, in fact, seriously considered in college curricula outside the areas we loosely group as the humanities. I would like to feel that my profession does speak to such issues. And yet I am suspicious of grand claims made for humanistic study. When it is argued that the "humanities bring together the perennial questions of human life with the greatest works of history, literature, philosophy and art," I find myself shuffling my feet and blushing. But then I reflect that the "perennial questions"—fewer in number than they may seem—are often far easier to deal with, in the classroom, in the abstract than the looming and unprecedented issues of our diurnal world: the threat of nuclear annihilation, for example, stark hunger amid plenty, equal opportunity for all. I wonder, more modestly even, whether "The Origins of Christian Civilization"—as much as I learned teaching it—ever taught students not to "betray" their friends—or to widen their notions of who the friendlies were. I reflect gloomily that the twentieth century offers ample, indeed agonizing, evidence that humane study guarantees not at all the cultivation of civilized behavior. Buchenwald, the Gulag, Hiroshima, My Lai. The brutalities massive and trivial of modern life can indeed lead us to despair of the humanizing function of education altogether, to conclude that what we do in 45 or 50 hours through a term will be little noted nor long remembered, that we had best stick to the form and allusive structure of *The Cantos* and leave questions of value and morality to the political and religious mavens who speak with less embarrassed restraint than we about them.

But surely politics is too important to leave to politicians, or morals to moralists. True, we will not end war and exploitation by teaching American Civilization 1, A or B. But that is not the question. What we study and how we assess what we study are, as I have suggested, matters of politics and values, and as these shape what we study (and how), surely what we study shapes them. Let us remain wary of the more extreme claims for our profession. But the basic idea that questions of value should charge the humanities classroom is, it seems to me, vital.

Let us also accept Mr. Bennett's contention that "because our society is the product and we the inheritors of Western civilization, American students need an understanding of its origins and development, from its roots in antiquity to the present." (p. 12) Between this contention and a great books curriculum lies a profound gap, because civilization is by no means expressed solely in big books—or even in writing, for that matter. This idea is, of course, familiar to those of us who teach American Studies

or American Civilization. We will teach anything—as people like to say of us. The intent is both democratic and practical: to learn of the fullness of our civilization, we need to know what it was that those without the leisure and position to publish thought and did. And what we teach also changes, because students change, the times change; and thus how the past, how our traditions (which are by no means simply western) can be grasped changes as well. For books do not live in a timeless empyrean; they were written in a particular world and they are read in a particular world. To me this reality presents a basic pedagogical issue.

Do we present to each generation of students the same set of classic texts to insure their exposure to the ideas and, presumably, the aesthetic monuments of our civilization? Or do we ask which works from the vast universe available to us speak most forcefully in *this* moment of time, to these people in this place, precisely on those questions of value Mr. Bennett would have us address? I need hardly say that these differing strategies suggest quite different discussions in the curriculum committee and lead to rather different syllabi.

Preserve the Traditions

In addressing this pedagogical question, I have, of course, ignored for the moment the conservative function of humanistic study—conservative at least in the sense in which Mr. Bennett quotes Walter Lippmann to the effect that “a society can be progressive only if it conserves its tradition.” (p. 42) My problem, English teacher that I am, arises from the lack of an “s” at the end of that last word—“tradition” rather than “traditions.” That minute but in no way trivial difference seems to me to focus a second set of issues. For underneath that missing “s” is the question of the canon—that is, what works constitute a tradition, convey a set of shared values? What books and authors do you propose that an educated person should know? These questions began to emerge during the past decade, especially, I think, as feminist and minority critics pointed to what we might call the “dialectics of validation”: that is, certain historical constructs gave importance to a body of texts, while the weight attributed to the texts sustained the very credibility of received versions of history. The search of the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s for a useable past led outside this closed circle, to works that existed often at the peripheries of received accounts of literary history. And, as we have contemplated writing by Harriet Beecher Stowe and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Sarah Orne Jewett, Charles Chesnutt, and Mary Wilkins Freeman, Black Elk, Zora Neale Hurston, and Meridel LeSueur, we have come to realize not only the need to construct new versions of history—social as well as literary—but also the need to reconstruct our standards of excellence, our understanding of form, indeed our ideas about the

functions of literature.

The question of the canon, in short, affects all the structures of literary study. A canon is, when we examine it, based on a limited set of texts. That is, we derive aesthetic and historical theories from a selection of works, often lifted from their historical contexts and quite limited in outlook and even form. In general, our choice of these texts is rooted in assumptions derived from the particular characteristics of our class, race, sex, and our academic training. From this narrow selection of texts, this canon, we project aesthetic standards and the structures of literary history. And once we have developed such historical constructs, we view other works in their terms, whether the works originate from that initial "text milieu" (to use Geoffrey Hartman's phrase) or from outside it. That commonplace and hardly conscious procedure underlies what I have called the "dialectics of validation" and helps explain the apparently self-evident character of the canon.

But the debate over the canon is not an academic one, although the canon is itself academically perpetuated. For the canon is, at its center, a construct like a history text which expresses what a society reads back into its past as important to its future. That becomes clear when we look at Mr. Bennett's personal canon, the works which, as he suggests, have shaped his own values. He presents his canon with the modesty of power; it is not his purpose to "dictate anyone's curriculum" but only to respond to the curious. His is a list with which we are all familiar, virtually identical, in fact, to the curriculum of the western civilization course I taught at Hobart and William Smith Colleges a quarter century ago:

The works and authors I have in mind include, but are not limited to, the following: from classical antiquity—Homer, Sophocles, Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, and Vergil; from medieval, Renaissance, and seventeenth-century Europe—Dante, Chaucer, Machiavelli, Montaigne, Shakespeare, Hobbes, Milton, and Locke; from eighteenth- through twentieth-century Europe—Swift, Rousseau, Austen, Wordsworth, Tocqueville, Dickens, George Eliot, Dostoyevsky, Marx, Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Mann, and T. S. Eliot; from American literature and historical documents—the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist Papers, the Constitution, the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural Address, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "Letter from the [sic] Birmingham Jail" and "I have a dream . . ." speech, and such authors as Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, and Faulkner. Finally, I must mention the Bible, which is the basis of so much subsequent history, literature and philosophy. (p. 16)

I want to focus on what Mr. Bennett selects from what he calls "American literature and historical documents." It may seem ungrateful in one committed as I am to equal rights to attack this list—as I shall obviously do—particularly in view of the inclusion among Mr. Bennett's paradigmatic works and authors of Dr. King's "Letter" and speech, not to mention the creators of Hester Prynne, Nigger Jim, Sam Fathers, Dilsey, and—yes—Babo. It may even sound ungrateful coming from a white, American male after one reflects on the interesting fact that nary a single female voice seems to have emerged with sufficient force to penetrate Mr. Bennett's American Pantheon or that Spanish seems to have become a non-western culture. But when one looks closely at that attenuated list of American fiction writers—Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, and Faulkner—these comments may not seem so ungrateful, or misplaced, as all of that.

Traditional Conception of American Fiction

Mr. Bennett's short list may be taken to represent, I think, a traditional conception of American fiction. I thought about this conception and the kinds of experiences and virtues it validates when during the past year I taught Faulkner's novella, *The Bear*. I take it that *The Bear* is the kind of book Mr. Bennett would have our students read, for it is surely concerned with courage, "what is noble," "what should be loved," why civilizations decline, and similar weighty matters. Indeed, it is a book about how one learns and applies courage, humility, sensitivity, and related virtues; for Ike, through whose consciousness we see events, "the wilderness the old bear ran was his college and the old male bear itself, so long unwifed and childless as to have become its own ungendered progenitor, was his alma mater."² It is a book, too, which renews thematic material central to other works of its tradition: *Leatherstocking*, *Moby Dick*, *Huckleberry Finn*, among others: the white boy, orphaned, learns adult virtues from the man of color, the primitive prince, deposed but noble still, even in his degradation.

I thought of such matters when I reread the opening paragraphs of *The Bear*. I want to share some of those opening paragraphs with you, as I did with my students at Old Westbury, and see if you respond to them as my students did.

The best of all talking . . . was of the men, not white nor black nor red but men, hunters, with the will and hardihood to endure and the humility and skill to survive, and the dogs and the bear and deer juxtaposed and relieved against it, ordered and compelled by and within the wilderness in the ancient and unremitting contest according to ancient and immitigable rules which voided all regrets and brooked no quarter;—the

best game of all, the best of all breathing and forever the best of all listening, the voices quiet and weighty and deliberate for retrospection and recollection and exactitude among the concrete trophies—the racked guns and the heads and skins—in the libraries of town houses or the offices of plantation houses or (and best of all) in the camps themselves where the intact and still-warm meat yet hung, the men who had slain it sitting before the burning logs on hearths when there were houses and hearths or about the smoky blazing of piled wood in front of stretched tarpaulins when there were not. There was always a bottle present, so that it would seem to him that those fine fierce instants of heart and brain and courage and wiliness and speed were concentrated and distilled into that brown liquor which not women, not boys and children, but only hunters drank, drinking not of the blood they spilled but some condensation of the wild immortal spirit, drinking it moderately, humbly even, not with the pagan's base and baseless hope of acquiring thereby the virtues of cunning and strength and speed but in salute to them.³

My students—well, I need to tell you about those New York students: most of them were women, about two-thirds white and a third black, mainly older for undergraduates, some in their 40s, many with children. Mostly the first generation to college—unless their children had preceded them. My students, then . . . well, they laughed. They found it all rather comical, the whiskey and the hunters and the trophies and the talk. And perhaps, perhaps at some level, Faulkner did, too, for it is certainly true that, as Faulkner created him, Ike is rather a failure at living in the world and especially in dealing with women. Perhaps this wilderness learning isn't very helpful, the wilderness past. But, then, why the fuss about learning it?

What might one make of our shared hilarity over Faulkner's Mead-Hall heroics?⁴ Perhaps that I'm waltzing my students down the garden path of barbarism. But it may also be the case that for many of us now into the second decade of the new feminist movement, the rituals of male bonding no longer retain the same force and importance, indeed have come to appear slightly comic—except, perhaps, when they are enacted with cocked weapons, and we taste their potential for vicious display. Let me be clear: I am not about trashing Faulkner. I have had many problems with his politics, his notions in the 50s that the civil rights movement should slow down so that the white south might reform itself; his proposition in his Nobel Prize speech that writers should stick to writing about "the human heart in conflict with itself" and avoid that central,

overwhelming fact of the second half of this century: the threat of nuclear holocaust. But none of that is really at issue here.

The problem is the tradition that Faulkner stands for within his fiction and in relation to the other writers who constitute the received canon of American literature. It is not an uninteresting and surely not a dying tradition. But it is woefully partial; it is a part, but only one part, of our western heritage. If one evokes solely from it, ideas of courage, nobility, justice, reasons for the decline of civilization, one will arrive at ideas that are exceedingly limited, and frankly sometimes banal. For one will not see the world coherently; one will not see even half those holding up the sky.

When I taught at Smith College in 1965, the Freshman English course (and that *was* the nomenclature used) included Shakespeare's sonnets, *Samson Agonistes*, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and two or three similar works, including Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom*. I never could get a clear explanation of its intent from the man who designed the course, much less from the women who took it. Even then it seemed to me somehow mocking of female education. Were those the best works for that audience in 1965? By what standards? Perhaps one could ask for nothing better, then. In 1985, however, one *can* ask for something different; one can ask for books that reflect the full range of human or even of western experience, those of women as well as of men, those of *and by* people of color as well as those of whites. If it does not reflect simple ignorance of the last two decades of scholarship—and I do not believe it does—what Mr. Bennett's list of his paradigmatic figures represents is a pretence—a pretence that the consensus or, to give it its proper name, the dominant ideology of the 50s can be reestablished and its values recommended to undergraduates by means of newly reassembled liberal arts requirements.

But what would one expect from a man of Mr. Bennett's tradition? " 'Can't repeat the past?' " Gatsby cries incredulously to Nick, " 'Why of course you can!' "

A Contrast to Faulkner

The situation is a bit more ominous, however. For it amounts to an effort to wipe away what we have learned these past two decades. To make the point more clearly, let me place next to the Faulkner passage one of very different content and form.

I didn't want to go out of that filthy dollar hotel room. I didn't want to open the door and go out into the dank hall with the stinking toilet running at the end. And I didn't want to be away from the warm breast of Butch. And it seemed like he just wanted to put on his clothes and get back down on the

street. We really didn't have to be out of that room till eleven in the a.m. I wanted to hide, to stay there forever. Never to stand upright in the cold air. Strange in the city to lie prone as if in a meadow along a line of sky, and feel each other near just as flesh as warmth as some kind of reaching into each other, on the other side of accidents and tearing apart and beating and collision and running into each other and blaming.

I didn't feel good. I cried. Butch got mad and slapped me. My old lady used to cry all the time, he said, getting you to do what she wanted. Didn't you like it? Wasn't I good to you? My old lady is crazy too. She cries for something she can't even remember didn't happen. All women are nuts, beyond me.

I hurt, I said. I didn't know it would be like this. Nobody tells you the truth. Now I could see mama and why she was hurt and why she always went back to papa, too, how she loved him in a terrible way. I thought everyone on the street would see this on me. Now I knew what they were winking and making faces about and hitting each other about and waiting for each other on streets for. Even risking their life for each other every day. Didn't mama risk her life everytime she turned over and took her medicine as papa used to say. I would hear him say that and I would hear her cry out. I knew now what that cry was. Nobody can tell you.⁵

Where in all the works of Mr. Bennett's two-and-a-half-foot shelf is the power and ambiguity of a woman's first sexual experience explored? Or is it that female sexuality, intimate violence, and how one learns of truth and heritage not in a memorialized forest but in the frosty urban jungle—is it that these are matters outside of "our" common heritage, matters insufficiently weighty to stand with the questions of why civilizations flourish, what to defend or to love, the "things that matter most"?

The canon to which Mr. Bennett would implicitly have us return gives us, at best, a narrow version of courage and aspiration, a quite partial view of history and values. It may well be that for our students, as for us, the "great questions" of life are addressed not in the Mead Hall or hunting camp but in the plain front rooms portrayed by writers like Sarah Orne Jewett in "Aunt Cynthia Dallett" and "The Foreigner." For in those homes there the issue is not finding humility despite one's gun and one's rich patrimony, but rather how, in the face of poverty, narrowness, and even pride, people build and sustain human community. It may well be, too, that a meaningful path from Thoreau's "Civil Disobedience" to King's "Letter" lies through a story like Mary Wilkins Freeman's "A Church Mouse," since mostly we and our students do not decide the fate of nations nor go to jail for principle, but, like Hetty in that story, search out

means, including passive resistance, to survive with dignity in the face of our weakness.

Now in the abstract, everyone but the most hardened traditionalist will agree with these liberal sentiments. We are all for diversity, representation, inclusion—so long, of course, as we do not “compromise standards.” But when we get down to cases, and in particular to the question of who gets dropped from the anthology or the curriculum to make room for Jewett or Freeman, Zora Neale Hurston or Rudolfo Anaya, then we begin to run into tensions. For it turns out that most of us would rather fight than switch.

Curriculum and Momentum

Indeed, this issue is in curricular terms what “reverse discrimination” has become in matters of personnel action. The curriculum is not an infinitely expandable universe of discourse: there are thirty Tuesday and Thursday classes in most semesters; we can, at best, imagine students reading five or six hours of work at home each week. So if one person insists on Elizabeth Stoddard, another on Charles Chesnutt, and a third on Steinbeck, who is to go? Poe or James or Hemingway or . . . well, you get the picture. Recently at one of our sibling universities, talking informally with a group to plan a series of programs on changing the canon, I mentioned that I no longer taught Henry James in my own courses at Old Westbury. Involuntarily, the director of the women’s studies program, a fiction specialist, startled: “Do you mean . . .” she began, apprehension rising in her voice. And then she, and everyone else in the room, dissolved in laughter at the ironic demonstration of Lauter’s first law of curricular momentum: namely, whatever has been taught will continue to be taught, until death, alteration of the Norton anthology, or a force equivalent to both part us from it.

It is precisely at this point that the voices arguing for the old, the tried, and the true—the gold and calf-bound classics—sound most seductive. “Come hither,” they call. “Leave contending; be not stiff for change. Even reformers disagree. Then gather ye round what we know and share. What is, after all, the best.” And now, faintly accompanying those voices, we can hear the jingle of federal gold also urging the putative classics upon us. And with a sigh of regret, perhaps, we surrender to the lure of Mr. Bennett’s little list and the very real power that lies behind it.

For his is, I think, a forceful gospel. To castigate it as a snare and a delusion, an idol, however federally gilded, it will not do to play Jimmy Carter and argue that things are more complicated, that there are limits to what nerve, faith, and traditional values can accomplish, that Egypt-land, where we are, isn’t perhaps so very bad, after all, after all. We need, rather, to raise an alternate standard which, if it is not precisely a pillar of fire, will at least mark the direction in which we should go.

The humanities embody, celebrate, and sometimes mourn the diversity of traditions from which American civilization has been created. To appreciate that diversity and thus to comprehend our civilization, we must teach a broad range of works, including but not limited to classical western texts. What these are will change with time and circumstance—nor must that be a problem. We need to embed these varied texts both in the historical world in which they were produced and also in the contemporary world in which we now read them. By so doing, we charge the humanities classroom with the energy of the real issues, the aspirations and mysteries, the pain and delight we and our students live.

Which is precisely why I would choose to teach *The Souls of Black Folks* rather than *Leviathan*, *The House of Mirth* rather than *Buddenbrooks*, and perhaps even *The Book of Daniel* along with *The Brothers Karamazov*. And which is why we need to hear the voice of Paul Robeson as well as the cadences of T. S. Eliot, the varied music of Adrienne Rich, Langston Hughes, and Ntozake Shange.

My problem with Mr. Bennett's canon, and everything that flows from it, is, then, a simple one: what the past decades of social change, what the research and pedagogy that derived from them have taught us is that the extraordinary diversity in the historical experience of people in this country cannot be represented by "a tradition," a narrow canon, however resounding the names that constitute and recommend it. Nor should the fact that our culture draws upon many diverse and sometimes conflicting traditions be troubling to us. To dream of creating a "common language" we must begin, with joy, at our common diversity. If we need "The Bear" and the Whale, so do we need "The Girl," "The Church-Mouse"—and "The Woman Warrior," as well. Let the Bear lie down with the Church-Mouse; we may all learn from the conversation.⁶

Notes

¹ All references to William Bennett are to his "To Reclaim a Legacy: A Report on the Humanities in Higher Education," Washington: National Endowment for the Humanities, 1984.

² William Faulkner, "The Bear," *Three Famous Short Novels*, New York: Vintage Book, 1963, p. 203.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 186–187.

⁴ Ann Fitzgerald suggested to me the remarkable similarity in subject, cadence, and imaginative language between the Faulkner passage and certain drinking-hall scenes in Old English poetry.

⁵ Meridel LeSueur, *The Girl*, Minneapolis: West End Press, 1982, p. 51.

⁶ Some portions of this paper, in differing form, were delivered at the 1984 convention of the Modern Language Association, Washington, D.C., and were published in *Social Text*, #12 (Fall, 1985), pp. 94–101.

We and Kafka

Robert Wexelblatt

THE bachelor-genius Franz Kafka, who writes like no one else, who sees like no one else, the German Jew in the Czech capital, the poet in the house of business, the brother in the family of sisters—this is the lonely writer who, at the end of his life, says *we*. He means it, too, though one cannot think of another writer more constrained by temperament and circumstance to isolation. Yet it is as if Kafka's insularity, without being overcome, or even by being intensified, has imploded and become its opposite, allowing him to speak for a great deal more than himself.

For example, in the very middle of his last work, "Josephine the Singer, or the Mousefolk," there occurs this moving sentence:

This piping, which rises up where everyone else is pledged to silence, comes almost like a message from the whole people to each individual; Josephine's thin piping amidst grave decisions is almost like our people's precarious existence amidst the turmoil of a hostile world.¹

At this point in the story, readers may be feeling fairly secure in the opinion that they are in the midst of a fable about the individual artist in his or her relation to the group—the audience, the people, the race, the species. They will not have been troubled by the rather unusual point of view: evidently there is a mouse-narrator of some sort, an *I*, though this narrator is by no means reluctant to speak for the group, for all the generations of the Mouse Folk. He or she says *we* far more frequently than *I*: "Tranquil peace is the music we love best. . . . we are wont to console ourselves. . . . we are quite unmusical . . ." and so forth. One might easily suppose the story is about Josephine. After all, it is her intense individuality that illuminates the mousy qualities of her people. Josephine, in short, is the exception, the only vivid *I* among this vague collective *we*, the Mouse Folk. It is her unique love of music and her capacity for performing it that elevate Josephine to individuality. So, like "A Hunger Artist," with which it appeared, "Josephine" would seem to be another tale about the artist, with all the artist's self-consciousness, vanity, neurotic arrogance, and renunciation. It really looks as if Kafka has simply

found another extended metaphor with which to rehearse his own case: Josephine K. this time, instead of Joseph; "piping" rather than fasting; the Mouse Folk instead of the Samsa family.

Not Quite Satisfactory

Yet there is something not quite satisfactory in this comfortable view, perhaps even something fundamentally wrong. Should we hurry over the tiny stumbling-block of Kafka's peculiar angle of narration, it leaves some slight effect nonetheless, as if we had lightly stubbed our toe. This insistent *we* begins to call attention to itself. For English-speaking readers in particular, it is an odd way to tell a story. The *we* is alien to a consciousness built upon such things as the Reformation, which set each soul on its own in a landscape of pitfalls; British Empiricism, with its atomized sensorium; the American Dream, which is not the dream of the American People but of people who live in America one at a time; travelogues, with their first-person Crusoes and Gullivers; Romanticism, with its cult of private experience and personal vision; Capitalism, with its regard for calculating self-interest. The Preamble to the Constitution is one thing, but there are few authors who pronounce themselves a genuine, collective *we* in English or American literature. Eliot said of Yeats that it took him more than half his life to achieve the freedom of speech really to say *I*.

Here, in his last story, in a fable of a singer written just as his own voice was about to fail him, the author of "He" and creator of the two K.'s does not struggle at the last to say *I*; Kafka says *we*. He has not taken the point of view of Josephine the Songstress, but of all the Mouse Folk who are *not* Josephine. Kafka's last word is not, after all, about an art of the stifled, isolated ego, but one which is "almost like the precarious existence" of an entire species. True, for him there is no alternative to the isolated ego, even a stifled one; yet here he invokes its very opposite. Thus he also does not say that Josephine's art is a message from the individual to the group, or even a piping-for-piping's-sake which the anxious, utilitarian group can take or leave; in fact, he says the very opposite. In a reversal of expectation, if not of logic, Kafka writes that this art of Josephine's is "almost like a message from the whole people to each individual." The group speaks through the individual to the individuals who constitute the group . . . almost. Kafka is hardly ever without this "almost," and one should not forget it.

Kafka's strenuous and even athletic agnosticism does not admit of many certainties. All the same, Paul Goodman saw in "Josephine" something sublime, virtually a final redemption for the guilty artist, for all who are guilty over their art:

Josephine . . . demonstrates a beautiful Kafka-like possibility for finished art, as he says: "Our relation to our fellow man is prayer." The songstress melts back into her people and atones by proxy for the arrogance of art. It is such a conviction, that their art is really universal, it is really only human speech, however incomprehensible, that lightens for many artists their heavy guilt.²

There is no evidence in the story of Josephine's sense of guilt. Nevertheless, the narrator believes in her redemption, and thus in her need for it. This redemption occurs not in despite of the forgetfulness of the Mouse Folk, but just because of it. In this way, her *I* is subsumed in the *we*, but only as she rises "to the heights," which are not to be confused with immortality. Oblivion is up there.

"Josephine" can certainly be classed with Kafka's other tales about artists, but it belongs equally to another and rather small group of stories, most of which are late works—those told in the first-person plural, each of which strives to become "a message from the whole people to each individual."

Kafka is careful about pronouns. Even in his first published work, "Meditation," several of the inchoate lyric pieces are directed at a *you* or refer to a deliberately indeterminate *one*. He is already, one senses, restless with the lyric ego, something suggested also by such an early effort as the dialogue "Conversation with the Supplicant," where the confident *I* encounters its suffering alter-ego. The boundaries of identity are already in some question there, though the *we* is only parenthetical and limited: "Why indeed should I feel ashamed—or why should we feel ashamed—because I don't walk upright and ponderously, striking my walking stick on the pavement . . ."

A writer says *we* decisively when his material calls for it, when the matter is of a collective character, for instance; when an individual subject can best be illuminated through the more objective opinions and memories of his people; or when, among the tensions between individual and group, the group is to be given a chance to express its opinion. However, in the case of Kafka, a story is frequently like a blueprint of experience, a plan which can be used to construct a great variety of interpretations conforming to the same structure.³ In his work, then, the *we* is as likely to represent the fate of an individual as a group, an inward state as much as an outward condition; or rather, the story may express all these things simultaneously.

"An Old Manuscript," for example, a symbolic story of invasion, is just such a blueprint. A people's land—even their capital city—may be invaded by unruly and carnivorous barbarians, but so may an individual's consciousness be invaded by the repressed impulses his

defenses are not strong enough to hold back. The Emperor may be an emperor indeed or a version of, say, the superego, guarantor of order and degree, of cleanliness and obedience. Of course, "An Old Manuscript," like "Josephine," is only equivocally in the first-person plural. There is a particular narrator, an *I* who is a cobbler. And yet the cobbler speaks for his fellow citizens. He is only one of those "artisans and tradesmen" to whom the salvation of the nation is being ineffectually relegated. He is the norm, the one who is moved in on, the first-born child, the bourgeois, the homeowner, the man of this world who wishes to establish a sealed-off reality and believes himself secure behind his Chinese Wall; he is the lover of order, the anxious ego caught between Emperor and barbarian. The invasion is not simply a catastrophe for the cobbler; on the contrary, he concludes that "it will be the ruin of us."

The story is as collective as, say, a psychological theory. In this sense, the *we* is by no means inappropriate. It is precisely *we* who try to screen out the unreal, to suppress the "nomadic" in ourselves, to defend ourselves against the inexplicable—even, let it be said, the terrifying and barely intelligible messages of a Kafka. (The barbarous nomads, Kafka writes, "communicate with each other much as jackdaws do." *Kafka* is Czech for *jackdaw*.) We all like to think ourselves safe if we live "far from the frontier," huddled before the very gates of authority. The story is about us; and the collective narration, without falling into abstraction, universalizes it, confirms it. The angle of narration is itself a sign of Kafka's sureness here, of the precision of his blueprint. If we have read it properly, then the story has indeed become "a message from the whole people to each individual." Perhaps that is one definition of a masterpiece.

Another Plural Narrative

"An Old Manuscript" is to be found in the volume, *A Country Doctor*. The story that Kafka insisted should lead off the collection⁴ is an even briefer plural narrative, "The New Advocate." The collective point of view is not insisted upon here, as in "Josephine," yet it sets the story's chief idea in motion:

We have a new advocate, Dr. Bucephalus.

It is not enough to say that Alexander the Great's old warhorse has become a lawyer. Kafka implies that he is, so to speak, *our* lawyer. The "we have" is a clear sign that the story is to be an expression of "our" condition, and, indeed, the parable is little more than a contrast between then and now, which is to say, between them and us. It is an ancient enough theme, the common complaint of today's inferiority to yesterday; but

Kafka elevates this complaint from private, querulous nostalgia to the dignity of a spiritual judgment. Kierkegaard once remarked, "That past which cannot become a present is irrelevant." History which cannot repeat itself recedes into dusty tomes which, in the course of time, may come to resemble Bucephalus' thick law books. But what of a past we cannot *succeed* in making a present? The irrelevance then may lie more with us than with the past, which, like the Gates of India, will have receded, not into dusty tomes, but "to remoter and loftier places." And why should this be?

Nowadays—it cannot be denied—there is no Alexander the Great.

Paul Goodman was so taken with one of Kafka's late aphorisms that he named one section of his book after it. "Such freedom as is possible today," Kafka wrote, "is a wretched business." Here in "The New Advocate," what is possible for us is pointedly expressed by indicating what is *not* possible for us today. Yes, murder, wanderlust, and the hatred of fathers all are flourishing, even perhaps to excess, but

... no one, no one at all, can blaze a trail to India.

Of course, Dr. Bucephalus possesses "such freedom as is possible today"; that is, with "his flanks unhampered by the thighs of a rider . . . far from the clamor of battle." But there is nothing grand for him to do with this unbridled freedom. Instead,

... he reads and turns the pages of our ancient tomes.

Without that initial *we* to set the pitch of the story, one might think with some amusement of Kafka preparing for his irksome law examinations, writing up his detailed briefs, or compiling his compulsive annual reports for the Workman's Accident Insurance Company. With the direction of the pronoun, however, we must think of nothing less than the conditions of modernity, a period which substitutes anxiety, dissociation, and lawbooks for ambition, integrity, and the imperial ego's bold cavalry charges on the Absolute. "The New Advocate," for all its brevity, has as much to say on these modern-classical contrasts as "The Waste Land" or *Ulysses*. To have left out the *we* would not perhaps have altered the meaning of the story, but it would have altered its effect and restricted its scope. The distance would be by that much the greater between ourselves and the parable, which is truly a serious one only if it is about ourselves. Without the *we*, not only would the story become a more private matter—the spiritual sentimentality of an implied *I*—but its playfulness (a *horse* is reading the law, not the King of Macedon) would then take our eye to

such a degree that the earnestness behind it ("yet the King's sword pointed the way") might wholly escape our attention. After all, Kafka is seldom more in earnest than when disporting himself among his metaphors, his fortified similes.

Complex Simile

The simile of "The Problem of Our Laws" is a complex one and yet, underneath superficial differences, not without resemblances to "The New Advocate." Both are collective narratives; both speak of an essentially ahistorical predicament in historical terms; each invokes Kafka's typical infinite regression to express the distance of the Absolute (the vanishing origins of the laws, the receding Gates of India); moreover, both conjure up the image of the Law itself—in one case as an unworthy and pedestrian substitute for the lawless greatness of Alexander's ambition, in the other as a mysterious or even non-existent source of redemption entrusted to unworthy and lawless substitutes (the earthly nobility) or made up by them. The question of "such freedom as is possible today" arises in both stories. "The Problem of Our Laws" is, certainly, no less explicit:

... though there is still a possible freedom of interpretation left, it has now become very restricted.⁵

The condition of the people among whom Bucephalus has taken up the practice of law is given no positive expression whatever. It is conceived essentially as a lacking, a debility which draws Bucephalus to their law courts. In "The Problem of Our Laws," the same is true to the extent that the people's whole condition is solely the result of not knowing the laws by which they are ruled:

We are convinced that these ancient laws are scrupulously administered; nevertheless it is an extremely painful thing to be ruled by laws one does not know.

So it was also for Alice in her Wonderland, where too "the nobles" seem an oppressive law unto themselves. But then again one of the chief differences between Alice and Kafka is the latter's willingness to say *we*. Lewis Carroll's rationality precedes the dream, whereas Kafka's reflections (and ours) can only try to catch up to it. Kafka's stories will never become entertainments for children, even though the condition of the people in "The Problem of Our Laws" is not unlike that of children, assuming for the moment that the nobility are like grown-ups. For both spirited children and the dissatisfied people, the thought of a real insurrection is equally impossible. After all,

The sole visible and indubitable law that is imposed upon us is the nobility, and must we ourselves deprive ourselves of that one law?

The *we* here is the common people, perhaps mankind, but these people are not completely unified. There are two factions based, of course, on their response to the problem of the laws. The narration is at first impartial between the majority and the minority parties: the former believing in the existence of the laws and in their ultimate discoverability, the latter only in the "arbitrary acts of the nobility." Finally, however, the narration sides—provisionally, at least—with the majority who hope to discover the Law and be rid of the nobility. They do not hate the nobles, however:

We are more inclined to hate ourselves, because we have not yet shown ourselves worthy of being entrusted with the laws. And that is the real reason why the party which believes that there is no law has remained so small

In either case it does not matter, for the narration is all-inclusive when it concludes that "we live on this razor edge"—no matter which of these opinions we hold. What is lacking here is a third possibility, a party that might unify the people by denying *both* the existence of the laws *and* belief in the nobility as well. The narration calls this "a sort of paradox," because to deny the nobility is unthinkable. Nietzsche could not do it and, presumably, none of "us" could face the anarchy and despair of being without *both* the promise of redemption *and* the earthly and traditional, if corrupt, order provided by the nobility. And so we go on, collectively, along the razor edge in our perplexity—a cynical or complicit minority accepting the self-aggrandizing or gratuitous acts of the nobles, a majority cleaving to the faith that a few more centuries of note-taking and historiography will somehow end in the moment when "everything will have become clear, the law will belong to the people, and the nobility will vanish." This is the hope of utopia or of Kingdom Come, the end of history or of time. The story, then, describes our political situation quite as well as our spiritual perplexity. The problem is not that of *my* law nor of *yours*, but—irremediably, and however we vote—of *our* laws.

Before turning back to "Josephine," which, from the standpoint of pronouns alone is a *tour de force*, let us consider a few further aspects of Kafka's *we*. In his fascinating book on Kafka, Paul Goodman describes a tension between the author's profound desire for humility and the arrogance of asserting himself as an artist:

To put it schematically, the conflict . . . is between (a) writing

as art: self-projection, escape from father, and (b) writing as prayer: humility, imploring father.⁶

Goodman goes on to argue that Kafka's finished works (including "Josephine") were those which "by their plot, avoided the conflict." For example, in "The Judgment" and "The Metamorphosis," the plots end with the destruction-sacrifice of the surrogates for Kafka-the-artist (Georg, Gregor), while the existence of the work itself "affirms," Goodman says, Kafka-as-an-artist. I am not sure why Goodman calls this operation an avoidance of the conflict; nevertheless, I believe the conflict itself is genuine. However, in the case of this last story, of "Josephine," there is actually no plot at all; the work is static, an extended account of the relation between Josephine the Singer and the Mouse Folk. And yet there is in it a resolution of the conflict, as Goodman says there must have been, since it is finished. This resolution is not achieved by the story's plot, but by its point of view, by the *we*, by Kafka's device of describing this distinctly un-humble artist from the viewpoint of all those humble Mouse Folk who are not the artist. The father is neither defied nor propitiated. He is still there on the scene, but only in the form of the whole of the Mouse Folk.

If, in the earlier examples, the narrative *we* entailed an expansion of applicability or scope, this same *we* may also imply a degree of presumption or a deflection of responsibility. The *we* is also a mask. The acutely solitary and inward writer can become a people, a nation, a species. Is this presumptuous? Is it dissimulation or vision? One of Kafka's late aphorisms provides, if not an answer to this question, at least a justification for the *we*. Moreover, the aphorism itself is very close in spirit to the lyrical swelling of "Josephine":

The indestructible is one: it is every human being individually and at the same time all human beings collectively; hence the marvellous indissoluble alliance of mankind.⁷

Varied, Collective Pronouns

Like mankind itself, the pronouns of "Josephine" are amazingly varied, but the overall effect is decidedly collective. The story actually begins with a pronoun, which is not likely to have been an accident. Kafka's opening sentences are always critical, like the first terms in algebra problems: "Given that X equals 0." As "The New Advocate" had begun with such a *donnée*, a short declarative sentence stating a collective relation to an individual ("We have a new advocate, Dr. Bucephalus."), so does "Josephine" ("Our singer is called Josephine."). The point of view is more firmly established by the rest of the initial paragraph, which is positively crammed with collectives: ". . . a music-loving race . . . what we love best . . . our life . . . we are no longer able . . . we do not much

lament . . . we hold to be . . . we stand greatly in need . . . will vanish from our lives"

The second paragraph, however, begins with a little surprise: "I have often thought about what this music of hers really means." So, there is an *I* after all, but an *I* without real distinction, an *I* who cannot or will not assert himself apart from his people. Indeed, he seems to give up at once; for the next sentence offers up the pronoun *we* no less than three times. Still, for a while, there is a hovering, a balance (" . . . in my opinion . . . I do not feel . . ."). By the end of the paragraph, though, we are once more back to *we* (" . . . we admit freely . . .") and stay with it throughout the long third paragraph.

There is a quite virtuosic effect in the fourth paragraph when the pronoun *you* is trotted out. We readers are not Josephines, after all, but, so to speak, mice. To make this politely clear to us, that we are also part of the *we*, Kafka places us literally among the audience of Josephine by means of this involving pronoun *you*:

If you post yourself quite far away from her and listen, or, still better, put your judgment to the test, whenever she happens to be singing along with others, by trying to identify her voice, you will undoubtedly distinguish nothing . . . yet if you sit down before her, it is not merely piping

To round things out, the fifth paragraph employs all three pronouns: *we*, *I*, *you*—over against, of course, *Josephine*, *her*, and *she*.

Is the story, then, exclusively about Josephine, as "A Hunger Artist" is pretty exclusively about the Hunger Artist? No, the story belongs at least as much to the Mouse Folk. Not only is this clearly signified by the story's title, but by an account we have of it. In his biography, Max Brod quotes one of the little conversation-slips Kafka was reduced to writing after the failure of his larynx in his last illness. The note implies that the story was once called simply "Josephine" or perhaps "Josephine the Songstress," but that, on further reflection, Kafka changed his mind:

The story is going to have a new title, "Josephine the Songstress—or the Mice-Nation." Sub-titles like this are not very pretty, it is true, but in this case it has perhaps a special meaning. It has a kind of balance.⁸

That Kafka is equivocal about just what has a kind of balance seems appropriate: the title is balanced because the story is, and this balance may have a special meaning. The story is balanced between *we* and *she*, between group and individual; but also—and here one should recall Goodman—the story is balanced in a quite new way between father and

child. What else are we to make of such a touchingly charged and lingering paragraph as the following:

... the people look after Josephine much as a father takes into his care a child whose little hand—one cannot tell whether in appeal or command—is stretched out to him. One might think that our people are not fitted to exercise such paternal duties, but in reality they discharge them, at least in this case, admirably; no single individual could do what in this respect the people as a whole are capable of doing. To be sure, the difference in strength between the people and the individual is so enormous that it is enough for the nursling to be drawn into the warmth of their nearness and he is sufficiently protected.

An artist like Josephine—Goodman's egoistic "self-projector" *par excellence*—will not, of course, see it this way. Such paternalism on the part of her people would be humiliating, although it is humility that is most needed on her part. All the same, though, the artist is a child, clamoring and assertive, and so the paragraph concludes in this beautiful fashion:

To Josephine, certainly, one does not dare mention such ideas. "Your protection isn't worth an old song," she says then. Sure, sure, old song, we think. And besides her protest is no real contradiction, it is rather a thoroughly childish way of doing, and childish gratitude, while a father's way of doing is to pay no attention to it.

It is as if Kafka, through the collective device of the Mouse Folk, were able for once to play father to himself, to gain literally a new angle of vision on his dilemma, an infinitely more understanding and even indulgent viewpoint than that of, say, the prototypical Bendemann and Samsa fathers. The reason for this is given in the above passage itself: "... no single individual could do what in this respect the people as a whole are capable of doing."

This point is even confirmed a good deal later in the story, where Kafka rings yet another change on his collective narration, describing, more or less precisely, the earlier "finished" plots, the cruel alternative of the condemnation by the resuscitated Bendemann and Samsa fathers:

Suppose that instead of the people one had an individual to deal with. One might imagine that this man had been giving in to Josephine all the time while nursing a wild desire to put an end to his submissiveness one fine day ...

This is just what the Mouse Folk refrain from doing; but in this passage Kafka's last finished story recalls—as if to indicate the distance travelled—his first, the “breakthrough” story, “The Judgment,” in which the father rises up nightmarishly with a “wild desire” on just such a “fine day.” That story begins:

It was a Sunday morning in the very height of spring.⁹

Josephine's battle is for recognition, for acknowledgement of her status as an artist. This is the recognition Kafka could not win from his own father, of course. Josephine does not do all that much better, actually. She tries protests, strikes, and threats, especially the comical one about leaving out her grace-notes until her petition should be acted upon:

Well, the people let all these announcements, decisions and counterdecisions go in at one ear and out at the other, like a grown-up person deep in thought turning a deaf ear to a child's babble, fundamentally well disposed but not accessible.

The Mouse Folk are, perhaps, ultimately no more “accessible” than Hermann Kafka, the origin of the laws, or the Gates of India; however, they speak of Josephine with sympathy, they are “well disposed.” Josephine may be only “a small episode in the eternal history” of her people (who is more?); and, no doubt, “the people will get over the loss of her.” However, the narrator says frankly that this loss will not “be easy for us . . .” The story ends lyrically, then, with the last of Kafka's sentences. The tone is one of reconciliation, of a final ascent to the “heights of redemption,” with a mingling of Josephine and the Mouse Folk in which oblivion and redemption are truly indistinguishable:

So perhaps we shall not miss so very much after all, while Josephine, redeemed from the earthly sorrows which to her thinking lay in wait for all chosen spirits, will happily lose herself in the numberless throng of the heroes of our people, and soon, since we are no historians, will rise to the heights of redemption and be forgotten like all her brothers.

It is more than 60 years since Kafka's death. Since then many readers, critics, clever interpreters, and learned exegetes have become absorbed, poring over Kafka's stories—and not only his stories, but his diaries,

letters, and his postcards as well. For such devoted readers, Kafka would seem to be very much an individual; it seems the more they know of him the more original and distinct a personality Kafka becomes. This writer does not “interest,” he obsesses; he does not “entertain,” he imprisons. After all, a prisoner comes to distinguish the bricks of his cell’s wall very precisely, while to anyone else they would appear interchangeable. So Kafka’s works come to have, for some, almost the authority of holy books. In view of this, it is neither surprising nor indecorous for the marvelous body of Kafka criticism to resemble Talmudic commentary.

Is it really so unreasonable to say, then, that the work of Kafka—an *I* who says *we*—itself constitutes something like “a message from the whole people to each individual”? Indeed, we can go yet further: such messages are to be found not just in Kafka’s work either, since all of literature, all of culture, comes to us (in our childhood, our adolescence) as the embodiment of the images and values of teachers, parents, grown-ups, and only vaguely imagined forebears whose generations, like those of the teeming Mouse Folk, appear to us countless, because for the young there is no reason why the past should seem less infinite than the future.

Notes

¹ *The Penal Colony*, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Schocken, 1961), p. 266.

² Paul Goodman, *Kafka’s Prayer* (New York: Hillstone, 1976), pp. 257–58.

³ Hannah Arendt, “Franz Kafka: A Revaluation,” *Partisan Review*, Fall 1944 (reprinted in *Story and Critic*, ed. Matlaw and Lief, New York: Harper and Row, 1963, p. 143).

⁴ Letter to Kurt Wolff Verlag, in *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Schocken, 1977), p. 193. The four following quotations from “The New Advocate,” are from *The Penal Colony*, pp. 135–36.

⁵ *The Great Wall of China*, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Schocken, 1946), p. 254. The three following quotations are from pp. 254 and 257.

⁶ Goodman, p. 256.

⁷ *Great Wall of China*, p. 295.

⁸ Max Brod, *Franz Kafka: A Biography*, trans. G. H. Roberts and Richard Winston (New York: Schocken, 1963), pp. 205–206. The three following quotations are from *The Penal Colony*, pp. 263 and 272.

⁹ *Penal Colony*, p. 49.

POETRY

Adrienne Rich

Edges

In the sleepless sleep of dawn, in the dreamless dream
the kingfisher cuts through flashing
spirit-fire from his wings bluer than violet's edge
the slice of those wings

5 a.m., first light, hoboies of the past
are leaning through the window, what freightcars
did they hop here I thought I'd left behind?
Their hands are stretched out but not for bread
they are past charity, they want me to hear their names

Outside, the world where so much is possible
rekindles in sunrise and the kingfisher—
the living kingfisher, not that flash of vision—
darts where the creek drags her wetness over stump and stone
where poison oak reddens acacia pods collect
curled and secretive against the bulkhead

and the firstlight ghosts go transparent
while the homeless line for bread

Copyright © 1985 by Adrienne Rich

Blue Rock

For Myriam Diaz-Diocaretz

Your chunk of lapis-lazuli shoots its stain
blue into the wineglass on the table

the full moon moving up the sky is plain
as the dead rose and the live buds on one stem

No, this isn't Persian poetry I'm quoting:
all this is here in North America

where I sit trying to kindle fire
from what's already on fire:

the light of a blue rock from Chile swimming
in the apricot liquid called "eye of the swan."

This is a chunk of your world, a piece of its heart:
split from the rest, does it suffer?

You needn't tell me. Sometimes I hear it singing
by the waters of Babylon, in a strange land

sometimes it just lies heavy in my hand
with the heaviness of silent seismic knowledge

a blue rock in a foreign land, an exile
excised but never separated

from the gashed heart, its mountains,
winter rains, language, native sorrow.

At the end of the twentieth century
cardiac graphs of torture reply to poetry

line by line: in North America
the strokes of the stylus continue

the figures of terror are reinvented
all night, after I turn the lamp off, blotting

wineglass, rock and roses, leaving pages
like this scrawled with mistakes and love,

falling asleep; but the stylus does not sleep,
cruelly the drum revolves, cruelty writes its name.

Once when I wrote poems they did not change
left overnight on the page

they stayed as they were and daylight broke
on the lines, as on the clotheslines in the yard

heavy with clothes forgotten or left out
for a better sun next day

But now I know what happens while I sleep
and when I wake the poem has changed:

the facts have dilated it, or cancelled it;
and in every morning's light, your rock is there.

Copyright © 1985 by Adrienne Rich

Macushla Nugent

Deathlings

Fifteen years ago I drew blood for a hospital lab;
I got calls for tough cases:
patients with migrating veins, or veins that
disappeared, or veins like microtubes.
Once, I punctured a woman in recovery after surgery.
She was awake. I don't remember her history,
where else they cut that day,
but when I entered she was having her throat split.
They called me for her collapsible veins.
I can see the scene clearly:

a resident I recognize
finishes a small slice in her neck.
He's pulling thick red from it.
The woman is wall-eyed, mouth a white sliver.
Wordlessly, I move to the vacant side of the bed,
put down the rail, touch her hand.
I tourniquet her left arm, my index fingertip
becoming an explorer. I press each centimeter
inside her elbow, looking for a pulse,
part of me seeming to watch from a distance.
I find a thin swell, yes, a vein's throb,
so I swab with alcohol. I hit dark red.
First stick, too. I coax 25cc carefully,
tube the vivid color. I'm jelly,
but I finish my job like a pro.
I walk out with my head up.

Another time I drew a woman on 2 East,
private room, end of the hall.
Thinking "Not on the ward . . . must be plenty sick,"
I stopped just inside the door of 208.
I felt that we were utterly alone.
The room seemed to pause with me;
she was dead to the world, breathing.
I listened as I prepared the arm,
stuck the needle in. I had to probe a little,
but soon my syringe filled with the dark ellipsis
of her blood. As I removed the beveled steel,
she made a sound unlike any—

I heard the breath unfollowed.
I tubed the specimen. I placed her arm carefully,
bending it at elbow over a gauze square. No pulse.
I went for the nurse. "You came from 208?"
My head lurched. "Did she die?"
"While I was taking her blood . . ."
Reaching the room, the nurse turns in the entrance.
"You mean you were with her?" "Yes."

"Good." She leans to feel the neck.
"Nothing." The nurse straightens.
We are looking at the woman in the bed.

Fifteen years later I imagine a crazy reunion.
I am in 208. In my mind's eye I gather
the resident who did the tracheotomy, his patient
with her collapsible veins, the nurse who said "Good,"
and, of course, the deathling in the bed.
Here, nothing has elapsed.

I see us poised on the brink of our connection.

Man in Search of War

"I'm just not fit for civilian life," he explains.
Three ex-wives, hopeless parents, forgotten children convince him,
"No, they can't understand:
I had to leave them, come to El Salvador."
Months later he had returned,
expecting to find his dinner warm in the oven.
"Now, I just don't go home."

This man is less than thirty-five.
He holds heavy artillery in his lap.
The jeep bounces the weapon a little,
so he steadies his load with thick arms.
He does not seem to notice the dry noise under the wheels,
the flattening of ribs, vertebrae, tarsals, metatarsals, fibulas,
crackling down there in the mud.
He overlooks each roadside corpse,
a rotting body is nothing to him:
he wants only those about to die.
He has fallen already,
yes, as surely as that carrion figure there
with its sightless eyes still staring,
an arm and a leg rigged in a lasting flail.
Perhaps he does not even question why this amuses him.
He feels his own blood, only his own blood.

"I saw Mad Dog Killer once.
I'd heard he was a psychopath.
Shouldering a sawed-off shotgun,
like a demented samurai,
Mad Dog called a young Rhodesian front and center.
When the boy saluted,
Mad Dog ordered him to spread his teeth.
They were gleaming, white.
Upon the boy's tongue Mad Dog laid the twin barrels.
He smiled as he squeezed lead."

"The victim had no head.
A grisly stump sprayed blood.
Some stained the shirt of Mad Dog,
and he was smiling, smiling, smiling."

"I come to the desert,
I strap on my weapon.
I am a man."
90mm guns, 50 calibre machine guns—
he pretends he is firing.
His face transfixes with memory,
his eyes glaze.

Finally, he continues:
"I was scared shitless.
I didn't know if one of them would fire first.
They walked into our ambush.
Then, my driver hit the gas.
I felt the wind in my hair,
my weapon in my lap.

We swept through there like the hand of God."

His voice softens.
"I love this. I love it.
Why not leave war to those of us who enjoy it?"
Then, almost as an afterthought:
"I'll be back.
I'll bring you a string of ears."

Suggested by an ABC documentary, "The Soldiers of Twilight," aired March 19, 1981.

Pigeons

I reach the tenement roof winded,
the flights unfamiliar.
"Why do you do it?"

The old man looks at me and squints.
"To see 'em fly." I want to sit.

Gray and white and brown splotches—
undigested bits of berry bulging blue—
splat, stain the soles of my shoes.

"My daughter used to crawl in with 'em, years ago."
He crows. "Her ma raised hell."
He coughs and spits.

I look even harder at the droppings.
My eyes down, I hear the coop creak.
When I raise my head, the birds are already aloft.

Far above the hard tar roof where I stand,
far above the city heavy with life,
in some fantastic space I hear only wings.

"In the midst of life . . ."

The face flagged the casket for three days.
On the third day one viewer saw:
This was not motionless as a dead thing should be.
The lips had been darkening beneath the wax;
one white lid, unsewn, was slipping open,
like an old scar rupturing, to reveal some sign.

To what errand, then, did the witness commit herself?
The eyes of the decedent were gone, she knew,
to a medical bank. She had heard the story
from the lips of the man's wife, of that last Sunday,
of the hiss and whine of machines, of the small room,
of the doctors who would become the harbingers of this death.

The watcher went home, after the burial,
with her own lover, thinking how alike they were,
lying back to front and stirring in sleep,
and the deceased on some journey beyond sleep.
Her sheets were whiter than the satin of the dead.

She wondered then, what she knew of the thudding heart,
of the secret worming the center of life.

J. B. Goodenough

Days of Plague

They came for you with their
White box, setting it in
The haggard while they knocked.

The cart waited, wheels
Muddied; the pony, dark in
The moon's light, whickering.

No, I said, he is not here,
He is up the hill,
He is down the hill,

He rode away or he sailed away,
He has not been here
Since sowing, since reaping.

No, I said, he never was
Here, now I think on it,
Never was here at all;

Now I think on it there
Never was such a man.
I do not know what I said.

Now will you come back?

Reductio

I will be small:
I will no longer disturb you.
If I sing, you will not hear;
If I laugh, no matter.

If I have anything I must say
I will speak moth-tongued.
I will not be in your way:
I will go moth-footed.

When you notice that it is not
As it was, that I am gone,
You will call my name, your voice
Vast and silly as thunder.

But you will have to see
That you have lost me.
You have been losing me
For years.

Hill Settlement

You don't know who's up there;
I don't know either.
My mother climbed those hills
Only once. She told us
It would be wise not to ask.

I found it later, in
The journal that she kept:
 Their men do not speak.
 Their ways seem otherwise
 Much like our own ways.

A child was born the last
Night of my stay, a fine boy,
With feathers of dark hair
And perfect limbs and a terrible
Crying all that long night.

The midwife dropped a spool
Of darning-yarn into her pocket.
Born with a tongue, she said,
That would not do, I had
To make him like the rest.

Limiting Factors and the Survival of Populations

Howard Shellhammer

YOU may have visited the desert after a wet winter and had the pleasure of seeing it in full bloom. It is marvelous evidence of the effect of the proper amount of water. You may not know that both the amount and the pattern of rainfall act to limit the germination and growth of most desert annuals. Life in the desert, as it is in more mesic, or moister, areas, is always a balance. Too much or too little of any factor, or the correct amount at an inappropriate time, may be limiting.

Most of my research has been about limiting factors, especially those that we produce as we modify nature. Most of them are not expected and are revealed only when a whole community has been studied. Such limiting factors are usually the result of changes in some other part of the community or ecosystem, and the limits occur because of changes induced long before the problem arises. It often takes a long time for conditions to exceed the limits of tolerance of an organism. This paper concerns the mostly inadvertent production of limiting conditions in three very different communities, those involving the giant sequoias, the salt marsh harvest mouse, and the large mammals of the Diablo Range.

Studies in the 50s

Giant sequoias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) are huge trees distributed throughout the central and southern Sierra Nevada in groves, the largest being the Redwood Mountain and Giant Forest Groves of Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park. For most of this century the groves have been crowded with an understory of white fir (*Abies concolor*) and incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*), both shade-tolerant species. The interior of a typical grove in the 50s did not look like the Sierra Nevada John Muir described as a forest through which a person could ride and not get one's hat knocked off. The groves were green, dark, and busy, while the floor of a typical grove was covered with a deep layer of litter and few young giant



—*photograph by the author*

A thick, understory of shade-tolerant white fir among giant sequoias. By suppressing fire, human beings have allowed a buildup underneath the trees that reduces to near-zero the probability that the trees will reproduce and increases greatly the chances of destructive crown fires.

sequoia seedlings. There was a high fire danger, as the thick understory could produce a crown fire if fire occurred in the grove.

Richard Hartesveldt of San Jose State University had studied these trees in the 50s. He concluded, after studying tree rings, that fires had occurred often in pristine times and that the fires had reduced the competition between the giant sequoias and the other species in the groves. Hartesveldt, Thomas Harvey, Ronald Stecker, and I, all from the Department of Biological Sciences at SJSU, were commissioned by the National Park Service in the 60s to study the effects of planned, management fires on the groves, to see if such fires would reduce the fire hazard, reduce competition, and promote regeneration.

Our preliminary studies and initial experimental burns produced several insights. We burned off the litter and produced bare mineral soil in which the tiny seeds of the giant sequoia could germinate and become established.^{1,2} The seeds are so small that it takes 91,000 seeds to weigh one pound and most of each seed is composed of sterile wings. They may germinate on the top of the litter layer, but they lack enough stored reserves to become established.

Ron Stecker discovered a long-horned, wood-boring beetle (*Phymatodes nitidus*) which lays its eggs inside the green cones of the giant sequoia.¹ The larvae eat their way about inside the cones and often cut the vascular bundles leading to the cone scales to which the seeds are attached. When this happens, the scales shrivel and brown and the seeds attached to them fall out. This appeared to be the primary way seeds are released from giant sequoia cones which, unlike those of other conifers, may remain on the tree in green and unopened condition for decades. High winds and heavy loads of snow break some limbs and cause the drying of some of the remaining cones. And then another animal was found to play a role.

The douglas squirrel, *Tamiasciurus douglasi*, is what John Muir described as "... the brightest of all squirrels I have ever seen, a hot spark of life, making every tree tingle with his prickly toes... a condensed nugget of fresh mountain vigor and valor..."³ I discovered that this very active, non-hibernating squirrel relies on giant sequoia cones for the bulk of its calories when it lives in the groves; it eats the cones primarily and the seeds only secondarily.¹

When the density is high, an individual squirrel cuts numerous cones from the one or two giant sequoias that constitute the center of its territory and then buries them about the base of the tree, under roots or logs, or in the wetter areas of the forest floor. I once observed one squirrel cut 537 green cones in 30 minutes, or an average of 18 a minute.⁴ A decision had to be made about each cone cut, as all the cut cones were green and selected from a relatively narrow range of the age classes present on the tree. The buried cones are retrieved over a period of weeks and eaten

at "kitchen middens" or feeding sites. Most of the seeds of each cone are scattered unharmed during the process and constitute a source of seeds for reproduction. When there are few douglas squirrels, the animals do not cut large numbers but cut and eat individual cones high in the trees, again shedding the seeds to the forest floor. But in neither case do these seeds add greatly to the tree's reproductive potential, because most of the time they fall on the dry forest floor of summer or the equally harsh surface of the winter snows. Only when they drop to the wet forest floor in late spring, or in late fall when they are covered quickly by a layer of snow, do they have the potential of both germinating and surviving. But most of the time the surface they land upon is deep litter, and the germinated seed depletes its store of energy before it becomes established. Hence it appears that all of these reproductive strategies—the beetle or squirrel or snow damage—are relatively minor strategies. They only work when the soil has been disturbed by erosion, when a root pit has been produced by the fall of one of the giant sequoias, or when some other soil-disturbing process has occurred.

So what is the major strategy of giant sequoia reproduction? The answer was obvious. But since we were so close to it, we had difficulty seeing it.

The National Park Service, which sponsored our research, observed that our research burns were effective in reducing fuel loads and hence the potential of crown fires; so it started using fire as a management tool long before we finished our ten-year study. At the end of the summer of 1968, Tom Harvey walked out into the deep ash of the first management burn on Redwood Mountain and found the ash covered with giant sequoia seeds. In this way we discovered that it is the heat of the fires that is the most important factor in the reproductive cycle of the trees. The fire produces bare mineral soil, and it also releases the seeds. It was so simple. We knew giant sequoias were fire-adapted with their thick bark, but none of us or those before us had made the connection. Our research fires were less intense than the management burns, so less heat rose and few, if any, seeds fell. A great deal of heat rose from the much hotter management burns, dried out many cones, and tens of thousands of seeds fell on each hectare of ash-covered soil.

Fires must have cleaned out the groves on a regular basis in pristine times. They released seeds; and when the fires occurred late in the season, the seeds were covered by snow and could germinate when the snows melted in the spring. But by suppressing fire, human beings have allowed the buildup of both a heavy litter layer and a thick understory. This buildup meant that we have reduced the probability of reproduction to near-zero and greatly increased the probability of destructive crown fires.

The Beetle and the Squirrel

But what of the role of the beetle and the squirrel? They and the serotinous (closed, fire-adapted) cones must have coevolved. During periods of the more mesic, geological past they must have been more important. Today they play a lesser role, one of back-up to fire. Most of the seeds they disperse fall to litter-covered forest floors.

The National Park Service is using fire as a management tool. Their burns convert groves thick with green undergrowth and limited visibility to a much more open situation. The groves are much more open, lighter and gothic in character. The gigantic trees are like great brown buttresses holding up an airy green ceiling far above. Most park visitors have grown up with the former condition, but the latter is the way these groves must have been like for millions of years.

The second area of my research into limiting factors concerns a much different organism in a very different environment.

The salt marsh harvest mouse (*Reithrodontomys raviventris*) is endemic to the marshes of the San Francisco Bay region. It is a cover-dependent animal living primarily in the dense cover provided by pickleweed (*Salicornia virginica*), a plant that comprises the middle portion of most tidal marshes and some of the more saline, diked-off areas of the Bay Region.^{5,6,7} The mouse has been declared an endangered species by both the State of California and the federal government. One of the reasons for this special classification is that over 70 per cent of the original tidal marshes of the Bay have been destroyed, hence the mouse has lost most of its original habitat. The other reasons are less obvious.

Unlike its relative, the western harvest mouse (*R. megalotis*), which lives in grasslands, the salt marsh harvest mouse moves into the grassy edges of the marshes only during the highest tides of summer. Usually they escape into the uppermost zone of the marsh, the peripheral halophyte zone, which is composed of such salt-loving species as Australian saltbush (*Atriplex semibaccata*), fat hen (*A. patula*), and alkali heath (*Frankenia grandiflora*). Both of these zones, however, have been greatly reduced. Most of the remaining tidal marshes have been back-filled or converted into salt ponds, hence fill or dike roads cover what once were the upper portions of most marshes. In most cases the peripheral halophyte zone is an intermittent strip one to two feet wide. Such marshes may appear to be complete to the uneducated but they are not, and they are usually devoid of mice. Salt marsh harvest mice can swim but not for long periods of time. When forced from cover by high tides in such back-filled marshes, they either drown or, more likely, are removed by aerial predators.

Other marshes have subsided as the water table has been drawn down and the land has compressed. This phenomenon is especially common in

the South San Francisco Bay. The lowest zone of a typical Bay marsh, that composed of cordgrass (*Spartina foliosa*), expands in subsided marshes. Salt marsh harvest mice do not live in the cordgrass zone. Hence, as the pickleweed gives way to the cord grass, so do the mice.

Finally, the salinity of many marshes has changed. Sewage outflows freshened by most cities by expensive tertiary sewage treatment have turned many former saline marshes brackish. These marshes now support alkali bulrush (*Scirpus robustus*), another species not used by the mouse.

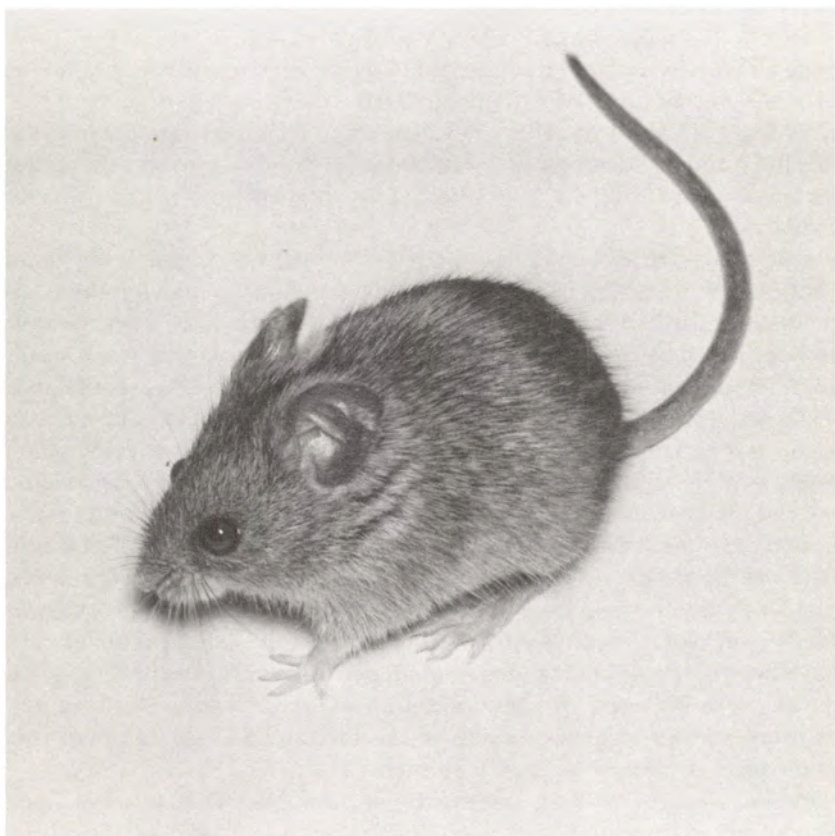
For all these reasons, few remaining marshes support populations of these beautiful little rodents.⁸ Most of the marshes have been destroyed; those that remain have been highly modified. Without the diversity of zones they once had, most marshes are unlikely to support mice long into the future. Cities ring all of the South San Francisco Bay and much of the San Pablo and Suisun Bays. They are growing rapidly and are closing in on the edges of the bays. Industrial and, to some degree, housing developments threaten to separate marshes, making it impossible in the future to reunite them and hence to support larger populations of the mice.

To save the mouse, it is necessary to recreate marshes and upper edges. This has to be done in areas of high and rapidly-increasing land values where mitigation dollars buy less and less. But unless we act, the remaining marshes will be reduced by surrounding developments and pollution. Smaller marshes mean smaller populations, which usually means less genetic variability and the increased chance of the extinction of such populations.⁹

Why try? There are numerous ethical, moral, and economic reasons for saving the mouse as well as any other endangered species. I will not discuss them beyond the following brief remarks. If large marshes capable of supporting salt marsh harvest mice are protected, much of the present Bay will remain as open water and marshes which in turn will maintain the weather of the Bay Region as it is at present. A smaller Bay with less water surface will create higher summer temperatures, lower winter temperatures, less wind, more smog, a harsher climate. My basic reason for wishing to protect this endangered species is, however, much simpler. I do not think human beings have the right to knowingly destroy any species. I am the expert on this species and will continue to fight to protect it.

Wild Mammals

The last of the three areas of my research is again quite different from the other studies, although it is close geographically to the salt marshes of San Francisco Bay. The Diablo Range east of San Jose supports a number



—*photograph by Sandra Khoury*

The salt marsh harvest mouse, endemic to the marshes of the San Francisco Bay region, has been declared an endangered species by both national and California state governments.

of large, wild mammals including puma (*Puma concolor*), black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*), wild pig (*Sus scrofa*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), and tule elk (*Cervus elaphus nannaodes*), as well as domestic cattle. They live in a variety of plant communities including grassland, chaparral, oak savannah, and woodlands which cover the mountainous terrain.

Michael Kutilek, also a Professor of Biological Sciences at San Jose State University, and his graduate students have been studying a number of these species since 1978. Reginald Barrett and James Bartolome of the University of California at Berkeley, Kutilek, and I joined together in 1983 to study the predator-prey interactions of this community of large mammals, especially as it is affected by management burns of the chaparral.

Our goals are two-fold. We wish to better understand both what controls the numbers of large mammals and how to manage them. It seems odd that, with all the ecological studies carried out over the last century, we do not have a better idea of what controls the numbers of large mammals such as deer. We have experienced a gradual but profound decline in the number of deer in California in the last 30 years. Most of the general public blame it on the puma and the coyote, while many scientists ascribe it more to the quality of the vegetation, especially the chaparral, which has been protected from fire over the years and has grown older and less nutritious with time. What is the answer? Better still what are the answers? We feel they can be supplied only by a comprehensive study done over a long period of time. Only the studies of L. David Mech¹⁰ on wolves and of African ungulates by A. R. E. Sinclair et al.¹¹ have been carried out for a long enough period of time to supply some of the answers. We hope to get enough support to carry on our study for ten or more years and answer some of the fundamental questions of the population dynamics of large mammals.

While we are working on the theoretical questions, we are also attempting to develop better management techniques. We are spending most of our time on the use of fire. The California Division of Forestry uses fire in chaparral management quite like the National Park Service uses fire in the giant sequoia groves; fuel supplies are reduced and the new shoots that stump-sprout from the chaparral shrubs provide better nutrition for deer. The fires are started by small masses of napalm scattered by helicopter. They are started when weather conditions will allow the fires to burn only moderately; hence a mosaic of patches is produced.

Our preliminary studies indicate that burned patches far from the woodlands surrounding the chaparral are little used by the deer, who prefer the woodlands to old-growth chaparral. Studies are under way to ascertain if this initial observation is valid and, if so, to examine how to

maximize deer use of all the patches. The present fire management techniques have been used for many years and, as is the case with many of the management techniques used by wildlife managers, are based on old and relatively untested studies. Most governmental agencies just do not have the money or manpower to reevaluate such techniques. It is only through long and comprehensive studies such as the one we are doing that such old techniques can be effectively reevaluated and new ones developed.

Such is the nature of my research. All three studies have been team projects carried out over long periods of time. I have not mentioned the names of all the graduate students and volunteers who have worked in all the studies, for they are too numerous. I have been the sole senior researcher only on the mouse studies, but I could not have carried out the number of trap nights we have done on that continuing series of studies—some 42,000 trap nights in the last nine years alone—without plenty of knowledgeable support.

The type of research discussed in this paper probably can only be done in the university setting. Governmental agencies and industry require results much more quickly. What they lose and what we gain is a better understanding of ecosystems. The work has been, and will continue to be, long and complicated, demanding and arduous, significant and valuable, but most importantly it has been, and I am confident will continue to be, fun.

Notes

¹ H. Thomas Harvey, Howard S. Shellhammer, and Ronald E. Stecker, *Giant Sequoia Ecology—Fire Ecology and Reproduction* (National Park Service, Washington, D. C., 1980), 182 pp.

² H. Thomas Harvey, Howard S. Shellhammer, and Ronald E. Stecker, *Giant Sequoias* (Sequoia Natural History Association, 1981), 77 pp.

³ John Muir, *My First Summer in the Sierra* (Atlantic Monthly, 1911), Volume 107(4), pp. 521–528.

⁴ Howard Shellhammer, *Cone-cutting Activities of Douglas Squirrels in Sequoia Groves* (Journal of Mammalogy, 1966), Volume 47, pp. 525–526.

⁵ Howard Shellhammer, *Reithrodontomys raviventris* (in *Mammalian Species*, American Society of Mammalogists, 1982), Number 169, pp. 1–3.

⁶ Howard S. Shellhammer, Rodney Jackson, William Davilla, Anne M. Gilroy, H. Thomas Harvey, and Lee Simons, *Habitat Preferences of Salt Marsh Harvest Mice, Reithrodontomys raviventris* (*Wasmann Journal of Biology*, 1982), Volume 40, pp. 102–114.

⁷ George F. Fislser. *Adaptations and Speciation in Harvest Mice of the Marshes of San Francisco Bay* (University of California Publications in Zoology, 1965), Volume 77, pp. 1–108.

⁸ Howard Shellhammer, *Management Problems Associated with the Recovery Plan for the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse and California Clapper Rail* (Cal-Neva Wildlife, 1982), pp. 61–63.

⁹ Howard Shellhammer and Thomas E. Harvey, *Recovery Plan for the Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse and California Clapper Rail* (United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Endangered Species Program, 1984).

¹⁰ L. David Mech, *The Wolves of Isle Royale* (Fauna of the National Parks of the United States, Fauna Series, No. 7, Washington, D. C., 1977).

¹¹ *Serengeti—Dynamics of an Ecosystem*, ed. A. R. E. Sinclair and M. Norton-Griffiths (The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 389 pp.

SHORT STORY

Silence and Slow Time

Laurie Kaplan

"FRANCIE, Francie, Francie." The stuttered chant hissed out between clenched teeth, between lips that did not seem to move. "Francie, Francie, Francie."

In front of the door, Gloria hopped up and down on the wet linoleum as the group of student nurses came into the building. Gloria tottered among them, brushing against their coats as she searched their faces. The young women, all about twenty or twenty-one years old, hesitated in the hall while their eyes adjusted to the blur of moving bodies in the dim room. Their light blue uniforms and white bibs contrasted with the mud-colored clothes of the patients who crowded around them.

"Francie, Francie, Francie." The chant became more audible, and Gloria's nurse stepped forward from the group.

"My name is Miss O'Brien, Gloria. Not 'Francie.'" She gave her coat to one of the other students. "Can you take this for me?"

The other student nodded. "Just keep in mind it's our last day here," she murmured.

"Francie—"

"Gloria, you are completely naked. Where are your clothes?" Her voice was soft, precise, low.

"Naked, naked, naked." Gloria crossed her arms over her bare chest and grasped her small breasts with red, thin hands, the knuckles rubbed raw, the broken nails painted with blood red polish. Small sores dotted her arms up the elbows, which stuck out now like plucked wings.

The tall nurse and her tiny patient walked down the narrow corridor

toward the stairs leading to the dormitory. The grey-green tiled floors, darkened with scuffs, echoed the slaps of Gloria's bare feet. Rubbing her right shoulder against the wall, she trotted rather than walked. She continued to grasp her breasts.

"Sister Mary Catherine wants to see you in her office, Francie, Francie, Francie." Laughing shrilly, Gloria raced along. "Those are the pearls. . . ." Her laughter stopped. "Bad Francie. Wicked girl."

Jesus H. Christ, Ellen thought. She rubbed her face slowly, asking herself whether she really could manage professional passivity this one last day, wondering whether the psychological game she played with this other young woman had not worn them both out. When she reached the landing at the top of the first flight of stairs, she lingered to watch slits of sun cut the sky. Patients from the unlocked wards hurried toward the cafeteria. In the piercing cold of Cleveland in March, only a few wore coats.

Ellen's hands held on to the bars as she looked left and right at the group of red brick buildings, the scrawny branches of the woods behind them, and the high red brick wall that surrounded the "campus." That's what they called it. The thought did not make her smile. She noticed again that even the nurses' dormitory, the last building on the lane off to the left, a typically Colonial edifice, had vertical bars slashing across the first floor windows.

Ellen moved to the corner of the landing and saw the tracks the nurses had left in the hard frost when they came to the door. One key to get in, she repeated to herself—without moving her lips—one key to get out. And only one more day to blunder through.

Letting go of the window bar, Ellen shivered. Christ, she thought, that's the same spot she watches me from every day. The uneven floor around her feet was worn through to the concrete below.

Somewhere a half-story above her a toilet flushed. Gloria appeared in the doorway of the bathroom, her hair dripping water over her naked shoulders. Ellen hoped it was only water.

"Baptism, baptism, baptism," Gloria chanted. "Francie, church, church, church."

Ellen helped towel-dry Gloria's hair, then waited and watched as Gloria began to dress herself.

"Where's your underwear, Gloria." It was a comment, not a question.

The clothes all seemed to belong to her for a change, Ellen noticed, not only because they almost fit the bony frame but also because every item was red—faded, yes, but Gloria's color nonetheless, picked carefully from the bin of donations. Even her hair was red, smashed down under a red triangular scarf that had run like a pair of stockings. Ellen did not stop her from smearing caked rouge in circles over her cheeks and dark red

lipstick around the wide, moving mouth.

"Don't tuck your slip into your underpants."

Ellen sat cautiously on the edge of the bed while her patient finished pulling on a sweater. The iron bedstead felt cold even through the blanket. "That shoe goes on your other foot," she warned, hoping to save the other woman time and trouble, but Gloria went on yanking and knotting the tangled laces. Ellen noticed that Gloria's breath came out of her mouth in rapid little puffs.

Trying to look relaxed and reasonable, Ellen glanced around at the rows and rows of cots. A couple of beds had big lumps sunk into their middles, patients who would not get up or even change positions that day. She chose not to observe the catatonics who stretched out stiff and stared fixedly at some unseen point on the acoustical tiles above them. They never blinked, and one of the staff had to put oily drops on the open eyes so their eyeballs wouldn't dry out. It was the emptiness of the eyes that bothered Ellen so much, the lack of reflection of a soul. She turned to Gloria and was startled once more to see how blank Gloria's eyes were. In the half-light, Ellen could see her own reflection in the shallow pupils.

Gloria had decided to take off her shoes and put them on again. Ellen watched as two other students turned a patient in the corner of the room. In the nurses' office there was a turning schedule, two students a day providing for the patients what they would not do for themselves.

"The pearls, the pearls—"

Gloria's whispers were distinctly audible now, and Ellen knew that what the staff was instructed to call "the activities of daily living" were about to commence. Everyone agreed about the "daily" part; it was the "living" that seemed so incorrect. The echoing speech was worse than ever today, Ellen thought. She'll drive me batty by noon. But then maybe I drive her batty, too. After today, she'll never have to see me again.

"—the pearls that were, that were—"

"His eyes. Yes." Ellen helped Gloria finish her sentence.

"Francie, Francie, Francie."

Ellen pushed herself up from the bed. Gloria raced ahead down the stairs.

The sturdy nondenominational church, its facade a dulled brick like all the other buildings, bore its armor—its window bars—with perhaps more dignity than, say, the cafeteria and the laundry and the beauty parlor. Inside, however, dignity disintegrated into chaos. Two dogs, one black and one white, sniffed around in front of the communion railing. The brown marble looked like a low fence erected to keep the patients away from the altar, but four women and three men, modern apostles, crowded around the priest and aped his gestures. The priest flapped back

and forth in green vestments, bowing and folding his hands protectively over the chalice. His vestments swirled out from his body as he turned and walked; the women behind him swirled out their coats and skirts and kept swirling, dark dervishes. There were, of course, no candles.

The priest rang the hand bell three times and then quickly hid it back up his sleeve. As if on signal, a middle-aged bald man, two thick scars streaking the top of his head, jumped up from his seat and shook his fist in the air.

"You let her die. You killed her," he screamed.

Someone in the center of the church started laughing and couldn't stop. The black dog barked. People continued to come and go.

"Killed her, killed her, killed her." Pounding her chest, Gloria chanted. "Miserere, miserere, culpa, mea culpa, mea culpa." She scratched at the sores on her wrists and made them bleed.

"Gloria, *don't*," Ellen demanded.

The man shrieked, "Why?"

"Francie, Francie, Francie. Confess, confess—" Gloria ran down the aisle, dragging her coat, the dogs snapping at the red fabric.

Gloria pulled Ellen into the confessional and tugged the curtains closed. The cold darkness of the little box, smelling faintly of urine, enveloped them. Gloria did not kneel.

"Bless me, bless me, for I have sinned, sinned, sinned, sinned." She swayed to the rhythm of her words.

"Sin, cheat, Sacred Heart, hate, pride, covet, covet, Francie."

Ellen backed into the corner of the confessional. Before she ever got to the State Mental Hospital Ellen knew of Gloria Burke, the child wonder, the star pupil at Ursuline Academy of the Sacred Heart, the honor student. With an enrollment of four hundred girls, from all over Cleveland, Sacred Heart was small enough to keep legends alive, captured by imaginations and yearbook pictures. But no one at Sacred Heart—not Sister Immaculata or Sister Therese or Sister Cecilia—had ever mentioned—did they even know?—Gloria's supreme craziness. Was she at all crazy then, Ellen wondered, and who would have been able to tell?

Ellen tried to reconcile in her own mind the two paradoxical characterizations of this young woman. One weekend she had driven over to their high school and had scanned the old yearbooks in the library. Those yearbook pictures, the shiny hair, and the "pixie" face—that was the descriptive word of her time—full of such hope, her reputation as all the nuns' favorite—on Ellen these scraps of a different past weighed heavily. Ellen knew that a recording of Gloria playing Beethoven's "Emperor Concerto" was kept in the permanent archives of their high school, that she was a child prodigy, a phenomenon whose gifts must have proved there was a God. But Ellen couldn't make the edges of the past and the

present line up; too many fragments were missing.

"That were his eyes. His wounds, Francie." Gloria tore off her scarf and pulled savagely at her hair. "His wounds. Died. Killed." She walked blindly through the curtains, the velvet, caught against her wool, flowing out like an opera cape.

The priest was gone now, the altar exposed, except for a human effigy laid out upon it. Patients still meandered through the pews, walking on the kneelers. One man paced out the church's dimensions: "One thousand two hundred and thirty-three. . . ." He snapped his fingers as he counted. Gloria ran up to the altar and slapped the figure asleep there. Together, Ellen and Gloria crossed themselves and left the church.

According to some plan etched into Gloria's mind, as part of the daily routine she had set up for herself seven or eight years ago, the next stop was the music room, the padded basement in the administration building. From the care plan on Gloria's chart back at the nurses' station, Ellen knew all the routines, and the variations on those routines as weather or illness dictated. Student nurses came and went, but Gloria's plan varied significantly only when she had to be locked up in solitary confinement. Gloria, for example, was not supposed to slap other patients—an act punishable by "solitary"—but then patients aren't supposed to sleep on the altar, either, Ellen rationalized.

Ellen, like the many student nurses before her, had gone with Gloria to this music room five days a week for three months, rain or snow, except for periods when her patient was being difficult.

Gloria played only on the tuneless Steinway, coming to the grand piano as if by right, interrupting at the keyboard anyone else who might be playing. She had been doing this—stopping the other patients, demanding her own time—for so long now that no one really seemed to mind much, except perhaps the people who were close to being cured and going home.

During her first year at the institution, her chart revealed, Gloria had refused to enter the music room, had, in fact, avoided concerts and sing-alongs. The staff noted that she would never dance with the other women when someone played on the rickety piano over in her ward, but that she danced wildly when the music came from a record. What was missing from her chart was documentation about how she finally found the music room and began to play once more. Also missing (these data had been locked in the physician's safe) was an account of what had brought her to the locked ward in the first place. Rumor had it that she had killed someone—a lover, perhaps, the students guessed, or maybe a nun.

Gloria knocked the bench out of her way. Hunched over, grim and

silent, and waiting for some unheard cue that told her when and what to play, she would remain perfectly motionless for periods of time that lengthened as Ellen's days with her wore on. At the piano her chants and echoes stopped. Here in this room she never talked to herself. Suspended in time and place, her hands stuck out stiffly in front of her rigid body. She ignored the pedals. She simply stared into space.

With a crash she let her hands drop onto the keyboard. Her lips pinched closed in a thin red line, a wound slashed in her rouged face. The red of her nails flashed over the black and white as she pounded the keyboard. Her hands were large in comparison to the rest of her immature body, and very strong. Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* collided with the silence of the room.

Gloria played only on this piano; Gloria played only Beethoven. Ellen shuddered and pulled her coat more closely around her. The problem was that Gloria played the piano the way she walked: she rushed—ran—through the piece, beating her fingers so hard and so fast that the music came out in a slur. The notes howled through Ellen's head. She had at first thought that Gloria played like that to punish her, but rather, she knew now, the woman was punishing herself. The piano was her devil, her torment. Ellen knew also that once it had been her love.

Ellen leaned against the wall and stared dully at her watch, at the second hand winding itself around and around, and noticed simultaneously that they kept the pianos warmer than they kept the patients and that time dragged. She wondered what Gloria would say when she explained that this was her last day on the psych ward, that these student nurses were leaving, that another group of students would arrive in two days to take their places, that Francie would never return.

Ellen's thoughts drifted from the music and focused on the strange relationship she had with this other person, this patient she watched over and reported on every day. Gloria had never re-named any of her other nurses. The students and staff all wondered what shadow Ellen O'Brien stirred in Gloria's grey memory. There was no Francie, or Frances, or Francine in the old yearbooks. Too often Ellen wanted to shake her patient. "Remember!" she wanted to yell. "Tell me who I am—who you think I am."

Afraid of Gloria's reaction to the news, Ellen had not warned her patient that the student nurses' three-month rotation was over. Last week when Ellen left the hospital for the Saturday and Sunday break, Gloria had had a minor outburst—disruptive to the ward, the head nurse charted, and dangerous. Gloria had scrawled "Doctor Frazer is a sissy" in big block lipsticked letters on the bathroom mirror (Ellen snickered as she thought of the note Doctor Frazer had written on Gloria's chart that day), and then she had swallowed the contents of two bottles of Jean Nate after-bath "splash"—belonging to other patients, who also went on a

rampage when they discovered the empty plastic containers in a toilet. Gloria was sick for two days, in the infirmary, that time, not solitary confinement.

The music stopped as abruptly as it had started, timed by a clock no more imaginary than nature's. For the musician there seemed to be neither beginning nor end. Gloria pulled Ellen out into the hall.

"Francie, Francie, Francie. Sister Mary Catherine wants me to play for the prom queen, prom queen, queen, queen. Francie is the prom queen. Francie is so beautiful, so, so, so—"

Ellen jerked her arm away. "Gloria, stop it. You are not in high school. And I am NOT Francie. I am Ellen O'Brien. You are my patient." She recited most of this, her psychology lesson, in a low, unsteady voice. She had never learned to recite her phrases without emotion.

Ellen's starched white cap was suddenly grabbed from her head. Gloria pinned it awkwardly to her own hair and hissed, taunting, "I'm a student nurse, I'm a student nurse." She continued to fumble with the hair pins, her fingers smearing red streaks on the stiffened cotton. "I'm a student nurse. You're my patient." She climbed up the stairs backwards, reciting Ellen's lesson back to her. "Francie, Francie."

It was lunch time.

They returned to the women's locked ward. The students always flipped coins to see who had to help the patients get ready to eat. The eight students split into two groups, four of them staying to set the patients up, four of them leaving the ward to go to the cafeteria for their own lunches. The girls who "won" the flip were lucky enough to eat "first," that was the important adverb. Kathy Samson, Claire Childs, and Beth George, along with Ellen, had lost. They would have to be on hand to help with lunch.

"At least it's good for our diets," Claire whispered.

Most of the women scooped up their food with their hands. Eating for them was not a pleasure; it was merely another thing they did during the course of their day. Some people smeared the food all over the table and chair and floor and themselves before the nurses could intervene. Some patients had to be fed; the ones who still lay in their trances upstairs ate nothing. Silverware clattered to the floor. Plastic dishes banged on the formica table.

"Let's be orderly," Beth called out.

"Let's keep our senses of humor," Claire said loudly, both to the patients and to the student nurses.

"Thank God there's no soup or jello," Kathy murmured to Ellen.

"Don't eat that cup, Mrs. Anderson."

"Don't put milk on your stew, please."

"Take the silverware away from Mrs. Gilstrap, Beth."

"Hurry, Ellen. Get Gloria," Beth warned.

Gloria tried to stuff all her food into her mouth at once. She kept gagging but continued eating anyway.

"Gloria, wait," Ellen called frantically. She reached across the table to remove Gloria's plate.

Gloria slapped the dish out of Ellen's hand. The food plopped off the dish into Claire's lap. And in one projectile stream food and vomit flowed from Gloria's mouth. The patients and nurses jumped out of the way, and more plates and cups spilled.

"Sorry, Claire."

"I can handle it."

Ellen brushed ineffectually at her own skirt. Gloria dashed off, and some of the other patients lost interest in finger-painting in the spilled milk and began to move away from the table.

"If you can't eat it, wear it, ladies," Kathy said. "Here come the others. They'll love cleaning up after us. Let's get out of here."

The four nurses walked the short distance to the cafeteria and let themselves in through the staff door. A few patients had lined up a second time, perhaps a third time, before the bolted dining hall door. Here they locked the door to keep the people out—since immediately after breakfast the lines formed all over again. Life was a cycle: one meal after another, a constant succession of breakfasts, lunches, and dinners.

"I'm not very hungry," Claire announced. The others laughed.

"Just coffee for me, thanks," Ellen took a seat next to Claire. "Thanks for being a good sport."

"Look. I am calm because *my* primary patient does the hokey-pokey all day." She drawled out the last two words. "I chart the same words every single time I sit down in the nurses' station: 'Does the hokey-pokey. Puts her right foot in. Puts her right foot out.' That is the extent of my learning experience here."

Ellen crossed her arms and put her head down on the table. "I am so worn out."

"From running?"

"Poor Francie," Beth said as she sat down. "They'll have to lock us all up when we get out of here. Which is, incidentally, in about three hours."

"Glory be."

"Don't say that word," Ellen said. They all laughed again.

"We follow these creatures around for eight hours a day, five days a week, three months in a row," Ellen said. "We're leaving today, but have we managed to change anything?"

"Life can only get better. My next rotation is obstetrics."

"Mine, too. Doesn't the cycle seem backwards?"

"I hate to mention this, ladies," Kathy said. "But don't we have to go bowling this afternoon?" Beth groaned.

"Maybe you do," Ellen said as she straightened up. "But we're not allowed back in the bowling alleys. Why is everything I say funny?"

"Francie—"

"Please don't call me that. I have had to endure someone else's name and past and personality for three very long months. I'm the one who feels schizoid. Sometimes I don't answer to my own name. Gloria even says *my* own words back to me."

"Ellen—"

"Besides that, today I'm the prom queen."

"In that dress?"

"Ellen, what are we doing here?" Claire asked.

"Eating?" Kathy suggested.

"Babysitting," Beth declared. She sounded surprised at her own words.

"I mean, how did a bunch of nice girls like us—even like the prom queen there—how did we end up at the Matheson State Mental Hospital for the Insane?"

"I refuse to commit myself," Kathy said.

"My dears, we are the new modern women. Before long we will all be financially independent."

"Especially if we marry doctors."

"Be serious," Claire said. "I need answers to these unhappy questions that have been plaguing me for three months. All I want to do with my life is deliver little, red, wriggling babies—and I spend three months following around the hopeless and the helpless."

"Look," Kathy said, "I want a clean, organized operating room. The mess quickly swept or washed away. The patients asleep. This place is simply part of a process."

"Part of the contract," Beth said. "So we'll be fit to handle any life crisis."

"Except our own."

"Poor Ellen. Is Gloria that crazy today?"

"I'm not sure. Maybe it's just me. I'm the one who feels 'hopeless and helpless.' I keep thinking that all these people have been dumped here until they die—'abandon all hope,' you loonies—and we come and live with them, talk with them, dance with them, and never once do we penetrate their consciousnesses. Is that a word? Anyway, I feel that I haven't accomplished a thing while I've been here."

"Now, wait. Has there ever been a prom queen before?"

Ellen ignored Kathy. "It's worse than watching a patient die."

The other young women were silent, staring at their empty dishes.

"All I know is that I don't want anything chronic, incurable. I want to get

back to St. Thomas's and see people who will get healed, made better. You get my drift."

"When we get back to school," Kathy said, "believe it or not, life will seem too terribly normal. We'll all be bored with appendectomies and coronaries and fractures."

Ellen shuddered. "Two years ago I was the prom queen. Same high school, same nuns. It's almost as though Gloria knows."

"Francie's paranoid." Kathy shook her head. "Who's crazy now?"

It was settled among them that there would be no bowling on this their last day, that the thunder of the heavy balls being flung onto the hard floor was better avoided. So, in the afternoon sun, the student nurses sat with all the worn-out, crazy women and watched over their puzzles and pot holders and checkers. The natural light enhanced the ghastly make-up and dark, misshapen clothes. The women roamed the room, staring vacantly, their eyes pale and colorless. Loose sockets gapped away from the bony structures of the faces. Avoiding the dead eyes, Ellen felt that she, that everything, that everyone seemed suspended, like Gloria's hands before she played her music. Having no place here, youth and beauty had somehow sickened and died.

Over the P.A. system Ray Charles crooned that Georgia was on his mind. The patients, their own minds empty, sat and played dominoes and worked out the intricacies of jigsaw puzzles. Patients and student nurses alike ignored the woman who stood in the middle of the room dancing very slowly, very methodically. Her voice was as quiet as her dance steps: "You put your right arm in, you put your right arm out—"

Gloria never played games or did crafts, but sometimes she snatched pot holders or dominoes from the other women. These artifacts from a different life she either hid in her bra or tried to bury in her bed. What she loved most, what she demanded every day, was to listen to stories read aloud by Ellen. If one of the other nurses happened to be reading a book to another patient, Gloria would grab that, too, and then give Ellen the book of fairy tales.

Gloria slid her hands up her sweater and held onto her breasts as she listened to Ellen read about Cinderella and the Handsome Prince. Her lips moved constantly, but no words escaped. She still wore the white cap.

Ellen read slowly, yet she still wasn't sure that the people listening to her understood what she was saying. When she finished the happy ending she laid aside the book and saw that Gloria was still telling some silent story to herself. Ellen waited.

"Francie, Francie, Francie."

Ellen heard the tiny hiss of Gloria's whisper. It was almost as if Gloria were coming out of a trance, released when Ellen's voice stopped. Ellen would tell her now, explain the logic of the nursing program, which of

course Gloria had heard many times before, as many times as the number of student nurses who had taken care of her. But Ellen couldn't watch Gloria while she gave her prepared explanation.

This time it was the nurse, afraid of the blank eyes, who stared at the opposite wall.

"Gloria, this is my last day here. I am going away now and I will not come back again. I have only a few more minutes to spend with you. Is there something you would like to talk about?" That was the way the psychology book handled problems: set limits, it said, the patient needs and wants limits.

Gloria quickly snatched at Ellen's hand and pulled it toward her. That her patient was going to bite her flashed through Ellen's mind, but she sat there, very still, as though to have her fortune told, while Gloria flattened the palm to match her own.

Her touch surprisingly gentle, Gloria pulled Ellen's hand slowly over her small face. Deliberately, Gloria took Ellen's index finger and traced along her eyebrows, her cheekbones, the line of her nose. With her eyes closed, she drew the finger round and round the smeared red mouth. "The fish that were his pearls, Francie. The fish, Francie—" Gloria rocked in her seat. Her touch was cold and moist—like a fish, thought Ellen, or like a dead body. The chant was still a whisper.

Paralyzed by something more than the feel of Gloria's dead hand, Ellen was vaguely aware that near her—but somewhere distant—all the students and some of the patients watched and waited. She, too, seemed a mere observer, somehow removed from the scene. Her months of training did not help her come up with the words that would get her hand off the other woman's face without hurting her, not physically, of course, but emotionally. What exactly would Francie do, Ellen mused. Where was the distance between patient and nurse? What would Doctor Frazer say?

"Patients are not allowed to touch the student nurses." Ellen spoke loudly, less gently than she meant, as she looked directly into the face her hand moved over.

Ellen saw the flash of red polish and later remembered hoping that Gloria would not break her nose. Gloria's fists beat at Ellen's face.

"Die, Francie, die. You should be dead, dead, dead."

They wrestled, Ellen trying to protect her face from the hands that flailed. As she held up her arms to fight off the attack, Ellen saw in astonishment that tears were streaking the rouged face, streaming from the blank blue eyes.

A direct punch made Ellen's nose bleed. Gloria shrieked. Her fists stopped, suspended in mid-motion. Then she tried to scrub at the blood on Ellen's face, tried to stop it with her palm flattened against Ellen's nose.

Kathy and Claire managed to pull Gloria away, but she would not stop screaming.

"My Francie, my beautiful Francie, Francie—"

A stuttered hiss choked her as she examined the blood on her hands. She patted Ellen's blood onto her own face. Then she ran.

Ellen mopped at her nose with the apron of her uniform. Somewhere in the distance she could hear Ray Charles droning on. Just in her line of vision, a nurse shook hands with a patient, but the game of dominoes went on. Some patients didn't look up from the potholder looms when the student nurses said good-by. The woman in the middle of the room continued her methodical, ceremonious dance. Kathy helped Ellen up.

The other students reported off to the charge nurse. No one mentioned Gloria. The people coming onto the evening shift were already involved with the counting and dispensing of pills, so they had no time to notice that Ellen's bruised face was hidden in her patient's chart.

The girls handed in their keys and were let out of the ward by the head nurse. As they turned toward the nurses' building, they were silent, already trying to direct their minds away from the present and into the future—into the evening, tomorrow, next week.

"Did she hit me?" Ellen asked suddenly.

"What?" said Kathy. "Who?"

Beth offered Ellen another wad of tissue.

"Gloria," Ellen said. "Did she hit Francie or me?"

Claire put her arm through Ellen's and patted her hand.

Ellen glanced up at the landing window and waved to Gloria just as she had done twice a day for the past three months, as she would never do again. Ellen saw her white cap askew, the small face pressed up against the bars. The lips were moving rapidly. Ellen wept too when she saw that tears came from those blank, pearl-pale eyes.

ART

Impressions of Latin America

Betty LaDuke

NURTURED by the rich ethnic diversity and multi-faceted ancient and contemporary cultures of the Latin American peoples, I have responded with paintings and prints that express my impressions of their reality.

While I always carry a sketchbook with me as I travel to record immediate impressions based upon a realistic interpretation of daily events, the paintings and prints germinate slowly and evolve in my home studio after each journey. They represent my symbolic summation of selected experiences that can also involve each culture's ancient myths, as well as contemporary traditions and current political reality.

I have added a few verbal clues to accompany the following examples of my work, in order to place the images within a specific cultural context. I hope that these visual impressions of Latin America will reach out beyond the confines of national boundaries to reveal that, in spite of our cultural differences, human survival is dependent on our ability to connect with one another through understanding and compassion.



LATIN AMERICA: SUNFLOWER No. 1, SEEDS OF UNREST—Etching, 12 x 18 1982

The people are like a swirling pattern of moist sunflower seeds bordered by crackling flames. Soon they must shake themselves free in order to survive.



CUBA: TREE OF LIFE No. 3—Etching, 18 x 24 1982

Cuba's social and cultural climate is a mixture of socialist ethics and sensual warmth permeated by the persistent rhythms of their Afro-cultural heritage.



LATIN AMERICA: TREE OF LIFE No. 4—Etching, 8 x 24 1983

Ancient ceiba trees are the great mothers, witnesses to the endless centuries of their children's sufferings, yet the fruit from their branches continues to nourish and refresh both the body and spirit. The struggle goes on.



HOMAGE TO NICARAGUA, TREE OF LIFE No. 5—Etching, 18 x 24
1984

The dancing, vibrant, flamelike forms are a celebration of the people's 1979 revolutionary triumph over the oppressive Somoza dictatorship. "No pasarán," implying "We shall not be defeated," is their popular slogan.



LATIN AMERICA: HOMAGE TO THE DISAPPEARED—Etching, 18 x 24, 1984

Voices of young and old, raised to ask questions or to speak the truth about their oppression, quickly become silenced in endless, unmarked tombs.

Observation in Cuba

Kent Schellenger

NICARAGUA: the debate rages. Is the Sandinista regime an imperfect but progressive democracy, under attack by U.S. imperialism? Or is it in fact a totalitarian outpost of the Cubans and the Soviets? Thousands of Americans travel to Nicaragua to see for themselves. Too often, their first-hand accounts are of little help. Almost invariably, hawks return more hawkish, doves more dovish, and nearly all return convinced that their preconceptions were right all along. Is it possible that on-the-spot study of nations under tight rein could still inform and shape our policy into something more than rhetorically embellished versions of our preconceptions?

I recall a visit to Cuba four summers ago, in that short period when a U.S. passport was valid for travel to the land of Castro. Looking back now, I know I was unprepared, but I couldn't have helped it much. The long-time ban on travel had left Cuba the enigma that China used to be. Since 1959, Year One of Castro's reign, media coverage had been—and still is—scant: headlines in times of crisis and news clips of refugees. In-depth treatment was and continues to be rare and usually polemic. Castro's relentless tirades, the Cuban-Soviet alliance in this hemisphere and abroad—all confirm the view of Cuba as an alien and hostile presence just 90 miles away.

President Carter dropped the ban on travel in a brief era of good will. Few Americans took note. Visits were largely limited to special interest tours. A flyer describing one such tour happened to cross my desk one June. Its bias was quite clear. The group would visit clinics, schools, and factories—not prisons, slums, or missile sites. Participants would talk with professionals and bureaucrats—not Communists or dissidents. Emphasis would be on achievements, not failures or abuses. In fact, the flyer said, tourists would observe, first-hand, "participatory democracy." Hardly an objective approach, I thought, but a possibly interesting change from the usual negative view. Not without misgivings, I signed on.

A pre-trip meeting allowed the fellow travelers to size each other up. We were 15 young to middle-aged professionals, individualists no doubt but only somewhat eccentric as Californians go. I was glad that several of us spoke Spanish; it would keep the translators honest. Our politics were



A Cuban pupil asks, "Do children in the United States have the right to go to school?"

varied, and our preconceptions, too. Some expected to find in Cuba a developing utopia—not so much because of what they had studied as what they wished, like an older generation's love affair with Bolshevism 50 years before. A few apparently imagined Cuba in the *avant garde* of causes dear to California hearts: among them, the environment and gay rights, low cholesterol nutrition, and energy from the sun. They were to be disappointed. Care for the environment is not usual in less developed countries. Culturally and ideologically, homosexuality is taboo. True, Cubans are part-time vegetarians but not by choice. And far from looking to the sun, Cuba is already working on its first atomic plant—a discovery that shocked us all.

The Doubting Thomases among us also had prepackaged views. I, for one, foresaw a drab and impoverished people, full of hostility and fear. I expected nothing like democracy. I awaited, rather, a down-sized Caribbean clone of the Soviet dictatorship.

Leaders of our group were two community college instructors with a special interest in the Third World. They had toured Cuba just the year before. They had arranged our trip through "Cubatur," which would provide a guide. Familiar with the Soviets' travel bureau, "Intourist," I was aware of certain potential pitfalls. Would our time be budgeted, and our movements controlled? No, our leaders said, adding that with planned visits and conferences, our days could be full but that we would be free at all times to participate, relax, or strike out on our own. Nothing would prevent us from meeting Cubans, in public or in private,

unchaperoned. Would we then hear from Cubans opposed to socialism? That was possible but unlikely, we were told, because 97 per cent of the people had approved their Constitution in 1976, leaving only three per cent opposed. With regard to creature comforts, we would travel 700 miles in an air-conditioned bus and spend the nights in good hotels. Food would be ample.

Happily, all promises were kept. Facilities were adequate, and scheduled speakers valuable, although some were candid, others doctrinaire. In addition to Cubatur's arrangements, our guides made other contacts for us. Among them were a psychiatrist, an artist, and a black American exile. The last was an ex-Panther, hijacker, and convict, employed as a teacher of English in a Cuban high school. Most important, we *were* free to wander and to talk with Cubans in a variety of contexts—and alone. Those we met were without exception friendly, all the more so, it seemed, when they learned where we came from. They were quite willing to stop by our hotels or to entertain us in their homes. Only one, a young engineer, showed some restraint. He had posed with us for a snapshot overlooking a town square. Afterward he asked that the photo not be published: "Someone might think I'm against the revolution." He then chatted with us for hours at our downtown hotel.

First Impressions and First Surprises

Our Ilyushin 68 departed Mexico for the two-hour flight to Cuba. Abandoning the rubber chicken served by Cubana de Aviación, I savored instead the irony: riding a Russian jet over the Caribbean, once an American lake. Aside from the meal, the flight was pleasant, quite unlike that of a friend who once flew Aeroflot. "Like being mailed to Russia," she recalled. First preconception felled: this plane was quiet, comfortable, and well-designed.

The Soviet ambience continued after our landing at Havana. All visible aircraft—Cubana's smaller planes for intra-island service and a big Aeroflot Ilyushin for daily flights to and from Moscow—were made in Russia. We learned later that Havana is also served by airlines of, among others, France, Belgium, Canada—and by "American Airways," Air Florida in disguise.

Inside the unpretentious terminal, we met our Cubatur guide, Andrés "Andy" Albuquerque. Wearing a blue safari suit, he had the looks of a younger Sidney Poitier and the language and good humor of a Latin Bill Cosby. He would be with us most of the next 14 days. Baggage collected and customs cleared, Andy ushered us aboard a blessedly cool bus, relatively new, and made for Cubatur in Spain. Leaving the airport grounds, we passed under an iron arch with a hammer and sickle, big red stars, and the motto, "Patria o Muerte," "Fatherland or Death," a satisfactorily

sinister beginning. We settled back for the half-hour drive into town.

City streets, busy at the end of day, still were strangely uncluttered. I realized suddenly: commercial advertising does not exist. No need, of course, in a socialist state. In the place of ads were admonitions: signs urged vigor in "production and defense." As we approached Havana, a lighted billboard proclaimed, "We Have Entered a New Age. An Age of Solidarity." "Isn't that nice," said one young woman, a health food store employee. Nonconformists at home, I learned, were intrigued by the collectivism here.

Imposing government buildings, the vast Revolution Square, and a seven-story portrait of Ché Guevara—killed in guerilla action in Bolivia—showed that we had reached Havana. Slogans and symbols of revolution were already giving way to the sights and sounds of a city ending business for the day. Dusk approaching, buses filed past, full of tired people heading home. The commuters were clean-cut and well dressed for the hot climate, men and women alike in slacks and cool shirts. Had I expected rifles, beards, and green fatigues? I was mildly disappointed; they were nowhere to be seen. Traffic was heavy but again a disappointment: old Fords and Chevies were outnumbered by new foreign cars, about three to one. By the time of our arrival in midtown, it was apparent that this city was not closing down in fear of night, as is too often the case at home. It was preparing for the evening. Crowds were gathering at the bars or queuing up for movies and—Castro's answer to Baskin-Robbins—Coppelia ice cream.

My first hour in Cuba had left two impressions. One was of a Soviet-inspired, vaguely threatening state. The other was of a busy, progressive, contented people. These contradictory impressions would return to confound me every day.

Schooling at All Levels

Top priority on our agenda was a look at Cuban schools. Cubatur obliged. Clearly, they wanted us to see what the revolution had wrought. The bus was waiting early to take us to a Havana primary school, which our guide, Andy, said had been chosen randomly and was no different from any other. In fact, on other days we saw similar schools in our wanderings through Havana, lesser cities, and small towns. No Potemkin village had been created for our sake.

We arrived at recess when active, noisy children, first to sixth-grade pupils, played in red shorts or skirts and clean white shirts. Nearly all wore the neckerchief of the "Pioneers," the Revolution's "scouts." The building, like many we saw, seemed relatively new. (Elsewhere, authorities—with an unerring eye for symbols—have housed new schools in former barracks and in abandoned homes of the elite.) Above

the school yard a sign proclaimed, "Under the Victorious Banner of Marxism-Leninism, Conquering the Future." A bell rang, the children lined up and marched off to class.

The woman principal bade us welcome, then invited us to follow. We walked down the hall past a smiling portrait of Fidel and Che. A plaque read, "The Best Homage Is Daily Effort." We stopped to say hello to a roomful of first-graders, all well-scrubbed and healthy-looking. We passed a smaller class of children with learning handicaps. Shown into a sixth-grade room, we found an oral quiz under way. The pupils were aggressive and alert, but our interruption brought noticeable relief and then interest, when the principal introduced us as guests from the U.S. Inviting the children to ask us questions, she, perhaps to play it safe, suggested that they ask about sixth grade in the United States. With that limitation, their questions were routine and were answered by the mother of a sixth-grader and by a retired teacher in our group. These children seemed satisfied that their American counterparts bear burdens not unlike their own.

In our next classroom, however, the questions were anything but routine. This time no guidelines were set down. A tall black girl, obviously a leader, stood: "What has happened to the 'anti-socials' who fled to Miami?" The second question, posed by a fair-skinned boy in front: "Do children in the United States have the right to go to school?" I wondered, was he surprised to learn that they do and that school is free? Then the tables turned and we asked questions. The first one was predictable: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" The answers were impressive: "lawyer," "engineer," "nuclear physicist." Girls as well as boys seemed convinced that their potential had no limits.

The next question brought a moment of surprise: "Would you like to trade places for a month with sixth graders in the U.S.?" The fair-skinned boy and a few indicated by a show of hands that they would. But the black girl and most of the rest did not. Was it simply the unexpected question? Was it fear of being different that caused their hesitation? Or was it doubt about how a Pioneer ought to reply? A few furtive looks and then more hands went up until almost all were in the air.

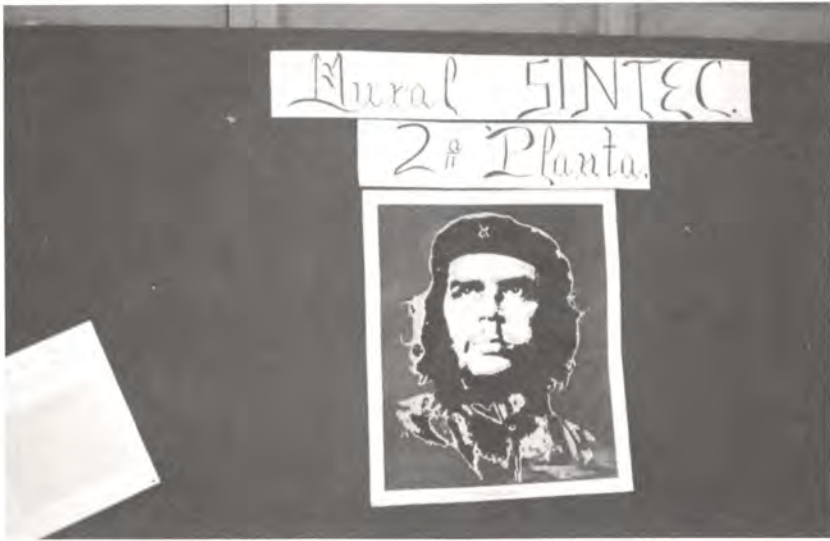
Our final question was, "What do you see ahead for the United States and Cuba?" The answer: "That will depend on the governments, but we know that Cubans and Americans can be friends." This response from a sixth grader would be echoed time and again by the adults we met in the remainder of our stay. They apparently accept the message of their propagandists, that their enemy is our government, over which we have no control. Many take the Marxist view that Washington is run from Wall Street, by the Rockefellers *et al*, and that just as the moneyed interests used to exploit Cuba, they continue to exploit us. "Isn't it too bad," said one young man, "you have to live there?"

For a look at secondary education, we were driven to the Lenin Vocational School, near Havana. Admittedly a show-piece, a "must-see" on any guided tour of the achievements of the revolution, it is one of six such schools, with others planned for each of Cuba's 14 provinces. While the Lenin School may indeed be special, we had seen films of the others and noted similarities. The Lenin School, like its five counterparts, is a boarding school for more than 4,000 exceptional junior and senior high students. Completed in 1974, in time for its dedication by a visiting Leonid Brezhnev, it consists of a complex that covers half a mile. In addition to dormitories, classrooms, and laboratories, the complex includes theatres, swimming pools, and a gymnasium. While called a "Vocational School," that term is used not to mean terminal training for a trade but preparation for higher technical education. Graduates go on to become engineers, scientists, or teachers. Besides the usual range of high school subjects, studies include compulsory courses in Marxism-Leninism.

With exams in progress, our visit was short. We walked down halls past banners won in "emulation." (Only capitalists compete, communists emulate.) We passed by classrooms, labs, and a gym. We saw a library, which was off-limits during examinations so that students could store their texts there. The books were the same texts that Russian youngsters used—translated into Spanish. They were labeled "gifts from the Soviet people."

Our host at the school, a fortyish teacher of math, Sr. Mario Gonzales, gave an impressive account of educational gains. His commitment to the revolution was clear. In the free-wheeling discussion that followed, one of us, a young teacher, asked: "Isn't it possible that once your goals are met, your students will face new problems that you have yet to confront?" Did she refer to that plague of developing countries, the explosive mixture of overtrained youth and too few suitable jobs? Or to the alienation that comes with affluence in a "post-industrial" age? Whichever the case, Sr. Gonzales was puzzled: "With the opportunities we are giving them, what problems could there be?" More than once, we saw this refusal to admit there could be problems inherent in the revolution itself.

For a more detailed briefing, we bussed to the Ministry of Education, located in one of the large grey buildings in old Havana. Inside, we met Sr. Fernando Garcia, a middle-aged specialist with the Institute of Pedagogy, acting as spokesman for the Ministry. Using an overhead projector and charts, he compared current educational levels with those under the Batista dictatorship. Before 1959, said Sr. Garcia, almost a quarter of the Cuban people were illiterate. Once the old regime had been overthrown, a massive literacy campaign began. Everyone who could read and write was urged to teach someone who could not. The slogan was: "If you don't know, learn; if you know, teach." As a result he



Che Guevara looks down on a classroom.

said, the literacy rate is now 96 per cent, the highest in Latin America. After the recent revolution in Nicaragua, Cubans helped the Sandinistas mount a similar campaign.

Moreover, continued Sr. García, before the Castro Revolution, only 56 per cent of Cuban children aged six to twelve signed up for school. Actual attendance was much lower, either because of personal poverty or because of a lack of schools. The latter deficiency was especially telling in a country with 10,000 teachers unemployed. To Sr. García, the first goal of the revolution had been achieved when free and compulsory education was available for every one through the sixth grade. Then came a new goal of nine years of schooling for all. In 1980, 81 per cent of children aged 13 through 16 were in school. When asked about the missing 19 per cent, Sr. García made an unusual admission: this is a problem not yet solved; there is some delinquency. However, stop-gap measures have been introduced, including work-study programs for the drop-out who is younger than the minimum employment age. We learned later that the unemployed drop-out theoretically does not exist, as such a one would be in violation of the "Anti-Loafing Law." "Parasites" do exist; in downtown Havana teenage hustlers frequently sought black market dollars from us, offering pesos at one-third more than the official rate. Once we observed the police with a young man in custody, evidently reenacting a crime of stealing from a tourist bus. "They are just making a movie," we were told. If so, they had forgotten to bring the camera. Another form of "parasite," also theoretically non-existent, propo-

sitioned late-night wanderers. Reports were that some of the prostitutes may have been in the trade even before the revolution.

Higher education, Sr. Garcia pointed out, enrolled 19,000 students before the revolution, all children of the middle and upper classes. He recalled that he himself had wanted to be a pilot and had passed entrance exams to the Naval Academy. All places were reserved, however, for the sons of Batista's cronies. Since the revolution, in addition to the University of Havana, universities have been established in five provinces, with university branches in all other provinces. Enrollment is ten times the pre-Castro figure, he said. Half of the students are working adults who take classes arranged at times to suit their work schedules. Higher education, too, is free to all.

Teacher training has a high priority. Initially, high school students, not yet finished with their own education, became teachers of still younger pupils. But, the spokesman claimed, the ultimate goal is almost within reach: possession of a university degree by every teacher.

Educational opportunities also extend to children of other, like-minded Third World countries, said Sr. Garcia. On Batista's "Devil's Island," now called the Isle of Youth, boarding schools for especially gifted Cuban children are located. And there too, young people from Nicaragua, Angola, Namibia, and Congo study in 16 schools built specifically for them. When asked if this arrangement implied "exporting revolution," the spokesman became indignant. Indeed not, he said. "Cuba is a peace-loving country and would never export revolution."

On returning home, I checked Sr. Garcia's figures. United Nations and academic sources, while not as dependable as one might wish, generally confirmed his story. The revolution has brought great gains in literacy and education. In addition, these non-Cuban statistics show that even before the revolution, Cuba led most Latin countries in literacy and school enrollment, suggesting that at least some benefits came during the much-maligned American presence. Moreover, in the years since 1959, all countries in the hemisphere show improvement, regardless of their politics.

How Cuban Young People Get "the Word"

As in any country, with literacy and education comes "the Word." From the primary grades on up, the work ethic is stressed, as is commitment to the revolution. School texts resemble the *McGuffey's Readers* of 19th century America. Each day's lesson contains a moral. The child is taught to study hard, to consider others, and to emulate the nation's heroes. Portraits of Lenin, Castro, Ché and José Martí—19th century national leader—adorn the walls. Revolutionary slogans are ubiquitous. Older students get the message in an immediate way. In part

to meet the needs of a developing country, in part to instill respect for work, labor is a part of everyone's curriculum. Students in urban schools go to the country one month a year for agricultural work. Their teachers also go and work with them. In rural schools, students spend four hours a day in study and three in work.

Youngsters' values and perceptions are shaped in other ways. Their history books are revealing.

The child reads that the modern revolution began July 26, 1953. On that date, Fidel—he is almost always referred to by first name only—led a band of men and women in an attack on Batista's Moncada barracks. The attack failed, most were captured, then tortured and shot. Fidel escaped, only to be captured later, tried, and sent to prison. Following a general amnesty in 1955, he fled to Mexico. There he gathered a new band, including brother Raúl and the Argentine physician, Ché Guevara. In December, 1956, Fidel and his guerillas returned to Cuba on the small yacht, "Granma." Of the 85 who landed, only 12 survived to find refuge in the Sierra Maestra. Among them were Fidel, Raúl, and Ché. Yet these few men, augmented by a growing opposition to Batista, prevailed. On January 1, 1959, the guerillas entered Havana, to be greeted by cheering crowds.

That part of the story is embellished. Castro's revolution was not the popular uprising described in school texts. Its support came largely from the middle class who thought Castro was what he said he was, a liberal reformer. Batista's flight was encouraged by withdrawal of U.S. support, an item overlooked. But the outlines of the romantic story, with its narrow escapes and tales of courage, and the final triumph of Good, are true and scarcely need improvement.

Following Fidel's victory (the child is taught) the U.S. schemed to subvert the revolution. The U.S. imposed a trade embargo, including medicine and food, and encouraged sabotage. The U.S. was involved in attempts to kill Fidel. The United States aided counter-revolutionaries, even those attempting an invasion, which ended in "the first setback for imperialism" at Girón—the Bay of Pigs.

Treatment of the Soviet Union in the approved texts is more imaginative. In a school library, I looked through a book on World War II. The war, it said, was started by "the imperialists." The term, used in all other contexts to mean the United States and its allies, was never clarified. A Cuban child could be excused for believing that the Western powers were allied with the Nazis and that only the courageous Soviet people turned the tide. A reference book for teachers' use was no improvement. It depicted the Western powers as doing little beyond appearing at Potsdam to make imperialist demands. The Soviets got no credit for the Cuban Revolution—and this much, at least, is true. But the Soviets are depicted as Cuba's saviors in the face of U.S. intervention. Cuba's debt of

gratitude to the U.S.S.R. is stressed consistently. Childish drawings on schoolroom walls reflect this emphasis. The first Cuban cosmonaut is the young artist's favorite theme: blasting off, attaining orbit, and exploring space accompanied by the Russian crew. But there is one point to score for the American side: cowboys and baseball players have not been excoriated; portraits of both kinds of American heroes appear on walls.

We pursued the question of socialization of older students with Sr. García. University-level education is above all work-oriented, in sharp contrast to the largely impractical courses preferred for status reasons in other Latin countries. No electives are permitted. The only non-specialized courses are in "philosophy," he said. Our guide interjected that, unlike in American universities where philosophy is considered one of the humanities, in Cuba it is a "science." Sr. García explained that of course he was referring to the required courses in Marxist-Leninist thought, "which is the scientific view of history, based on objective laws revealed by Marx—as opposed to all other philosophies which are based on erroneous premises."

This dogmatic statement raised a question that we would pose in various contexts for the remainder of our stay: how much freedom of expression is there, especially in the schools? I asked about an incident in which some students at the university had criticized Fidel. Next day, the association of students had voted them expelled. Sr. García did not deny that the incident had occurred but said that he did not know all the facts. Surely more than criticism must have been involved, he said, assuring me that, while "constructive criticism" is definitely allowed, students do sometimes confuse liberty with anarchy. "Would you," he asked, "let students dance on tables in your classroom?" I had to admit that I would not. His answer was of little help, however, in distinguishing the permitted "constructive criticism" from "anti-social," and therefore unacceptable, behavior.

Our group had just begun to appreciate the enormous pressures to conform. In the schools, children meet occasionally to discuss each others' strengths and weaknesses and to assess classmates' attitudes and contributions. Records are compiled of conduct in the classroom and of behavior out of school. These records become important at graduation time, for applicants for further training are not judged on grades alone. First, a state commission determines Cuba's needs, in much the way that the Soviets' Gosplan prepares the Five-Year Plans and oversees their execution. Next, personnel requirements are projected for several years. Finally, current applications are reviewed. Individual preferences are considered, but the needs of the revolution, as set down by the commission, come first. The best applicants in each field are accepted while the openings last. "Best" refers not alone to the academic record, but also to the accumulated evidence of revolutionary zeal. As Sr. García

put it, the record must show "good social behavior and no anti-social views." We learned later that the same criteria—job performance, off-hours activism, and right-thinking—decide questions of career promotion and even of the allocation of scarce housing and appliances.

Health Services

Medical care has received high priority since 1959, and great pride is taken in the gains made by the revolution. No doubt for those reasons, our schedule included a visit to a polyclinic in the new planned community of José Martí, near Santiago de Cuba. The town comprises modern apartment buildings housing 40,000, schools, and all appropriate facilities. On entering the polyclinic, we were welcomed by a doctor and a nurse. The physician began by describing the lack of medical care before the revolution. What care was available was concentrated in Havana. Forty per cent of the people had no access to doctors or hospitals, with predictable results in infant mortality and susceptibility to diseases such as polio, malaria, diarrhea, diphtheria, and tuberculosis. Life expectancy was short.

The situation deteriorated even more when, following Castro's victory, half of Cuba's 6,000 doctors fled to the United States. Since then, two medical schools have been established, in addition to the one in Havana. Thousands of doctors have been trained, along with nurses and technicians. Medical care extends to the country-side, where new doctors must serve three-year assignments. Graduates in all fields accept these conditions as a way of returning the costs of their free education. Facilities have been expanded as well. In the cities, polyclinics provide care in several specialties, while hospitals take the more difficult cases. In less populated areas, rural hospitals combine the two functions. Preventive medicine is especially stressed. Our physician-spokesman explained that many organizations—the Federation of Women, labor unions and youth groups, and the nation-wide "Committees for Defense of the Revolution" have helped alert people to the need for nutrition, immunization, and early diagnosis and care. The result: polio, malaria, and diphtheria are extinct; and other killers, sharply reduced. Life expectancy, said the doctor, is now the highest in Latin America. Thanks to pre-natal care and hospital births, infant mortality is the lowest. All medical care, except medicine for out-patients, is free. Furthermore, he said, Cuba has already started its own foreign aid program. Thousands of medical personnel have served and are serving abroad, primarily in Africa and the Caribbean. At our hotel we met a few of 50 Ethiopians studying medicine in Havana.

Following this discussion, I wandered uninvited into the dental wing of the clinic. I saw a row of new chairs and equipment. Two uniformed



Roadside billboard with the slogan: "Don't put off until the exams what you should study today."

women were examining a young Pioneer. Throughout our travels in Cuba, we saw such clinics and hospitals, many of recent construction—physical evidence of the revolution's achievements.

On my return home, I checked other sources. Again they substantially confirmed the gains described to us. Cuban officials said that before 1959 life expectancy for men was 50 years, for women 55. Now the figures claimed are 70 and 75. United Nations statistics for 1960 to 1975, the only data available, show an average increase from 61.8 to 71.8. Even using only UN figures and discounting Cuba's enthusiastic claims, I had to concede that Cuba *has* apparently achieved the highest life expectancy in Latin America. Before Castro, infant mortality was 35.4 per thousand; in 1975 it was 22.9. It is now the lowest. (Compare Guatemala's 76.5.) In hospital beds per capita, Cuba is surpassed only by Argentina and Uruguay. According to the UN figures, Cuba also stands third in Latin America in doctor-patient ratio and by this time may well be number one. And thanks to the revolution's stress on public health and prevention, Cuba is second only to Uruguay in "per cent of deaths due to infectious and parasitic disease."

However, as with education, comparative tables produce a surprise. Sketchy figures suggest that medical care before 1959, while surely inadequate, was still among the best in the Americas. In life expectancy, infant mortality, and nearly all categories, Cuba ranked high—if not the highest. And in the years since the revolution, other Latin American countries have improved, regardless of political system. In some areas, in

fact, their gains are proportionally greater than Cuba's. These observations, though, should not cloud the fact that, as in the field of education, Cuba has lessened the gap between the "haves" and "have nots," which few other regimes have seriously tried to do. Those that have tried have often been blocked, if not ousted, by their entrenched elites, by their generals, or, on at least two occasions, by the U.S. The reformist regimes of Arbenz and Allende, elected presidents of Guatemala and Chile, infringed on the privileges of American corporations. Allegations of "communism" predictably spread. The CIA was unleashed, in both cases with success. Arbenz was unseated and Allende killed. Right-wing governments have ruled those countries ever since.

Housing

If gains in health and education are clear, housing is another story. A 1953 census found almost half of Cuba's dwellings to be "bad" or "worthless." Three-quarters of the rural homes were labeled *ruinoso*, which is just as bad as it sounds. The acute shortage of decent housing is openly admitted to be a great unsolved problem. While Cuba did not display the concentric rings of cardboard shacks that surround most Latin American cities, still, millions of Cubans live in crowded, substandard flats. When we walked through the poorer areas of Havana, streets were clean, no doubt due to "voluntary" efforts of the residents of each block, but the drab and cramped apartments left a great deal to be desired. A few of us were invited into Cuban homes and found them far too small for anyone's comfort. In the countryside, we saw much subsistence housing, including cottages with thatched roofs and dirt floors.

We did see many signs of construction, whole new towns recently completed, and apartment complexes under way. Near Cienfuegos, we saw a state farm, one of 200, and the modern housing created there. A social worker attached to the farm escorted us past the general store and an elementary school in session to a thatched roof *bohío* such as we had seen, still inhabited, along the road. This was a typical peasant's house, she said, under the old regime. She then ushered us across the street into a modern building. Invited into one apartment, we met a farm worker, his baby, and his sister-in-law. His wife was in a hospital in Havana. The flat was small but attractive. Even in a forgiving climate, it was a vast improvement over a mud-walled cottage. Rent is free, and occupants pay only utilities, we were told.

Despite all the construction, however, the housing shortage is likely to remain acute. Newlyweds must crowd into their in-laws' homes. Estranged couples continued to cohabit for lack of an alternative. Waiting lists were long; and, as allocations are based on need, only couples with children had much chance of bettering their living quarters.

Consumer Goods

Availability of consumer goods, also in short supply, showed some improvement. We saw plenty of appliances in store windows, but prices were sky-high. A 21-inch TV, for example, was priced at \$1,000, although it is true that nearly every apartment had one. Even thatch-roofed *bohíos* sprouted antennas. The reason for this seeming abundance perhaps lay in the allocation system, which operates like this: a quantity of appliances—radios and televisions, stoves and refrigerators—are assigned to an enterprise. Prices are low, but waiting lists are long. Workers in the enterprise then decide who gets what. The criteria are: proven need, work performance, and, again, exemplary revolutionary attitude. Clearly, “anti-socials” need not apply. Strange shortfalls may appear, due perhaps to glitches in the Five Year Plan. Children sometimes approached us begging, as did one university professor, for American ballpoint pens. More serious problems of production have inspired some decentralization of controls. But only tinkering is permitted. There can be no basic rethinking of the socialist approach.

Clothing gradually removed from the list of rationed goods was lacking in quality and priced high. Shoe production was a disaster. A shoestore in downtown Havana displayed one pair in its window. There seemed to be few more inside. New shoes that are poorly made and “hard as rocks” are a subject of citizens’ complaints and discussion at official levels. As is usual in communist countries, a private sector still exists, limited to artisans who hire no one, as hiring, except by the state, is considered exploitation. On Saturdays in Havana, Cathedral Square was jammed with Cubans buying clothes and shoes made by such individual capitalists. A pair of leather *huaraches* cost a worker two weeks pay. That Cubans would pay such prices suggests both needs that state enterprises cannot fill and excess cash in hand for lack of things to buy. It ought to be noted, however, that such excess cash is also attributable to low rent and free health care and education.

Grocery stores were depressing, with little food, unattractively displayed. Prices were low, but the choices meager. Rationing was called “guaranteed allocation” to make a valid point. Before the revolution, there was widespread malnutrition. An assured minimum means that no one goes harmfully without. I found few items rationed, but meat was one of them, as a scarcity.

Free markets, run by private farmers, augmented the diets of those who can afford such products. Agriculture in Cuba takes three forms: state farms, cooperatives, and private holdings. The state farm is an outdoor factory, where, as we saw, workers live in apartments. Like the Soviet *soukhoz*, the state farm is preferred for reasons of ideology and mass production technique. Here Castro has accomplished something even

Stalin could not. Castro deprived Cuban state farm workers of their private plots, lest they spend too much effort on their own small farms and too little on the collective. Cooperatives, like the Soviet *kolkhoz*, are ideologically acceptable but carefully controlled. Private ownership is still permitted but strictly regulated. These farmers must meet a quota and sell their product to the state at state-determined prices. However, they may sell any surplus at the farmers' markets at whatever price customers will pay. And prices may be ten times those of state-owned stores. As a result, private farmers were known to do quite well.

Why was private ownership allowed at all? Some statistics show that 30 per cent of Cuba's farm land is tilled by private farmers. This land produces far more than its share: 80 per cent of Cuba's coffee and tobacco, 65 per cent of its vegetables, and 50 per cent of its fruit. Yet the private farms were slated for extinction.

If the revolution has reduced the division between "haves" and "have-nots," inequality in standards of living made some Cuban consumers more equal than others. The idealists in our group were shocked to discover that a Cubatur guide like Andy gets a commission for the tour business he attracts. But, in fact, the profit motive pervades the system. There was a time, in the 60s, when "moral incentives" were stressed. Following the Mao-ist path, Ché Guevara believed that exhortations sufficed to step up production. There was much talk of a "new Cuban man" who would work selflessly for the benefit of all. This period ended with the all-out campaign to cut ten million tons of sugar in 1970. Factory workers and students, ministers and bureaucrats whacked at the cane with revolutionary zeal. It was Cuba's "Great Leap Forward," and it had disastrous results. The harvest goal was not met, and the entire economy suffered. Turning back toward the Soviet path, Cuba began to rely more heavily on "material incentives."

For example, we visited a cement plant near the port of Cienfuegos. We learned that a worker there makes \$100 a month. An engineer makes four times that. In addition, bonuses are paid for good job performance. The free services available weaken the impact of the salary gap. When our disillusioned idealists later inquired about the disparity in incomes, it was explained in Marxist-Leninist terms. Cuba is only in the "transitional" stage. It is "socialist," not "communist." Remnants of capitalism remain. Thus its society is governed by the maxim, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his *work*." Only in the final, communist stage will things be allocated according to need. In the meantime, although classes by definition no longer exist, some Cubans live well, others do not.

Shortcomings of the Cuban economy were explained in various ways. The U.S. embargo required a drastic reorientation of commerce and production. U.S. aggression caused diversion of men and resources from

civilian needs to preparations for defense. Economic sabotage by counter revolutionaries brought disruptions and setbacks. Faulty administration was occasionally conceded and even bad decisions by the *Lider Maximo* himself. It was assumed, however, that trial and error bring improvement and that continuing Soviet aid will make Cuba self-sufficient. Already, officials said, production and exports were on the rise: sugar, rum, and farm products, and minerals and manufactured goods, as well.

An evaluation of the revolution's economic gains must consider both the U.S. trade embargo and the massive Soviet aid. Also, as in the case of health and education, pre-revolution data must be reviewed. When U.S. corporations once controlled all aspects of the economy, they built an infrastructure—roads, utilities, and communications—that the revolution inherited. And, even admitting the pre-revolutionary maldistribution of material wealth, it is true that as of 1960 Cuba ranked in the upper fourth of all Latin American countries in per capita ownership of cars, radios, telephones, and televisions. As of 1975, according to the United Nations' figures, Cuba had held its own in consumer goods only with regard to cars. Those figures no doubt include many cars also counted in 1960. In all other categories, Cuba had lost ground relative to the rest of South America. These data suggest that rising expectations may become mounting frustrations. These frustrations were in fact a major impetus for the flight from Mariel, in which 135,000 Cubans, often at risk to their lives, fled to the U.S.

Disturbing—Even Frightening—Moments

While the achievements of the revolution, particularly in health and education were clear, we experienced several profoundly disturbing moments, especially during discussions of Cuba's new "participatory democracy" of which our guides were so proud. One of the most frightening to me found others in our group reacting positively. This moment came during an arranged visit with the members of a "CDR," Committee for Defense of the Revolution.

One evening we bussed through the suburbs of Havana to a pleasant, middle-income neighborhood. There, on the front porch of an attractive home, waited about 20 residents of the block, men and women of all ages. Their chair, a soft-spoken woman, made us welcome and introduced us to other officers: the vice chair, the master of the night watch, and the block's "ideologue." A superior was also present, a man responsible for coordination of organizations in a number of city blocks. (The CDR is Cuba's most comprehensive mass organization, we were told, and is structured in pyramidal fashion.) Among the absent officers, one was at a meeting on public health and a second was helping prepare for the July 26 celebration. A third was involved with the Territorial Militia, to which

most adults belong and which is being reorganized to meet the renewed threat of aggression presented by the election of President Reagan. Finally, we were introduced generally to the other members present: housewives, students, retired people, and professionals. At this point, the chairwoman said no more. The men took over.

We learned that the CDR was originally created to guard against the sabotage committed by counter revolutionaries and the CIA. Since then it had expanded to take on other tasks. CDRs exist in every block in all cities and in housing units on state farms. Similar functions are performed by another organization in other rural areas. CDRs work with the police to prevent crime, with the schools in education, and with medical technicians in public health. With CDR help, for example, one national objective has already been reached: the immunization of every Cuban against polio, once a major threat. A campaign was under way to stamp out disease-carrying mosquitos. Meanwhile, the CDRs continue their initial work, preventing sabotage. Recent events, a speaker alleged, prove that this work is still required. He cited a tobacco blight, an epidemic of swine fever, and a passing tanker's massive oil spill that ruined rich lobster beds. This series of events, he said, quoting Fidel, "could hardly be coincidence." Later, in his July 26, 1981, harangue, Castro added another charge: the mosquitos that bring dengue fever must be creatures of the CIA. There was an element of surrealism in listening to all this. Still, for an American familiar with the ruthlessness of anti-Castro extremists, who once blew up a Cubana airliner, killing all aboard, such maniacal schemes are conceivable. And the CIA surely showed itself unscrupulous in contracting with the Mafia to murder Cuba's leader. As for the sabotage of production, the Nixon-Kissinger plot, hatched at the highest level, to "destabilize" Allende by creating economic chaos, suggested that at least some of the speaker's charges might be true, although I did think that he believed the CIA to be more efficient than it really is. In addition to work on national programs, the CDRs turn out for local projects, such as block beautification, clean-ups, and the recycling of waste material.

As we could see, the spokesman said, "the CDR is non-political." But that statement hardly squared with the presence of the block "ideologue," whose job is "ideological education of the masses." Spokesmen for the revolution claim that the CDR is Cuba's unique contribution to the cause of socialism. This may be true, but Hitler's "National Socialists" used a similar block organization to prevent straying from the Nazi path. With this in mind, some of us raised questions about the limits of *Cederista* power. We were assured that participation in the CDR is entirely voluntary. Of the 33 families in this particular block, four did not belong. One officer's father, whose hardware store was expropriated in the early days and who "does not understand the revolution," did not take part. We were told that non-members were not

persecuted; one non-member resident was said to hold a job in the Ministry of Construction.

Another question concerned us: "Does the CDR intervene in the private lives of residents, as in a marital conflict?" The answer: "No, we believe that is their business." However, if the school alerts a CDR to a child's problem in school, the CDR might step in to help parents and the child resolve the problem. Recalling that some who fled from Mariel reported being held by the CDR in virtual house arrest, without food, water, or electricity, we asked if the CDR is in any way repressive. "Of course not," came the quick denial. "But we will not stand by and allow 'anti-social behavior.'" Once again that elusive term confronted us.

Hoping for a definition, our environmentalists raised the issue of Cuba's decision to "go nuclear," as a source of energy. "Are Cubans aware of the inherent dangers and the problem of waste disposal? Can they protest this decision, or would this be 'anti-social?'" Avoiding the issue, the speaker again replied, "The people and the government are one, so no decision *could* be made against the interests of the people." He added, "Americans don't trust their government, so you can't understand that." Later Andy told us that he had heard of the Three Mile Island malfunction, but, said he, that was in the U.S. "The Russians have atomic plants throughout their country, and they have had no trouble." Further questions proved fruitless. Was the lack of response because we were confronting the lowest level of official? Or was it the dual presence of followers and a superior? In any case, the answers became increasingly emotional and evasive, rigid and party-line. With the departure of the "anti-socials," we heard, only total commitment to the revolution remains. Only the "purest" of the youngsters now remain, and they will build the future. We had encountered this attitude before: the tunnel vision of the True Believer. None too soon, a tray of drinks appeared, liberally laced with good Cuban rum.

New Constitution

Our introduction to Cuban political institutions came from two elected members of the Santiago de Cuba People's Power, the city's representative assembly. We sat in a shady garden setting, sipping cold fruit juice, while the older of the two men explained. In 1975, 15 years after the revolution, a draft constitution was presented to the Cuban people for their consideration. Countless meetings throughout the country gave everyone a chance to raise questions and propose revisions. After nationwide debate, the people's suggestions were considered, and a final draft was submitted to a national referendum. The Cuban people, we were told, approved their new constitution by a majority of "more than 97 per cent" in a free and secret ballot, with 99 per cent voting of those

eligible—all citizens over 16. Some of the 3 per cent who voted against the constitution “may have made a mistake.” But I wondered about that near-unanimous approval, normally *prima facie* evidence of a fraudulent election, although by the standards of communism it might almost be called a modest victory. In 1945, the people of Outer Mongolia voted to affiliate with the Soviet Union by a vote of 483,291 to 0.

However, there were reasons why a large majority of Cubans might have favored the new constitution. The democratic constitution of 1940, which Castro had promised to respect, had been largely amended or ignored. Elections, which he had promised, had not been held. Existing institutions, it was publicly acknowledged, were not working well. Decision-making was over-centralized; the party and mass organizations were in decline; the army was gaining power; there was no provision for formal popular participation. The new draft constitution surely seemed an improvement. Furthermore, as in most referendums, there was no alternative to choose from: the choice was yes or no. Near-unanimity would hardly have prevailed, needless to say, if absentee ballots had been mailed to Miami.

And what of the original draft that had been composed by the party under the close supervision of Castro himself? Had it been changed in any way, as a result of all those meetings? According to one pro-Castro account, “the inevitable topics” raised in public meetings were “changing the name of the republic, the inclusion of one article specifying Spanish as the only official language and of another establishing the peso as the only official Cuban currency.” But there was general silence about whether any important changes came from all those meetings. One plain feature of the constitution is that it created institutions almost identical to those of the Soviet Union. Indeed, half the articles of the new Cuban constitution are copies from the old 1936 Soviet constitution adopted under Stalin.

I asked our People’s Power spokesman, “Is there more than one candidate for each seat?” I was thinking of the Russian system: only one nominee, approved by the party; thus, in effect, no choice. He assured me that there were at least three or four candidates, sometimes as many as eight. Nominations are made at public gatherings, with each sub-district entitled to one nominee. “Do the candidates then campaign, and approach the voters with their ideas?” Our speaker was amused by the naiveté of my question. No, he said. Photographs of the nominees, accompanied by brief résumés of their experience and contributions, placed in conspicuous places are what voters base their decisions on.

“How many of the Santiago de Cuba People’s Power are members of the Communist Party?” “Sixty-three per cent,” he said. (That was even higher than in a similar city council in the Soviet Union.) Delegates to the municipal People’s Power select their own executives and choose

delegates to provincial councils and to a National Assembly, the counterpart of USSR's "Supreme Soviet." The Assembly, like the Supreme Soviet, elects two executive bodies. One is a Council of Ministers, or cabinet. The other is the Council of State, a collective presidency that governs by decree when the Assembly is not in session, which it is not 361 days a year.

The concentration of power in this "participatory democracy" began to come clear. City and provincial councils have administrative functions only over services—schools, hospitals, housing, and utilities—and over businesses formerly in private hands—stores, workshops, cinemas, and restaurants. More important sectors of the economy—mining, key industries, agriculture, and finance—are centrally administered, outside the jurisdiction of the local councils.

Representatives, then, are regarded not as legislators but as ombudsmen, liaison between the citizen and the bureaucrat. Only the National Assembly is given legislative power, and, as in the Soviet Union, that is delegated to the executive. On the four days a year when the Assembly is in session, we learned that it does little more than discuss topics raised by the executive and ratify decrees. "How many members of the National Assembly are members of the party?" Our spokesman said he did not know. I researched that later. Ninety-five per cent are either members of the party or of the Young Communists. That leaves another five per cent to serve as the "loyal opposition."

Announced intentions of the 1976 Constitution were to reduce dependence on the charismatic leader and to avoid decision-making by a clique. So I inquired about Castro's role in the new, more structured system. He remained both Commander-in-Chief and, as Chairman of the Council of State, President. His position as Chairman of the Council of Ministers made him, in effect, Prime Minister. Outside the governmental structure and of great importance, he stayed First Secretary of the Party. Brother Raúl was number two in all four of these positions. Administration may have been somewhat decentralized. Policy-making was not.

The Party Is All Over

The new constitution clearly leaves the party dominant over the representative bodies at each of the three levels and over the two top executive bodies, the Councils of Ministers and of State.

Obviously, to appreciate the new system one must understand the party. First, it is, of course, the only party. Second, it is a self-selected elite. While there is provision for mass organizations to nominate "exemplary citizens" for admission, only the party decides whom to admit. Comprising only 3 per cent of the population, it could not be considered broadly representative. Workers, peasants, and women were

underrepresented, grossly so at the higher levels. This same imbalance exists in the National Assembly. Two-thirds of the population are workers or peasants, but in the first Assembly elected, worker-peasant delegates held less than one-third of the seats. Women, one-half the population, held one-fifth. Finally, the party's internal operation follows Lenin's rule of "democratic centralism." As in the Soviet Communist Party, the "centralist" aspect prevails in the Cuban Party, which means that outcomes of elections of party leaders are determined at the highest level and ratified by lower bodies. Policy decisions also pass from top to bottom. While debate may go on, it goes on behind closed doors. A façade of complete unity is all that the outside world sees.

The spectacle at one July Congress of the Polish Party Congress when delegates voted for competing slates of leaders and openly debated and voted on party policy, would not be permitted under the current Cuban system. A few leaders run the party, and the party runs the state, including the representative assemblies, the so-called People's Power. It is democracy Communist-style: decision-making by an elite, based on what the people *ought* to want, what they *would* want if they knew the answer to the relevant Marxist-Leninist catechism.

Freedom of Expression

At our CDR meeting, we had raised the question of the reach of freedom of expression. Indeed, said the older spokesman, the new arrangements do provide channels for public criticism. Delegates to the city councils must report regularly to their constituents, although delegates to provincial and national assemblies report only to the city councils that selected them. These accounts are given in open gatherings, and the delegate can be called to task for his or her performance. Moreover, he said, citizens with complaints can stand up and speak out. Or, if they prefer, they can bring up the matter privately with the delegate. For example, we were told, if you have been treated badly at the store, you are entirely free to complain. Or if you have taken your television in for repair and six months later it has not been fixed, you can report such incompetence. And if nothing is done thereafter, you are free to complain repeatedly, until the problem is solved.

All the examples cited dealt with trivial problems, most of which would be solved in the market place in a capitalist economy. One of our tour leaders reported a low-level but not-so-trivial complaint voiced by a city resident whom she had met. He had said that the city's garbage cans have no lids and that despite complaints, nothing had been done. Our People's Power man attempted to explain why that might be, but his reasoning seemed to be only that sometimes the system works and sometimes it does not. Still wondering whether freedom to criticize extends beyond

administrative matters, I made up my own example: "Suppose that I, as a citizen of Santiago de Cuba, believe that too much money is spent on sending Cubans to Africa and that the money should be used instead to build more housing. Am I free to stand up in public and express that opinion?" The response was somewhat indignant. *Everyone* supports aid to Africa, I was assured. Cubans are proud of their African descent and are anxious to share what they have with those who are even poorer. So the issue would never come up.

Our young teacher, who had a knack for pertinent questions, posed a hypothetical one of her own. "Suppose I think the government should build a polyclinic in my city, as opposed to some other, but the government says 'no.' In the United States, we don't take 'no' for an answer. We organize in groups to bring pressure on the government to change its mind. Could I, as a Cuban, do that?" The older man smiled indulgently: "We don't have that problem." But the younger man could not let it go at that. In a heated and perhaps incautious statement, he said, "Look. What we have is a dictatorship of the proletariat. We simply will not permit counter-revolutionary activities." The older representative calmed the situation down by noting that a citizen will sometimes make illogical demands, whereupon it becomes the delegate's job to explain why his demands cannot be met.

That night, two members of our group called a general meeting to castigate the young teacher for what they thought was a hostile question, "which did not take into account the realities of the revolution." They suggested that the guilty one engage in public "self-criticism" and that we set a group policy prohibiting such questions. After some discussion, the suggestion was voted on. To my surprise, the two gained only one adherent. The rest of us resolved to go on asking what we pleased and took no reprisals against this traveling Gang of Three.

Cuba's new constitution includes guarantees of freedom of expression, but that is qualified. There is no right to speak or write against the revolution. One can expose incompetence, at least at lower levels. When invited, one can participate in discussion of how best to carry out government decisions. But those decisions are decided by the elite. No input is encouraged, no criticism permitted. Objections to the decision to "go nuclear," for example, would be "outside the system" and "anti-social," if not "counter-revolutionary." However, the importance of even this limited participation should not be underestimated. We found Cuban officials well aware of the problems faced by the Polish Communist Party. When questioned, they said that the Polish party had made a serious mistake over the years in losing touch with the people and in permitting corruption and incompetence in the party and the state bureaucracy. It may be that the elections of People's Power delegates and some, although restricted, rights of expression have helped the Cuban Party avoid the Polish problem.

More on Freedom of Association

The reappraisal after 1970 brought new life to mass organizations like labor unions. Members now debate issues affecting them and choose representatives to make organization policy. Teachers, for example, in the early 70's helped reform Cuban education. But how much freedom is there in this kind of participation? Typically, in a communist state, mass organizations are mere "transmission belts," one more means by which party leaders can make their orders known and see that they are carried out. In the Soviet Union, trade unions provide the example *par excellence* of mass organizations dominated by the Communist Party. Strikes, of course, are illegal, and collective bargaining does not occur. No need for either, says the party, because in socialist countries the workers (that is, the workers' state) own the factories. While Soviet labor unions have some say in matters affecting workers' safety, benefits, and conditions, their first responsibility is to encourage support for goals set by the party, such as fulfillment of the Five Year Plan. I had read that the Cuban Constitution establishes the party as "the highest leading force of the society and the state." Yet we were assured on every side that the mass organizations are "democratic." We had two opportunities to explore this question.

The first came when we were bussed to the Karl Marx Cement Plant near Cienfuegos, a shiny new and massive complex, being built with East German aid. Still in construction, it already exported cement—to Libya, among others. The claim was that it would be the world's largest, a statement easily believed. We were warned not to take pictures. A sign inside the gate demanded an end to the U.S. embargo and aerial reconnaissance. Gathered around a model of the plant, we met a union leader, a shift foreman, and the secretary of the party cell. Because the intricacies of cement-making had limited appeal, at the first opening I turned the conversation to the union and the party. The union leader confirmed that he had been elected by the workers. He is a party member, as are a third of the plant's workers. Union membership is voluntary, but nearly all belong. And as the members pay union dues, their organization is independent of the party. "But what would happen," I asked the secretary, "if the workers chose a leader who was not a party man?" He smiled and answered that it was likely that the party would respect the workers' judgment and admit the leader into the party. Considering the overlap of union-party membership and the discipline required of party members, it seemed that the union might not be as independent as we were encouraged to believe. However, we had another chance to pursue this question when we returned a few days later to Havana.

We were shown into an air-conditioned room in the headquarters of the Cuban Confederation of Labor (CTC). The room was dominated by a



This billboard proclaims: "Our relations with the Soviet Union will never be destroyed."

long table surrounded by high-backed chairs, a setting fit for a board of directors. Somewhat incongruously, a tapestry portrait of Marx, Engels, and Lenin looked down on us from the wall. Cold drinks of rum and fruit juice were passed around while three labor officials welcomed us and introduced themselves. They were heads of CTC departments for Social and Labor Affairs, Work and Salary, and International Relations. One began by explaining that the Confederation coordinates Cuba's 17 labor unions which represent 90 per cent of the country's 2,500,000 workers. The policy-making body of the CTC, he said, is its Congress which is elected by union members. With refreshing candor, he admitted that there are sometimes differences between labor and management, because of their different priorities. (The three labor officials were among the least dogmatic and therefore most convincing of those we interviewed.) Managers of enterprises are above all interested in production and in meeting their planned goals.

Union leaders have as their top priority the interests of the workers. Conflicts do therefore occasionally occur. Most can be resolved at the plant level, but if not, they are passed upward to higher officials of the union and state. As examples of workers' interests that the union defends, the speaker listed safety—although management also has responsibility under the law and the Five Year Plan—medical care, and use of factory profits for bonuses and improvements of the plant cafeteria. The unions also promote education for the workers, seeing to it that time is made available for those who want to complete their secondary or even univer-

sity education. Workers naturally share with management an interest in building socialism and will work with management to reduce waste and inefficiency toward the goal of greater production. The CTC spokesman reaffirmed that the unions and the CTC are "autonomous." However, they do work closely with the party.

As for worker participation, they assured us, there are many channels open. At the factory level, workers may take part in making the Five Year Plan. For example, if they believe that they can make more refrigerators than the planners propose, they are free to say so. They can discuss factory issues at open meetings and elect their union leaders. In addition, they have the means available to any Cuban citizen, such as the election of, and appeal to, the delegates of People's Power. Finally, it was said, the party itself is composed of "vanguard" workers. In fact, 68 per cent of the last Party Congress consisted of blue collar workers. And, we were told, workers are also well-represented in the People's Power assemblies. (Actually, they are not, at least not in the National Assembly.) With all this, of course, there is no need to strike. Workers realize that a strike would only hurt themselves. With that, our meeting was adjourned. (One memorable moment occurred as we left the CTC. An irrepressible member of our group, a California healthnik of the evangelistic sort, was overheard in conversation with one of the labor leaders—attempting to persuade him that sugar is not good for people.)

As a result of our discussions at the cement plant and the Confederation, I concluded that even if Cuban unions are more than the mere "transmission belts" they are in the Soviet Union, they are by no means truly "autonomous."

In sorting out what we had learned about participation in the Cuban system, I recalled a film we had seen in our pre-trip orientation. One scene, shot in the auditorium of a school, was intended to show how children learn to take part in making policy decisions. In retrospect, the sequence may have revealed more than was intended. Children were invited to decide which shade of blue would be used in their new school uniforms. They were not asked whether they wanted uniforms at all, or what color—just what *shade* of blue. The scene unintentionally reflected rather accurately the probable limits on the participation the children will experience in adult life. Amazingly, Fidel himself was shown as there to help them with the decision, an example of his ubiquitous involvement.

News Control and Dissemination

Input into the system is only as good as the available information on which popular views can be based. Several members of our group—rather naively, I thought—searched in vain in Havana for coin-operated copy machines. In Soviet bloc countries, no printing machine more

prolific than a typewriter is allowed in private hands. An unprecedented breakthrough for Poland's "Solidarity" was when they won the right to their own printing press. In Cuba, all media are controlled. *Granma*, the daily newspaper of the Communist Party, establishes the party line. *Rebel Youth*, published by the Young Communist League, echoes *Granma*. Provincial newspapers and magazines and journals do the same. The front page of *Granma* is largely devoted to reports on progress toward the Five Year Plan. A chart is carried daily showing results in the weeding and harvesting of sugar cane. The back page is devoted to international news and denunciation of the United States. Treatment of the U.S. is fairly accurate, despite some hyperbole, but it is relentlessly negative. Favorable news about the U.S. goes unreported. No opportunity is missed for editorial comment. A rehash of the John Lennon murder inspired the observation that "such violence is typical of capitalist countries."

Occasionally an outright lie is printed. One day *Granma* told in some detail of an NBC documentary on functional illiteracy in America. The report added that "many states have laws prohibiting black children from attending school with whites." If not deliberately false, this report was a quarter-century out-of-date. An intelligent reader may, of course, learn to read between the lines. In perusing an article concerning Reagan's cutbacks in social programs, such a reader might learn for the first time that there *are* such programs—a risk the propagandists are forced to take. Nevertheless, I was constantly amazed that educated Cubans seemed to accept without reservation the news reported by their media.

Television is naturally an important tool for the manipulation of public views. Frequent news programs reinforce the printed word. Other kinds of programs contribute, too. Throughout our stay, the entire nation was entranced by a six-part "docudrama" on Cuban infiltration of the CIA.

Newspapers and television are supplemented by wall posters and billboards, so colorful and imaginative as to be an art form in which Cuba's artists excel. In all media, the Soviet Union is portrayed only in a favorable light. While Cuban-Soviet friendship is an occasional theme of outdoor displays, the preferred topic is U.S. hostility toward Cuba. Whether watching Cuban television, walking city streets, or traveling across the country, we were constantly aware of slogans warning of past, present, and future acts of aggression by the United States. "Girón," we learned, is the single most important word in the propagandist's lexicon. It refers to "Playa de Girón," the Bay of Pigs, site of the abortive CIA-backed exile invasion in 1961. To this day, the landing is used as evidence of U.S. intentions to destroy the revolution. Cubans are urged unceasingly to redouble their efforts in the "twin tasks" of defense and production "in the spirit of Girón." On the 20th anniversary of the invasion there were even—perhaps inevitably—Bay of Pigs T-shirts.



“. . .Ya estoy todos los días en peligro de dar la vida por mi país y por mi deber —puesto que lo entiendo y tengo ánimos con qué realizarlo— de impedir a tiempo con la independencia de Cuba que se extiendan por las Antillas los Estados Unidos y caigan con esa fuerza más, sobre nuestras tierras de América. Cuanto hice hasta hoy, y haré, es para eso.

José Martí.

José Martí, Cuban independence leader and opponent of U.S. imperialism. His name has been used in the Reagan administration's anti-Castro "Radio Martí."

The most disturbing example of the anti-American tone on display was in Havana. On a main street downtown, there was an exhibition hall. We were told that the displays change monthly, but the subject of this month's display was "American Aggression." Its sponsor was the Ministry of the Interior—the police. By opening hour on Sunday evening, a line two blocks long was waiting. I joined the crowd. When I reached the entrance, my camera bag was searched by a young soldier, who patted me on the back and waved me in. I walked into a curving tunnel, made of steel ribs and camouflage cloth. The lighting and music created a fun-house aura. Every few yards there stood seven-foot paper mache figures, Kafkaesque caricatures of Cuba's enemies. As if in a zoo, each was identified by a plaque as to genus and species, with a semi-humorous comment on its animal behavior. The figures included a "South African Racist" in a Nazi uniform, a "Frogman," a "Mercenary," an "Enemy Agent," and—my favorite—the "Anti-Social." The latter's plaque read, "Because of his incapacity to adapt to a free and just society of and for the workers, this animal develops migratory tendencies." Perhaps most impressive was the "CIA Agent." Its face was an unmistakable likeness of G. Gordon Liddy.

Moving upstairs, the fun-house climate changed. It was as if I had been time-warped to Nazi Germany. A cacaphony of sounds assaulted me from all sides: martial music, chanting people ("Fi-del, Fi-del"), barking dogs, and machine-gun fire. Dominating the room was a red and black sign: "What the imperialists cannot forgive us is that we are here—and that workers have made a socialist revolution.—Fidel." Two films ran side by side, one showing cheering crowds welcoming Castro's triumphant guerillas, the other the victorious battle at the Bay of Pigs. Display cases featured equipment captured from saboteurs, with U.S. markings prominently displayed. A Russian-made computer printed out a list of U.S. aggressions. The list ran five feet long. Projected transparencies showed Cuban men and women, heavily armed, ready for an attack. Garish murals showed the Statue of Liberty as a painted whore. (*This*, I was surprised to find, enraged me. Maybe we should keep score, I thought: How many refugees have fled to Cuba?)

I left the hall through another tunnel, with strobe lights playing tricks above and beneath my feet. I entered a completely different atmosphere, upbeat, an entirely positive mood. There were cheerful voices singing, and projected portraits of smiling people, all happily building the socialist future. Above it all a banner proclaimed: "Wherein lies the power of the Revolution? Wherein lies the invincible force of the Revolution? Precisely in the identity between the organs of Revolutionary power and the people, and between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Revolutionary masses—Fidel." I found the exit and walked out under one last sign: "Fatherland or Death. We Will Conquer." Outside

was one last surprise. In several garbage cans were stuffed the heads of Cuba's enemies, as displayed at the entrance to the hall. It was in the best show-biz, "leave-'em-laughing tradition."

Foreign Relations

We were able to explore aspects of Cuban foreign relations in a dialog with Sr. Manuel Lee, a Cuban of Chinese descent, head of the North American section of the Cuban Institute for Friendship of the Peoples (ICAP) which maintains contact with 80 countries and had helped arrange our tour. I was allowed the first question.

Recalling that Cuba last year hosted a meeting of the 119 members of the Conference of Nonaligned Nations, I asked, "Considering Cuba's massive support by the Soviet Union, her membership in COMECON (the Soviet economic bloc), and Cuban-Soviet military cooperation, how can Cuba claim to be 'nonaligned'?" Sr. Lee's answer was pat. "'Nonaligned' means those nations that have no foreign military bases on their soil, who have no military alliances, and who oppose imperialism." I raised some objections, which Sr. Lee disposed of easily. The only foreign military base on Cuban soil is the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo. The 3000 Soviet troops in Cuba are "advisors," there on invitation, differing from U.S. "trainers" in El Salvador in that the former have come to protect the people rather than oppress them. Cuba has no military alliance with the Soviet Union. "Does Cuba then, like the vast majority of the Third World countries, oppose Soviet imperialism in Afghanistan?" Sr. Lee admitted that this question was "more difficult." In a slight lapse from the party line, he suggested that the Soviet Union in this case may have acted out of self-interest, to ensure a friendly buffer state on its border. However, he added, imperialism by definition can be committed only by capitalist states, and the Soviets are in Afghanistan only to protect a "progressive" government against counter-revolutionaries aided by the forces of "international reaction."

With regard to Soviet support for Cuba, someone asked, "Is it true that the Soviet Union now subsidizes Cuba at the rate of \$3,000,000 a day?" In one of his few unpredictable answers of the session, Sr. Lee replied, "No, I think it is more than that." The estimate is at this writing \$10,000,000 a day.

Like all Cubans whom we questioned on the subject of Soviet support, Sr. Lee denied that the subsidy is in any way a *quid pro quo*. There are no I.O.U.s to be called in, except for the economic assistance loans whose repayment was to start in 1985. Military hardware is an outright gift. The word was that the Soviet Union is simply coming to the support of a fellow socialist country that is threatened by aggression. In any case, he said, with Soviet help Cuba will soon be self-sufficient. Unable to accept

this line of thought, I tried again: "If Cuba is really nonaligned and Soviet aid comes no-strings-attached, does Cuba differ with the Soviet Union on *any* foreign policy?" Sr. Lee's answer dealt with differences in timing, nuance, and style, but he apparently could not name a substantive point of difference. On the subject of Cuba's alleged export of revolution, Sr. Lee emphasized that Cuba has never done that, despite U.S. accusations. He described the recent State Department "White Paper" concerning arms shipments to Salvadorean guerillas as contrived. (He did not know it, but both *The Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal* had reached the same conclusion.) If certain Latin American governments also accuse Cuba of such behavior, it is due to pressure from U.S., he continued. Cuba will, of course, support the just struggle of people attempting to resist repression: the Sandinistas of Nicaragua who rid themselves of Somoza, the Angolans who fight South African racists and the Ethiopians who resist aggression by Somalia. Thus did Sr. Lee draw the fine line between "exporting revolution" and the "support of just struggles."

But even if it is true, as Sr. Lee insisted, that there is no Soviet-Cuban alliance, the Russian presence was all-pervasive. In schools, factories, city streets, cane fields, the billboards and posters constantly reaffirmed the bond between the two peoples. Soviet-bloc guests were common in the better hotels. Stores were stocked with East-bloc goods, from Russian appliances to Bulgarian pickles, and the streets were busy with "Moskvitches" and Russian-made Fiats. Soviet books and periodicals filled libraries and bookstores. Cane production was rising, thanks to Russian machines. Passing a motor pool, someone said, "Why aren't those American tractors? Wouldn't it be exciting to help?" I agreed, recalling that the only American tractors to go to Cuba were as ransom for the captured exile-invaders at the Bay of Pigs.

Soviet weaponry is seldom seen but there are exceptions: an occasional vehicle or mobile radar station along the coast. And one morning, from the roof garden of our Cienfuegos hotel, I saw three Soviet submarines, apparently manned by Cubans, putting out to sea. But the most impressive proof of the Soviet connection was the amount of new and in-progress construction of all kinds. Clearly, Cuba's economy could not support all this building without massive outside aid, now estimated at a staggering \$3.5 billion every year—with all the Soviet leverage that this implies. (Cuba has had the highest per capita foreign debt of any country in the world.) In addition to low interest loans, the Russians sell oil to Cuba at below market prices and buy sugar at an inflated price. Furthermore, Russian aid has made the Cuban army perhaps the best-equipped in Latin America, has provided Cuba's air force with sophisticated jets, and is now adding to its navy.

Castro's revolution is thus dependent on Russian aid. An end to it would mean disaster, which makes it difficult to believe, as apparently



This poster reminds its readers to: "carry on the economic struggle as at Girón"—meaning the Bay of Pigs.

most Cubans do, that it all comes no-strings-attached. One thing, at least, was clear: the Russians had come with the intent to stay. On Havana's embassy row, a huge building project was under way. It was the high-rise complex designed to house the Soviet presence.

Back Home

On completion of our tour, I flew from Havana to Miami, two boxes of Cuban cigars in my bag. Both flight and cigars were legal, thanks to President Carter's lifting of the ban. I wondered how long that opening would last. Not long, as it turned out, for the Reagan administration aimed to "get tough" with Castro. Not that hostile U.S. gestures would bring an immediate response. For United States' hostility has served Castro well. He might be loathe to do without it. Consider the constant emphasis on "production and defense." If he could no longer convince his people that they have an enemy, how long would Cubans sacrifice for "production" alone? Then there are the thorny issues of our aerial reconnaissance flights and our naval base at Guantanamo. And in response to U.S. claims for \$1.9 billion in unpaid compensation for expropriated corporate property, Castro claims even more for "damage done by the embargo." Most important there is the "linkage" question: the Cuban presence overseas. Various reasons have been advanced for Cuba's persistence in this policy: the dictates of ideology, an obligation to the Russians, Cuba's own national interests, and a way of exporting Cuba's unemployed. Castro's ego may be another factor. With such star quality, does he crave a global stage? It is safest to assume that all these factors play a part in his sending Cubans abroad. And Cubans are proud of their "internationalists": not just troops, but physicians, teachers, and technicians. So it is unlikely that Castro would agree to give up their aid to other countries if that were our price for lifting the embargo.

Even now, looking back to my Cuban visit four summers ago, I find it difficult to weigh the benefits brought by the revolution against the blatantly authoritarian aspects of the Castro regime. I find it less difficult to evaluate U.S. policy toward Cuba. Once again that policy has allied the U.S. with an elite in opposition to desperately needed change. It is also profoundly disturbing that, in working against such "totalitarian" regimes, we continue to support "authoritarian" ones that are sometimes worse, although we call them "friends." These unworthy policies are always excused on grounds of strategic necessity. Clearly, it is not in our interest to have a Soviet client on our doorstep. But our policies have not worked in Cuba. They have only served to strengthen Castro and communism.

Now, in Nicaragua, we face similar dilemmas. How do we evaluate the Sandinistas? Even eye-witness accounts should be heard with

skepticism, particularly from those observers who find nothing good, or nothing bad, about the regime. Like the rest of us, the most sincere observers are likely to be as influenced by personal values and preconceptions, hopes and expectations, as they are by reality.

But there does seem to be little doubt that present U.S. policy is as counterproductive in Nicaragua as it has been in Cuba. In Nicaragua, too, we are opposing long-overdue reform, supporting the contras in the terrorist tactics that we denounce when used by our enemies. (An American ambassador to Mexico once remarked that we judge others by their actions, ourselves by our motives.) Our rationale is, as always, the Soviet threat. The quandary is by now an old one; and it is clear that our last seven Presidents, and our present one, have not found the answer to how we can assure our security without betraying all that we stand for. Better intelligence and wider understanding are keys, even though observation of any kind in controlled societies is an arduous and problematic way to truth.

Contributors

J. B. Goodenough, who is a graduate of Harvard University, is a writer of music as well as poetry. Albums by Tommy Makem and Liam Clancy, by Gordon Bok, and by Ann Mayo Muir contain her songs. The first collection of her poems, *Power Land*, was published Autumn, 1984, by the Cleveland Stican committee for Irish Studies. The two authors in whom she specializes are James Joyce and Jane Austen. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Miami, Coral Gables.

Laurie Kaplan, who chairs the Department of English at Goucher College, has written for the American committee for Irish Studies. The two authors in whom she specializes are James Joyce and Jane Austen. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Miami, Coral Gables.

Betty LaDuke, professor of art at Southern Oregon State College, Ashland, has developed two courses that demonstrate her current interests: Women and Art and Art and Third World Cultures. City Lights Books has just brought out her *Compañeras: Women, Art, and Social Change*, a survey of 14 countries that features both professional artists in big cities and self-taught "primitivists."

Paul Lauter, professor at the State University of New York, College at Old Westbury, has recently been a visiting professor in California—at San Jose State and the University of California at Santa Cruz. A founder of the Feminist Press and its treasurer for 12 years, he is currently preparing an entirely new two-volume anthology of American literature for D. C. Heath, "Reconstructing American Literature."

Macushla Nugent, assistant professor of English at Goucher College, coordinates the Writing Center there. In 1983, she won an honorable mention in the National Writing Award contest sponsored by *The Connecticut Writer*. Before joining the Goucher faculty, she lectured in English and American Studies at Towson State University.

Adrienne Rich is Distinguished Visiting Professor of English at San Jose State University. Her newest collection of poetry, *Your Native Land, Your Life*, will be published by W. W. Norton in Spring 1986. She is the author of 12 books of poetry and two non-fiction, prose books.

Kent Schellenger, associate professor of political science, came to San Jose State in 1966 from the University of Oklahoma. He is the author of *The German Social Democratic Party in the Bonn Republic*. He holds a Ph.D. from Cornell University.

Howard Shellhammer, professor of biological sciences at San Jose State, has written three books on giant sequoias and numerous scientific papers on the sequoias and on salt marsh harvest mice. His baccalaureate and doctoral degrees are from the University of California at Davis. In 1985, he was chosen President's Scholar for that year. His article in this issue is based on the address he gave on the occasion of receiving the award.

Robert Wexelblatt has been a professor at Boston University for 15 years. He has published in a number of journals in addition to this one and has won prizes for his articles and fiction from the *Southern Humanities Review* and the *Arizona Quarterly*. He is a holder of Boston University's Metcalf Prize for Excellence in Teaching.

To Prospective Contributors:

San Jose Studies, a journal sponsored by San Jose State University, is published three times each year—winter, spring and fall. The contents include critical and creative prose, as well as poetry, interviews, and photographs.

Our scope is interdisciplinary. Past issues have included articles on topics as diverse as the social implications of genetic engineering, Melville's deliberate "errors" in *Billy Budd*, the texts of secret Politboro resolutions, and the letters of William James. Special numbers have been devoted to John Steinbeck, to the American Bicentennial, to the poet, Roberta Holloway, and to Charles Darwin.

Each year, the Committee of Trustees of *San José Studies* awards \$100 from the Bill Casey Memorial Fund to the author of the best essay, short story, or poem appearing in the previous volume of the journal. In addition, authors of the best article, short story, and poem in each volume receive a year's complimentary subscription.

As a refereed journal, *San José Studies* requires evaluations of manuscripts by a generalist reader, by a specialist in the area of the paper, and by the editors. This process usually takes from six to eight weeks. Authors receive two complimentary copies of the issue in which their contribution appears. Manuscripts not accepted for publication will be returned if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is provided.

Manuscripts, welcome from all writers, should be submitted to:

The Editor
San José Studies
San Jose State University
San Jose, California 95192

They must be typewritten and double-spaced on standard 8½ x 11 white bond. In order to preserve the anonymity deemed necessary for impartial review, the author's name should appear *only* on the cover sheet. Previously published work or multiple submissions are not acceptable for consideration.

Acknowledgments

The publication of *San José Studies* is possible only through the support of its guarantor, benefactor, and patron subscribers. The Trustees and Staff of *SJS* wish to acknowledge the contributions of these supporters and hope to see their ranks grow.

GUARANTORS

Association of California State University Professors,
San Jose State University Chapter
School of Social Sciences, San Jose State University
Spartan Shops, Inc.

BENEFACTORS

Mr. and Mrs. E. M. Arends
Hobert W. and Patricia Burns
California Faculty Association
San Jose State University Chapter
Lucius R. Eastman, Jr.
Stanley and Gail Fullerton
Jay D. Pinson
Fauneil J. Rinn
Mr. and Mrs. O. C. Williams

PATRONS

Gene Bernardini	Anna Kuhl
Don Betando	Elsie Leach
Ralph C. Bohn	Lela A. Llorens
John R. Brazil	Lucy McProud
Dennis Brown	Men's Athletics, San Jose State University
Paul Brown	Virgil Parsons
Marshall Burak	Robert Pepper
Whitaker T. Deininger	Helen S. Ross
John A. Galm	Mr. and Mrs. Donald R. Torrey
Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Gordon	Rose Tseng
Ted C. and Caryl Hinckley	United Professors of California
Andrew Hughey	
Clair Jennett	

SAN JOSE STUDIES ORDER FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Please enter a subscription beginning with the current issue as indicated:

Institutions: 1 year	\$ 18.00	_____
Individuals: 1 year	12.00	_____
Patron:	50.00	_____
Benefactor:	100.00	_____
Guarantor:	250.00	_____

Single issues \$5.00 each; please inquire of Business Assistant.

Make check payable to *San José Studies* and mail to:

Emi Nobuhiro
Business Assistant
San José Studies
San Jose State University
San Jose, California 95192

Now in its twelfth year, *San José Studies* appears three times annually—winter, spring, and fall. Articles are directed to the educated reader but provide resources for the scholar as well. The contents of *San José Studies* are interdisciplinary and indexed or abstracted in:

<i>ABC-Clio</i>	<i>Language and Language Behavior Abstracts</i>
<i>Abstracts of English Studies</i>	<i>Modern Humanities Research Association: Annual Bibliography</i>
<i>American Humanities Index</i>	<i>MLA International Bibliography</i>
<i>Biological Abstracts</i>	<i>National Index of Literary Periodicals</i>
<i>Historical Abstracts</i>	<i>Sociological Abstracts</i>
<i>H.W. Wilson Company Indexes</i>	<i>Women Studies Abstracts</i>
<i>Index to Periodical Fiction</i>	

forthcoming in **San Jose Studies**—in addition to poetry and fiction:

The Entropy of Computopia

Brian W. Holmes and Fenwicke W. Holmes

The Time of Friendship: the Short Fiction of Paul Bowles

John Ditsky

Patron Saint of Liberation Theology

Francis Donahue

Developing Public Policy on Sexual Harassment

Douglas I. McIntyre and James C. Renick

SJSU SAN JOSE
STATE
UNIVERSITY

San José Studies

One Washington Square
San Jose, California 95192

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. Postage

Paid

San Jose, CA

Permit No. 816

