archipelago

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Contributors

Robert Castle Popesixtus2000@yahoo.com teaches History and Film Criticism at a small academy outside Trenton. His articles have appeared in *Bright Lights Film Journal, The Journal of Religion and Film, Metaphilm, Talking Pictures, Film Comment, UnderCurrent,* and *24 Frames Per Second.* He writes a monthly feature column, "A Sardine on Vacation," for *Unlikely Stories.*

Patricia Connolly jocpatcon@hotmail.com was born in London; she has lived in New York City for many years. Her poems have been published in *First Intensity, Babel, American Writing, Salthill, Denver Quarterly, International Poetry Review, 13th Moon;* and upcoming issues of *Poetry Now* and *Raintown Review.*

Verna Posever Curtis vcur@loc.gov is a curator of photography in the Prints & Photographs Division at the Library of Congress, where she oversees the collections of art photography. She writes and lectures on American art photographers at the turn of the nineteenth century. She is co-author of AMBASSADORS OF PROGRESS, AMERICAN WOMEN PHOTOGRAPHERS IN PARIS, 1900-1901 (Giverny: Musée d'art Américain in cooperation with the Library of Congress, 2001); co-author of F. HOLLAND DAY, (Amsterdam: Van Gogh Museum, 2000); and co-editor of F. HOLLAND DAY, SELECTED TEXTS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY (World Photographers Reference Series, Vol. 8, Oxford: Clio Press and New York: GK Hall & Co., 1995).

Robert Fisk is Middle East Correspondent of the London paper *The Independent*. He is based in Beirut, where he has lived for twenty-six years and from where he covered the civil war and two Israeli invasions. Educated in Britain and Ireland, he holds the Ph.D. in Political Science from Trinity College, Dublin. He has been the recipient of twenty-four awards in journalism for his reporting of the Iranian revolution and wars in Lebanon, the Gulf, Kosovo, and Algeria. He won the 2000 Amnesty International award for his reports from Serbia on NATO's bombardment of Yugoslavia and received the 2001 David Watt Memorial Award for his reporting from the Middle East. His articles for the *Independent* are at http://www.independent.co.uk/search.jsp?keywords=robert%20Fisk&field=byline.

George Garrett is the author of books of poetry, essays, short stories, and novels, including DEATH OF THE FOX; ENTERED FROM THE SUN; THE SUCCESSION; DO, LORD, REMEMBER ME; THE KING OF BABYLON SHALL NOT COME AGAINST YOU ; WHISTLING IN THE DARK, *et alia*. He is Henry Hoynes Professor of Creative Writing, Emeritus, at the University of Virginia, and has been Chancellor of the Fellowship of Southern Writers. He spoke to *Archipelago* about publishing in Vol. 3, No. 2 http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-2/garrett.htm. His SOUTHERN EXCURSIONS: Views on Southern Letters in My Time, is due out in April 2003. George Garrett is the Poet Laureate of Virginia.

Born and raised in Bristol, Tennessee, **Carolyn Hembree** carolyn.hembree@usa.net has poems published or forthcoming in *antennae, The Cream City Review, CutBank, Faultline, Forklift Ohio, jubilat,* and *Puerto del Sol. Poetry Daily* http://www.poems.com/jubilhem.htm featured one of her poems. "Until Anne's Shadow's on the Curtain Round Her Bed" is from her first book-length manuscript, FEVER RIBBONS. She has an M.F.A from the University of Arizona and currently teaches at the University of New Orleans.

Marilyn A. Johnson's marilynajohnson@aol.com poems appear in the current issues of *Field* and *Open City*. She grew up in Chardon, Ohio, and now makes her home in Briarcliff, New York.

Christian McEwen ChristianMcEwen@aol.com was born in London, and grew up in the Borders of Scotland. She is the editor of four books, including JO'S GIRLS: TOMBOY TALES OF HIGH ADVENTURE (Beacon Press, 1997) and (with Mark Statman) THE ALPHABET OF THE TREES: A GUIDE TO NATURE WRITING (Poets & Writers, 2002). Her long poem, "September 11th," received the Quadrangle Award for Poetry from the Springfield Museums and Library Association, and was read at memorial events in New York, Massachusetts, and California. She is the author of "'Music Hiding in the Air': A Memoir of Rory McEwen," *Archipelago*, Vol. 4, No. 3 http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-3/mcewen.htm, and is currently gathering material for "The Rory Stories Book," a composite biography of her uncle, the painter, **Rory McEwen**. She lives in Guilford, Vt. A letter from Rory McEwen to Ron Padgett appears in this issue.

Kathryn Rantala rantala@verizon.net has work forthcoming in *The Iowa Review, Drunken Boat, Linnean Street*, and *3rd Bed*, among others. Recent credits include *The Notre Dame Review, Field, failbetter, Crowd, The Adirondack Review, The Oregon Review* ("Don't Say If I Love You"), *Best of Melic Review, Raven Chronicles*. Her book MISSING PIECES (Ocean View Press) follows a chapbook, THE DARK MAN, by some years. She is the founder and co-editor of *Snow Monkey*, An Eclectic Journal http://www.ravennapress.com/snowmonkey/.

Mary-Sherman Willis cswillis@bellatlantic.net is a writer living in Washington, D.C., at work on a family memoir. Her poems appeared in *Archipelago*, Vol. 6, No. 2 http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-2/willis.htm.

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News of Our Contributors

Odile Hellier, owner of the **Village Voice Bookshop**, Paris (named the best literary bookshop in Europe by *The Bookseller*), regularly e-mails announcements of readings and other events at the VV. The shop is at 6, rue Princesse, off the rue du Four, in the Sixth Arrondisement; tel: (011331) 46-33-36-47, fax: (011331) 46-33-27-48. Métro: Mabillon or St. Germain. Readers can subscribe by writing to VOICE.VILLAGE@wanadoo.fr. *Archipelago* spoke with her in Vol. 4, No. 1 http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-1/odile.htm.

DANCING EMBERS, by **Sandor Kányádi**, the Transylvanian Hungarian poet has been brought out in Prague by Twisted Spoon http://www.twistedspoon.com/, publisher of Central European writers in English translation. Paul Sohar is the translator. The book is distributed in the U.S. Kányádi's "All Soul's Day in Vienna" appeared for the first time in English, in *Archipelago*, Vol. 3, No. 4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-4/kanyadi.htm. His charming poem for children, "A Song for the Road," appeared in Vol. 4, No. 1 http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-1/kanyadi.htm.

Corinna Hasofferet has launched her multi-lingual website, *Corinna* http://www.corinna-hasofferett.com. "I've thrown out the T.V. twenty years ago," she writes on the English-language page, "the radio is tuned to the classical music programs, I write during the night and sleep when the world is noisy, and each evening I vow to never again surf the News sites, yet do open them, and read, and shed an inward tear. Like you. So you might ask, Is it the right time to establish a new publishing house (and dare name it HudnaPress), come out with a new book, set a new web site?" Corinna Hasofferet's interview with Svetlana Vasilievna Vasilenko appeared in *Archipelago*, Vol. 6, No. 1 http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-1/hasofferet.htm.

Christopher Metress 's THE LYNCHINNG OF EMMETT TILL: A Documentary Narrative, has been brought out by the University of Virginia Press http://www.upress.virginia.edu/. An excerpt, "'They Stand Accused:' James L. Hicks's Reporting from Sumner, Mississippi, September 1955," appeared in *Archipelago*, Vol. 6, No. 1 http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-1/hicks.htm.

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Letters to the Editor

On Monday, November 4, 2002, the Editor sent a letter to our subscribers explaining why we had published no Autumn issue. That letter elicited a large number of replies. Although the reason for it has passed, we thought our readers might want to read a selection of those replies and comments: they compose a small snapshot of a moment in political time, or are a sort of place-marker in the political process. In this issue's Endnotes, "A Year in Washington," we write at greater length about what we saw during our year in the capital.

November 4, 2002

Ladies and Gentlemen:

A number of readers have asked why no Autumn issue of *Archipelago* appeared. Has Archipelago been retired? they ask in kind alarm. The answer is simple: No, *Archipelago* is quite alive, and Volume 6, Numbers. 3/4 will be on-line sometime after mid-December.

With that issue, we inaugurate a new series, "Living with Guns," in which various writers will contemplate how, historically, philosophically, metaphorically, ethically, and even legally, Americans have allowed ourselves to justify and bear ever more lethal weapons, and how we have lived (and died) with the choice that is perhaps not that of a majority.

In the meantime, no Autumn issue appeared because I went on sabbatical. I went to Washington. I wanted to see up close how this President and his administration are changing this nation. In the Endnotes of Spring 2002 http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-2/endnotes.htm, "The Colossus," I had written: "The President and his cohort believe intensely that they have the right to govern; to govern by their own rules; and they are remaking terribly important rules by which this nation is governed. Their expansion of executive and legal powers, without clear recourse; their unwillingness to share information, necessary to our democracy; and their determination to involve this nation in a long, formless 'war' — it looks like real war but has not been formally declared by Congress — for which they are unwilling to make an accounting: this is a watershed in our history. The Republicans since Nixon have not been shy about circumventing the Constitution; their arrogation of power continues and, if not opposed, will, I fear, become unalterable. In that case, we Americans will no longer know ourselves as the people we were before the presidential election of 2000. Perhaps this is already true."

I wanted to see if it is already true. But I am not alone in my deep unease and dismay.

In last week's *New Yorker,* Hendrick Hertzberg reminded us that Al Gore received half a million more votes than George Bush did, that Bush was then selected by a bare majority in an appallingly partisan act by the Supreme Court, and that no one since — including Gore himself — has spoken out nationally for the majority whose votes he had won. On Friday's "Now," on PBS, Bill Moyers convened a round table of philosophers and political scientists and asked them how we can repair our rapidly disintegrating democracy. Garrison Keillor, on Saturday's "Prairie Home Companion" (NPR) reminded us that if the Republicans win the Senate and the House, their proclaimed "agenda" — a solidly conservative court system, increased militarization, further shrinking of what remains of our system of social welfare and well being, the removal of a woman's right to choose, and more, will rule our lives for the foreseeable future. He's a yellow-dog Dem

himself, he said, being the product of Republicans who wouldn't vote for a Democratic candidate if he came down from the sky on wings: a dry reminder of the apocalyptic vision hovering over of much of our nearly-ruling party.

About ten days ago, with more than 100,000 other people, mostly middle-class, many of them of my (Sixties) generation, I marched in Washington against this President's coming war, then saw that march under-reported in the media, which don't seem to know how to tell this story.

The story is this, as I see it: The President has told the world that we are its dominant military power (let us remember that he includes military domination of Space), and that any observable threat to that power arising from any other nation may, at his discretion, be subject to a preventive strike. He has proclaimed that his government has expanded their definition of legitimate defense to include offensive war: that the America takes the legal right to become, when necessary, an aggressor nation. Our — very, very serious — domestic issues shrink before the magnitude of this declaration. Congress has handed the President a free rein and a blank check, as Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia instructed us in his eloquent defense of the Constitution. If the Western nations are already engaged in a real world-wide war — the "War on Terrorism" — nonetheless, the scope of that war has now been expanded, by us.

Tomorrow is Election Day. Important governorships, a third of the Senate, and the entire House of Representatives are in contest. I urge the American readers of this journal, having considered with due seriousness all that is at stake, to go to the polls. Vote. Person by person, the vote is a very small bit of power. It may be all the civil power we, those in resistance, have left.

Yours truly,
Katherine McNamara

To the Editor:

You have stated the situation with stunning clarity. Many thanks.
G.F. Hale

To the Editor:

I salute you on your comments and your courage and clear thinking. I just want to reassure you that many people share the same beliefs in this matter.
Matthew Jennett
Pharos Books, New Haven, Ct.

To the Editor:

Just wanted to tell you how much I appreciated this latest message. Even though the U.S. press played it down, we have other sources (the British press, for example), and I know that the march in Washington was hugely successful. Wish I could have been there. I certainly was in spirit. I'd so like to think that young people in the U.S. are becoming more politically aware and active. I come in contact with many American students over here and all too often it seems like they're focused on getting their MBAs and making loads of cash. One can only hope for the better, and the turn out in Washington was encouraging. I have my

fingers crossed that tomorrow's elections might reflect some of that protest, if people will just get out and vote. (I mailed in my ballot to Oregon over a month ago!) If it's a Republican sweep, I think I'll feel like giving up on the U.S., and then remember that many people, such as yourself, are carrying on the good fight.

Keep up the good work on the front lines and in print. I look forward to the next issue.

Jill Adams

Editor, *The Barcelona Review* http://www.barcelonareview.com

To the Editor:

While I suppose I agree in principle with your general attitude toward the current administration's policies, the dismaying thing to me is not so much that the Bushies have taken power as that it has been given to them by a bunch of stunned liberals and other Democrats who can't seem to get it together to raise an argument that most of the country wants to listen to. While it is probably true that the Supreme Court, under the control of special interests, acted outside of its jurisdiction in overruling the Florida court (as proved by its own reluctance to overturn a state electoral decision in New Jersey, an admission that there *is no* federal electoral process, only a state-based system, according to the Constitution), it is also true that the polls continue to put the Republicans virtually even with the Democrats. Not just Bush and the gang, but others across the land.

The vote tomorrow will not be corrupt or one of coercion in a one-party totalitarian system. It will rely effectively upon the same mechanisms that existed two, four, eight, eighty years ago. If the Republicans win both the House and the Senate, so be it: vox populi. Nothing to argue against. Live in a democracy, sometimes you get jerks. Some times they stay there for eight years, as the Republicans believe Clinton did.

The Republicans who spent zillions of federal dollars to bring down Clinton finally have their revenge. The same seething hatred that many now feel for Bush was earlier coursing through the veins of frustrated Republicans for eight years. The country did not go to hell because one party was in power and the other wasn't. (If it's going to hell, I propose that is for reasons other than the current regime.)

In the last two years, with the press and the media virtually bought off and catatonic, and the Democratic politicians afraid to say anything (witness that tired hypocrite Joseph Lieberman, clearly trying to become president by looking like Bush), I have been reminded too much of the grumbling and whining of the Russian intelligentsia in recent years, who complained only of their own demise and marginalization, yet did nothing really to stop what has turned out to be Putin's rise to totalitarian power. Putin is now replacing the Chechen-run Moscow mafia (which owned the mass media) with the Petersburg mafia, of which he is a part and beneficiary. In either case, you have a mafia.

It was this same idea that Ralph Nader was trying to get across when he interloped in the 2000 elections: his point, which Democrats hate to hear, was that both Bush and Gore were representing the same set of interests, only with different modalities of expression. His claim that he was not merely a "spoiler" was backed up by his observation that his own, lazy-ass green party would have no choice but to wake up if Bush were elected, since Bush would clearly be such an obvious affront to the liberal sensibility that the Liberals would have to start shouting louder.

So far, that hasn't happened. Amusingly, bin Laden has gotten exactly what he seems to have wanted. I never talked to the man when he was alive, but I suspect he realized on a deep level that America, possessing no real backbone or moral commitment to anything outside the petrodollar, would respond to his attack with fear and posturing rather than with real comprehension of what had just happened, and a desire to

take responsibility for its unique position in a very disturbed world. So Bush, who was otherwise just a mediocre one-term president, now gets the chance to undo eight years of Clintonism over the same period of time. Meanwhile, al Qaeda has exacted its revenge, which is fomenting America's growing inability to believe in its own institutions.

Alas, the alarm you are sounding with your letter represents a complete loss of faith in America's institutions, which do include checks and balances and an electoral system and a more or less unfettered press. That loss of faith seems to me to be a tacit attack on the very America that elected (at least by its current popular support if not at the ballot box) the current Administration, and is likely to do so again.

From my side, I predict the current group of clowns will engineer their own demise. If they win both chambers of Congress, and therefore own the entire government, then there will be no one to blame when the economy crumbles and social programs have been dismantled to the extent that the populace is extremely insecure. Then you have the chance, in another two years, to throw the bums out. If you don't succeed, then in theory that's democracy at work.

Bruce McClelland

Bruce McClelland is a poet and a Russian specialist whose translation of TRISTIA by Osip Mandelstam is published by Station Hill Press http://www.stationhill.org/mandelstam.html.

To the Editor:

Thanks so much for sending out your message. Well-received on this end. I will vote tomorrow — my senator Dick Durbin deserves my vote for having opposed the use of force resolution.

I've been pretty shaken up by the death of Paul Wellstone. Below are a couple things I've posted about him in recent days.

All right, let's vote, and march, and write, and do a lot of other stuff, too.

Dan S. Wang

Dan S. Wang is an artist working in letterpress. His collaboration with Alan Sondheim, "Rosa's Argument," appeared in Vol. 4, No. 4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-4/rosa.htm.

Internet postings by Dan S. Wang:

Hi friends and acquaintances, I'm sorry to bother you with group mailings but I did want to share with you a bit of my experience knowing Paul Wellstone. Since most all of you who are receiving this have some interest in and commitment to political activism, I thought you might forgive my questionable nettiquette and allow me to indulge my grief.

I had Paul as a professor during my first year in college. He helped me to articulate my early interest in environmental issues, and encouraged me to examine my personal history as a child of immigrant parents, and to think about how that fit into my evolving political outlook. I took two classes with him, including his famous 'Social Movements and Protest Politics' course, which produced a reliable number of aspiring organizers each year. He made it a point to emphasize that classwork would never fully educate anyone about politics. He convinced me. I worked for ACORN the following summer, joined the governing board of MPIRG the next year, and never lost my interest and belief in practicing some kind of activism at some level ever after.

But what really made the impact on me was how I saw him treat individuals, and how he treated me. He really believed that one person could make a difference — it sounds like such an

incredibly banal thing to say, much less believe — but that's how he went about interacting with people. You could just see it in the way he talked to some of the most marginalized people — single mothers on welfare, people who lost their farms — in his eyes, every single person, no matter what, was somebody who had the potential to do something really amazing. Especially when they had something to fight for.

…….

Contrary to how the mass media has portrayed him, Paul was anything but an idealistic lost liberal. Anything but naïve. When talking politics (which is what he was almost always talking), he used the word 'power' *all* the time. He understood that politics is war by other means. He also knew there was an army just waiting to be assembled for his side. He became more circumspect with his terminology after he became a senator, but only because it was a cosmetic requirement of the job.

His doctoral dissertation was, if I remember correctly, titled THE BLACK RADICALS: WHAT DO THEY WANT?, and was based on a lot of research conducted in urban ghettos. His first book was titled HOW THE RURAL POOR GOT POWER, and was similarly based on first-hand contact and exchange with farmers suffering foreclosure and the rural unemployed. Between the two works lay his greatest talent, and for us the most valuable lesson — the man knew how to talk and how to listen, how to build trust and friendship with people from any socioeconomic or cultural group, how to learn from others, how to give credit to others, how to see ordinary people as agents. People who, with the right tactics, can exercise political power. By the time he chaired Jesse Jackson's campaign in Minnesota in '88, Paul was already way beyond the Rainbow Coalition, in terms of actual experience working with a true cross section of the Left.

There was something incredibly anachronistic about Paul — the scrappy neighborhood organizer who went national — but I would argue for revisiting the ideas and subjects he taught. The basics, in times of acute crisis (like right now), are still very relevant. What do we want? How do we get it? If we don't get it, then we try something else.

He wasn't much for the mirror stage, the logocentrism of language, the spectacularized society. But he knew the history of American protest and organizing through and through, from the populist farmers to the suffragists to the labor movements to the civil rights marchers to the SDS-ers to the grape boycotts to the anti-nuke groups to the sanctuary movement, and so on. Because he identified with the most marginalized people, he firmly believed that the consequences of political activism and organizing were almost guaranteed to be better than inaction, even when things developed in unforeseen ways. That's something to remember these days: enforced despair is to be rebelled against, and optional despair is afforded to the privileged.

Organizing as experimentation. To conduct the successful experiment. Political science in the best sense of the term.

The experiment Paul conducted using himself as the subject succeeded wildly. Even in death, the confirmation of success is there. Why else would more than 20,000 people attend a memorial service for a United States Senator, in an age when ordinary people are more than likely tempted to celebrate when a prominent politician goes down? —Dan Wang

To the Editor:

Please remove from your mailing list. I was interested *Archipelago* from the standpoint of arts and literature, but less interested in your particular and personal political opinion. I'd prefer to get those from the folks who are up front about what business they are in. Thanks.
(No signature) NLeighMc@

To the Editor:

I want to say 'thank you' for your note of explanation of what has occupied your thinking. I believe you've stated well and concisely some of the most worrisome aspects of what has creepingly gone on in Washington. As you say, Republicans have a clear 30-year track record of misstating and bypassing the Constitution as it concerns their persistent efforts to arrogate and concentrate power. The result is a military/industrial/ [and now] political and communications complex that trumps anything of the sort that we may have protested against in the '60s. Yes, the threat to the sunnier, more beneficent aspects of our character as a nation is sinister. Yes, it would be great if people of conscience would emerge tomorrow from their state of shock and passive disillusionment and vote — in the old Chicago phrase— "early and often."

Yet I don't quite see the groundswell of opinion which might lead to that happier result. Why not? First, I think, the Democratic Party may be blamed for not having the courage of its convictions, for trying to fly low under the radar of a narrowly defined "patriotism" in this war-mongering hour. As in the Gore presidential campaign of 2000, the party leadership's modus operandi is playing not to lose, rather than playing to win. Wishful thinking steers the ship; they hope the electorate will note that the Bush regime has delivered nothing in health care, that its "prosecution" of boardroom corruption has been all tough talk, that more people are without jobs (or job retraining) and that this exodus of work likely will continue as U.S. companies pursue a "leaner and meaner" ethic of Bottom Line Über Alles.

But what does the Democratic Party now stand for? There has been more silence than enlightenment about this, leading one to wonder how much will the party possesses for any sort of hard, doctrinal political fight. When their own convictions are too nebulous or lacking in rigor to make comparison desirable, Democratic politicians have not been apt to dissect their opponents' policy statements — which conservative spin-doctors have learned to turn into pap readily digestible by an intermittently attentive public — and expose the selfish bedrock ideologies and "ends-justify-means" ethics hidden beneath them.

I fear that the Democratic Party, in the eyes of much of the undecided U.S. electorate, appears, at best, to be rather ineffectually wistful, or, at worst, to be a bunch of watered-down Republicans, bent on chasing power but inept at marshalling it into legislation and policy.

Secondly, I think we have been ill-served, as a nation, by our news media, which seem no longer to know how to ask hard questions of politicians and to persevere analytically through the smokescreen denials, changes of topic, and appeals to public prejudice (for patriotism, against snoopy questioning of authority) with which the politicians tend to respond.

Perhaps it's naïve of me to believe so, but writing or broadcasting news used to seem like a profession; now it's been made a business. CNN makes claims about the depth of its investigations; more evident is its tone, appropriate to a shill, perhaps, but not to an objective, observant commentator. (Ah, Walter Cronkite, happy birthday! We could use someone like you.) There has been so little public EXAMINATION of this administration, its methods and intentions, that those voters not motivated by inimical prior convictions may have had little ground AND little incentive to do such analysis for themselves.

All the conservative name-calling directed over 30 years at the news media — "biased," "left-leaning," and worse — has had effect, and perhaps more directly than the organizers of it could have hoped. To avert the accusing finger, our news organizations now tamely swallow most of what is said or reported by conservatives, as if it will be enough to let history judge. The Bush regime has no loyal opposition with a voice.

Since the electoral debacle of the Goldwater campaign (if not earlier), the core mode of conduct in Republican politics has been that of hostile takeover, stealthily wrapped up in the flag, the founding fathers, notions of prosperity, and whatever else for which the public has shown an appetite. Steadily, the mechanisms of governance have been disappearing from view, taken behind closed doors, walled off from scrutiny, which, itself has been represented as a danger to the nation.

A culture of public fear has been lit and stoked, though we are frequently assured that we are in the right hands now.

If the Democratic Party is not to become as irrelevant as the United Nations is said to be, it had better find its footing, its gumption, and something more of unity, or we all may find the rules of democracy and the path of our country changed. So thanks again for raising the alarm, and eloquently. I'll try to beam it on to friends and colleagues who might be swayed or emboldened. (I had been tempted to try to write "Nine-One-One: Our Nation Hijacked," but to assemble facts and figures — in short, to go beyond the Republicans' favored methods of allegation and assertion — would have dragged me away from my fiction, and also seemed to demand more faith in its potential persuasive efficacy than I've been able to find, lately.) Best wishes, too, for *Archipelago*.

Jon Guillot (in hopes that tomorrow may yet prove that "Regime Change Begins at Home")

Jon Guillot is a rare-book specialist, appraiser, and owner of Magnum Opus Rare Books, Charlottesville, Va.

To the Editor:

Many thanks for reaffirming this U.K. reader's belief that there is, in the U.S. consciousness, still a deep well of common sense. All too often we're shown the shallow, blurred, unified face of 'The U.S. prepares for war...' / 'The U.S. rejects Kyoto...' / 'The U.S. this and that...' as though in collective madness a 280 million strong gun-toting hoard are ready follow Mssrs Bush and Powell without question.

Your march on Washington was presented more as a footnote than real news. But in Europe, more than ever, we need to hear from the U.S. the sort of views expressed in your message.

So, in short, best wishes for tomorrow. As with any major U.S. event, the shockwaves will be felt globally. That's an awesome responsibility for any electorate; I hope the power is used wisely.

Yours,

Martin Reed.

To the Editor:

Thank you for reminding us that we are not helpless.

Best regards,

Caila Rossi

Caila Rossi is a short-story writer from Brooklyn.

To the Editor:

I was happy to hear from you and to read the eloquent message you penned to *Archipelago* readers. Here in New Hampshire (conservative Republican territory), there is a chance that Jeanne Shaheen (D) will beat John Sununu (R) for a seat in the Senate, primarily because Sununu is pro-life and Shaheen pro-choice. On other issues, the voters will probably — unfortunately — elect Craig Benson as governor because Benson has bought the vote by spending 11 million dollars of his own money and promises not to instate an income tax or a sales tax. The entire tax burden in N.H. is borne by homeowners through a property tax. For homeowners of modest means or those on fixed incomes, this unfair burden can mean that they have to sell their homes — yet the electorate won't entertain a more equitable way of raising money for education and other programs. A sad commentary on an unenlightened populace!

Elizabeth Knies

Elizabeth Knies is a poet. Her translations of Rilke appeared in Archipelago*, Vol. 4, No. 3*
www.archipelago.org/vol4-3/knies.htm

The Keys of Palestine

Robert Fisk

from
PITY THE NATION

> It is a tragedy of both our people. How can I explain in my poor English? I think the Arabs have the same rights as the Jews and I think it is a tragedy of history that a people who are refugees make new refugees. I have nothing against the Arabs ... They are the same as us. I don't know that we Jews did this tragedy — but it happened.
>
> Shlomo Green, Jewish refugee from the Nazis, on learning that his home in Israel was taken from a Palestinian family in 1948.

Editor's note: In 1990, Robert Fisk, the British foreign correspondent in Beirut, published PITY THE NATION, an enormous narrative of the war in Lebanon during the 1970s and 1980s, based on his dispatches for the *London Times*, for whom then wrote; he is now with the *Independent*. The book has just been re-issued. The chapter printed here offers, as the book does, a view from the ground of how terrible, deep-rooted, and complex is the unended conflict in the Middle East. Reading it, we are also moved to ask, What then is the journalist's obligation? In the preface, Fisk gives his answer:

> I think I was in Lebanon because I believed, in a somewhat undefined way, that I was witnessing history — that I would see with my own eyes a small part of the epic events that have shaped the Middle East since the Second World War. At best, journalists sit at the edge of history as vulcanologists might clamber to the lip of a smoking crater, trying to see over the rim, craning their necks to peer over the crumbling edge through the smoke and ash at what happens within. Governments make sure it stays that way. I suspect that is what journalism is about — or at least what it should be about: watching and witnessing history and then, despite the dangers and constraints and our human imperfections, recording it as honestly as we can.

However, in recent speeches and articles, Fisk has refined his definition of the journalist's task, by quoting, and agreeing with, his colleague Amira Hass, of

Ha'aretz. He writes: "'There is a misconception that journalists can be objective,' she tells me…. 'Palestinians tell me I'm objective. I think this is important because I'm an Israeli. But being fair and being objective are not the same thing. What journalism is really about – it's to monitor power and the centres of power.'"

—*Katherine McNamara*

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The Keys of Palestine

When David Roberts toured the Holy Land, he was an explorer as well as an artist, a romantic who filtered the hot and crude realities of the Middle East through a special screen. As he journeyed on horseback through Palestine and then up the coast of southern Lebanon in the 1830s, he was an adventurer, staying overnight with the governor of Tyre, crossing the snows of the Chouf mountain chain to the gentleness of the Bekaa Valley where he sketched the great temples of the Roman city of Heliopolis.

In the world that he created, there were no wars, no political disputes, no dangers. His lithographs of Palestinian villages and of Lebanon, of Tyre and the peninsula of Ras Naqourra, of the temples of Baalbek, are bathed only in the peace of antiquity, a nineteenth-century dream machine that would become more seductive as the decades saw the collapse of the Turkish and then of the British Empire.

For today, Roberts' delicate sketches and water-colours of Ottoman Palestine can be found in the hallways, bedrooms and living rooms of tens of thousands of Palestinians in Lebanon. In the dust of the great Elin Helweh Palestinian camp just east of Sidon, cheap copies of Roberts' prints — of Nablus, of Hebron, of Jericho and Jerusalem — are hung on the cement walls of refugee shacks, behind uncleaned glass, sometimes held in place by Scotch tape and glue. His pictures of Lebanon's forgotten tranquillity hang in Lebanese homes too. Volumes of Roberts' prints of Lebanon and Palestine can be bought in stores all over Beirut. They can be purchased in almost every tourist hotel in Israel. They are a balm in which anyone can believe.

In Roberts' drawing of Jaffa, the old city seems to bend outwards with domes and minarets and dusty tracks, watched from a distance by a pastoral couple with a donkey. At Acre, the ramparts of Richard Coeur de Lion's massive fortress stretch down to a tideless Mediterranean while tiny Arab figures promenade in the dusk past the *serail*. From time to time, the dun-coloured hills are washed with a light green, faint proof for the Palestinians perhaps that the desert bloomed before the Israelis created their state. In his epic landscape of Jerusalem executed in April of 1830, Roberts draws the Holy City in silhouette, its church towers and minarets, the Dome of the Rock, mere grey outlines against a soft evening sky. Six Arabs — their headdress and robes suggest they are Bedouin — rest beside an ancient well of translucent blue water. A broken Roman column lies beside the pool, its mammoth

pedestal a reminder of the immensity of history. Roberts' prints have become almost a cliché, corrupted by overuse, representative of both a cause and a dream. If it was like that once, why cannot it be so again, a land of peace and tranquillity?

On the wall of my Beirut home, I have one of Roberts' lithographs of Tyre in southern Lebanon. There in the distance is the great peninsula upon which Alexander built his city, there are the familiar standing Arab figures, the broken Roman masonry in the foreground. One afternoon in 1978, I returned from Tyre after spending 12 hours in the city under Israeli shellfire. The Tyre from which I had travelled was a place of unpaved roads and overflowing sewage, of Palestinian camps and *fedayeen* guerrillas, of guns and sunken ships and the sharp clap of explosions. Could I relate this in any way to the picture on my livingroom wall? Was this part of the Lebanon I knew? Was it a scene which in later years I would look at with nostalgia, even longing? For the Roman ruins of Tyre, a few of the old Ottoman harbour warehouses, the little Christian streets near the port, are still there. And the Mediterranean, the great pale green sea that sloshes away at the coastline of Phoenicia, this too still shaped our movements and our lives, provided the essential and unchanging link between that distant, unphotographed world of Roberts and the country in which I now lived.

Reading Roberts' biography, one learns that the world he visited *was* violent: crossing the snows of the Chouf mountains, he was told that there were gunmen on the road to Baalbek — just as there are today. But this picture hung there on my wall with the depth and serenity of a new world. And if I could enjoy the dream, how much easier for those who were born in Israel or Lebanon or Palestine — or for those who wished to live in the land that was Palestine — to believe in it.

Certainly, the Palestinian Arabs can reflect that when Roberts drew Jerusalem, the Jewish population of the land can have numbered scarcely 10 per cent of the total. There had always been a continued physical Jewish presence there over the centuries; it was for the Jews too an ancient homeland. But eight years before Roberts sat on that hilltop above the city, there were only 24,000 Jews living in Palestine.[1] Browse through the second-hand bookshops of Beirut or Jerusalem, however, and the ghosts begin to appear. In 1835, for example, just five years after Roberts had sketched the recumbent city of Jerusalem, we find the French writer Alphonse de Lamartine returning from a visit there to recommend to his readers in VOYAGE TO THE ORIENT that since Palestine did not really constitute a country, it presented remarkable opportunities for imperial or colonial projects.

Within 60 years, the nineteenth-century fascination with the Middle East begins to lose its romantic edge, even for the most mundane travellers. In a broken-backed 1892 edition of John Murray's HANDBOOK FOR TRAVELLERS IN SYRIA AND PALESTINE which I bought in an antiquarian bookshop in west Beirut, a volume with a faded title in gold on its pale red cover, I discovered an item entitled 'Muslim Arabs'. These people are, we are told, 'proud, fanatical and illiterate ... generally noble in bearing, polite in address, and profuse in hospitality; but they are regardless of truth, dishonest in their dealings and secretly immoral in their conduct.' The Jews, on the other hand, were in the guidebook's opinion 'the most

[1] Edward Said, QUESTION OF PALESTINE (New York: Times Books, 1979), p. 9.

interesting people in the land ... The Jews of Palestine are foreigners. They have come from every country on earth ... of late years there has been a remarkable influx of Jews into Palestine, but the Turkish government are striving to hinder their settlement by every means in their power.'

These were the authentic reactions of an imperial Britain to a land which covered its transit routes to the Indian empire. Britain encouraged the growth of Zionism in Palestine in the early years of the First World War because she wanted American Jews to ally their country in the war against Turkey. Since the Tsar was already an ally against German, it was politically inconvenient to demand an end to anti-semitism in Russia. The idea of settling Jews in Palestine, the British Foreign Office cabled two of its ambassadors in 1916, 'might be made far more attractive to the majority of Jews if it held out to them the prospect that when in course of time the Jewish colonists in Palestine grew strong enough to cope with the Arab population they may be allowed to take the management of the internal affairs of Palestine ... into their own hands ... Our sole object is to find an arrangement which would be so attractive to the majority of Jews as to enable us to strike a bargain for Jewish support.'[2]

This is cold-blooded business indeed, just as was the Balfour Declaration of 1917 that gave Britain's support to a Jewish homeland providing that 'nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine'. The equally earnest Anglo-French Declaration of 1918 promising the Arabs of former Ottoman colonies their independence if they supported the Allies against the Turks fell into much the same category, although it was not a promise that was intended to be kept. As Balfour himself said the following year, 'in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country.' So far as Balfour was concerned, Zionism was 'of far profounder import than the desire and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land [of Palestine]'.[3] The slaughter on the Somme and at Passchendaele had helped to bring about these conflicting pledges, just as a far more terrible massacre would in the second great European war virtually guarantee the creation of the Jewish state in Palestine. Against these historical profanities, the descendants of those colourfully dressed figures in Roberts' lithographs stood no hope.

The British themselves began their descent of the bloody staircase the moment Balfour blotted his signature in 1917. As Winston Churchill was to write on a different occasion, 'at first the steps were wide and shallow, covered with a carpet, but in the end the very stones crumbled under their feet.' One of the men who had to walk down this precarious companion-way was Malcom MacDonald, the British dominions secretary in 1938, still vainly attempting to reconcile the desperate promises of the First World War

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[2] Among the most carefully researched works on this period, containing many other examples of Foreign Office pragmatism, is BRITAIN AND ZION: THE FATEFUL ENTANGLEMENT by Frank Hardie and Irwin Herrman (Belfast, Blackstaff Press, 1981).

[3] Quoted in Said, QUESTION OF PALESTINE, op. cit., p. 16.

before the outbreak of the Second, trying to preserve order in the British mandate of Palestine by restricting Jewish immigration.

Forty years later, I sat in the drawing-room of his home at Sevenoaks in Kent, watching him shake his head vigorously from side to side as he contemplated the ruins of his own efforts to resolve the Palestine problem. The ghosts were more substantial now. Churchill, a strong Zionist supporter, had fiercely condemned MacDonald in the Commons in 1938 and continued his verbal assault afterwards in the Division Lobby of the House of Commons. 'Churchill accused me of being pro-Arab,' MacDonald said. 'He said that Arabs were savages and that they ate nothing but camel dung.' But the British could avoid turning such disputes into personal grievances with a generosity not available to those who would ultimately be their victims. 'I could see that it was no good trying to persuade him [Churchill] to change his mind,' MacDonald said, 'So I suddenly told him that I wished I had a son. He asked me why and I said I was reading a book called MY EARLY LIFE by Winston Churchill and that I would want any son of mine to live that life. At this point, tears appeared in Churchill's eyes and he put his arms around me, saying "Malcolm, Malcom."' MacDonald sat there in his deep armchair, savouring this story, an old man contemplating lost opportunities. He was to die four years later. He fussed for a while over a large teapot, pouring both of us outsize cups of tea. He put down the pot, stared at the floor for a few seconds and then looked up glowering, pointed his finger at me in a way that was frightening because it was so sudden. 'But you are living now in Beirut,' he said, 'because I failed.'

How could he have succeeded? More ghosts, more photographs intervene. The Yad Vashem memorial on the hills west of Jerusalem is supposed to commemorate the Holocaust. That word 'supposed' may anger Jewish readers, but Yad Vashem is not so much a memorial as a political statement. Its documents, its photographs, dictate its theme: that the Holocaust produced the state of Israel and that anyone who opposed the creation of that state is on the level of the Nazis. Thus in the same building as the photographs of SS officers selecting the Jews on the ramps of Birkenau are news pictures of British paratroopers ordering the concentration camp survivors away from postwar Palestine. The British, it says in effect, were like the Nazis; they too were war criminals. When I first visited Yad Vashem in 1978, I found it a place of unanswerable accusation. When I went there in 1987, after my journey to Auschwitz, it seemed somehow facile, an instrument of propaganda that used the horror of what happened in Auschwitz and Treblinka and all the other camps to justify not just the existence of Israel but all that Israel had done since.

It is also a place of accusation against the Arabs of Palestine. For there are pictures at Yad Vashem of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem being greeted in Nazi Germany by Heinrich Himmler. The photographs are perfectly clear. Here we can see Sheikh Haj Amin al-Husseini shaking hands with the leader of the SS, there he proudly inspects a volunteer Muslim contingent of the *Wehrmacht*. On the wall are his words — an accurate translation — exhorting the German government to prevent the Jews of Europe going to Palestine. The inference is clear: the Muslim religious leader of the Palestinian Arabs is also a war criminal. So why should not his political successors be war criminals? If the Arab Palestinians who saw in the Nazis some hope of preventing Jewish immigration into

Palestine were on the same level as the SS, were not those Palestinians who oppose Israel today equally guilty?

The civil war in Palestine that followed the end of hostilities in Europe inevitably embraced the tired holders of the imperial mandate. From the desert of political opposition at Westminster, the old Zionist Churchill contemplated the murder of British troops by Jewish gunmen and pronounced Palestine a 'hell-disaster'. It was far worse for the Arabs whose homes lay in that part of Palestine in which the United Nations had decided to locate the new state of Israel. Those whom Balfour had described as 'the existing non-Jewish communities of Palestine' were about to undergo their first catastrophe.

The Arab armies that invaded the new Israel were driven out, together with between 500,000 and 700,000 Arab Palestinians whose homes had been in that part of Palestine that was now Israel or in those areas of Arab Palestine that the Israelis captured. For decades after their War of Independence, the Israelis claimed that most of the Arab Palestinians had left of their own free will after-being urged by Arab radio stations to leave their homes and take sanctuary in neighbouring states until the Arab armies had conquered the upstart new Israeli nation. Israeli scholars now agree that these radio appeals were never broadcast and that the allegations were fraudulent. The Palestinian Arabs left their homes because they were frightened, often because they had heard stories — accounts which were perfectly true — of the massacre of Arab civilians by Jewish gangs.

The result was inevitable. While the Jews of Israel exulted in their renaissance, the Arabs of Palestine left in despair. From the camps of Europe, those who had avoided the execution pits and the gas chambers had at last reached the Promised Land about which their cantors had sung at Auschwitz. Here, for example, is how the American journalist I. F. Stone describes the last hours of his voyage to Haifa, aboard a Turkish refugee ship called the *Akbel*, a listing hulk carrying hundreds of concentration camp survivors on their journey to Palestine. The vessel approached the coastline at dawn, somewhere to the north of Mount Carmel.

> Shortly before dawn I slept for a while on top of the wheelhouse. I woke to see the dim outlines of a mountain towards the southeast.
>
> As the light increased and the sun rose, a cry ran over the ship.
>
> 'It's Eretz Israel.'
>
> We saw Mount Carmel ahead of us and the town of Haifa sleeping in the morning sun below us ... The refugees cheered and began to sing *Hatikvah*, the Jewish national anthem ... People jumped for joy, kissed and hugged each other on the deck.[4]

And here is the militant Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani recalling an Arab family's departure from that same country just a few months later:

> At Al-Nakura, our truck parked, along with numerous other ones. The men began to hand in their weapons to their officers, stationed there for that specific

[4] I. F. Stone, UNDERGROUND TO PALESTINE, AND REFLECTIONS THIRTY YEARS LATER (New York, Pantheon Books, 1978), pp. 205-06.

> purpose. When our turn came, I could see the rifles and guns lying on the table and the long queue of lorries, leaving the land of oranges far behind and spreading out over the winding roads of Lebanon. Then I began to weep, howling with tears. As for your mother, she eyed the oranges silently.[5]

The feelings of joy and despair in these two passages are almost equally balanced, and the Jewish cry of delight on seeing the shore-line of Palestine in the first and the image of Arab guns and hopelessness on leaving Palestine in the second are even more relevant now than they were then. The idea that Israel is the final and true refuge of all Jews — 'the first and last line of defence of the Jewish people', as Szymon Datner called it — is as credible to Israelis today as it was in 1948. And amid the hovels of Sabra and Chatila in Beirut, in Ein Helweh, in the Nahr el-Bared camp in Tripoli, in Bourj el-Shemali in Tyre or in Rashidiyeh further south, the guns and the bitterness and tears that Kanafani witnessed have congealed in hatred.

Henceforth, the many thousands of Arabs who fled — like the few thousand who stayed and like the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the West Bank that would shortly be annexed by Jordan — would call themselves Palestinians. The Jews of Palestine were now Israelis. And from the 'land of oranges', the new exiles arrived in the West Bank and in Lebanon and in the Kingdom of Transjordan with an identity — as 'Palestinians' — that applied to a country that no longer existed, that indeed never did exist as an independent nation. This irony was only accentuated by the refugees' initial belief that their exile was to be brief, a few days perhaps, at most a month, after which — in the manner of other civilians who had abandoned their homes in the midst of battle — they would return to their houses and fields to resume the life which had been interrupted by war.

It was for this reason that many of them carefully locked their front doors when they left their homes. Those who had time also diligently collected their most important legal documents — the deeds of ownership to property, the maps of their orange groves and fields, their tax returns and their identity papers going back to Ottoman times — and packed them into bags and tins along with family heirlooms and jewellery and their front door keys. With luck, their homes would not be burgled and any disputes that might subsequently arise over their property would be swiftly resolved on production of those impressive-looking deeds, some of them so old that they bore the colophon of the Sublime Porte.

By one of the more subtle cruelties of Middle East history, the papers and the keys were to prove the most symbolic and most worthless of possessions to the Palestinians. They acquired a significance that grew ever more painful as weeks and then months away from home turned into years. Younger Palestinians — Palestinians who were born in Lebanon, for example — can remember how their parents angrily threw the keys away in the early 1950s, how the documents that were guarded with such care in the initial days of exile were mislaid or destroyed as their true meaning became clear; because they proved

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[5] THE LAND OF THE SAD ORANGES, quoted in DISPOSSESSED: THE ORDEAL OF THE PALESTINIANS 1917-1980 by David Gilmour (London, Sidgwick and Jackson, 1981). Gilmour's book is among the most readable accounts of the Palestinian tragedy in Lebanon.

ownership of a world that had disappeared. For the keys — often made of thick grey iron, sometimes with decorated handles — were in a sense a promise of return, a promise that history inevitable broke. The new owners of those homes forbade any return and then changed the locks.

Yet among the half million Palestinians now living in Lebanon, many stubbornly went on cherishing these keys and their titles of ownership in Palestine. When a Palestinian political identity began to emerge after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war — when the West Bank and Gaza Strip were occupied by the Israeli army — the promise contained in these mundane implements and pieces of paper was somehow renewed. Reminders of humiliation once again became priceless possessions, as emotionally valuable as they had once been legally essential. In Lebanon, where the Palestinian war against Israel was focused once the PLO's guerilla movement was evicted from Jordan in 1970, they were squirrelled away beneath floors or carpets, sometimes stored in rusting biscuit tins, broken suitcases and ancient trunks, often the way containers in which the refugees carried their most valuable belongings from Palestine in 1948.

Each document is signed by a British mandate official and gives in detail the figures of sale and settlement in the name of the Palestinian who inherited or bought the land. Some of the papers are now torn and others have been heavily creased because they have been re-read and re-folded so many times over the past 41 years. But each of them, surmounted by the royal coat of arms and the monogram of King George VI, carries the authority of the British Crown. Laid across a map of Israel, these documents form a patchwork of disputed ownership, a matrix of lands from northern Galilee to Ashqelon for which there are now in existence two perfectly legal deeds: one, in Jerusalem or Tel Aviv or Beersheba, proving irrefutably that the land is now owned by an Israeli, the other — in Beirut or Amman — showing that the rightful owner is a Palestinian Arab. Placed next to each other, the documents are both a territorial and a political contradiction; one is proof of the existence of Israel, the other carries with it the dream of Palestine.

The first time I ever saw one of the keys was in the Chatila camp in Beirut in 1977. I had been interviewing a family — four young brothers, two sisters, their parents, the children's paternal grandmother — about their lives in a city that was now dominated by the Syrian army. Were they watched by the Syrian intelligence service? Probably. Had any of the family been arrested? Perhaps. Did Yassir Arafat truly represent them? Of course. And then — because the deepest questions curiously acquire the least importance in such interviews — did they ever really think they would return to 'Palestine'? At this, the grandmother stood up and shuffled into a little hut-like concrete alcove, her bedroom, and emerged carrying something in a handkerchief. 'It is from our home in Haifa,' she said, unwrapping the cloth. And there was her key, its gun-metal grey shaft rusted brown but the handle still gleaming. How many families kept these keys? They did not know. Only the grandmother was old enough to have lived in Palestine. Her son and his family regarded the instrument as the key to 'their' home, just as they regarded Haifa as 'their' town although they had never been there.

Over the following three years, I was to see the keys again and, more often, the deeds of ownership to lost land. In many cases, they were kept in a container with aging

brown British Palestinian passports, the last used page of which registered their owner's final departure into exile. Before the fighting started in 1948, some Palestinians had even arranged to take a holiday in case of hostilities and had called at the Lebanese consulate in Palestine to pick up a visa for Beirut. An agreeable sort of departure, a legal exit to which no legal re-entry was ever to be forthcoming. But if it was so easy for me to see this evidence and to talk to those who had substantial proof of their ownership of homes in mandate Palestine, surely it would be no more difficult to go to Israel, find those same homes and — the idea had a special excitement about it — to knock on those same front doors. Who would open them?

What I did not realise then — but what I would discover the moment I embarked on my journey to those front doors — was that I had touched upon the essence of the Arab-Israeli war; that while the existence of the Palestinians and their demand for a nation lay at the heart of the Middle East crisis, it was the contradiction inherent in the claims to ownership of the *land* of Palestine — the 'homeland' of the Jews in Balfour's declaration — which generated the anger and fear of both Palestinians and Israelis. The evidence of history, not to mention the physical evidence of those land deeds, suggested a subject of legitimate journalistic inquiry: who legally as well as morally had the right to ownership of the property? To the Palestinians, the question appeared naive, almost insulting. In their eyes, they were not refugees but legal inhabitants of Palestine who were illegally exiled. Their homes had belonged to them, had been taken away from them and were now in the hands of others. Merely to ask the question was to imply that the justice of their cause was in doubt. To the Israelis, however, and to their supporters in the Jewish diaspora, the same question struck at the very morality of Zionism. To knock on those front doors, it transpired, was to cast doubt upon the very legitimacy of the state of Israel.

It mattered not that after weeks of interviews with 35 Palestinian families in Lebanon, I chose to write about the experiences only of those who had no immediate connection with the Palestinian guerrilla movement. It proved of no consequence that I then chose only those four families who still possessed their original Palestine passports, complete land deeds and mandate tax returns. The fact that three of these families had been moderately wealthy in Palestine and had managed to acquire the same social status in their exile — that they behaved and looked like millions of middle-class couples in Europe, or indeed in Israel — only compounded my error. I set off from Beirut for Jerusalem in the late autumn of 1980; and the moment I entered Rafi Horowitz's office in Jerusalem, I realised that I had set myself no easy assignment. Horowitz was an Israeli government spokesman, a middle-aged man with an angry, almost bitter way of explaining what happened to the Arabs of the old Palestine mandate. Every few minutes, he would break off to apologise for his own cynicism. 'You've got to realise that the state of Palestine never existed,' he said. 'The Arabs went to war with us in 1948 to destroy our Jewish state. Please excuse us for winning.'

Outside, in the rainy winter evening, the rush-hour traffic still clogged Jaffa Road. It had taken almost half an hour to reach his office along streets jammed with tourist coaches, the Americans inside staring through the windows at the neon Tel Aviv highway sign that glowed through the drizzle. The advertisement hoardings, the posters on the buses, the

names above the shops — all were in Hebrew. A pretty Israeli girl had been selling magazines in the little paper-shop on the corner. 'That'll be two dollars,' she said. 'Have a nice day.' She sounded like a clerk at a Manhattan bookstore. Could this really once have been Palestine?

It is a question that immediately caused irritation in the office of Israel's official spokesman. Ask just who legally owns the land in Israel — who owns the deeds to the houses and orchards and blocks of property parcelled out under the British mandate — and the irritation turns to open annoyance. Horowitz left the room for a moment and returned with a slim red volume entitled LAND OWNERSHIP IN PALESTINE 1880-1948. It was written by Moshe Aumann of the Israel Academic Committee on the Middle East and its 24 pages are sprinkled with quotations stretching back a hundred years — from Mark Twain and Lamartine to Lord Milner and the 1937 Palestine Royal Commission — all of which assert that Palestine was a land of brigandage, destitution and desert before the mass immigration of Jews in the late 1930s.

Aumann, for example, quoted Mark Twain's account of his visit to the Holy Land in 1867 in which the American writer spoke of 'desolate country whose soil is rich enough but is given over wholly to weeds — a silent mournful expanse ... We never saw a human being on the whole route.' Twain is quoted as recording that 'one may ride ten miles, hereabouts, and not see ten human beings' and that 'the hills are barren ... the valleys are unsightly deserts ... it is a hopeless, dreary, heartbroken land ... Palestine is desolate and unlovely.' The quotations were accurate but one sensed within Aumann's text an underlying idea: not just that Palestine was empty of people — which it assuredly was not — but that perhaps those people who did live there somehow did not deserve to do so; that they were too slovenly to use modern irrigation methods or to plant trees or to build brick houses. That Palestinian Arabs did cultivate the land in the nineteenth century — as a glance at Roberts' lithographs clearly proves — went unnoticed by Aumann, who concluded his thesis by stating that the contention that 95 per cent of the land of the state of Israel had belonged to Arabs 'has absolutely no foundation in fact.'[6]

To Horowitz, the Palestinians were now refugees, pure and simple. 'When the entity of the mandate ended,' he said, 'two other states — Jews and Arab — were to have come into existence but the Arab state did not. It was annexed by Jordan. Of course, Arabs owned land here legally in what is now Israel. There are Arabs who owned land and can prove it without any doubt. But these people are now citizens of Arab states that are at war with Israel and they cannot claim possession of this land. As a result of losing the war in 1948 — excuse us for winning — the Arabs became partly a community of refugees. That is part of the Middle East problem.'

There was a pause in Horowitz's peroration. Then he leant forward across his desk. 'You know,' he said, 'you people have a habit sometimes of coming here to Israel with some specific details and thinking that from them you can deduce some universal truth. Forgive me for being a little cynical of that.' There was in reality no need for his self-proclaimed

[6] Moshe Aumann, LAND OWNERSHIP IN PALESTINE 1880-1948 (Israel Academic Committee on the Middle East, undated), pp. 5-8.

cynicism. Up in Lebanon, where so many of the 1948 Palestinian refugees are concentrated, there is sometimes precious little detail to be had about the land they once owned.

Even memories have been sealed up. One elderly Palestinian in Beirut wanted to draw a map of his olive grove for me and spent ten minutes sketching and re-sketching the roads south of Jaffa. But after a while, the roads on his map began to criss-cross each other in a crazy fashion and it became clear that he had forgotten the geography of his land. 'I am very sorry,' he said, 'but you must understand it has been a very long time ...' There is indeed an opaque quality to the memories that Palestinians like to tell of Palestine. Many now recall how happily Jews and Arabs lived together before 1948, although it is a fact that in some parts of Palestine near civil war existed between the two communities long before that date. Elegiac recollections are buttressed by the Roberts lithographs, pictures which have become part of a deep and dreamlike sleep through which the Palestinians have passed since 1948.

They bear little enough relation to the land that now lies west of Jerusalem. In many places, the Arab villages have disappeared, their names erased from the map. Even the township of Deir Yassin — notorious in Palestinian history as the village in which Jewish gangs massacred 250 Arabs, half of them women and children, in April of 1948 — has vanished. It is now called Givat Shaul and is a mere suburb of Jerusalem, its main street a line of petrol stations, garages and highrise apartment blocks, more like the Edgware Road or Brooklyn than the scene of a mass murder. Only occasionally can you glimpse the old Palestine. Near the Latroun monastery, for example, and along the back road to Ashqelon, you can briefly catch sight of Arab women picking fruit in the dark orchards, their traditional Palestinian dresses of gold and red embroidery glimmering amid the heavy foliage, descendants of the 170,000 Arabs who stayed behind in 1948. Down in the old Arab quarter of Jaffa, the cozy streets of Roberts' lithographs are all but gone. The Arab houses are little more than shacks separated by acres of devastation where developers have torn down vacated Palestinian homes. While I was searching for some Arab property in the area, I had come across three young Palestinians standing beside a shabby food stall on the waterfront. The three — all were Israeli citizens — were arguing fiercely among themselves about a loan of ten Israeli shekels. One was talking in Arabic. But the other two Palestinians were shouting at each other in Hebrew. After the Palestinian militancy of Lebanon, it was like staring at the wrong side of a mirror: Palestine through the looking glass.

Is this the land to which the Palestinians of the diaspora wish to return? It was not difficult to find the answer in Lebanon. For every Palestinian who expressed doubts about the worth of returning, there were hundreds who would go back to what is now Israel if they had the opportunity to do so, people like David Damiani, a Christian whose family had been in Palestine since the time of the Crusades. Sitting on a thin metal chair above one of west Beirut's noisiest streets, eyes staring intently through heavy framed spectacles, he described his family tree with careful pride. Boutros Damiani was born in Jerusalem in 1687 and his four sons were consuls there for Britain, France, Holland and Tuscany. The last consul in the Damiani family was Ferdinand, who represented Mexico in 1932. David

Damiani has an old photograph of him, a slightly pompous-looking man in a top hat surrounded by some Jerusalem worthies and an Englishman or two.

'When Napoleon besieged Jaffa,' Damiani said, 'my ancestor Anton Damiani interceded on behalf of the Muslim population and protected them from French anger — we have an official certificate from the *sharia* court to this effect.' In the early nineteenth century, Lamartine stayed with the Damiani family in Jaffa and mentioned them in VOYAGE TO THE ORIENT, the same book in which he advertised the colonial possibilities of Palestine. David Damiani's father Jean owned olive groves, extensive properties in Jaffa, Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and a soap factory which he operated inside the old Turkish *serail* on the hill above Jaffa not far from St Peter's church. The Damianis had bought the decrepit domed buildings from the Jaffa municipality and for several decades after the First World War the name of Damiani was proudly displayed in English and Arabic over the vaulted gateway where Turkish pashas Turkish pashas once administered the law.

David Damiani's memories of the time were those of a schoolboy in a safe land. He lived with his five brothers, sister and parents in an old building near the Cliff Hotel in Jaffa and he still remembered the day in 1935 on which Jean Damiani bought the first family car, a magnificent light green Buick saloon costing 350 Palestinian pounds, equivalent then to the same amount in sterling. Damiani senior maintained a chauffeur to take him round the family olive groves. 'Before 1936, the harbour at Jaffa was flourishing,' Damiani recalled. 'There were always 25 or 30 ships moored off the port waiting to load. It was a prosperous place. Arabs and Jews were happy to live in Palestine. Everything was in abundance — fruit, vegetables and foodstuffs of all kinds. People would have lived happily if it wasn't for the troubles instigated by the government and the Jewish Agency.'

It was only when he came to 1936 that Damiani's face grew suddenly cold and his hands, until now resting quietly on his knees, began to move in agitation. 'I remember the general strike starting in 1936. It started on April 19th, a Sunday; and the next day I didn't want to go to school. I was fourteen years old. A bus used to take us to school in the Ajami area of Jaffa but there was no school that day and I was pleased. It was an Arab strike but we were in a safe area. It was middle-class.' Damiani paused here for several seconds. 'When the Arab revolt came in 1938, the Arab leaders used to impose taxes on well-off people. So like many others, my father went to Beirut to get away. In his absence, the factory was run by honest workers. I was still at school but at home I used to look after the accounts for the soap factory. My father did give money to the Arabs to keep his head.'

With the outbreak of the Second World War, life in Palestine returned to normal — 'in a day', according to Damiani — as old enemies temporarily cooperated. When the Allies liberated Lebanon in 1941, David Damiani went to the American University in Beirut to study business administration. It was a gentle enough life and it took only six and a half hours to travel home by taxi from Beirut to Jaffa. The first hint that things were not really changing for the better came in 1945 when, according to Damiani, two Palestinian Jews paid a visit to his father.

'They were both prominent Jews in the town. One was called Jad Machness and the other's name I can only remember as Romano. They proposed to my father that he make a list of all our properties in Palestine so that they could buy them. They said he would then

have to take his family to Switzerland. My father would not accept the idea. He told them that we were a very ancient family in Palestine and were much respected. He said that our grandfathers fought for the Holy Land and that we must stick to the Holy Land. Then Romano took me to one side — my father was sitting at his desk — and told me that I had a great future in front of me and that people would be prepared to sell property to the Damianis. He brought out a list of thirteen Arab properties that he wanted me to buy and then resell to the Jews. One of the properties comprised five thousand dunums of land owned by the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem near Nablus. He told me that if I bought this land at five pounds a dunum, he and his friends would buy it from me at twenty-five a dunum. He told me he also wanted me to buy land from an Arab magistrate called Aziz Daoudi who had an orange grove near Tel Aviv. "You will make two million pounds," he told me. "Then you can go and live in Switzerland with your family." I told my father and mother about this and my father said: "Is there anything that you lack? Do you lack clothes, food or a home? Why should we do such a dirty business and stain our name, we who for centuries had an excellent reputation?" I turned Romano down.'

When the United Nations resolved upon the partition of Palestine in 1947, the Damianis were in Jerusalem, buying property near Talesanta in the Jewish part of the city. 'We thought that if we didn't like the Arab sector of Jerusalem after partition,' Damiani said, 'we would also have property in the Jewish sector. We thought that Jerusalem sooner or later would be an international city. We wanted to put our money in various places so that if one was not safe, the other would be. We did not think of going to live abroad or of buying property outside Palestine. We did not think things would be as bad.'

A year earlier, David Damiani had married Blanche, an 18-year old Nazareth girl, and set up a home of his own in the Arektenje district of Jaffa. He bought a two-storey house at the end of a narrow street just off the Tel Aviv road and furnished it with new tables, chairs and beds. There was a handsome portico outside and four mock Grecian columns at the back of the front hall that gave the house a museum-like effect. There was no street number but in Beirut years later, David Damiani could remember that his postal address had been Post Office Box No. 582. It was to be the only home he ever owned in Palestine.

'You have to realise,' he said, 'that we didn't think in terms of a Jewish state and an Arab state. We thought the worst that would happen would be a national partition with Jews and Arabs still living in their own homes. But from the beginning of December 1947 until April 1948 there was continuous fighting around Jaffa. In early 1948, people started sending their families outside Jaffa to Nablus, Gaza and Lydda. Some Arabs went to Amman, Egypt, Lebanon or Syria. In Jaffa, life was rendered very difficult. Water pumping by the municipality stopped. The electric wires were cut. The British cooperated with the Jews against the Arabs. Dogs and donkeys were killed and left in the streets to create a health hazard. The city was in chaos and we were afraid that armed men would attack us. I once went to the Ajami police station to ask for protection but the British constable wouldn't open the door to me.'

Palestinians find it almost impossible to recall their final departure from Palestine without considerable emotion, for it was not only a tragedy for individual families but has

become a critical moment in modern Palestinian history. The Damiani family made their decision to leave in the third week of April after snipers in Tel Aviv began shooting into the centre of Jaffa, sending at least one bullet into David Damiani's home. They left for Beirut by sea on 25 April.

'My father originally refused to leave Jaffa,' Damiani said, 'But the rest of our family insisted because we did not want him to be endangered. We were peaceful people. We did not care very much for politics. We are still not interested in politics. We locked the front door of our home just before lunchtime. We carried only suitcases and clothes and we had a case with our jewellery and the registry deeds to our lands inside. We never thought we would not be able to go back. If we had thought that, we would never have left. We thought we were going for a month or so, until the fighting died down. We took our front door keys with us but we threw them away some years ago. They are worthless now ...'

In Jaffa harbour, the Damianis boarded the Italian passenger cruise ship *Argentina*, a comfortable vessel which would take the family on the 16-hour journey to Beirut port. Damiani still has the tickets for the journey. 'When we pulled out of Jaffa, I stood on the stern and looked out over the old city,' he said. 'I could see our soap factory in the *serail* on top of the hill and St Peter's church next to it. Then I did ask myself if we would see this place again; and when Jaffa started to disappear to our starboard, I remember I said to myself: "If this ship could turn round now, I would return to Jaffa." We were foolish. It was too late.'

David Damiani said nothing for several seconds after finishing his narrative but he opened up a battered suitcase and produced from it his old pale brown British Palestine passport and opened the document on page six. There, in the top left-hand corner, is an exit visa. 'Jaffa Port,' it says. '25-4-48'. It still retained the same dark blue colour that it had when it was stamped into the passport by a British policeman 32 years earlier; last exist from Palestine.

David Damiani's life since 1948 was a mixture of family bereavement, hardship and moderate business success. The family spent the summer of 1948 in the Lebanese hill resort of Aley, living on 7,000 pounds they had taken with them from Palestine. By the standards of other refugees, they were well off. 'We heard the radio and saw photographs of the damage in the papers,' Damiani said. 'We wondered who would take care of our orange groves. After about a month, we realised that a catastrophe had taken place. My father was very sad all the time; he was an old man without home, property or money. He died in 1952, a broken man.' Damiani and his wife went to Jordan in 1950 while his brothers looked for work in Beirut. In Amman, he worked for UNRWA — the newly established United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees — and started a small soap factory, but the project was not successful. He became a civil servant in Jordan and then part-owner in a Beirut hotel. In 1949, he had become a Jordanian citizen and in 1954 secured some family money that had been locked in Jaffa bank accounts, making him 'not a rich man, but living'.

Yet he still kept all the family deeds and files. On a clean parchment headed by the British crest were the deeds to his home in Jaffa, bought from his father for 3,493 Palestinian pounds and dated 27 October 1947. He was even able to produce the fragile

Turkish deeds to the *serail* in Jaffa and British documents proving family ownership of orange groves in Yazour on the main Jaffa—Jerusalem road (32 dunums), near Holon (76 dunums) and at Beit Dajan (240 dunums) and to property in Jerusalem, part of which was rented to a British assistant district commissioner.

'I once had an opportunity to visit Jaffa again,' Damiani said. 'My wife went but I refused to go there. I would see my house occupied by other people. I am not allowed to dispose of my property or live in it. If you were not allowed to go back and live in your country, how would you feel? And if you could go back, would you stay in Beirut just because you had a nice home there?'

There is something insulting about the way in which a stranger can visit a place which is forbidden to people with infinitely more interest in such a journey. If Damiani could go to Jaffa, most of his fellow exiles are prevented forever from walking in the streets outside their old houses — or knocking on those front doors. The nearest a Palestinian in Lebanon can go to his former family home in what is now Israel is likely to be the orange orchards south of Tyre or the east bank of the Jordan river. A key or a lifeless deed or a cheap Roberts reproduction, perhaps a family snapshot or a tourist postcard of the 1930s, is the nearest that many Palestinian exiles can move in spirit towards the place they regard as their homeland. Blessed be the foreign correspondent who can fly from Beirut to Athens, therefore, and in the same day pick up an El Al flight from Athens to Tel Aviv and land at Ben Gurion airport and travel — faster even than the old direct taxi route from prewar Beirut — to Jerusalem. Doubly fortunate is the journalist who can within 24 hours leave Beirut and look upon what is left of the world Damiani lost on that April day when the *Argentina* sailed out of Jaffa harbour for Beirut, carrying his family from Palestine for the last time. It was not difficult to find the ghosts of that world. The Israelis had turned the Damiani soap factory into a municipal museum but you could still see the family's name in fading Arabic letters on the archway at one end of the building. The wind and rain on the little hill above Jaffa had ripped away at the paint but it was just possible to make out the words 'David Damiani' to the left of the broken wooden gate.

The rest of the wall was stained with damp and flaking brown paint; the winters had cut deeply into the fabric of the old *serail*. The museum had taken over the northern end of the building but the main hall of what had been Damiani's factory, with its vaulted roof and tunnels, was in semi-derelict condition, leased on occasion to a firm of Iranian-born Jews who dealt in Persian art. The outer windows had been smashed and the cut stone had been severely fissured. Dust lay thickly over the cracked flagstone floor and only when I ascended a dangerous staircase did I find a solitary reminder of the business that helped to make the Damianis one of the richest Arab families in Jaffa. Against a wall was a corroded iron trolley that was once used for carrying oil in the factory. It was perhaps as well that David Damiani had not come back.

The first-floor museum for the Ancient History of Tel Aviv-Jaffa just round the corner was well cared for, although it recorded not the Arab history of Jaffa but the Biblical history of the land; there was an exhibition to illustrate the Israelite Royal Period (930 BC) with references to King David. A large Biblical map of Solomon's life lay beneath a quotation from the Book of Chronicles chapter 2 verse 16: 'And we will cut wood out of

Lebanon, as much as thou shalt need: and we will bring it to thee in flotes by sea to Joppa; and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem.' The museum staff knew the name of Damiani, although it was not recalled with much enthusiasm. 'Do I know the history of this building?' asked the Israeli Jew in the museum curator's office. He was a cheerful, tubby-faced man, born in Australia and still using the broad, flat accents of the Antipodes. 'This place used to be the Turkish administrative headquarters in Jaffa. It was one of the most important places in the city. Then much later it was bought by a very rich Arab Christian family called Damiani and they turned this building' — the man paused in humorous reflection for a moment — 'into a soap factory. In 1948, this became a Jewish town and we took over the building.' The whole structure was now owned by the municipality of Jaffa and the museum hoped to extend it galleries into the rest of the building when money was made available.

When I told the museum official that I had met David Damiani, his eyes opened wider with interest. 'Does he know this is a museum now?' he asked, and then walked over to a glass-fronted bookcase. He withdrew from it a rare bound second volume of PALESTINE ILLUSTRATED by François Schotten, published in Paris in 1929. The Israeli flicked through the pages of photographs, sepia prints of Arab peasants and donkey-drawn carts clattering through the streets of a forgotten Palestine, until his thumb came to rest on a picture of workers inside a cavernous hall. And there, sure enough, was the interior of old Jean Damiani's soap factory with a row of moustachioed Palestinians piling up bar after bar of soap around the walls. Each man in the picture was staring blankly at the photographer, a bar of soap in each hand as if caught in the act of some doubtful ritual. 'When you get back to Beirut,' the Israeli said, 'you must ask Damiani if he's got that picture.'

Beneath the hill on which the *serail* huddles, the great iron gates of Jaffa port still stand next to a row of small stone shops, their Arab architecture belied by the Hebrew names above the windows. David Damiani set off from here with his family in April 1948, and it was not difficult to see how clearly the old factory and the church above the city must have stood out on the horizon as the *Argentina* slipped past the tide bar and steamed for Beirut.

Finding Damiani's old home, however, was not quite as easy. The Israelis had turned the old Arab buildings south of the *serail* into a shopping and restaurant precinct, a tastefully laid out tourist attraction in which the best architectural features have been preserved. But no one there had ever heard of the Arektenje area of Jaffa where the newly married Damiani had bought his home. Nor did the Israelis in the market by the Jaffa clock-tower have any idea where it was. It was only when I entered the Arab quarter, a network of dusty roads and wastelands of rubble interspersed with a few small houses just south of the city, that a Palestinian remembered the name. He directed me to a main road on the edge of Jaffa and to a small lane that ran off it to the north. I followed his directions and down a narrow street came to a cul-de-sac dominated by a large white house with a portico over the front door.

Jews and Arabs lived together in the street, speaking each other's language with some fluency, and it was an Israeli Jew who first pointed to the white house. An Arab woman, a Palestinian, was peering from the upper balcony. 'Was this Damiani's house?' he

shouted up to her in Arabic and she replied, in Hebrew, that it was. A small Palestinian boy led me up some steps to the side of the building and the woman ushered me inside. It was a light, airy room with some rural paintings on the wall and two small clean bedrooms leading off on each side. Very shyly, the woman introduced herself as Georgette Aboud. She and her husband Louis, a garage owner, had bought the upper floor from a Jewish family and were bringing up their four children there. The little boy, Zohair, was sent to make coffee.

Mrs Aboud led me to the balcony from where it was evident that many of the surrounding buildings — like those elsewhere in the Arab quarter — had been devastated, their roofs smashed in and their windows punched out of their frames. 'The landlords do that,' she said, and pointed to three small cottages that had been vacated and destroyed within the past 24 hours. 'Two Arab families and a Jewish family lived there and the moment they moved out, the landlords broke the houses. They want to build on the land.' Mrs Aboud — she and her husband were both Israeli citizens — seemed resigned to this gradual destruction of the little mixed society around their home. But her family owned only the upper floor of Damiani's old house. 'There is an old man living downstairs,' she said. 'We do not usually see him but he is a kind man. He is a Jew.'

It was growing dark and a sharp wind was coming in off the Mediterranean, blowing up the dust around the house. But downstairs I rang the bell next to the black steel gates and after a while I heard someone coming to the front door. The gate opened to reveal an old man, slightly stooped and staring quizzically at us. We told him why we had come. 'If you know the man who owned this house, you had better come inside,' he said. And so we followed the old man up the stone steps beneath the portico and into the long hall.

At the far end it was possible to see four mock Grecian columns, painted white and glowing in the light of a single bulb. 'I live here with my two daughters,' the man said and sat down carefully in an armchair beside the columns. There was a little table between us, piled with books upon which lay an old photograph of a man in British army uniform standing next to a beautiful young Jewish girl. 'That was my wife,' the old man said. 'I was in the British army during the war. I have been here eight and a half years now. I bought this floor of the house from an Arab family. I never knew Mr Damiani.'

The man spoke in short sentences, as if trying to strain out of his monologue all but the most essential facts. There was a long silence and then he said with just a trace of a smile: 'I am a sculptor, I am an old man and I am a Jew.' He wanted to talk. His name, he said, was Shlomo Green and he had been a refugee from Romania. He had left his village of Clug on the Romanian-Hungarian border in 1939 and boarded a ship for Palestine just before the outbreak of the Second World War. 'The British navy caught our ship but we were lucky,' he said. 'It was the last ship from which the passengers were permitted to stay legally in Palestine. I spent a year and a half in a kibbutz then joined the English army for five years. I went from Alamein to Tobruk then to Syria. All my family were sent to Auschwitz. Only my mother survived. They made her a slave labourer. She told me my father died in the camp in 1944. I lost about a hundred relatives in Auschwitz.'

Shlomo Green stopped speaking for a moment. It was a natural coda in his story. He joined the Israeli army in 1948, fought at Latroun and in Galilee and joined up again in

1956 and 1967. His wife had died just over a year earlier; one of his daughters was a teacher in Tel Aviv, the other a painter, and Shlomo Green was himself a sculptor of some distinction. He had had 11 exhibitions in Jerusalem and some of his creations lined the walls of his little home, of David Damiani's home. Shlomo Green was only 62 but he looked much older.

He walked quickly around the room to show off his sculptures and then said: 'Tell me about Mr Damiani. I know nothing about him.' So he sat down again and listened to the story of the Damianis, of their life in Jaffa and of how they fled in 1948, how David Damiani stood on the stern of the ship off Jaffa port and wished he could have turned round then and gone back to his home. If human death is a measure of suffering, then David Damiani would surely have agreed that he had suffered less than Shlomo Green.

But the old Jew sat for a long time in silence as the wind and rain in the darkness outside lashed at the windows of Damiani's old home. Then he looked up quite suddenly with tears in his eyes. 'I am very moved by what you have told me,' he said. 'What can I say? I would like to meet these people. If you can say for me ...' Here he paused, but he wanted to go on. 'It is a tragedy of both our people. How can I explain in my poor English? I think the Arabs had the same rights as the Jews and I think it is a tragedy of history that a people who are refugees make new refugees. I have nothing against the Arabs. I am living here with Arab people in peace and I have some friends among them. They are nice people. They were the same as us. I don't know that we Jews did this tragedy — but it happened. I want only one thing: peace for the new generation and progress. How can I say more than this? I feel at home here.'

In Beirut, I told Damiani of what Shlomo Green had said, of the warm old house with the mock Grecian pillars still standing in the front hall. I repeated the details of how so many of Green's family had been murdered at Auschwitz. Damiani showed no bitterness. 'I wish him happiness,' he said. 'Can you tell him that? Can you tell him please that I wish him happiness?'

It would, however, be an historical untruth to suggest that all Palestinians felt as generously as Damiani towards those who now own the lands that belonged to them. Kanaan Abu Khadra was a case in point, a journalist in mandate Palestine — by all accounts a good one in a crusading and courageous if rather partisan sort of way — who founded and edited a newspaper called *Al Shaab*. In 1946, in the top front page article in the very first edition of his newspaper, whose title in Arabic means 'The People', he urged Arabs to struggle harder to maintain their land in Arab ownership in Palestine. The page carried a map covered in dark smudges. 'These shaded land areas have become the property of the Jews,' the caption said. 'This will become the national homeland of the Jews.' It was a prophetic piece of journalism.

Leafing through bound volumes of those old editions in Beirut, Abu Khadra could still experience the odd moment of journalistic triumph as old newspapermen tend to do, long after their papers have died. 'We had a great paper,' he said. 'By 1948, we had a circulation of 12,000 — the highest in Palestine. I bought a second-hand English flatbed press and issued shares. We were less than self-supporting but we were an independent,

neutral paper. We were independent of the Husseinis and the Nashishibis, the big Arab families. It was a national paper. The Jews hated it but we were not against the Jews.'

Abu Khadra's heavily boned face and strong rectangular glasses gave him a slightly fearsome appearance. He was also the kind of editor who would ask you to check the spelling of a place name or the age of a politician (he was born in 1920). He was as exacting in his own business affairs. The old blue suitcase which he carried out of Palestine in 1948 was still stuffed with his files and documents, all neatly labelled and dated — land deeds, deeds of sale, taxes, rents and maps of allotments — together with correspondence with the United Nations about the ownership of his family's land. There was a lot of it. Indeed, the Abu Khadras were one of the largest families in Palestine, their orchards and property scattered between Jaffa, Jerusalem and Gaza. There were two Abu Khadra Streets in Jaffa and there still is an Abu Khadra Mosque in Gaza. The family jointly owned 12,000 dunums of agricultural land and about 20 properties in Jaffa. One of Abu Khadra's first memories — and one that he went back to again and again — was of walking with his brothers Rabah and Anwar through his father's olive grove in Jaffa to visit the house of his uncles. The family grew oranges, corn, barley and sugar cane.

'I used to go there every day when I was a boy. My uncles Fawzi and Tawfiq lived in two houses joined together, one of which had been built by my grandfather Ismail. It had three big windows with iron doors and white walls and you used to go into the house up a flight of steps because there were shops underneath. My cousin Ibrahim lived in a two-storey house a few hundred metres away, just beyond the Tel Aviv-Jaffa port railway line. He had Jewish tenants in the house.' In 1937, Abu Khadra went to study science in Beirut and attended the American University — as David Damiani was to do four years later — but he did not like the course and returned to Jaffa, eventually settling for a degree in journalism at the American University in Cairo.

He started *Al Shaab* in 1946, with four full-time staff in Jaffa. He was at his desk at the paper when the UN passed its resolution to partition Palestine. He kept working when the war started between the Arabs and the Jews but his last edition came suddenly on 9 March 1948. 'We wanted to print a banner headline above the capture of a Jewish settlement by Lebanese soldiers,' he recalled. 'The British mandate censor, a Jewish man called Arieh Siev — a nice fellow although we never saw eye-to-eye — refused to let us print. On the next day, the district commissioner suspended our paper. My father and mother had died some years before and I lived with my brother Rabah, my sister Rabiha, my wife Sulafa and my baby son. It was originally my father's home; there was a big hall inside the entrance which was also used as a dining-room. Most of the house was white. My father had been a great admirer of Kemal Ataturk — he fought in the Turkish army against the British in Gaza — and Ataturk's picture hung in the living-room.

'About April 15th, my house was mortared. It was in the middle of Jaffa. Two shells hit the roof and one exploded in the corridor during the night. By five in the morning, it was impossible to stay there. We had a car, an English Rover, so we drove to the southern part of the city. We locked the house up but we thought we were going back. People say that the Arabs were told to leave their homes by Arab countries. But in Jaffa it was panic. The city was being destroyed. Some people left babies behind. We were being

murdered.' The shelling, according to Abu Khadra, came from Tel Aviv. The family stayed with relatives for ten days, then drove to Ramleh where Abu Khadra's second brother Anwar lived. Abu Khadra remembered stopping at a gas station and finding three bullet holes in his car from snipers. Then he went on to Gaza. By this time, the Egyptian army had entered southern Palestine but Abu Khadra was to watch them, only a few days later, retreating along the beach towards Sinai. The family Rover also became bogged down on the beach road and his brother Anwar suffered a heart attack after spending a night on the open beach. He died of a second attack a few months later.

For days, the Abu Khadras lived in a house in Gaza under nightly air attack. 'We could not move further,' he said. 'We could not move back home and we had reached the end of Palestine.' Abu Khadra became a refugee camp official for the UN in Gaza, leaving in 1951 to become an UNRWA officer in Lebanon. He was later to become owner of a Beirut company that dubbed educational films and translated technical books into Arabic. Yet he took with him to Beirut his old suitcase of deeds and taxes, proof that the Abu Khadras owned their land in Palestine. The documents amounted to a small archive; they even included his Palestine mandate press cards, entitling him 'to pass freely anywhere in Palestine, including areas in which a curfew has been imposed'. There were 1948 tax receipts from the Municipal Corporation of Jaffa and rental agreements for the lease of land to the Royal Air Force. There were deeds for the family home in Jaffa, in the name of his father and dated 1 August 1930, and a map of the Abu Khadras' mortgaged orange orchards at Barqa around the Wadi al Gharbi on the road from Jaffa to Ashqelon.

'The groves were just above the sea,' he said. 'They were magnificent oranges, the best in Palestine. These were the original Jaffa oranges; they were grown in Palestine long before the Israelis came. From my orchard, I could see the steam trains running down the coast to Gaza. I used to hear the locomotive's whistle.' Abu Khadra showed little physical emotion when he talked about the past, but his words were carefully chosen and sometimes very angry. 'It is miserable for us to look back on these things. The West says the Palestinians are better off now and this could be true in some cases. But it is not the point. Palestine is our home. My sister-in-law was allowed to visit Palestine a few years ago. She brought me some oranges from my orchard but I couldn't eat them. I threw them away. I don't realise even now that we will not go back. My kids want to go for a visit and my daughter wants a picture of our home ... I was asked if I wanted to go. But I could not stand the humiliation of crossing the Allenby Bridge — at my age, being stripped and searched by a Zionist, Jew, a Pole, a Russian or a Romanian who is living in my country, in my home, asking me questions and searching me. And it is my country. I think about my land every day. I remember every stone in my house and every tree in my orchards. I am not willing to sign any paper that would release that land to anybody.'

Abu Khadra's faith in legal niceties was only a gesture. He knows what has happened to his land. The trains still run along the coastline south of Jaffa where the family's old orange groves stand. It is no longer a steam locomotive but a fast diesel pulling a trail of red, white and blue carriages, an express that rumbles down to Ashqelon between the orchards and the sea. I could see it from where Abu Khadra used to stand at the edge

of his fields in Barqa, although few people knew where Barqa was. 'Was' is the correct word; for Barqa, like hundreds of Palestinian Arab villages, disappeared after 1948.

The Israeli Jews in the little kibbutz a mile or so away had never heard of it, but an old Arab woman in a long dark dress picking fruit pointed up a hill when she heard the name and shrugged her shoulders. The orchards, now part of a large farming combine, stretched across a little hill. The Wadi El Gharbi — mentioned in Abu Khadra's land maps — elicited a faint response in the woman. It is buried today, like the village beneath the trees, their branches heavy with fruit.

The Abu Khadra inheritance in Jaffa was almost equally hard to find. The house which Kanaan Abu Khadra fled in April 1948 had lain in semi-derelict condition for years, its windows partly boarded up. The olive grove through which he used to walk as a boy was submerged beneath a main road and a cluster of lean-to engineering sheds even before 1948. But I found the home which his cousin Ibrahim owned next to the Tel Aviv-Jaffa port railway line. The railway track had been torn up years earlier — a cutting lined with ivy-covered telegraph poles marked it now — but the house, in need of a few coats of paint, was just next to the old railway bridge. One of Ibrahim's former Jewish tenants still lived on the second floor.

David, a small, thin, smiling man with long, sensitive features, welcomed me to his little home. He and his wife were Turkish-born Jews who came to Palestine before the Second World War. They had never left their home, even when the Arab-Jewish front line ran behind the house in 1948. He well remembered Ibrahim Abu Khadra. 'He was a nice enough man,' David said. 'But we saw little of him in 1948. This house was part of the Jewish front line and although Mr Abu Khadra never knew it, we had guns and ammunition stored downstairs. Menachem Begin used to come here during the 1948 battles to this house, and he came up to see us three or four times during the fighting to have coffee and biscuits with us. He was a good man, an agreeable man.'

The war had left its mark, too, on the home of the two uncles whom Abu Khadra so often recalled visiting. Abu Khadra Street had now become Gerulot Street, but the white-stone house was still there, with its three fine, tall windows of delicate iron tracery. The embossed iron doors were rusting and one of them had fallen off its hinges. On the south wall, there were some faint shrapnel marks; several deep bullet holes could be seen beside a window. The ground floor consisted of a key-cutter's stall and some small shops, just as it did when Abu Khadra knew it. Up the flight of steps was a very old door, covered in flaking green paint.

I knocked on it but it was so dilapidated that I could see right through the door frame and into a large room where a man was sitting in a kitchen chair, dressed in trousers and vest. He was suspicious but courteous. 'Yes, this was Abu Khadra's house,' he said. 'It is not his house now.' He was joined at the door by his wife and daughter. He wanted no publicity and he did not want to talk about himself. 'I own this house now,' he said. So I left, and as I walked back to my car, the man watched me from the little steel balcony upon which Kanaan Abu Khadra had played as a boy. His hands were thrust deep in his pockets, his shoulders slightly hunched in the breeze, a man looking after his home.

At least in Jaffa there had been doors to knock upon. The same cannot be said for many thousands of Palestinian houses in what is now Israel. Fatima Zamzam, for example, knew just what had happened to her home and lands. But from her two-room concrete refugee shack, she could now just see Palestine. She still called it that; and indeed, beyond the line of evergreen trees beside the main road south of the Lebanese city of Tyre, I could see above the coastline a faint, thin grey line of hills inside Galilee on the other side of the Israeli frontier. Mrs Zamzam had left her home on the other side of those hills more than three decades earlier and she had never been back.

She lived in the Palestinian camp at Rashidiyeh, a wretched four square miles of breeze-block huts and cabins relieved only by the occasional tree, a straggling plant hanging from a poorly made brick wall and an open sewer that snaked uneasily down the centre of the mud roads. Mrs Zamzam had a tiny garden; a few feet of clay with a stunted flowering cherry tree that shaded the sandbagged air-raid shelter. For Rashidiyeh was coming under shellfire or Israeli air attack almost every day.

She was at first sight a cheerful figure, a plump woman of 65 who wore a brightly patterned dress and whose curly hair showed around the front of her white scarf. She had a heavily lined face, a prominent, almost hawk-like nose, but she had kindly eyes and every so often she would display a vein of sharp humour that suggested her family had to keep their shoes clean when they approached her little parlour. When she told me how she came to be a refugee, she paused reflectively before each statement, conscious that as a foreigner I might not know the history of Palestine before 1948.

'I come from a village called Um Al-Farajh,' she said. 'It was in northern Galilee. My family had three houses in the village. We used to make olive oil to sell to the other villages around. We grew wheat and made flour. My husband was Mustafa Zamzam and we had three orchards — two with olives and one with citrus. We even grew grapes on the side of our houses. We had all kinds of fruit — we had everything. In 1944, we had a new house built just outside the village for my husband and myself. Mustafa got Arab engineers up from Tel Aviv to build it and it cost about 700 Palestinian pounds. Some English tourists even came to take pictures of our home. It was a stone house — white stone — with four rooms upstairs and four rooms downstairs. It was built in an orchard opposite a place where we used to have our old house. It was known in the village as the Island Area. We had seven children — five boys and two girls.'

Mrs Zamzam spoke slowly, a village woman speaking to a stranger, and without warning she stood up and went to her other room, returning a minute or so later with a rusting tin. I could still read the name of the English toffee manufacturer on the lid which she prised off with a knife. From inside, she took a piece of pale mauve, floppy parchment. It was the 1915 Turkish deed to her family land, heavily stained by damp, the corners torn but the wording and the ornate flowered crest still clearly visible. A Turkish stamp was still affixed to the bottom left-hand corner. 'This shows that my family owned the land,' she said with a simplicity that might have left even a lawyer silent. Then she took a cleaner but still crumpled paper from the tin. *Government of Palestine Certificate of Registration*, it said at the top. 'Land Registry Office of Gelo, Sub-District: Acre. Village: Um Al-Farajh. No. of Land 18151. No. of Doc 52. Block: Al-Habara Kanel. 19 dunums ...' The date is 22

October 1947. The document was in the name of Mustafa Ibn Assaad Shihada Zamzam, Mrs Zamzam's husband, and when she said that I recognised this type of British mandate deed Mrs. Zamzam's face lit up as if a great discovery had been made. Mr Zamzam was dead but his widow regarded the land — not without reason under Islamic law — as rightfully hers.

She said that it never occurred to her or her husband that her village would be harmed or its people endangered. 'We used to visit Jewish people,' she said. 'There was never any problem. We took our sick people to a Jewish doctor. There was a Doctor Kayewe and a Doctor Natani and there was also a lady doctor called Miriam. They were good to us. Sometimes we took our goods to sell in Jewish villages. But one day in 1948, Jewish gangs stopped a truck from our village. They ambushed the truck and killed the driver. Jewish women then shot all the men on board the truck. This happened on the road between Um Al-Farajh and Acre, near the Al-Insherah orchard opposite Nahariya. So no one went to Acre any more.'

According to Mrs Zamzam, Jews then began to shell her village. 'We were surrounded. Other Arabs told us we were surrounded and should move to another village. We tried to use the date palm trees to close the roads — we had only eight English .303 rifles in Um Al-Farajh. The Jewish gangs were just outside. I met a brother-in-law who told me to leave but I stayed another night in our new house just outside the village. The men stayed behind but we left next day. I held my son Hassan who was 40 days old and the small children carried the other babies. We took the keys to the house with us — we lost them here in Rashidiyeh.'

Mrs Zamzam listed the villages through which she travelled — Al Naher, Al Kabil, Al Nahalie, Tashiha and Al Dear — and then she fell into a kind of swoon, wailing as if she was mourning a husband or son and holding her hands to her face. The young Palestinian who had gathered in the room to hear her story sat quietly, knowing that she would finish her grief and that this was a ritual even if it was a deeply felt one. Mrs Zamzam looked up to the wall of the room where there hung a framed portrait of a young man and woman. The girl was dark-haired with an attractive but serious face; the man was painfully innocent, his handlebar mustache and sleeked-down hair with its sharp parting at odds with his handsome features. It was a photograph of Mrs Zamzam and her husband taken in 1939, six years after their wedding.

Outside Um Al-Farajh as she fled, she had met her brother-in-law Mohamed, who had a car, and he returned briefly to her home to get blankets and clothes for the children. 'We thought we would only be away from our village for a few days,' she said. 'But the Jews entered the village. My husband was in the fields and he saw them blow up our new house. They discovered the olive oil we had left behind and they took all our olive oil machines. The Jews destroyed all the village. Even the cemetery was destroyed — my father had been buried there.'

In May of 1948, the Zamzams crossed the Palestine border into Lebanon at Naqqoura — where the Palestinian writer Kalafani was to describe the misery of the refugees — and rented a house in Tyre for 12 Palestinian pounds a month. 'We moved to Baas camp from there,' she said, 'We had only tents for shelter and we tried to make

concrete blocks. Then we cam to Rashidiyeh. I thought I would go home when I left but it has been a long time. I have been twenty-nine years in camps now.'

Just as Mrs Zamzam was finishing, there was a shriek from a home-made air-raid siren in the street and a general movement towards the door of the little hut. High up in the deep blue midday sky were the contrails of three Israeli jets. They soared above us up towards Tyre and then turned southwards over the Mediterranean, back towards Galilee. Mrs Zamzam watched all this with equanimity. A year and a half earlier, she had lost her previous camp home when a shell fired from the Israeli-armed Lebanese Christian enclave to the south hit the roof. She had lived almost half her life amid violence.

Throughout our conversation, a loaded Kalashnikov automatic rifle had lain propped against a wall of her living room, left there by a youth who had gone off to drink tea. When I asked Mrs Zamzam what her sons did for a living, a young man interrupted to say that they all worked 'for the revolution.'

When I asked Mrs Zamzam whether she would really go back to Palestine if the frontier was opened, she did not hesitate. 'We are waiting to go back. I hope I am still alive to go back to Palestine again. I would like to die there.' Mrs Zamzam agreed to let me photograph her and she sat a little unsteadily beside the wall of her home just in front of the cherry tree. She stared into the camera as if she was talking to it. But when I suggested that she smile, another young man interrupted to answer for her. 'She cannot smile,' he said bleakly, 'because she has lost her land.'

Mrs Zamzam's land should have been only 25 minutes' drive across the international frontier. It was actually only 15 miles away. But true to the political contours of Lebanon and what is now Israel, I had to fly to Greece, then to Tel Aviv and then take a four-hour car journey to see it, a round-trip of almost a thousand miles. On the way to Mrs Zamzam's land, I looked across the same Lebanese border from the Israeli side and could actually make out in the far distance Mrs. Zamzam's camp at Rashidiyeh inside Lebanon. It was a journey that would not have made Mrs Zamzam happy had she been able to make it herself.

For her land now lay underneath a plantation of banana trees a few hundred yards down the road from a bricked-up mosque. Her two-storey white-stone house long ago disappeared. It had vanished as surely as the name of her village had been erased from the map of Israel. The Palestinian Arab hamlet of Um Al-Farajh simply no longer existed.

Just how it came to be extinguished was something of a mystery, and even the Israelis who live in Ben Ami — the farming settlement that has been built on the site — had scarcely heard the name. A young man wearing a yarmulka skullcap and sitting astride a roaring tractor wiped his brow with his arm when I asked for the location of Um Al-Farajh. 'I have never heard of this village,' he said. 'Why do you want to know?'

The mere question had been enough to provoke suspicion. Ben Ami lies just five miles south of the Lebanese border, well within range of the Katyusha rockets which were then being fired by Palestinian guerrillas around Tyre and Rashidiyeh; there were concrete air-raid shelters with iron doors between the bungalows. Barbed wire zigzagged in front of the small houses and large Alsatians snarled at strangers from behind steel fences. The people of Ben Ami were not frightened but they were prepared for an enemy; and visitors

interested in the Arab-Jewish war of 1948 were well advised to present convincing explanations for their questions before they stirred memories too deeply.

'So you are writing about those things,' another Israeli said as he stood in a narrow, shaded lane. 'There was an Arab village here but there is nothing left now, you know. All that business is over long ago.' His friend, a tall, bearded man in a black vest with a pair of garden shears in his hand, stared at me without smiling. 'Whose side are you on?' he asked. 'Are you on our side or their side?' He did not bother to explain what he meant by 'their' side. In the event, it was a local veterinary surgeon, a woman with a brisk, hospitable but no-nonsense attitude towards journalists, who invited me into her home and confirmed that this had indeed been Um Al-Farajh. She gave me sandwiches and coffee while I told her of Mrs Zamzam's flight from the village in 1948. She listened carefully to the details of the Palestinian woman's story, of how Jewish gangs had murdered a truckload of Arab villagers shortly before Um Al-Farajh was surrounded and of how the Jews then destroyed Mrs Zamzam's home, the village and even the little Muslim cemetery beside it.

'This certainly was an Arab village,' the Israeli woman said. She spoke charitably of what happened so long ago but her attitude was to grow colder as the evening wore on. She suggested that I speak to a man who had lived nearby in 1948, and after some hours he arrived at the house, a middle-aged Israeli with a lined face and very bloodshot eyes. He spoke only Hebrew and the woman translated for me. I never knew his name; if I wanted to quote him by name, I would have to get permission. Neither of them disclosed from whom this permission would have to be obtained. The newcomer listened in his turn to the description Mrs Zamzam had given me of the events that led her to run away from Um Al-Farajh, occasionally nodding agreement or interrupting to correct her account.

Yes, he said, it was true that the houses had grapes on the outside walls. He himself had seen them when he used to bring olives to the village so that oil could be made from them. Yes, Jewish doctors did indeed care for the Arab villagers then, although Mrs Zamzam had mispronounced the names. It was Dr Kiwi not 'Dr Kayewe' as Mrs Zamzam remembered, and Dr Nathan not 'Dr Natani', but there was indeed a woman doctor called Miriam just as Mrs Zamzam had said. Her family name was Beer; all were now dead. But the man was clearly unhappy about Mrs Zamzam's memory. Did she really have a two-storey house? he wanted to know. All the houses in the village had been small single-storey homes, perhaps only four square metres in area. He was to become even more disenchanted about Mrs Zamzam's record of events.

The first ambush was staged not by Jews but by Arabs, he said. A bus travelling from Haifa to Nahariya in the early spring of 1948 was stopped by Arabs who took the five Jewish passengers from the vehicle and cut their throats. Then it was rumoured that Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti, was travelling from his postwar sanctuary in Lebanon to Acre and there was an ambush at Insherah on the bus believed to be carrying him. When shots were fired at two cars accompanying the bus, one of the vehicles, which had been loaded with ammunition for the Arabs, blew up. This, the man thought, was the ambush to which Mrs Zamzam had referred.

'Um Al-Farajh was not shelled,' the man said, 'although the Jewish forces threw hand grenades near the village of Kubri some kilometres from here. Mrs Zamzam had

accurately remembered the way she travelled away from Um Al-Farajh but the Jews never destroyed her village. They never blew up the houses. The mosque is still standing here and one of the stone-built houses of the village is still here. You can see it. And the cemetery was *not* destroyed. It is still here. Some houses fell down later. Mrs Zamzam is correct when she says that the villagers put tree trunks on the road but she seems to have forgotten why this was done. They were afraid of reprisal because the Arabs had just ambushed a relief convoy at Kubri. It had been sent to an isolated kibbutz with food but the Arabs stopped it and killed forty-seven Jews. That is why Mrs Zamzam left Um Al-Faraih. All she forgot to tell you about was the killing of forty-seven Jews.'

It is quite true that the Jewish armoured convoy was ambushed over at Kubri. What is more, the old iron trucks with their armour plating are still lying rusting beside the old Kubri road just where they came to a halt in 1948, the wheels stripped of their tyres but their iron bullet shields still intact. The rifles with which the Jews defended themselves have been welded onto the sides of the vehicles as a memorial. A plaque erected by the Israeli Ministry of Defence pays tribute to Ben-Ami Pachter, the Israeli commando leader who died in the ambush; which is one reason why the name Um Al-Farajh ceased to exist and the name of Ben Ami took its place.

It was also perfectly true, as the Israeli said, that the village mosque was still standing. Its windows and doors had been sealed up with breeze-blocks but the Koranic inscription beneath the roof remained and someone had painted it in the past ten years. The only surviving house of Um Al-Farajh was now used as a storage shed.

It was not so easy to find the cemetery where Mrs Zamzam's father was buried. The same bearded man whom we had already met said that it lay next to the mosque, behind some barbed wire which had been put there to protect it. It was impossible to see it now, he said. But I walked round the barbed wire and crawled inside the little ground that lay beyond. The Muslim cemetery of Um Al-Faraih was a field of rubble and undergrowth, distinguished over most of its area by nothing more than small mounds of earth and scattered, broken stones. Two cement graves had been smashed open, apparently several decades earlier. Just as Mrs Zamzam had said — and contrary to what the Israelis had told me — the cemetery seemed to have been systematically destroyed.

Beside a new gymnasium not far away, an Arab Israeli was sweeping a path. Where was Um Al-Farajh, I asked him, and he led me to a large square of fir trees and pointed to the earth. 'There is Um Al-Farajh,' he said and raised his hands quickly together in the way you might imitate an explosion. There he left me.

So I walked beneath the trees and found just under my feet pieces of old concrete and what might once have been bits of wall. There was what looked like a door lintel. It was cheaply designed, the kind that villagers would have used in their homes. All this time, I was watched by three Israeli farmers standing next to a tractor.

It seemed as if the circular ironies of history in Ben Ami were too strong. The dead Jewish convoy commander had given his name to the land where Mrs Zamzam's village once stood, an Israeli hamlet that was now periodically threatened with rocket-fire from Palestinian guerrillas, perhaps the same men who as children walked with Mrs. Zamzam from Um Al-Farajh after the ambush on the Jewish convoy.

My visit might have ended there if my car had not run short of petrol on the road south of Nahariya. The gas station attendant was an Israeli Arab, a young man with light brown hair who assumed I was a tourist and wanted to know what I was doing in the cold far north of Israel in winter. I mentioned Ben Ami and Um Al-Farajh and referred momentarily to Mrs Zamzam, when suddenly the boy's face lit up. 'She is may aunt,' he said.

And so it was that Osman Abdelal took me from the gas station and up to a small Arab village called Mazraa, clustered round the ruins of an old Roman aqueduct. He lived in a small house there with his brothers and sisters, all Israeli citizens who spoke Hebrew and lived and worked in Israel. It was Osman's father Mohamed who had returned in his car for the clothes for Mrs. Zamzam's children just before Um Al-Farajh was finally abandoned by the Palestinian Arabs in 1948. The family did not want to talk about politics but they asked about Mrs Zamzam's health. They never went near Ben Ami, they said, and smiled at me. What happened to Mrs Zamzam's house? I asked. 'It is gone,' one of Osman's older sisters replied. 'My mother went to look for it later but it had gone.'

Then what happened to Um Al-Farajh? Osman looked at his brother and sisters. 'They blew it up, he said. 'My family did not see it but they heard the noise of the explosions. They were already coming here to Mazraa.'

And so Mrs Zamzam's family, perhaps irrevocably split by nationalities, was living only 15 miles apart, divided by the Israeli—Lebanese frontier. If Osman Abdelal and his sisters had climbed the furthest hill to the north, they might have just been able to see Mrs Zamzam's refugee camp at Rashidiyeh. But they had never climbed the hill.

There are, of course, specific Israeli laws to stop Damiani and Abu Khadra and Mrs Zamzam from crossing back in the other direction. There is Israeli 'absentee' legislation and there are land expropriation laws passed on from the British mandate. Palestinians with relatives still inside Israel could pay two-week visits — many, like Damiani's wife, have gone wistfully to look from a distance at the homes they once bought and lived in — and the same Israeli spokesman who referred to the Palestinian Arabs as 'a community of refugees' said that he had himself assisted 40,000 Palestinians to rejoin their families and become Israeli citizens. Yet most exiled Palestinians instinctively reject the idea of taking Israeli citizenship in order to return. The spokesman, Rafi Horowitz, was wrong when he said that Palestinians could not claim their lands because they were citizens of a country at war with Israel. Whatever his or her status, a Palestinian can claim compensation from the Israeli Special Committee for the Return of Absentee Property. But only about 170 Arabs had claimed such compensation in five years; making a claim in the Israeli courts means recognising the state of Israel.

It was a point made to me with some vehemence by Mahmoud Labadi, who was then official spokesman for the Palestine Liberation Organisation in Lebanon, a bespectacled figure every bit as urbane and cynical as his Israeli counterpart. 'Do you really wonder,' he asked me at an embassy function in west Beirut, 'why we won't claim compensation? We don't want compensation — we want our land.' He sipped his champagne (Veuve Clicquot 1976) and raised his finger in the air. 'It's invidious for any Palestinian to take a cash payment from the Israelis. It undermines our demand for the return of our homes.'

And he was right, as the Israelis themselves were well aware. They still hoped in 1980 that the Palestinian issue — the demands of Palestinians who lost their homes in what is now Israel — could be dealt with as part of a general Arab—Israeli peace settlement, that the whole two and a half million Palestinian diaspora could be given a lump-sum, once-and-for-all payment of compensation. They do not want the Palestinians back and a glance at the statistics quickly shows why. Well over two million of that diaspora regard themselves as victims of the 1948 war; the half million or so who fled Palestine in 1948 have had children — in many cases grandchildren — who regard themselves as Palestinians. Many Arabs who lost their homes in what became the state of Israel and settled on the West Bank in 1948 became refugees for a second time during the Six Day War in 1967. All these people now regard themselves as having a moral claim to land inside Israel — which is one reason, of course, why the PLO was for so long loath to consider a Palestinian nation outside the boundaries of the Jewish state.

Exactly how much land the Arabs owned in the part of Palestine that became Israel is still disputed. Moshe Aumann concluded from original British figures that in 1948 Jews owned 8.6 per cent of the land and Arabs 20.2 per cent; of which, he claimed, 16.9 per cent was abandoned by Arabs when they thought the neighbouring Arab armies were going to destroy Israel.

But there was one man to talk to in Israel who knew more than anyone else about the land of Palestine. Jacob Manor proved to be the very opposite of David Damiani or Fatima Zamzam. He was academically specific and efficient, a thin ascetic man with a degree in jurisprudence from the Hebrew University and offices in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Manor held the title of Custodian of Absentee Property — the word 'Absentee' giving the curious impression that the absent person could not be bothered to return. He could describe the land registration bureaucracy of the Ottoman Empire, define the intricacies of land expropriation and run off a photocopy of the Israeli Absentee Property Law (1950) in the twinkling of an eye. And everything he did, as he told me several times in his Tel Aviv office, was strictly according to the law.

In his possession were copies of almost every British mandate land registration document, file after file of papers recording in detail the Arab and Jewish owners of property in pre-1948 Palestine. Ask Jacob Manor about the land that belonged to Mrs Zamzam's husband in the village of Um Al-Farajh and he could immediately explain how it came into the hands of the development authority and was then leased to the village of Ben Ami. Each transaction — of which the original owners remained in ignorance — had involved the transfer of money from one Israeli government department to another. If the government expropriates land, then it must pay compensation to the office of the custodian. The custodian can then in theory pay compensation to the original owner — although the land, of course, has gone.

The law is so rigorous and so thorough that it would be difficult to misunderstand the import of the statutory legislation which governs the property of the Palestinian Arabs who fled their homes in 1948 and who — by the same law — cannot return. Manor knew much of this legislation by heart. An absentee, according to the 1950 Israeli law, includes anyone who, between 20 November 1947 and the ending of the State of Emergency, was 'a

legal owner of any property situated in the area of Israel ... and who, at any time during the said period, was a national or citizen of the Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Trans-Jordan, Iraq or the Yemen or was in one of these countries or in any part of Palestine outside the area of Israel ...' An absentee also included anyone who was 'a Palestinian citizen and left his ordinary place of residence in Palestine for a place outside Palestine before 1 September 1948, or for a place in Palestine held at the time by forces which sought to prevent the establishment of the State of Israel or which fought against it after its establishment.'

The definition is broad. For the 'State of Emergency' has not yet ended. And if a Palestinian Arab fled his or her home during the 1948 fighting for an area controlled by Arab forces — even though the individual did not in any way participate in the war — Israeli law effectively deprived the owners of their homes and lands. Jacob Manor made no bones about it. 'Let us suppose,' he said, 'there is someone called Mohamed and that he was born and lived in Acre. And let us suppose that in 1948, following the fighting, he left his ordinary place of residence for a place of insurrection, then he is an absentee — even if he did not join the Arab forces that were fighting against Israel.'

There is a further clause in the 1950 law that permitted Manor to confirm that a man or woman was not an absentee if that person left his place of residence 'for fear that the enemies of Israel might cause him harm or otherwise than by reason or for fear of military operations'. Manor said he had given this dispensation on 40 occasions. But the law did not take specific account of Arabs who left their homes for fear that *Israeli* forces might cause them harm — the reason most Arabs give for their sudden departure. So much, therefore, for the Damianis, the Abu Khadras and the Zamzams.

Of those who left — well over half a million people — scarcely any had disinherited themselves by claiming compensation under the Israeli Absentees Property Compensation Law of 1973. Only 170 Arabs made successful applications in five years. The Israelis, of course, do not dispute the legality of the old British mandate deeds. 'There is no dispute about the legality of the mandate papers,' Jacob Manor said. 'There is no dispute about the land unless a claim is made ... compensation for those who claim it for their land and receive it from the authorities is calculated according to the value of the property in 1973 plus the difference in the index of inflation together with four per cent interest.'

Manor sat back in his office chair as he rolled off these statistics. 'I am a very liberal man,' he said. 'I always take a positive view towards any claim.' He himself was an Iraqi Jew and estimated that 150,000 Iraqi Jews were expelled from their country. 'They left all their property. They cam here penniless and made a claim to the Minister of Justice. We have a list of all the claimants for the future when there is peace with Iraq.' Manor holds the figures, too, for those Jews who lost all their property in Egypt, Yemen and Morocco after the creation of the state of Israel. The Israelis have in fact scrupulously recorded every dunum and block of lost Jewish property in the Arab world so that it can be placed on the scales of compensation payments when there is any balancing of refugee debts at that final Middle East peace conference.

The Custodian of Absentee Property did not choose to discuss politics. But when I asked him how much of the land of the state of Israel might potentially have two claimants

— an Arab and a Jew holding respectively a British mandate and an Israeli deed to the same property — he said he believed that 'about 70 percent' might fall into this category. If this figure was accurate — and it should be remembered that over half of Israel in 1948 consisted of the Negev desert — then it suggested that Arabs owned a far greater proportion of that part of Palestine which became Israel than has previously been imagined. Jacob Manor seemed unaffected by this fact. 'Do you really believe that the Palestinians want to come back?' he asked. 'Most of them have died. And their children are in good positions now.'

If this extraordinary statement involved a blindness to reality, it provided no warning of the storm of anger and abuse which my series of articles in *The Times* was to generate among Israelis and their supporters in Britain. At some length and in careful detail I had told the story of David Damiani, Kanaan Abut Khadra, Fatima Zamzam and of another Palestinian woman, Rifka Boulos, who had lost land in Jerusalem. To visit their former homes and lands had been like touching history. For I had also told of the lives of those who now lived on or near those lands. Save for one mention of a PLO official in Beirut — the spokesman slugging champagne at the diplomatic reception — Yassir Arafat's organisation did not receive a single reference in the thousands of words I wrote. *The Times* also carried a long interview with Jacob Manor. But the reaction to the articles — a series that dealt with Palestinians as individual human beings rather than as some kind of refugee *caste* manipulated by fanatics and 'terrorists' — was deeply instructive.

On the day that the last of the articles appeared, the Zionist Federation staged a demonstration outside the London offices of *The Times*, some of their supporters holding placards which announced that the paper was 'a new Arab secret weapon' and that the PLO would be the next owner of *The Times*. Shlomo Argov, then Israeli ambassador in London, denounced the series as 'a bold apologia for what is none other than basic PLO doctrine'. In the letters columns of *The Times*, Jewish readers variously suggested that I was 'making a serious attempt to undermine the legal basis of Israel's existence' and that the paper had become 'a platform for the enemies of Israel'. The general drift of critical correspondence suggested that the mere publishing of the series was anti-semitic. Argov himself had written an earlier letter of such hostility that it had to be returned by the paper because its contents were regarded by lawyers at *The Times* as potentially defamatory. When this was first pointed out to the ambassador, he said that he could not be sued for libel since he possessed diplomatic immunity. The Zionist Federation condemned Damiani, Abu Khadra, Mrs Zamzam and Mrs Boulos as 'victims of their own aggression' who had 'remained refugees because they are being used as an instrument of the destruction of the State of Israel.'

Just how such lack of pity could be justified was not vouchsafed. Eric Graus, the Federation's honorary secretary, was involved in a heated argument in the street outside *The Times* building with Louis Heren, who was deputy editor of the paper and a former Middle East correspondent. Heren was actually in Palestine in 1948 and was one of the first correspondents to enter Deir Yassin after the massacre of its Arab residents by Menachem Begin's Irgun gunmen. He found himself bitterly telling Graus of the horrors which he had witnessed during a war in which the Israelis still claim they never committed atrocities. No comment was made by either demonstrators or critical readers — or by the ambassador —

about the kindness of Shlomo Green, the old Israeli who showed such compassion towards the Palestinian in whose former home he was now living.[7]

Generosity, however, was not an emotion that could be found in many Palestinian hearts in Lebanon, and the hatred that burned in 1948 was eagerly taken up by a new generation. I witnessed this phenomenon in tragically symbolic form several months after *The Times* had published my series. In early 1981, the Israelis had staged an air raid against the Rashidiyeh Palestinian camp — where Mrs Zamzam had her home — and I drove down to southern Lebanon from Beirut to report on the attack. The Palestinians had been firing Katyusha rockets into Galilee, the missiles landing not far from the Israeli village of Ben Ami where Mrs Zamzam's Arab village of Um Al-Farajh had once stood. There had been little damage to Galilee or Rashidiyeh in the exchange of fire but, not far from the entrance to the Palestinian camp, I was briefly introduced to a man who was described as the 'leader of joint PLO forces' in Rashidiyeh.

Several seconds passed before I recognised the features of the PLO officer who was defending the Palestinian camp and shelling the area around Ben Ami. It was Hassan Zamzam, Fatima Zamzam's son, the same Hassan who as a 40-day-old baby had been carried by his mother out of Um Al-Farajh in 1948 on the family's road to exile. So now the children of the dispossessed were attacking the children of those who had brought such misery to their Palestinian parents. The war had truly gone full circle.

[7] The complete series of ten articles entitled 'The Land of Palestine' can be found in editions of *The Times* between 15 and 24 December 1980. Editorial comment, readers' letters and a report of the demonstration by the Zionist Federation appeared in the paper between 23 December 1980 and 20 January 1981.

A selected list of links to sites concerning Robert Fisk:

Robert Fisk, "Amira Hass: Life under Israeli occupation," 26 August 2001
http://home.mindspring.com/~fontenelles/Fisk/fisk23.htm

Robert Fisk's articles in *The Independent*
http://www.independent.co.uk/search.jsp?keywords=robert%20Fisk&field=byline

The unofficial Robert Fisk website <http://www.robert-fisk.com/>, maintained by *Z* Magazine
http://www.zmag.org/

Robert Fisk, "Oussama bin Laden ," *Le Monde*, 18-09-01 http://www.lemonde.fr/article/0,5987,3230--222457-,00.html

Interview with Robert Fisk, "Four Corners," Australian Broadcasting System
http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/s368553.htm

PITY THE NATION, Nation Books http://www.nationbooks.org/book.mhtml?t=fisk

For criticism of Fisk as a Palestinian apologist, see for example, Andrea Levin (1994)
http://world.std.com/~camera/docs/oncamera/ocdisc.html and "Robert Fisk's Orwellian Newspeak,"
http://www.honestreporting.com/articles/critiques/Robert_Fisks_Orwellian_Newspeak.asp.

For a French view of death threats against journalists, particularly Fisk, for criticizing Israel, see
http://acrimed.samizdat.net/journalismes/societe/02antisemitisme03.html.

Fisk in Afghanistan: "UK journalist beaten by Afghanistan mob," BBC, 9 December 2001
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1699708.stm

Partial transcript of Robert Fisk speech, Concordia University, Montréal, Canada, Nov. 17, 2002
http://www.montrealmuslimnews.net/fiskspeech.htm

Living with Guns
A Series

> A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.
>
> *Second Amendment, Constitution of the United States*

Americans and our guns may be inseparable. In thirty states it is legal to carry a concealed handgun with a permit. All sorts of people carry. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, for instance, where *Archipelago* is based, it is lawful to carry a permitted concealed weapon into a community recreation center. Although citizens of Virginia often oppose the regulation locally, particularly in urban areas, only the state legislature, not town or city councils, can make it unlawful.

Across this country, our civic debate about guns is generally formed as the right to carry *versus* gun control. But in those terms, the National Rifle Association controls the territory. It has the money, the membership, a huge database, and very effective lobbyists to get what it wants. The Virginia gun law, for example, which forbids local regulation, was pushed by the N.R.A. The N.R.A. is the Commonwealth's most generous corporate political donor, and gives only to the Republican Party. The Republican Party, as it happens, holds the majority in both the Senate and House of Delegates. Nationally, pressing its agenda among both parties, the N.R.A. rules the U.S. Congress (where some prominent Democrats are also members), and any number of state legislatures. It has very good friends of the highest rank in the White House and the Justice Department.

In any room, the man with the gun dominates the conversation.

Over the next year, *Archipelago* will ask a number of writers of various backgrounds to contribute to this edgy conversation. Our premise is, in this nation, we live with guns. They aren't going to go away. How did this happen? Can their use be moderated: should it be? For the sake of peace among ourselves, what are we willing to give up?

—*Katherine McNamara*

For further reading; to be continued:
Second Amendment Annotations http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/data/constitution/amendment02/
Packing.org http://www.packing.org/state/
The Brady Center for Gun Control http://www.bradycenter.org/

The Fight for Kansas

The Letters of Cecilia and John Sherman

Mary-Sherman Willis

Among my family's books and letters are some first-person accounts of the Kansas-Missouri Border War, a prelude to the Civil War, writ small and concentrated. Published here for the first time, are letters from the scene in Kansas in May, 1856, by my great-great-grandmother Cecilia Stewart Sherman, when the violence flashed into what she herself called a "civil war." Along with the letters, the two-volume biography of her husband, John Sherman, William Tecumseh's younger brother and my great-great-grandfather, includes his account of events. Cecilia's urgent descriptions are balanced by John's more reflective voice — he was writing almost forty years after the events and knew exactly where they led. Taken together they are extraordinarily revealing about an American buildup to war.

One hundred-and-fifty years ago, Kansas was contested territory, the fight a mixture of doctrine and greed, fueled by widespread gun-ownership and by ineffective law enforcement. Until then the Kansas Territory had been the pass-through route to the Golden West or south to Mexico. The Territory itself belonged to the Otoes, Ioways, and Missouria; the Kickapoos, the Kaskaskias, Peorias, Shawnees, Delawares, Wyandottes, Chipewas, Osages, and Pottawatomies — Native American tribes already in decline, their names left as markers. Settlers kept to the trails etched into the prairies, the Santa Fe Trail heading south, or the California Trail through the Donner Pass on the way to the riches beyond. They rarely stopped to stay; the open space oppressed them. They felt vulnerable.

But that trend changed in 1854 with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which meant the repeal of the Missouri Compromise of 1820 that strictly limited the number of new slave states to be admitted to the Union. Now, the Act determined that each new state could decide on slavery for itself, by popular vote. It also included the Fugitive Slave Act, which implied that no state was free, because a slave was always a slave, even in a state where slavery was banned.

The formal issues during the Border Wars were slavery and the rights of states, but informally, the conflict was all about property. Missouri, which had been a prosperous slave state since 1821, determined to see to it that its new neighbor to the west would, likewise, be a slave state. Missouri slave property — human beings — was at stake, valued then at $150 million. With no clear guidance from distant Washington, people took matters into their own hands. Missourians and Southern sympathizers moved into the Territory to create a pro-slavery presence, while abolitionist settlers from New England and Illinois and Ohio took the long trip West to keep Kansas soil slave-free.

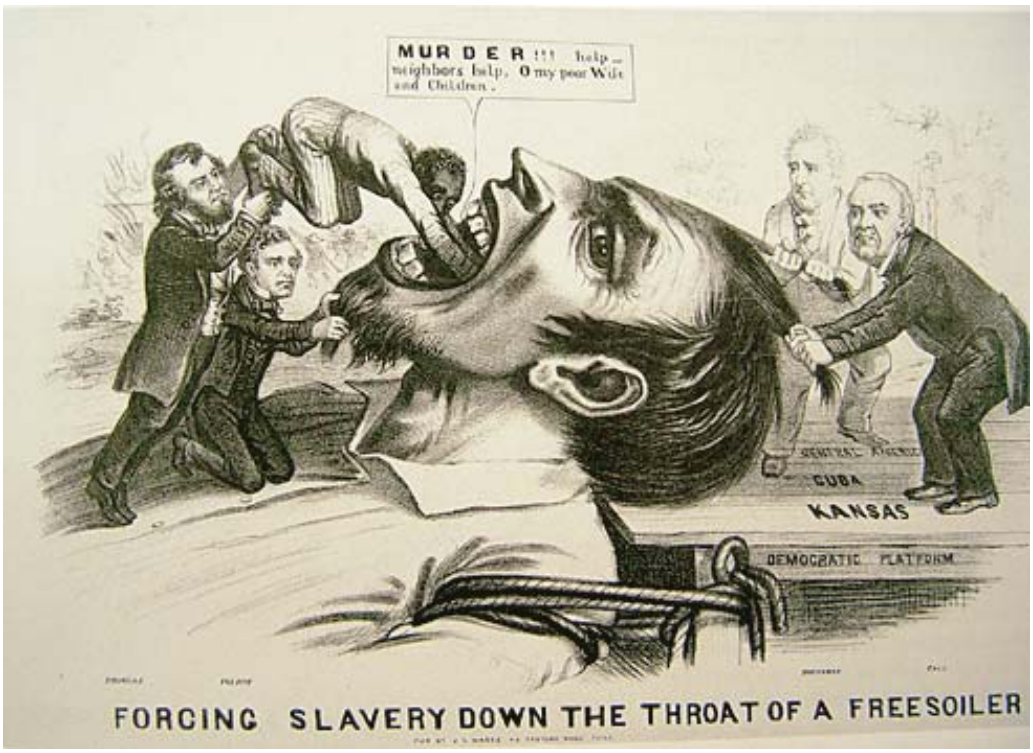
Back in Washington, Southern and Northern interests wrestling for control of the Congress saw Kansas as a proving ground for or against slavery. Democrats represented the South and the expansion of its peculiar institution. On the opposing side, the Republican Party rose from the ashes of the Whig Party in 1854. Its platform was to end slavery and to keep the Union whole. The fight would become violent even within the Capitol. Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, a founder of the Republican party, was beaten unconscious with a cane on the Senate floor in May of 1856 by Rep. Preston Brooks of South Carolina for besmirching the name of Brook's uncle, another South Carolina congressman, in an anti-slavery speech. Afterwards, Brooks triumphantly brandished his cane throughout the South, while Sumner's bloody shirt was paraded throughout New England.

As skirmishes intensified between pro- and anti-slavery forces, several important Civil War figures got a taste for the fight in the Kansas Territories. Lt. Col. Robert E. Lee and Lt. J.E.B. Stuart, U.S. Army veterans of the Mexican War, both were stationed in Fort Leavenworth and had run-ins with the abolitionist guerrilla John Brown, whose militia would murder five men in cold blood in Osawatomie, Kansas, in May of 1856. Three years later, it would be Lee's job to bring Brown to justice for trying to incite a slave revolt in Harper's Ferry, Virginia — a final act of terrorism for which Brown was hanged. Another Mexican war veteran, William T. Sherman, came to Leavenworth in 1858, to try his hand at law with his Ewing brothers-in-law, who had allied themselves with the Free-State Party. He had no law license, but a local judge allowed him to practice "on the grounds of general intelligence." Even so, he failed as a lawyer and spent the winter writing impassioned letters on the Union and the "slavery question" to his brother John in Washington, D.C. Also back from the Mexican war, Ulysses S Grant was a farmer in Missouri; Abraham Lincoln in Illinois was an early denunciator of the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Samuel Pomeroy was an anti-slavery fighter from Massachusetts in search of a political career, who would be sent to the U.S. Senate in 1861 when Kansas became a state. On the other side, Samuel D. Lecompte, the first chief justice of the Territorial Supreme Court, ruled against the Free Soilers in 1856, calling them traitors; the pro-slavery town of Lecompton was named for him.

In 1856, John and Cecilia Sherman had been married eight years and were childless. He was thirty-three years old; she was twenty-seven. The couple was in their first year of living in Washington, D.C., having come from Mansfield, Ohio, Cecilia's home town, where John had worked as a lawyer with his older brother Charles. There he had dabbled in Whig politics, but the repeal of the Missouri Compromise had motivated him to run for office; in 1854 he was elected as a Republican to the U.S. House of Representatives. Cecilia was a "carefully educated" woman, according to John, and an intelligent and supportive partner in his long political career, which would include a term as a Congressman, consistent re-election for forty years to the U.S. Senate, and service as Secretary of the Treasury under Rutherford B. Hayes, and as Secretary of State for William McKinley. The Sherman Anti-trust Act is named for him. Cecilia was known in Washington for her propriety and correctness. As a couple they were never considered warm; John, in fact was thought to be so humorless he was nicknamed the Human Icicle. But the passion Cecilia voices in her letters gives an idea of the heat that the Kansas conflict generated at the time.

The press had done much to fan the flames. The vote to elect a Kansas Territorial legislature was scheduled for March of 1855. Pro-slavery firebrands like hard-drinking David Atchison and John Stringfellow exhorted their supporters in the *Atchison* (Kan.) *Squatter Herald*, the so-called Border Ruffians, to cross into Kansas and vote, by force if necessary. Stringfellow's brother Ben wrote, "To those who have qualms of conscience as to violating laws, state or national, the crisis has arrived when such impositions must be disregarded, as your rights and property are in danger, and I advise one and all to…vote at the point of the bowie-knife and the revolver…. I tell you to mark every scoundrel among you that is in the least tainted with free-soilism or abolitionism and exterminate him." Indeed, thousands of votes were cast. A pro-slavery legislature was established in 1855; it immediately enacted drastic slave codes providing severe penalties for antislavery agitation and authorizing a test oath for officeholders. President Franklin Pierce sent Wilson Shannon, a U.S. congressman from Ohio, to Leavenworth as territorial governor, replacing Andrew Reeder. Pierce, a Democrat, expected Shannon to be pliant to Southern interests.

Horace Greeley rallied to the cause in his *New York Tribune,* summarizing the issue this way: "The contest already takes the form of the People against Tyranny and Slavery." Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote that he knew people "who are making haste to reduce their expenses and pay their debts, not with a view to new accumulations, but in preparation to save and earn for the benefit of Kansas emigrants." Political cartoons drove the point home, such as this one in *Harper's*:



"FORCING SLAVERY DOWN THE THROAT OF A FREE-SOILER"
(Library of Congress Rare Book and Special Collection Division, the Stern Collection)

Anti-slavery forces declared the Territorial Legislature a fraud and the election rigged. The New England Emigrant Aid Society in Massachusetts organized colonies of abolitionists to settle in Kansas. Over one thousand made the arduous trip, by train to St. Louis, then by boat down the Missouri River to territorial border, where the Missouri forks into the Kansas River. They headed for Lawrence, which had been established in 1854 about forty miles upriver from the border on the banks of the Kansas. Within a year their tent settlement was replaced by huts and cabins; the town's most imposing structure, the Society's Free State Hotel, was built of stone. The Society's agent, Dr. Charles Robinson, and his wife Sara would become the organizing center of the anti-slavery forces. Though Robinson advocated non-violent resistance to the elected legislature, the Society had the foresight to equip the colonists with sixty of the latest in rifle technology: the fearsome Sharps breech-loading rifle, manufactured by its inventor Christian Sharps in Philadelphia. Easy to load and deadly accurate, it was dubbed the "Beecher's Bible" for the New York minister who advocated its use in what was deemed a holy war to end slavery. (During the Civil War, companies armed with Sharps rifles were known as sharpshooters.) Mere rumor of these arms kept the Missouri Border Ruffians at bay. The town of Lawrence bought some time to become established.

Partisan newspapers kept tallies of the atrocities perpetrated by each side and exhorted their supporters to action. Offended readers often stormed the presses and threw them in the nearest river. The *New York Tribune* reported of the axe murder of free-soiler Reese Brown by whiskey-crazed Ruffians. "One of the wretches...stooped over the prostrate man, and, with a refinement of cruelty exceeding the rudest savage, spit tobacco juice in his eyes." The Lawrence *Herald of Freedom* described the tar-and-feathering of free-soil lawyer William Phillips in Leavenworth: he was paraded through the streets and then "sold" by a Negro for a dollar before being thrown into the Missouri. Unchastened by the violence, pro-slavery agitator David Atkinson's *Squatter Sovereign* threatened to "continue to lynch and hang, to tar and feather, and drown every white-livered abolitionist who dates to pollute our soil."

Law enforcement was often compromised. For instance, Indian agent George Clarke was accused of leading an ambush that killed Thomas Barber, one of a group of abolitionist settlers returning to their farms from Lawrence to cut firewood. "I have sent another of these damned abolitionists to his winter-quarters," said Clarke, according to a news report from Sara Robinson. Sara also reported how Missouri sheriff Sam J. Jones was the leader of an armed "motley gang" of ballot stuffers from Westport, who tried to force their way into the cabin that served as a poll. When unsuccessful, "[a] pry was then put under the corner of

the log cabin, letting it rise and fall…. The two judges still remaining firm in their refusal to allow them to vote, Jones led on a party with bowie-knives drawn, and pistols cocked. With watch in hand, he declared to the judges, 'he would give them five minutes in with to resign, or die…."' U.S. Marshall Israel Donelson was equally partisan. It was he who led a posse of Border Ruffians intending to destroy Lawrence in May of 1856. With such bias at the highest level of law enforcement, Col. Edwin Sumner, Lee and Stuart's commander at Fort Leavenworth, was left to issue Federal protection to abolitionist and pro-slavery agitators alike. An impossible task: Missourians were determined to wipe Lawrence and its inhabitants off the map.

In December of 1855, Dr. Charles Robinson was made commanding general of the Free State Militia to defend Lawrence against an armed posse of Missourians camped outside the city. Governor Shannon had been unable to control them. Although Robinson had sworn his men to non-violence, they had loaded their Sharps rifles and a smuggled howitzer and were armed to fight, in no small measure helped by the gunpowder their women had cached under their skirts from outlying storehouses. The position of the town — at the edge of the Kansas River in the middle of a plain, flanked by an overlook — made it impossible to defend. But the Ruffians' knowledge of the inhabitants' weapons — and a sudden winter storm with sleet and gale force winds — had kept attackers at bay. The only casualties that time had been a pro-slavery fighter who had shot himself in the foot, another felled by a fallen tree, another killed by his own sentry, and a fourth killed in a barroom brawl. The attackers would wait until spring to make their next assault.

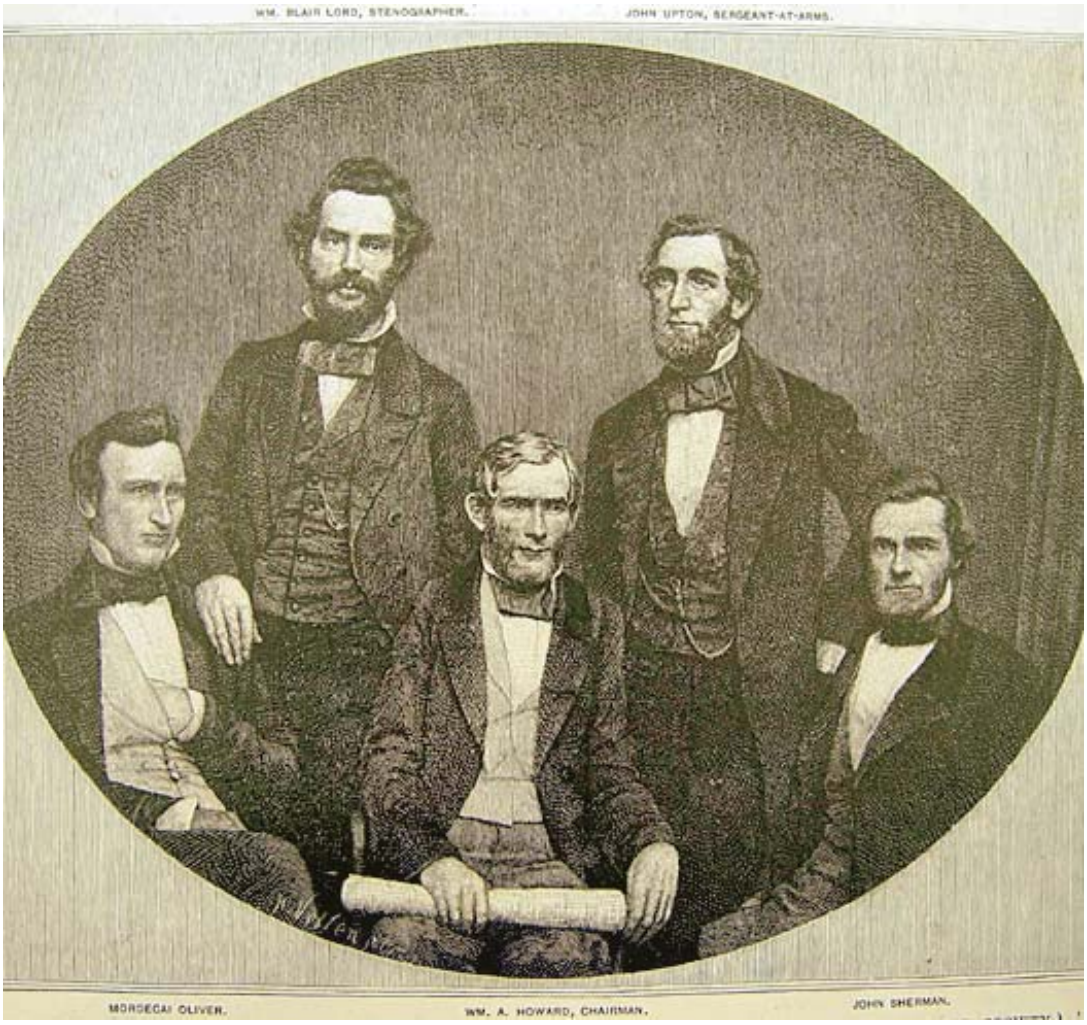
Meanwhile, word of the election fraud and the siege of Lawrence was telegraphed back to Washington. In January of 1856, President Pierce sent a worried message to the House about the situation in Kansas and asked that money be set aside for the "maintenance of public order in the Territory of Kansas." In March the House decided to assemble a committee to see the situation first hand, take testimony from both sides, and get an account of the territorial election. The committee would consist of three congressmen: Mordecai Oliver of Missouri; John Sherman of Ohio; and Chairman William A. Howard of Michigan. Accompanying them were a stenographer and a guard. They would travel by train to St. Louis, arriving April 12th, then continue by steamer and over land, taking testimony at both free-soil and pro-slavery settlements. They then would return the way they came, arriving in Detroit by June 17th to compile the report formally.

John Sherman picks up the story here:

> I accepted the position assigned me with much diffidence. I knew it was a laborious one, that it would take me away from my duties in the House, expose me to a great deal of fatigue and some danger, yet I felt that the

appointment on so important a committee was a high compliment when given to a new Member, and at once made preparations for the task before me….

Mrs. Sherman expressed a strong desire to accompany me. I tried to frighten her from going, but this made her more resolute, and I consented. She remained with or near us during our stay in Kansas and Missouri, and for a time was accompanied by Mrs. Oliver, a charming lady, to whom we were much indebted for kindness and civility where most of her sex were unfriendly….



Kansas Investigating Committee, from left to right: Mordecai Oliver, Commissioner (Missouri); W. Blair Lord, Stenographer; William A. Howard, Chairman (Michigan); John Upton, Sergeant-at-arms; John Sherman, Commissioner (Ohio). The print of the investigative committee is credited to the Kansas Historical Society, but there is a copy in John Sherman's book. Also, the records note that it appeared in *Century Magazine* in 1887. –*M-S.W.* (LOC Prints and Photographs Division)

We arrived by steamer at a place called Westport Landing near the mouth of the Kansas River. As I remember the place it was a mere hamlet,

composed of three dwellings, a store, a tavern and a blacksmith shop. We passed over the high rolling prairie, where but a few and scattered cabins then existed, but which now is the site of Kansas City…about six miles from the landing we entered Westport, the headquarters of the Santa Fé trade. This important trade in 1854 was conducted with "prairie schooners," wagons of great dimensions rudely but strongly built, each hauled by four to six mules or Indian ponies, and all driven by as rough a set of men of mixed color, tribe and nativity as could be found anywhere in the world. Their usual dress was a broad brimmed felt hat, a flannel shirt, home-spun trousers, without suspenders, and heavy cowhide boots outside their trousers, with a knife or pistols, or both, in their belts or boots. They were properly classed as border ruffians, and as a rule were whisky soaked.

Mrs. Sherman and myself started in advance for Lawrence in an open buggy drawn by one horse, and were told to follow the trail, and this we had no difficulty in doing. We passed through one or more Indian reservations, over as beautiful a country as the sun shines upon, but without house or habitation, except Indian huts. We arrived at Lawrence, a town less than two years old, and were cordially received. The people there were fearing a raid by the "border ruffians," but this was fortunately postponed until our departure for Leavenworth.

Cecilia writes to her sister-in-law Fanny, who is in Mansfield, Ohio. John's younger sister, Fanny was married to Charles Moulton, a prominent Cincinnati lawyer and businessman who looked after John's political interests in that Democratic city.

Leavenworth K.T. May 19th 1856

My dear Fanny,

I received Mr. Moulton's letter a few days before leaving Lawrence for which I am much obliged although I was sorry you were too unwell to write yourself. Mr. Moulton makes a good secretary though and we should be glad to hear more lengthily from him when his time permits. Mr. Sherman has not until yesterday written a letter to anyone since he came into the Territory. He thought it was doubtful if they would get through if he did unless sent by private conveyance to St. Louis. Intercepting of letters is one among the many annoyances the Free State people here have to bear. They cannot get a telegraph through either. The lines are generally down when they want to send or something of the kind. I presume in this the stopping of [Dr. Charles] Robinson at Lexington without any process or indictment, or without one having been found against him & all the other outrages committed daily, together with the army collected from Missouri Ruffians for the declared purpose of killing or chasing every Free State man from the Territory, has all reached Mansfield.

But yet it is impossible for any one so far removed from such scenes to realize them as those who hear and witness them here do. I would say too, it is impossible for them to even believe the half. I do not believe a day has passed since we have been in the territory that some outrage has not been committed upon some Free State man which would make the blood of every northern man boil. If they had only arms, they would not have submitted as passively to insult & oppression as they have heretofore done. Every day for two weeks large bodies of armed men from Missouri have been coming across the river into Kansas at

different points. Yesterday there were between one and two hundred from Platte City and Weston Mo encamped on the banks of the Stanger [River] waiting for it to fall so they could ford. [David] Atchison was with them They had two brass cannons, rifles, revolvers & plenty of bowie knives.

Cecilia Sherman in 1897.
This photo of Cecilia was taken three years before her death by society photographer Frances Benjamin Johnson for the *New York Times* Sunday supplement on cabinet members' wives (John was Secretary of State). Its caption: "first portrait taken in 27 years." I have no earlier image of her, but I do have a copy of a photo from the same group, of her decked out in ermine.—*M-S.W.* (LOC Prints and Photographs Division)

John continues:

> The committee proceeded immediately to take testimony. Governor Reeder acted in behalf of the Free State side, and General [John] Whitfield in behalf of the pro-slavery side, this being the conceded line of demarcation between the opposing factions. The town [of Lawrence] was in embryo, nothing finished, and my wife and I were glad to have a cot in a room in the unfinished and unoccupied Free State Hotel…. There was no difficulty in obtaining witnesses or testimony, but, as a rule, the witnesses on one side would only testify in Lawrence, and those on the other in Lecompton or Leavenworth. They were like soldiers in hostile armies, careful to keep outside of the enemy's camp.
>
> Dr. Robinson, afterward Governor Robinson [in 1861], was then by far the ablest and bravest leader of the Free State cause.…When the committee visited Lecompton to take testimony, it was a surprise to us that he not only offered, but insisted upon going to that place, the headquarters and capital of the pro-slavery party. It was then scarcely a hamlet, and its existence depended entirely upon the success of that party. Dr. Robinson and I rode together into the place. It was easy to see that he was not a welcome visitor. Everyone but the committee carried arms. Several murders and affrays had recently occurred, in regard to which we had taken evidence. Here we had access to the poll-books of the contested election and met on friendly terms with the officers of the territory, the chief of whom were Judge [Samuel D.] Lecompte, chief justice of the territory, after whom the town had been named, and [Samuel J.] Jones [sheriff of Douglas County, Missouri]…. Governor [Wilson] Shannon was I think also there for a time. The quarters for lodging were even more limited here than in Lawrence. I slept in a cot side by side with the one occupied by Judge Lecompte, who, though a terror to the Free State men, seemed to me to be a good humored gentleman, more violent in his words than in his acts. We had no unpleasant incidents while there, though much had been prophesied in Lawrence.

Cecilia:

….Mr. Jesse Newell, formerly from near Olivesburg & immediately from Iowa with his two sons & a son-in-law, is looking through the county for a location. He arrived [in Leavenworth] today and gave us an account of his adventures for the last two or three days. He was stopped several times before he got through. He was going from Topeka to Lawrence on Saturday but after having been stopped once or twice he turned around and went to Lecompton, the headquarters of the enemy, to see Gov. Shannon whom he knew. He spied him in a crowd upon the street and accosted him thus: "I would like to know what these

bands of armed men who are going round the country mean stopping peaceable citizens on the high way—&c &c. I am a free man & thought I was in a free country till I came here," he said.

Shannon got angry & told him there was no use in his getting mad—-&c—that the whole Territory was under military law. He then turned to go into his office. Mr. Newell called to him, "Shannon it's me[,] and you are not going to treat me thus. I'll know what these things mean." Shannon then told him to follow him in. He did so & he gave him a permit to pass unmolested through the territory. He then started again for Lawrence but was stopped twice by one party of ten—-& another of fifteen armed with rifles & fixed bayonets; they questioned as to where he was from, when he came, what town he had been, were he was going.

He told them, and they said he had been travelling in d—d abolition towns all the time. They supposed he was going now to Lawrence to help fight the Border Ruffians, and he couldn't go. He told them he had started for Lawrence, there he intended to go. They told him they would take his mules for the use of the army. Says he, "These mules cost eleven dollars & before you get them you'll take my scalp. He showed them his permit then & they let him go, but Shannon & they too told him there was no use to go, that he wouldn't get into the town, it was guarded & in arms. But he said he went on & when he came near the town he saw men planting corn & women in the garden. He went on down town & there were little girls jumping the rope, stores were open, the men at their usual work & all was quiet. He didn't know what to make of it after the stories Shannon had told him about the citizens of Lawrence all being in arms &c. No doubt Shannon thinks they are. The pro-slavery tell him so in order to bend him to their measures & he never goes out of Lecompton so he can find out himself.

John:

> From Lecompton the committee went to Topeka, then quite a small village…. It was already ambitious to become the Free State capital of Kansas, by reason if its central position. There was then no settlement of any importance west of Topeka. Some testimony was taken, but we soon returned to Lawrence, and from thence went to Leavenworth. A large part of the distance between these places was an Indian reservation. Mrs. Sherman and I rode over it in a buggy, and found no white man's habitation on the way. Its great value and fertility was easily perceived, and it in now well settled by an active and prosperous population of white men. On the road we met an Indian seated near his wigwam, with a gun in his hand, and for a moment I feared that he might use it. He uttered some Indian gibberish, which we construed as an invitation to enter his hut. We tied our horse, entered, and found no one there but an old squaw. I gave the Indian some silver which he greedily took, but indicated by his motions that he wanted a drink of whisky, but this I was not able to give him.

Cecilia:

[Leavenworth] May 20th

A message from Lawrence arrived this morning to communicate the intelligence of more outrages committed upon their men there. Their horses are stolen from them and everything else [that] this army of

ruffians denominating themselves [as] Marshall Donaldson's [sic: U.S. Marshal Israel Donelson] deputies can convert to their use. One old man was plowing with six yoke of oxen. They came & took from him three of the yokes — if they say anything against their proceedings they will knock them down as if they were dogs & they are such cowards they will never make the attack except when they are three to one; thus the free state men have no chance to defend themselves.

Yesterday about two o'clock a young man by name of Stewart from Ashtabula Co. Ohio was in a grocery a few miles from Lawrence when two or three or four of the Ruffians came in & walking up to him said, "We are going to search your pockets." Stewart says, "I guess you are not." & put himself in an attitude of defense. [A] young man in the grocery handed him a pistol saying, "Here, defend yourself." Whereupon the fiends leveled their guns at him telling him, "We will shoot you if you do not lay down that pistol." Stewart laid it down and got on his horse & was riding off when one of them said to the others, "D—-n it, let us shoot him anyhow." & fired a ball passing in at his back and out at his breast.

When the news got to Lawrence it produced terrible excitement. They all felt like laying aside their non-resistance plan & flying to arms. Some of his comrades did start for the scene of the murder, and before they got there, one of them was shot through the head & instantly killed. This was at five or six, the same evening one of the Delaware Indians was shot on the other side of the river by a party of the murderers. They hastened over to Lawrence to try to get assistance to protect themselves or revenge the death of one of their tribe.

Thus it goes. We know not what to look for next, for these hounds are thirsting for the blood of the Free State Men, but the non-resistance plan rather disarms them. They want to keep the shadow of law on their side and therefore they want to drive them from the position they have taken, and excite them to resistance by aggression and murder. [The Free State men] have proposed to them that if they would let [U.S. Colonel Edwin] Sumner station some of his troops among them to protect them, [the Ruffians] would deliver up all, even their private arms so long as [the soldiers] staid & they might arrest any of their men they chose provided they, the men quoted, were to be protected from the mob. But that when the troops left, their arms must be returned to them again.

The reply from Shannon (or Donaldson [sic-Donelson], rather) was that their arms must be delivered into his—Donaldson's—hands, and not only that, but the two printing presses in the town must be destroyed. They said nothing less would suit Carolinians. Of course the Lawrence people will not submit to such unjust demands. If they had they would only have imposed some other conditions with which they could not comply. They have sworn they are going to kill every man in Lawrence & the women they reserve for a worse fate. If it was not that the Federal Government is on the side of these men, the Free State people would soon show them who is the strongest. But as soon as they would do that, Shannon would call out the U.S. troops and they would be treated as rebels against the U.S. Notwithstanding all this awe of the Federal government, it is very hard for the leaders of the Free State party to restrain their men from pitching in & they say if these outrages continue they will not be able much longer to prevent them.

John:

Leavenworth was a new town near Fort Leavenworth, the then western military post of the army of the United States. We placed ourselves in communication with Colonel Sumner, then in command, but we had no

> occasion to summon his official aid, though authorized by the resolutions under which we were acting to call for such assistance from any military force which was at the time convenient to us. However, our meetings there were more disturbed than at any other place.

Cecilia:

[Leavenworth,] Wednesday morning. I have written you the war news so far, or some of them, for it would cover may sheets to give you all. And now I will give you a little history of ourselves.

The committee finished their duties at Lawrence and that portion of the territory the first of last week. We had been anticipating an attack upon the town for three days and nights before we left, for they had been heard to tell they were going to destroy the testimony in some way or other, and they knew Tuesday was the day set for leaving for Leavenworth—(Oliver & all his party had left on the day previous). As they did not attack the town we did not know but their plan was to attack us on our way to L.

John:

> …. Dr. Robinson was arrested on a steamboat on the way with his wife to St. Louis. We had confided to him a copy of the testimony taken, to be delivered to Mr. Banks, the speaker of the House. We believe that a knowledge of that fact caused the arrest, but, fortunately, Mrs. Robinson, who had the testimony safely secured in her clothing, was allowed to proceed to Washington. Dr. Robinson was taken back to Leavenworth and placed in prison, where I called upon him, but was rudely threatened, and was only allowed to speak to him in the presence of a jailer….

Cecilia:

A good portion of the original testimony had been sent on to Washington by Gov. Robinson (when he was taken of the boat at Lexington in such a dastardly manner his wife went on with it). The rest I sewed up in pockets made on the inside of my quilted skirt, the copies the sergeants at arms took charge of. Mr. Sherman & I started ahead of the rest. It was understood that he carried the testimony—when we got across the river Sergeant Dufries of the USA inquired of Mr. Sherman if he was the gentleman going to Leavenworth. He answered he was and [Dufries] said he would accompany us. Whether this meeting was accidental or whether he had been secretly instructed by Col. Sumner who had been at Lecompton on Saturday we don't know.

We came through without molestation. The road from Lawrence here lies through the Delaware Reservation and it is the most beautiful country one can imagine. I thought what I had formerly seen of the territory was as fine as it could be, but this surpasses it. There are thousands & thousands of acres, miles

in extent, upon which you see no habitation, and often no living things but birds. I think one has a deeper sense of loneliness or solitude on these great uninhabited prairies than we would feel in dense forests of the same extent. I think probably the prairies are more beautiful now, crowded as they are with the fresh green grass and such a variety of wild flowers, than they are when the grass is taller. It grows they say nearly as tall as a man's head. Leavenworth is much better built than Lawrence and is still more beautifully situated than it.

We are boarding at a private home, Mr. Keller's. He formerly kept the hotel. At the time Phillips was tarred and cottoned, when [Keller] found some of his boarders was engaged in that affair, he told then to walk up to the desk, settle their bills & leave his house. He would have no one about him who had been engaged in such a cruel dirty affair. He was born and raised in Kentucky, lived in Missouri for seventeen years before he came here and was with the pro-slavery party, till he says he became so disgusted he couldn't go with them any longer. Many others have told us the same thing….

On the Thursday after I came here, Mrs. Sumner and her daughters came to see me and invited us to come on Sabbath morning & witness the grand cavalry parade. We went but unfortunately were a little too late. It was nearly over. There were about five hundred on parade all in full dress uniform. The grandest sight I ever saw in America. I once witnessed a parade of British cavalry at Montreal. There are a great many handsome young officers at Fort L. Mary S[Sherman][1] would be in her element here, and have a much better field for the exercise of her powers of captivation than Washington. They have four brides there now. About twenty of the officers have wives with them & having not much to do, there is a great deal of gaiety. They urged us to come & spend some time with them but the committee will spend no time in play. They have worked about 10 hours a day ever since they commenced their duties and are almost worn out.

John:

We were frequently threatened through anonymous letters. On one occasion, upon going in the morning to the committee room, I found tacked upon the door a notice to the "Black Republican Committee" to leave Kansas "upon penalty of death." I cut it from the door and called upon a bystander to testify to the contents and the place from which it was taken.

On one Sunday morning, while sitting in my lodging, a very rough looking man entered, and I indicated to Mr. W. Blair Lord, our stenographer, to take down what he said. With many oaths and imprecations he told us that he had been robbed by ruffians of his horses and wagon a few miles from Leavenworth; that he had offered to fight them, but they were cowards; that he was born in Richland county, Ohio, near Mansfield, and he wanted me to help him get his traps. I knew his family as famous fighters. I asked him if he would swear to his story. He said he would. Lord read it to him, oaths and all, from his stenographic notes. He stared at Lord and demanded "Where in hell did you get

[1] Childless themselves for the first years of their marriage, John and Cecilia took active interest in their many nieces and nephews. Mary Hoyt Sherman was the daughter of John's brother Charles. In 1868, she married General Nelson A. Miles, who made his career in the West and spent much of it in Fort Leavenworth.

that?" He was handed the stenographic notes and, after looking at them, he exclaimed: "Snakes, by God; but it is all true!" Whether he got his outfit and traps I never knew.

Cecilia:

The Fort is about 2 miles from the city—a military road all the way and a delightful ride. The government farm contains 3,000 acres & is under fine cultivation. The Fort is beautifully located on a high commanding point overlooking the country & river for a great distance. The residences of the officers are handsome. They live on the best Uncle Sam can provide too. Mr. Moore, a young lawyer here, took me all around the government farm yesterday, and up to the top of Pilot Knob, a very high and narrow ridge of rock & of limestone formation, from which we can view the country for miles. The cemetery is on the top of this hill, here the murdered [Reese] Brown is buried—(he was chopped to pieces with lathing hatchets).

All who have seen Iowa say Kansas is a much finer state, and if those who are looking for locations in the west would only come here they could not but be more than satisfied. The climate is charming, the soil is unsurpassed for richness & depth. It is abundantly watered. I never saw so many springs in my life as I have here or so many creeks. The latter occur from every two to six miles & as they are not bridged yet they are often dangerous even after moderate showers.

John:

The trouble commenced at Lawrence shortly after our arrival at Leavenworth. A company of about 700 armed men, the great body of whom were not citizens of the territory, were marched into the town of Lawrence under Marshal Donaldson [sic] and Sheriff Jones, officers claiming to act under the law, and they then bombarded and burned to the ground a valuable [Free State] hotel and one private house, and destroyed two printing presses and material. The posse, being released by the officers, proceeded to sack, pillage and rob houses, stores, trunks, even taking the clothing of women and children. The people of Leavenworth were much alarmed, as threats were made to clean out the "Black Republican Committee" at Leavenworth.

Cecilia:

Thursday morning

We were roused this morning by sad intelligence from Lawrence which as been confirmed by others who have arrived since. On yesterday morning, as stated by one of our sergeant at arms who had been out, witnessing, between 8 & 9 oclock, while the citizens of Lawrence were peacefully pursuing their different avocations or going to their work, horsemen and footmen all armed with muskets with fixed bayonets & other arms were seen collecting on Capitol Hill & the mount overlooking the town. About 11 oclock [U.S. Deputy] Marshall Donaldson & eight men as a posse came down into the town and summoned two of their principal military men to assist them & then proceeded to make their arrest [of

two free state fugitives] without the least resistance from anyone. After making the arrests they dined at the Free State Hotel after which they with their prisoners retired up to Gov Robinson's house on the hill where the others were still stationed.

About two oclock Sheriff Jones (who they say was shot but which is doubted as all a hoax) & 18 men all on horseback came down, drew up in front of the hotel. Jones called for Gen. Samuel Pomeroy. He appeared. When Jones addressed him thus, "As one of the principal citizens of Lawrence I address myself to you. It is well known I have been repeatedly resisted in the execution of duties as Sheriff of Douglas Co. in this place & that the last time I was here an attempt was made to assassinate me. I now come to demand that all the arms, public & private, shall be brought stacked in the street & delivered to me." And taking out his watch he said, "I give you five minutes to decide. If it is not done I will storm the town."

Pomeroy asked for a longer time. Jones said, "No, you have had five days already." Pomeroy then consulted with the committee of safety and they determined they would deliver up the public arms consisting of a cannon & three or four howitzers. The private arms they told Jones they had no control over and he had no right to ask them. [Jones] then said he did not know as he had, but said he would pledge himself they should be returned to all who proved property. They did not give them up. To this demand he subsequently added that "they should be allowed unresistingly to destroy the two printing presses" & both to this demand & the former he added, "I demand this by order of the Court of the U.S." Judge Lecompte is responsible, if this is true.

After the cannons were delivered up, those who remained upon the hill then filed down into the town, about three hundred strong, with their cannon. [They] filed off and planted their cannon in front of the Hotel, also the cannon which had been delivered up. One portion of them went to the printing offices, took the printers prisoners, took the presses, type and all the furniture of the offices & threw them into the Kansas River, and came back whooping and screaming like savages, and parties stationed on the hills on the other side of the river answered them by whooping.

They then set fire to the printing offices. Some variance of opinions occurred as to tearing down the hotel. The Georgians troops wanted to save it but the Carolinians and Missourians insisted on destroying it. They then commenced firing upon it with their cannon and platoons of musketry. Then the women & children commenced flying in every direction, some with provisions in their hands & others with some of their clothing, to the ravines & wherever they could find any security. Some were crying & asking what shall we do or where shall we go.

The cannonading did not make much impression upon the walls of the Hotel & they then set fire to it. The bodies of those who had been murdered on Sunday lay in their coffins in the hotel & were burnt with it, it is supposed. Men had been sent out Tuesday to dig graves for them but were fired upon & had to quit. They then turned in and sacked all the houses, carrying off all they could find of value to them. They also set fire to Gov. Robinson's house, and when they went away they said they would be back in the morning to finish their work.

Mr. Whitman, a highly respected citizen living near Lawrence, having had a horse stolen from his claim during his absence on Monday might, went upon the hill among them to demand its return. He called for Donaldson but was told he was busy. [Dr. John] Stringfellow then came forward & [Whitman] stated his demand to him. He promised it should be returned to him when the party who had it came in. It was the Marshall who took [the horse] from the Whitman's claim together with saddle, bridle, & blanket. Stringfellow asked him if he thought the citizens would resist the Marshall. [Whitman] replied

they would not & they never had resisted the [Marshall]'s authorities. S[tringfellow] replied they were not [Marshall's] authorities. Mr.[Whitman] asked if they were not acting under authority of the U.S. Marshall. [Stringfellow] said yes they were, but in the enforcement of territorial law & that [the horses] were to be handed over to the Sheriff when the Marshall was done with them.

While they were talking, others crowded round. One said, "Well, fighting or no fighting, we will destroy the printing presses." Stringfellow replied to him aside, "There will be no difficulty about that." Another said, "We'll destroy the hotel too." Stringfellow replied to that, [that] they were acting under law & must act accordingly, but another man he said he wished his cannon balls were larger. S[tringfellow] replied, "They are large enough. The walls are not more than a foot thick, I could break them down." Mr. Whitman said [the Missourians] had various banners for each company but no U.S. flag. There was one he supposed was it, but when he got up close to it, it was black & white stripes without stars. Another black with a large red star in the centre. All had various mottoes upon them, one Slavery & Kansas.

Mr. Townsend tells me he saw one of their men, a Missourian from Weston Mo, who said they had the hardest work to get the hotel down, that they put kegs of powder in it & couldn't demolish it. It has just been all newly & handsomely furnished by Mr. [Shalor] Eldridge who has just come to Lawrence & was the proprietor. He had done nothing to deserve such damage to his property even from so base a government. Eldridge & his brother carried the message from the citizens to Shannon to which he & Donaldson gave the reply I formerly stated. Mr. Eldridge told him if those were the conditions he imposed he figured they must have civil war. "Well then, let us have war by God," said Shannon. It is now ascertained a certainty that Shannon & Atchison were both with the mob on the hill & Atchison made them a speech just before they came down into the town.

Every word I have written is the truth but O! it is not half the truth I could tell the whole or begin to. I wish every man in the north could only be here & see & feel things as we do. Then they would realize how it is & not till then. Mr. Sherman says Ruffian tyranny is nothing to what the Free State people here are & have been subjected to. They would not submit to it but if they resist, the whole government from the lowest officials up to the President are against them.

And [the Free State people] say even their own friends in the east will or would blame them, and so they thought they would just let the government and the Ruffians show what they would do. [Free State people] would concede all they could, to prevent it. It would make the crime of the other side the greater and the more apparent to the friends in the free states and [the free states] would then not blame them for protecting themselves. But they say if they had resisted at Lawrence just from fear of what [the Missourians] might do if permitted to come into the town, people would have said they were premature & that such a thing as their destroying as they have, never could have occurred.

But now that they have shown their cloven foot, the Free State people will attack them. Mr. Whitman said the last thing he saw was the great fire and lots of blue around, which can be seen for twenty miles in some directions & which was the appointed signal for the Free State men to [take] their arms and march for Topeka, which it was understood the enemy were going to attack next. There is not a doubt entertained but what the Free State men, even with the arms they have got, will be the victors unless the others are largely reinforced from [Missouri], which they probably will be.

Mr. Whitman said [the Free State men] would retake their own cannon & capture this too. Mr. Townsend says Mr. Burgess, the man from Weston, told him [the pro-slavery side] had 1400 men, & T[ownsend] strongly suspected [Burgess] was going home after more. T[ownsend] has been off through

[Missouri] ever since Saturday after witnesses & he says the whole thing is strongly condemned by all the good men in the towns he was in, that it is only the vagabonds who have come over to Kansas, though some of them are men of property too. Mr. Sherman says when they get courts in which justice can be obtained, their property will have [to] pay for the damage they have been accomplices in committing.

This image of Lawrence, showing the demolished Free State Hotel, appeared in *Harper's Weekly*, Sept. 19, 1863. (LOC Prints and Photographs Division)

Thursday evening

News has just arrived that Shannon has sent to the Fort for the U.S. troops to put down the mob, but in fact it is to protect them from the Free State men, now that he knows they have outraged law & that the F.S. men are arming for attack and resistance & would probably cut them to pieces if the troops would only stay away.

O! my, my, but the Free State men are mad to fight. Companies would start from here at once if they only thought they could reach Topeka before the troops could. But the latter are so much better mounted there is no hopes of that, and their only hope now is that the Free State men already there will have cut them off before the troops come.

O! how basely Gov. Shannon uses the powers invested in him by the President. He refused to call upon the station troops near Lawrence to protect it when requested by the citizens, but now when he knows they are justly exasperated at the repeated outrages upon life and property and he feels he maybe in some

danger, he calls upon them. He need have no fear of personal violence for they regard him as an old imbecile who is wholly at the mercy of the mob & must act as they dictate, else his life is in danger, for they have repeatedly declared if he acted otherwise than they will have him, they will kill him. Mr. Townsend says a man in [Missouri] said that the way in which they got powers to destroy the hotel & printing presses was by representing them to the grand jury as nuisances. There is not a Free State man on the grand jury and of course they had no difficulty in getting the color of law to act under. But they had no law for burning Gov. Robinson's house & sacking all the rest.

John:

> …The evidence at Leavenworth being closed, the committee returned to Westport, Missouri. When we were there we saw an armed and organized body of residents of Missouri march across the line into Kansas to retaliate, as we were told, for the murder of five pro-slavery men at Osawatamie.[2] While they were marching into Westport from the east, Governor Shannon, in obedience to the summons of the committee, came into Westport from the territory, and in his presence they filed off in regular array into the territory. It was difficult to ascertain the precise causes of these murders, but it was shown that they were in retaliation for those of certain Free State men, one of whom was the son of John Brown, later the famous leader of the attack on the fort at Harper's Ferry, and who had acted for the committee in summoning witnesses to Lawrence. The testimony in respect to these murders was vague, and the murderers were not identified. Two years afterwards I met John Brown in Chicago, and asked him about the murder of the pro-slavery men at Osawatamie; he replied with spirit that they were not murdered, but that they had been arrested, tried by a jury, convicted and executed. The arrest, trial and execution must have been done during one night. He did not disclose the names of the executioners, but his cool statement was a striking picture of the scenes then enacted in Kansas by both sides; both appealed to the law of force and crime, and crime was justified by crime.

Cecilia:

Tell Mary S. [that] Col. Mitchell is here & has just made a long call. He was here yesterday but I was absent. He inquired about her. If the roses & oleander are living, set the oleander where it was last year & the roses any place at all. Please tell Mary to have John clean out the cistern well & put the water pipes in again, & have the filter fixed so it will operate well if it don't now & also to get Mr. Wm. Ilvene to whitewash. We will probably be home by the middle of June at farthest. It is very warm here for the last week although there is always a fine air blowing.

[2] On May 24, John Brown, enraged by the sacking of Lawrence, led a posse of vigilantes consisting of five of his sons and three accomplices to murder five pro-slavery settlers in cold blood.

Ilvene to whitewash. We will probably be home by the middle of June at farthest. It is very warm here for the last week although there is always a fine air blowing.

I hardly expect you will read the half of this letter, it is so long. But I though perhaps Mr. M would like to hear some particulars from some one on the ground. Excuse all errors. I have written betimes & am constantly interrupted. My room has been ever since I came the public resort of all our own and all who want to talk over matters.

I send this by Mr. Grogg who returns to the east. Will visit Washington & give Court information of how matters are in Kansas.

After stopping in Detroit, John and Cecilia returned to Washington with the report, which ran over a thousand pages. Committee chairman William Howard presented it to the House on July 1, 1856, and after much debate, John read it to the assembly. The Congress continued to argue the Kansas question weeks past its customary recess from the sweltering heat of Washington summer, and did not finally adjourn until the end of August. John threw himself into

> …a futile effort to restore the prohibition of slavery in Kansas, according to the Missouri Compromise, but the struggle made was fruitful in good. It strengthened the Free State sentiment in Kansas, it aroused public sentiment in the north, and drove the south to adopt new and strange theories which led to divisions in the Democratic party and its disruption and overthrow in 1860. The compromise made was understood to the be work of Mr. Seward, and, though not satisfactory to the Republicans of the House, it was at least a drawn battle, and, like Bunker Hill to Yorktown, was the prelude to the Revolution that ended at Appomattox.

Postscript

When they went to "hear and witness" the shocking events of 1856, John and Cecilia experienced first-hand a new culture of violence and unilateral action prevalent in the American West. Today, as America readies itself for war, I am struck by the similarities in tone between the frontier war talk of the 1850s and of today. Its origins are in the Second Amendment to the Constitution, which protected the right of Americans to form militias to keep law and order in the absence of an army. In the frontier, the paucity of courts and the ubiquity of firearms thus encouraged Americans to settle disputes themselves, without benefit of legal mediation. The historian Richard Maxwell Brown calls this extra-legal principle "no duty to retreat." It was a departure from the medieval British common law requiring a person under threat to retreat until his back is to the wall before he could use deadly force; this would encourage people to settle quarrels in court and to protect the

sanctity of human life. "No duty to retreat," on the other hand, was best expressed by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953 Cold War speech: If you "meet anyone face to face with whom you disagree…and took the same risk as he did, you could get away with almost anything as long as the bullet was in front." — that is, as long as you were the quicker draw.

This was the *modus operandi* of the post-Civil War Western gunfighter, including Eisenhower's avowed hero and fellow Kansan, Wild Bill Hickok, who had been an eighteen-year-old sheriff in Leavenworth in 1854, and later, a Union scout. His "walkdown" with Dave Tutt at fifty yards in 1865 in a Missouri public square epitomized the American view of murder in self-defense, in which a "true man" under threat can be acquitted for standing his ground. In Texas, where the rule was carried to its extreme, justifiable homicide extended to defense of one's self, one's property or even one's values; "no duty to retreat" became known as the Texas rule in 1885. A man could fight and even pursue an adversary until the threat was over. "A man is not born to run away," wrote Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes in 1921, when he made the Texas rule federal law. Holmes had been a Union junior officer in of some of the Civil War's bloodiest battle—Antietam, Chancellorsville, and the Wilderness among them.

In the chaos of the post-Civil War West, the "good guys"—lawmen like Hickok and Wyatt Earp—represented the authority of capital: the owners of cattle ranches and mining companies and railroads, grasping for the wealth of the West, in what Brown and historian Alan Trachtenberg call the Western Civil War of Incorporation. The bad-guys were Southern-sympathizing outlaw homesteaders like Jesse James, or unaffiliated cowboys bent on mayhem and a fast buck—of the same ilk as the Border Ruffian. Our national mythology seized on the dichotomy. In foreign policy, we applied the prerogative of American police action abroad to protect corporate interests. We would stand our ground, wherever we determined we needed to. In 1947, the Truman Doctrine, intended to contain Soviet power, kept a U.S. military presence on the ground around the world, threatened war over Cuba, and sent forces to fight in Korea and Viet Nam, and countless other smaller skirmishes. The most militant impulses in American foreign policy have had their strongest advocates in Presidents from the Southwest.

Now we have a Texan in the White House, proposing a war of preemption against what *we fear* the enemy might do — war in the subjunctive tense, typical of the spirit of "no duty to retreat." President George W. Bush talks of terror, generalized and pervasive. "We must chose between a world of fear and a world of progress," he told the U.N. General Assembly. That is to say, a world of orderly democracies fit for business instead of a backward, chaotic world in the thrall of outlaw, non-democratic leaders. "We are the leader," he said, who must "combine the ability to listen to others, along with action." This

has meant arming our allies of the moment—Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, for instance—with new shipments of high-tech weapons, and threatening unilateral action as we position our troops around Iraq, our enemy of the moment. Bush argues in abstractions — freedom, terror—but his target is personal and material: the bad man who tried to kill his dad, and, incidentally, the oil reserves that bad man represents.

George W. Bush and I are the same age. I am from Washington, D.C.; Bush is a Texas transplant, his family of bankers and businessmen having moved from the moneyed lawns of Greenwich, Connecticut, to the oil fields of Midland, Texas. He has called himself "a child of Vietnam," but in fact, he and I are children of the Eisenhower era. I grew up—as I'm sure he did—cheering for the Lone Ranger on TV, and wearing my Roy Rogers cowboy boots and hat to kindergarten and brandishing my toy guns at the bad guys to be the fastest draw. So I can empathize with him when he described himself recently to Bob Woodward as a "West Texas tough guy" who wants to be seen as a liberator of the oppressed (even though this "tough guy" was a football cheerleader at Yale).

It was another Texan we have to thank for the formative war of our generation. Lyndon Johnson in 1964 seized the pretext of an attack on U.S. warships on "routine patrol" in the Gulf of Tonkin to bomb North Vietnam and launch the Vietnam War. America would stand its ground and fight the expansion of communism, and Johnson did not intend to be the first President to lose a war. "Let's hang the coonskin on the wall," he said. But once in Vietnam, fighting a formidably determined enemy, he could not figure a way to get out without having to retreat. Americans heard and witnessed on TV the horrors of an ill-considered war on the other side of the world that was miring us in defeat. When in March of 1968, TV brought the image of Lyndon Johnson announcing that he was resigning from the presidency, I remember the shattered look on his face. His career was in ruins, his war spun out of control, his country in open rebellion. I hope George W. Bush, self-styled "child of Vietnam," remembers that also.

Further reading:

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Why They Shot Us

Marilyn A. Johnson

PREMONITION: 1969

A troop — almost medieval —
came tumbling into our town
to bring us *Taming of the Shrew*,
the shrew a big girl with cleavage
even the teachers joked about.
That wench is stark mad, or wonderful froward.
She stood in a disc of light
framed by rippling velvet
renown'd for her scalding tongue
in a small town that quit listening long before
her speech of submission, and
muttered filing out, *That player liked the play too much*.
Breasts trembling
alive and dangerous.

IN RETROSPECT, THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN THE SEXES MEANT NOTHING
TO US, EVERYTHING TO THEM

Hitch-hiking home, my boyfriend and I
stranded in Ravenna
six inches of new snow blurring its streets
only plows and strays out.
Skidding downhill
the drunk fingering Eric's hair
we saw our chance at the light
left his doors to hang agape
the guy yelling *Hey*
git back here you girls!

Our luck: a Kent dorm unlocked
Thanksgiving week. We found the lounge,
made a bed of wet coats.
Now, what do you say if a guard comes?
Say, But this other guard told us we could.
Or fuck it, we'll both play girls and cry.

OBSCENITY IS A GIRL SHOUTING OBSCENITIES

After downtown shattered
and the ROTC building burned
the dolorous bell rang and
rang -- a knell for the worst,
which had past. The guards in gas masks
kept themselves busy
marched to the fence
knelt and aimed rifles
(full of blanks, one told Allison)
at the ridge where
those on the edge of the rally loitered and
flung rocks — and the codebreaker,
the killer — girls, in tangled hair and sheer
shirts, mouths twisted and shameless,
shook their slender fingers in the air
and screamed *cocksucker*, *motherfucker*
fuck your cocksucking, motherfucking war.
No longer women, no longer girls
the raunchiest of whores, maybe.
The enemy. Students
who needed to be taught a lesson.

NEWS, BREAKING

Did Miss Long understand what she was hearing?
She did not. *What?* she said loudly.
We looked up. No sonnet could
compete with news, breaking.
The messenger whispered,
and our English teacher, lover of all
meanings, stacked and shimmering,
that words could bear, said, *My God.*
They're killing their own children.

THE PEOPLE OF OHIO SPEAK

If the troublemaking students have no better sense...
throwing missiles, bottles and bullets
at legally constituted police authority
and the National Guard,
they justly deserve the consequences

they bring upon themselves,
even if this does unfortunately result in death.

It would have been a good thing
if all those students had been shot.
It would have been better
for the country
if you had all been mowed down.

Live ammunition! Well, really,
what did they expect, spitballs?

I WILL BE FREE, EVEN TO THE UTTERMOST, AS I PLEASE, IN WORDS

I dream you're running toward me,
your hair a cape.
I lie on the sidewalk. What's
leaking out of my breast?
You kneel, or your knees buckle.
O, your mouth says.
I see our lances are but straws
Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare...
Tell my lord and governor, *thou hast tam'd a curst shrew*
I pant for fifteen minutes.
They carry me offstage to die.

Until Anne's Shadow's on the Curtain Round Her Bed

Carolyn Hembree

My whole body's a hand up inside the hole of some lacquered clock reaching.

What word or other have you now Anne's in her tracks stopped—
what more than "slow up for me, hey." "Ta ta" goes
the rivulet that runs inside, inside this hospital partition.

You are indoors though her hand is colding. It is the South
though she's of northern lights, of rivulets, of yellow flight,
of gases of light at some odd 40,000 degrees, say.

Do't — pile her yellow dresses at the foot of her bed!
Already her room's of light beams—whoosh—
whilst her shale grimace (catty-corner mine) stays.

My face, it cannot want to be kind.

A nurse in bouncy shoes verifies "this is no catnap" and
"what's worse" and "as you please" and "moreover."
The partition. And curtain. A fluorescent strip casts her.

Like Anne's merely 'gainst a screen thrown, though I
her chin cup in one hand, in the other tender spine.

For she was old—pant-
on-steps-old Anne mumbled once (the earpiece
not to her ear) as she always did: "Such as it is . . . ."
Gingerly, gingerly up in arms, into her a tiny blow.

FIVE POEMS

Patricia Connolly

ABOUT THE ONE IN THE CORNER

What of the one in the corner,
face and form in shadow,
indoors for a night's sleep,
dreaming of the fat-tailed sheep
far behind her on the long roads,
the little carts behind them.

What of the spider she murdered, the peewit, the mouse,
who greet her in the blue dawn, dancing, whole, human size
over the acres of polished linoleum to where she is trapped
on that treacherous black ice, to tell her again
the story of the straw, the coal and the bean,
their brief march from hope to disaster.

What of the beef that was cooked and left to cool,
to be eaten in a ritual meal of thanksgiving
for love sparkling in the light after the nights of death.

A woman dancing alone past the gate
smelled it and stole it in the one quick breath,
tore away the meal's narrative and the
cook's life with it in a long firey streak,
leaving her battered corpse outside the door
on the cold cinders and camomile flowers.

What of the coal, the straw and the bean,
the spider, the peewit and the mouse,
playing cards for the spirit hidden by shadows.
Will the thread of the spirit hold or break,
how best should the spirit's story be told?

Who took the meat, and so tore down the cook?

IT TAPS

A mean triangle
just wide enough for a leftover spirit
to not lie, not stand, not sit, lingering past
vital signs gone flat from the dead cold
of an overdose that drew it past and on.
A little ease
where the spirit is trapped, fluttering.
Its odorless presence
is penned in close here where
it suffered, ate lunch, and slept,
put down rat poison, collected books.
Caught as it is in the triangle
deafened by its own shrieks.
It cannot escape.
The baggy black suit still hanging
in the closet is a universe away
from the trembling spirit pinched
between mirror, stove, wall,
where it can only tap tap
on the living sleeper's shoulder
She wakes to tap tap,
no known presence, no known argument,
its life is all there in the tap tap,
books, rat poison, hallucinations of love
become tap tap, no more.

WHO SPEAKS

Ask me a question, mirror, she said, user to used,
until now you've only answered mine, and she laughed.
Her words and her laugh held a cruelty twisting between them.
—Where was the lonely room, asked the mirror,
What was in it? What did you do there? I could never see it—
The room was secret, mirror, it's still secret.
I tormented my enemies from there, pinned their spirits
to the night sky to hear them shriek, and the apple,
the comb, I made the poisons there in my secret room—
it's a wormhole in the wood frame of a cracked mirror.
To come and go, I take the size of a deathwatch beetle.
Secret, mirror, secret, secret, it's never lonely.
—The changes in size, surely they savage your spirit,
the terror of being trapped between such forms, tell me,
what is the nature, dimensions of that fearful space?—
She slammed the door quickly against its questions,
the image it would show her again of a stranger
who was wearing her clothes, combing her hair,
looking through her eyes, and no answer for that stranger
no sense of who the stranger had become between forms.

ASKEW

They've disconnected a moment before,
a space has opened between them.
They're standing at angles to each other
and the lines run off into an infinity
of that newly made space in which
they will never meet.

He's armored against the world
behind heavy tweed and leather,
feet solid on the rough ground
in thick-soled shoes
while her feet are awkward
on the sharp stones, over at the ankles,
her summer shoes thin-soled,
her coat too light for the cold wind.

Who caught her like this, bird on lime,
astray from herself, frail, he holding power,
staring angrily back through the photographer
and out into the world, while her look
is oblique, a shaken one, an interior gaze of pain?
She has tossed the knife of the answer
that would give her balance here on the stones,
and she has missed, and she's adrift from herself,
shoulders a little hunched, spirit scrambled,
the princess of the folk tale stranded
near the northern sea in disarray on the sharp stones.

GOING ABOUT

A small stretch of backbone
on a greasy leaf
points to a way on

The traveler takes a detailed
map of her city
when she leaves, intending
never to return

What? string dangling from the night
into a single bright light
the route up and down
unraveling

A crooked smile opens
in a mound of pins
We hold our mouths in a certain way
even as we climb

The knot in the string
towards the sky end
if I could reach it and tie it
the smile . . . the pins . . .

Street names hide the way
ahead, behind
In a bright northern light
the traveler spins null

Will the wooden clapper
not sound clack
against the wooden bell
draw us to the maze

What came from . . . ?
our mouths open, open
upon the last way.

WINTER ALPHABET

(with thanks to Janice Gould)

Christian McEwen

A is the tent
I have learned to set up in the wilderness.
B is the memory of your breasts,
your stalwart arms.
C is a broken plate.
D is the grey moon
flattened against the sky.
E is your rake
lying rusty in the garden.
F is a thin girl
trying to peer into the future.
G sends its root down
into frosty ground.
H stands tall:
two posts, & then a simple gate,
which I throw all my weight against,
without success.
J skates across an icy pond
wearing a little cap.
K is a quick kiss
on your sunburnt neck.
L (was that once love?)
has been lost for a long time.
M makes the first
of many jagged mountains.
N is the door you bolted
in my startled face:
"No, & no, & again no."
O is the hollow sound
of my astonishment.
P is a bubble of pain
on the surface of the river.
Q is my sad monkey sitting on his tail, then
Resting his skinny weight upon one foot.
S is the white ribbon of the road ahead.

T is a small shelter with a flattened roof
where U & your new lover
duck in & out of the rain.
V is simply vicious.
Do not grant it your attention.
W is the reiterated question, "*Why?*"
Windshield-wipers slashing back & forth.
X marks the exception to everything I've said.
Y shows the place where the road divides:
north & south, highland & lowland.
Z is some crone who's watching all of this,
hope propped up upon a bony elbow,
kindly wrinkled face & cloudy eyes.

from
The Finnish Orchestra
Six Poems

Kathryn Rantala

Paavo and Helmi, on Love

Paavo in the furred wood strode
where canted trees leaned to slipping shore
and hung sadly in the mirror of his current days.
His Helmi globed in him a grief
and now he stood
and could not tell her all his heart

which broke above the black river,
his hands and thoughts
deep in it.

Helmi held a plate
and washed in right hand circle,
dried in left hand circle,
all the times their meals made them stronger.
Once, but once she asked at night
within the murmurs of the tight house,
what curtains sigh to glass, caressed;
what branches feel in leaf
and, very, very low,
what word he'd make of them
if there would be a word…

and then the river came in him,
rushed and rough,
and he was out,
his silence with him

and she never heard him say it,
not even once.

Finland

Sky, glass, stream
the higher in the world
the tighter.
A hard art rolls pebbles under fish.

Sun rounds low, crisp as glass,
spare, dear, as hard to say
as hear

and then the moon,
a vagrant want,
waits until it is just too cold
and hides its sought-after parts.

Anything goes dark,
anytime.

*

Mornings,
rivers sorrowing,
brinkling,

all the time water.

Iced sons
plunging
juiceberries

small plenties.

Some People Say

(for M.A.)

a lake has no tides like a sea
that it is placid
and by this they mean serene.

In Finland there are thousands of lakes
those that are deep
those that are wide
those that rise and fall unmeasured
but go down darker
and farther
and wider

and this is where the parted heart streams,
absent the edge-of-the-world rhythms,
and breaks columned wood
and plumbs hard pasture
and grows, lifts, rises, sinks
and fills contested space

then blues so it can show you
it is not calm at all

but deep
tireless, full, estranged
and sometimes deeper

The Coast

After awhile, we arrived at the coast.

We went back and forth on the beach,
bringing, taking little things.

The sun, weary of explaining itself,
became a sea;
a moment our eyes had strained waiting for.

There were intervals of fire,
a gritty breeze,
a voice closing in a door
and then the dark.

Something more
might have been offered,
but this is customary.

Fishing

A man fishing, without fish,
the wet connecting line that links him
where he cannot sink.
Tied silently in dark.

And now he thinks.
Water circles where he meets,
remembering it.

He does not move,
though cold and healthier than he has ever been.
He lets real water make him,
take him one on one
to sea of smallest possible scale.
Equal, hard and fine.
He does not apologize,
or sign.

And eventually reflected light.
It warms, rewards and ends.
It cools intention.
A man in a boat without fish
reminded in an obvious sense
to go home.

Don't Say If I Love You

Behind brown greatcoats,
we
when walking
clasp our own hands,
uneasy where we surface in our skin,
uncomforted
by the pardons on the bridge.

Fish dance
on spreading splash tails
alarming
with their vertical joys.

Hands behind,
oh,
please refuse me
though I carry what I can of lamp
in clean, red palms,
pieces slipping through
to light the magic forests.

How is love a sequence;
the piercing through, bliss?
We cannot, do not, arch, thump, whumpf, bleed,
oh,
please refuse me deeper now.

The trees, ferns and greens
dance on spray
and fish darken.

This mossy antlered life,
the sharp young bolting things in coats,
held back,
the arrowed hearts within,

the wild wounded wood
that sings us sad without.

Essay

From Desperation to Salvation:

Concealing and Revealing Nothing in History

Robert Castle

> . . .let more than mere opinion reach you through me.
> —*Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy*

> But today, the average man, because of historical ignorance finds himself almost like a primitive, almost like the original man, and hence — other things aside — the unexpected forms of barbarism and savagery which burst suddenly from his old and hypercivilized soul.
> —*Jose Ortega y Gasset*

> When I read that, during the Great Leap Forward, in China, between twenty and forty million had died, I thought this must be the apotheosis of statistical whimsicality, until a short time later the news that "between twenty and eighty million had died during the Cultural Revolution."
> ……
> We ourselves are the prisoners of these numbers, these figures, the statistics — the millions; and millions upon millions. Is it possible that our careless, our casual, use of these "millions" is one of the reasons for the brutality, for cruelty?
> —*Doris Lessing*

I. A Problem in the Classroom

Several years ago a college professor complained to a group of graduate students that a freshman student claimed never to have heard of Moses. How could someone pass through twelve years of schooling untouched by this essential religious-historical fact? The professor envisioned lazy and incompetent teachers failing to satisfy the most minimal educational requirements; he probably harbored a worse opinion of the student's parents.

This situation is but a sample circulating through the faculties of high schools and colleges. Personally, I have tutored college students so deficient in geography they have located China somewhere near the Pyrenees — a mistake worthy of Gogol's madman —

and have taught students who mistook England for Japan on a world map. Added to this pathetic situation, student indifference to History rivals a past indifference to Latin and Greek, an indifference which really killed the dead languages.

"I knew things were bad," my professor remarked, "but are they really this bad?"

Things may not be as bad as he feared. The poor achievements of American students documented in E.D. Hirsch's CULTURAL LITERACY may exasperate the teacher, and drive the History teacher in particular to despair, but the official assessments of cultural and other illiteracies may be the benign side of the problem. Things may be worse in a way not yet considered.

For instance, our "Moses" student could have had the Old Testament read to him when he was a child; indeed, on television one evening he may have seen Charlton Heston (whom the student only knows as President of the National Rifle Association) part the Red Sea. The special effects, however, may be better remembered than the man who was being dramatized. And the student may have heard of the Exodus from Egypt between *Ren and Stimpy* cartoons and *Gilligan's Island* reruns. Moses, again, may have come to his brief attention but amidst Play Station, skateboarding, and The Back Street Boys. Thus, upon reaching the college classroom, taking a course he would have normally avoided but which was required, my professor mentioned Moses in passing. Upon which, the student raised his hand and asked who this man was.

When you consider the quantity of information filling the average student's mental reservoir in the first eighteen years, what he or she remembers tends toward the arbitrary and the increasingly unexceptional. One might question whether this student's *knowing* who Moses was would make the state of education any better. That is, would the ostensibly well-prepared college-bound student have a better level of historical education than the apparently ill-prepared student?

The History teacher's task in the "Information Age" has been made distressing when television and the Internet are the most active sources of our myths, folklore, and stories, without foundation in texts. How does the teacher distinguish for the student the historical past — events fossilized in a textbook: but also the events forming the nucleus of the student's personality — from the news media, music, video games, comic strips, talk shows, magazines, and sports? In the News realm alone, current events are interpreted as fast as they are reported, in effect out-running History with a brand of hyper-historicism. How can the History teacher confidently instill in students a lasting flow of remembered time, when the regular conditions of contemporary life militate against effective remembering?

It would be another circumstance were the student exposed to two, three, or four information flows, and, thus, entrance into the Biblical stream, if you will, would have a chance of being a more vivid experience. Instead, the confluence of numerous streams floods the student's mind and washes out the banks or sides that support the historical sense. Computers, televisions, radios, telephones, tape recorders, all of these gadgets allow him or her to obtain information whenever he feels like it, creating an increasing inattentiveness towards his experiences. If the teacher is not vitally aware of these conditions, he or she will be trapped within this same nonchalance and merely be contributing to the continued erosion of the historical sense.

Before condemning the conditions of everyday life, we must acknowledge that the greatest inhibitor of the development of the historical sense has been History itself, that is, the sheer volume of historical knowledge. I repeat: "has been." Friedrich Nietzsche, one hundred and thirty years ago, diagnosed this malady of History in the second volume of his "Thoughts Out of Season," THE USE AND ABUSE OF HISTORY. He focused on the excess of History and how this excess "attacked the plastic power of life" by crowding out the unhistorical. The unhistorical he defined as man "going into the present" and having the power of forgetfulness. Educators and historians in 19th century Germany were oblivious of the fact that history served an unhistorical power; the excess of history no longer allowed man to act unhistorically and spontaneously. In today's classroom, the unhistorical is still neglected. Today, History is taught as another information stream, a formal competitor against video docudramas and mythologies for the student's immediate attention, with History disappearing into an undifferentiated confluence. Nietzsche likens the unhistorical to "the surrounding atmosphere that can alone create life in whose annihilation life itself disappears."

The unhistorical is an elusive component for the history teacher, who, upon comprehending its importance, might have trouble describing it in action. It is difficult to pin down the unhistorical, in the classroom or even in this essay, as if its very appearance dispels its importance and potency. At best, we might suggest its presence and hope for some result. The History teacher must do more than teach History and supply the unhistorical ingredient. How can a student leave the classroom with a sense of the unhistorical? A few years ago, I attended a lecture entitled "Poetry and Magic," and one of the audience members remarked that in some cultures the "spell" incanted for a given occasion cannot be taught — it must be overheard — and one must acquire it by stealth or theft. The teacher puts the student in a position to overhear the "spell."

Not every teacher is an historian, and it would be a great burden to require History instruction to supply a meaningful historical dimension. Yet, this precisely must be done. The History teacher must do more that teach History. How the teacher might restore this lost ingredient to the History program is one of the great lessons suggested by the books and lectures of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, especially from his history, OUT OF REVOLUTION: AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF WESTERN MAN.

II. History's Nervous Breakdown

The teaching crisis is merely a tributary of the historical crisis which runs through the last hundred years. History teaching feels acutely the effects of this crisis because of the symbiotic relationship between History and Education. When Rosenstock-Huessy discusses education in his essay "Teaching Too Late, Learning Too Early," he writes primarily about teaching History:

> We teachers are the cultural lag of mankind. Less politely, we are the hyenas of its battlefields, for we disembowel the heroes of antiquity if we are left to our natural tendencies as teachers.

We must occasionally avoid these tendencies if we want to develop the student's historical sense, a sense he defines thus: "Every human being, for his own salvation, must be trained in *the timing of his own experiences*" (italics added). In a paper read before the American Historical Association in 1934 entitled "The Predicament of History," Rosenstock-Huessy makes a similar point:

> Modern Man seems no longer to register experience without special training. Without the capacity for keeping and developing the process of selection which we call tradition, the group can have no history. The power of selection which applied by Darwin to processes in the world of animals and plants is in reality the power of civilization. And this power can be wasted or lost.

History. Education. Special training. History. Education. A recirculation process. They feed one another to fortify the process.

The aforementioned crisis represents a fouling of the waters, and History and Education today merely recirculate the poisons. An antidote to this poisonous flow at once seems impossible to find or not worth finding because nobody knows how to administer it. What do we do?

Imagine a crisis generally as the last and most terrible swelling of a social or political problem. Following the lead of the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, we can consider "crisis" an historical concept. In MAN AND CRISIS, Ortega rigorously defines historical crisis first and foremost as a predicament of History, a peculiar historical change. He describes this change when

> the system of convictions belonging to a previous generation gives way to a vital state in which man remains without these convictions. Man returns to a state of not knowing what to do, for the reason that he returns to a state of actually not knowing what to think about the world.

Rosenstock-Huessy defines crisis in nearly the same terms in THE ORIGIN OF SPEECH, when he describes the four "diseases" of Speech: war, crisis, revolution, and degeneration. "The inner crisis of a disintegrating society is constituted by the fact that too many people inside this society are not told what to do." No one can be told what to do because no one knows what to think about the world. He adds: "In crisis we wait for anybody to tell us."

In this book Ortega deals primarily with the Renaissance, but he points to earlier periods, both times in ancient Rome: during the first century before and the third century after Christ, which suffered similar social and cultural upheavals. In pre-Christian Rome, in a reference to Cicero, a familiar problem: "From a world which has turned itself back into pure problem — and man is part of that world — one cannot hope for anything positive; the substance of life is desperation." He quotes Cicero's DE FINIBUS BONORUM ET MALORUM:

"'We academicians' — that is to say, he, Cicero, declares himself an academician — 'are in a desperate state from *too much knowing*'" (italics added). In other words, understanding that a crisis exists does not necessarily guarantee an escape from it. The will to knowledge is not enough. "Our Soul," writes Rosenstock-Huessy, "overloaded with so much past, replies by a nervous breakdown."

The epigraphs which open this essay bespeak the seriousness and depth of the crisis and add an imperative to the search for some relief from our historical predicament. Doris Lessing's passages dwell on public indifference born from numbness to hearing about mass murders and genocide. Reports of twenty to eighty million killed weirdly echo a fast food chain's promotional claims: billions and billions sold. Rosenstock-Huessy had written that "objectivity without gratitude for the relation of our thought to other people's lifeblood is intolerable." History is transformed into a sideshow for trivia freaks. The facts and numbers lose reality in proportion to the frequency with which they are pressed upon us. The truth needs a rest occasionally, or it will not have the strength to penetrate our minds.

At some point during the slide into barbarism, our humanity is degraded and lost. The descent does not make good headlines nor is it distinguishable one day, one month, or one year to the next. There are only indications that things are wrong. Concentration camps and death chambers; tribal genocide; the gulags; death squads. When these kinds of events have occurred, inside or outside western nations, our response has been disingenuous. How could such savagery happen in a world of air-conditioned buildings, organized sports, and the general wish for all to live in peace? Only madmen would think of starting wars — you know the usual suspects: Kim Il Sung, Saddam Hussein, Milosevic, Khadaffi — and threaten to deny us our luxuries. Analogously, our personal sense of security is shattered each time we read about the latest serial killer or an otherwise friendly neighbor who has shot the wife and kids and himself.

Unthinkable things, once suppressed by a common if fragile humanity. We have forgotten that being born human is the most fragile state of life. Moderated by a sensitive historical brotherhood. Unthinkable things, now commonplace and nearly tolerable.

Ortega's broad comments about historically ignorant man anticipate Lessing's response to the statistical nightmare. Her question: "Is it possible that our careless, our casual, use of these 'millions' is one of the reasons for the brutality, the cruelty," realizes a discernible way we can avoid the historical crisis. We cannot prove the connection between our attitudes and the brutalities; her analysis resembles the associative connections a reader makes within a short story, play, or novel and corresponds to a process Ortega labels "historical reason," which will be our response to History's breakdown.

III. The Aesthetic Principle: Concealing and Revealing Nothing

"Do not believe any history that does not spring from the mind of a rare spirit," Nietzsche writes in THE USE AND ABUSE OF HISTORY. Such a rare spirit we recognize in Rosenstock-Huessy's OUT OF REVOLUTION. Despite its recognition as a great historical work, the book invites the kind of misunderstanding offered by Crane Brinton: "Written in what

to an American seems the cloud-cuckoo-land of beautiful and inexact ideas, choosing convenient and rejecting inconvenient facts, something in the tradition of Spengler, but with the kindly hopes of a man of good will."

When Nietzsche saw the excesses of History causing a malady of History, he proposed an antidote: the unhistorical by which he meant "the power, the art, of forgetting and drawing a limited horizon around oneself." This anticipated Crane Brinton's feeble objections to OUT OF REVOLUTION. To the contrary Rosenstock-Huessy increased the dose for curing the twentieth century's historical malady. Unfortunately, the uniqueness of OUT OF REVOLUTION "left it high and dry on the sands of academe." Page Smith adds in his assessment of the book that "[n]obody knew what to make of it because no one had seen nothing like it." The book, "demanded to be accepted or rejected." In the end, it was ignored. Again, Nietzsche best described how a work like OUT OF REVOLUTION should be construed: "The Delphian god cries his oracle to you at the beginning of your wanderings: 'Know thyself.' It is a hard saying, for that god 'tells nothing and conceals nothing but merely points the way,' as Heraclitus said. But whither does he point?"

Where does Rosenstock-Huessy point? OUT OF REVOLUTION' s subtitle is one direction. It proposes the book to be an autobiography: but that of Western Man's, and thus "no one man's enterprise." Referring to our own autobiographical circumstance, Rosenstock-Huessy invites our collaboration: "In adding from his own memory, whatever he knows of French, English, Russian, or Italian history [the reader] cannot but enlarge and round out our draft." He points toward our own past, whence we may organize the chaos in ourselves in thinking our way back to our true needs.

OUT OF REVOLUTION also points to the unhistorical in the form of an aesthetic principle: the invisible ingredient used by Rosenstock-Huessy to bind an account of 27 generations from Gregory the Great to V.I. Lenin. Brinton had fretted over the author's selection of facts, but by just looking at the book's table of contents, he might have seen that more than convenient choices were made. The first thing you see is that the events will be cast in a backward chronological order, starting with the Russian Revolution. This represents a bit of startling inspiration, especially when one compares it to Rosenstock-Huessy's THE EUROPEAN REVOLUTIONS, in which he used a straightforward chronology, published only eight years before OUT OF REVOLUTION. Why he changed his approach is unclear, but the significance of the change is unmistakable. Rosenstock- Huessy writes:

> We are recording *vive voce* the autobiography of Europe during the last thousand years with regard to its connection backwards; we are convinced, however, that any history of the evolution of mankind will prove a failure if it tries to deprive us of the greatest contribution of the last twenty years. I mean any history of mankind which fails to start frankly and modestly from the experiences and sufferings of our generation.

Bruce Boston, one of the book's principal interpreters, connects the autobiographical element to the "backward" structure: "Rather than viewing the great upheavals of western history as shameful interruptions in the course of its orderly flow, [he] is prepared to present them as exhibiting the same inner cohesion one would expect to find

in the life of a single individual."

The aesthetic pull from OUT OF REVOLUTION's structure emanates from this inner cohesion. The choice of working backward from the Russian Revolution, to invert the regular order from which we normally discern cohesion (for instance, in a history course in high school or college), is as profound and meaningful as the choice by the Church Fathers to order the gospels Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. In Rosenstock-Huessy's THE FRUIT OF LIPS, OR WHY FOUR GOSPELS, he points out that

> [t]he sequence of the four gospels is necessary because this sequence reverses the order which begins with the natural individuality of Jesus. And such a reverse of nature is the necessary sequence in human articulation!

The gospels, he is saying, work under an aesthetic principle to articulate a unity among them which can admit no other gospel. Likewise, the unhistorical as an aesthetic principle should articulate History that can admit no other information flow!

> They begat each other. Every gospel begins exactly at the point to which the previous gospel has progressed on its tortuous path. The last word of the one is the overture and sets the tone for the next!

If Rosenstock-Huessy's scheme for the Gospels seems farfetched, examine Richard Elliott Friedman's book, THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GOD, in which he shows how the order in which the Old Testament was written doesn't conform to the order we get in the Bible; yet, Friedman describes a cohesion of which suggests a nearly artistic or aesthetic subtlety.[1] The aesthetic quality and attraction of Rosenstock-Huessy's OUT OF REVOLUTION is never more obvious than after viewing Harold Pinter's play BETRAYAL. The backward development of the drama[2] raises the story of a conventional love triangle to a level where we can come to terms with the vital human or individual elements of the drama. In the case of this play, the begged question is, "Why does the affair fail?" The backward device particularizes what was an invisible dimension in the adulterous relationship, Time, and articulates Time's failure and constant betrayal of Man by changing him.

Pinter's characters are squashed by Time, but they never comprehend the slow disintegration of their relationships and the draining of their emotions. The intimacy dissolves as if it would inevitably lead to this point — except that Pinter started with the dissolution. Moreover, all the relationships seem tainted by betrayal.

The characters had believed their feelings to be everlasting, imperishable. Then Jerry falls in love with his best friend's wife and speaks of satisfying his desires instantly in the present, as if he could defeat time's betrayal. He has just cornered Emma in a bedroom. The speech occurs at play's end.

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[1] He makes the greater claim in THE HIDDEN BOOK IN THE BIBLE that one writer was responsible for a large part of the Old Testament.

[2] Scenes 1 & 2 — Spring 1977; 3 — Winter 1975; 4 — Autumn 1974; 5, 6, & 7: Summer 1973; 8 — Summer 1971; 9 — Winter 1968.

> Jerry. Look at the way you're looking at me. I can't wait for you, I'm bowled over, I'm totally knocked out, you dazzle me, you jewel, my jewel, I can't ever sleep again, no, listen, it's the truth, I won't walk, I'll be a cripple, I'll descend, I'll diminish, into total paralysis, my life is in your hands, that's what you're banishing me to, a state of catatonia, do you know the state of catatonia? do you? the state of. . .where the reigning prince is the prince of emptiness, the prince of absence, the prince of desolation. I love you.

This passage actually describes Jerry at the play's beginning when he meets Emma for the first time since the breakup of his marriage. He's desolate, empty, lost. While all the characters feel betrayed or seem to have been betrayed, Jerry suffers the deepest funk because he has failed the most to adapt to the change of feeling.

In OUT OF REVOLUTION, the backward development not only acknowledges the primacy of Time but witnesses the continuity of the generations. Time is an element of salvation, not damnation. One can admire Rosenstock-Huessy's faith at the time of the writing, 1938, when Stalinism and Fascism were squashing Europe. The historical and political squeeze soon deprived the European his autonomy, his life becoming less and less his own and more the state's, as Ortega wrote. Analogously, Pinter's characters suffer fates characteristic of the eternal love triangle: their lives become less and less their own because they are unable to circulate the "time poison" out of their relationships.

Rosenstock-Huessy recognized the crisis and refused to turn away. He actively engaged his world as a swimmer would the wall of a pool, propelling himself from it forward into the past toward something beyond the daily eternities.

IV. Education as a Salvation?

In applying the lessons from Rosenstock-Huessy's book to the teaching of history or education generally, we should not necessarily look to the school or classroom to work "magic." That is, we shouldn't expect an administrative directive or national standards to guide teachers. It would be too much to expect the powers that be to understand that the accumulation of facts is not enough. Nor should students look forward to a time when detailed factual knowledge is expendable. How can we make anyone understand the wisdom that "we must allow our young people a deliberate amount of ignorance lest their genius be stifled," he wrote in THE FRUIT OF LIPS.

Could we as a society extend this wisdom and curb the infinite excitements of our everyday life? Could we not deliberately limit ourselves to a modest range of resources? Limit the information flows? How can we protect students who are being drowned in a flood of meaningless facts, when we are unaware that the very forms that protect them from historical illiteracy have eroded? Will this alarm merely become lost amid all the other calls for the "improvement" of our educational institutions?

The imprecision of the concept "unhistorical" compels me link it to something experienced but indefinable. Rosenstock-Huessy's historical work, like OUT OF REVOLUTION,

teaches us how to sneak the unhistorical into the classroom: in the form of an aesthetic principle. By this I mean that history teachers will consciously lessen their information flow and more sharply design their lessons. Sooner or later, an effective application of their teaching may lodge itself in students' minds, and the students in turn will sneak the unhistorical back into society. Perhaps they will turn off their televisions for a few years and pay attention more closely to their own sense of the shape of things. Eventually, the information flow will slowly adjust itself to levels students can handle.

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Rory McEwen to Ron Padgett

September 7th, 1971

Dear Ron,

You go to Calcutta Airport and ask for the Jamair desk. This is not as easy as it sounds, for the desks in Calcutta Airport are merely desks, and they become "The Jamair Desk" or "The Air India Desk" when a scribbled sign is put up above the desk. This can happen at any time with no warning, so you can be speaking to the man at the Air India desk about flying to, say, Benares, and he will change the sign on you, quite slowly and deliberately, while looking in your eyes, so that the conversation will then have to shift and tack and rearrange itself to accommodate the fact that you and your baggage are now bound for Bangkok on Thailand Airways, since you are now standing in the "Thai Air Desk." This arrangement has the effect of keeping the passengers on their toes, and on each others' toes, as they dash like lemmings from one desk to another, ending up wild eyed and in deep shock on strange aeroplanes bound for places they never thought they'd see.

Jamair is a private Indian airway that used to have two aeroplanes but now has only one. The other one crashed before I arrived at Calcutta Airport. "It was very old, *very* old, and it just got tired," was how the Jamair official explained it to me. I didn't ask him to explain it to me, he insisted. "How old is the other one, the, er, one we're flying in?" I couldn't restrain myself from asking; "It is thirty years old next year," he beamed.

We got in the 29 year old Dakota; parts of it certainly were that old, in fact *much* older. All the rivets along the wings were loose, and the wings seemed to beat up and down – I think it helped us to keep aloft. A man came down the gangway with a large lump of cotton wool, which we were invited to pull at and fill our ears. We landed in several fields, ending up at a place called Bagdogra, which appeared to be under siege, from the number of tanks lumbering around and Russian jet fighters screaming overhead. It is a few miles from the frontier of East Pakistan.

A very smart soldier greeted us. He was different looking to anyone else there, with a flat Mongolian face, and DRUK GUARD on his shoulder. A captain in the Bhutanese army, sent by the Queen from Paro, 11 hours jeep drive away.

No one ever got into Bhutan, much, except Tibetan traders, until the Bhutanese were persuaded by Nehru to build a road into India following the Chinese annexation of Tibet in 1959. This road, known as the Indo-Bhutanese Highway, was completed in 1962. It was built under the supervision of the Indians, by Nepalese road-gangs, and it winds up through the jungly mountains that completely close off Bhutan from India along the Southern border, ending up at Thimbu, the capital of Bhutan. It is a narrow road with a blacktop surface which crumbles at the sides. It is subject to frequent landslides, as the

Indians have only the simplest of notions about road-building, which mostly hinge around very large charges of dynamite, which loosen up whole mountain sides and cause them to collapse at the hint of rain. Bhutan is one of the wettest areas in the entire world.

Before this road was constructed, ten years ago, Bhutan had only been visited by a few dozen Europeans during its entire history; the wheel was unknown and it was absolutely impossible to travel over most of the country. Even since 1961, very few people, relatively, had entered, as the only way you can attain entry is through formal invitation of the King or Queen.

I looked up at the blue barriers of hills as we drove through the tea plantations….

We spent a night at Phuntsoling, just over the border, in the Bhutanese Government Guest House where, 5 years before, the progressive Prime Minister Jigme Dorji, the present Queen's older brother, had been assassinated while playing bridge on the veranda. That night I couldn't sleep – cockroaches 5 inches long climbed all over my mosquito net, the frogs crashed around the room, and the night was made hideous by the whirring, screeching, howling, zooming, zipping, zapping, creeping & scratching of an incredible variety of unseen birds, reptiles, mammals and insects; also, according to the Queen's ADC, whom the smart soldier turned out to be, a substantial number of Ghosts. "Many many ghosts in Bhutan," he kept insisting.

The next morning early we set off in our jeep into the hills. The road cuts through the deep tropical jungle that covers the whole of the Southern part of the country, and huge butterflies frequently flew lazily across it, flapping from orchid to rhododendron. Every flower and tree seemed to be of a different variety – there are in fact more species of wildflower in Bhutan than in any other single country in the world.

We soon climbed up to 8,000 feet, the air got chilly, and we lunched on an Alpine slope, built a fire, and soon had a crowd of ragged sheep-herders sharing the meal, barefoot and barelegged, wearing the kho, the Bhutanese all-purpose garment, which is a floor-length cloak that they bind up above their knees, leaving a big pouch all the way round hanging over the belt, which they stuff with everything from a 12 inch knife to sacks of rice and baby sheep.

On we drove arriving at length at Paro valley. Red earth, tiny fields built up the mountain sides, with crops of maize and rice and buckwheat; houses with roofs held down by boulders, scattered down the valley, the whole thing, the whole atmosphere, dominated by a massive fortified monastery at the Northern neck of the valley, with the Himalayas rising sheer up behind it, their peaks hidden in clouds.

Down below the monastery is the Queen's palace. It is built on 3 levels like a wedding cake, square, with curving Chinese looking roofs, bells hanging at the corners, clinking in the breeze, wood and plaster, every inch painted and carved in fantastic gold and green, sienna and silver, brown and blue Buddhist symbols and scenes, gods and animals.

Bare legged servants scurrying and bowing, dark steep staircases leading into a long painted room, dim and scarlet and green. A low sofa, very hard, and the Queen's nephew, English speaking, jolly and smiling. At one end of the room, a wonderful, very old Tibetan Tanka, a Buddhist scroll painting; at the other a radiogram, with records by the Bhutanese bagpipe band, Frank Sinatra and Mantovani. (No electricity, however, except at rare

intervals, and then very wavery, Frankie's voice going from bass to falsetto, and the sudden realisation that that is what they thought he really sounded like).

The Queen is in Thimbu, with the flu; please make yourself at home in any way you want – would you like to fish? hunt bear or tigers? or blue mountain sheep or takin? Yes yes, indeed, everything, we'd like to hunt everything, including flowers and butterflies.

Then off up the valley and up on mule back through hanging forests of rhododendrons, up a slippery mud path and over a 10,000 foot high pass into the Ha valley, climbing up through the dripping trees, the ground carpeted with innumerable primulas, for six hours, the servants walking, carrying luggage and tents on their backs, singing and shouting and joking, all the way up. Then a further five hours stumbling down the other side, too steep to ride the mules and horses, looking out over the deep valley to the hills of Tibet, only 6 hours by mule train away.

We passed a monastery called The Tiger's Nest, perched on the side of a vertiginous cliff face. The ADC, Rinzi Dorji, said that a lama lived there who went flying over the valley one fine evening.

Further down the mountain into the valley we came out into a yak grazing ground and found a family of yak herders, living in black yak-hair tents, tough as wire wool. They said that they had heard a yeti, or abominable snowman, only 2 nights before, sniffing round the edge of the camp. It was easy to believe them. They had a huge black Tibetan dog, guarding the yaks against the wolves. Wolves there certainly were, roaming at night in small mobile gangs, taking cows and yaks and chickens from all over. Buddhists are supposed to not take life, but no one seemed to have qualms about bumping off bears or wolves, or trout, or chickens, as long as they made a suitable sacrifice to placate the right deity.

We camped in Ha, as beautiful a place as ever my eyes lit upon, for some days. In the daytime we rode down to the river and fished for trout, clambering down the wild river bed, all strewn with great rough boulders, washed down by the constant flow, catching dozens of silver fighting trout, which had been brought into the country from Kashmir only thirty years before, coming originally from Scotland in the days of the Raj. These were very delicious to eat, and provided our staple diet, for Bhutanese food is rough at best, at worst unbelievable – sort of smashed up rotting meat boiled in rancid yak butter, with red hot chilis on the side.

At night we sat on a carpet of highly scented pine needles, with wild azaleas and rhododendrons adding different scents at every shift in the breeze, while the servants sang and played games, like the "bonfire game," which consisted of building an immense bonfire, ten feet high, then waiting till it burnt down to about 5 feet high, then taking turns in jumping through it. Later I discovered that they have thicker skins than Europeans, which explained a lot of things, such as the fact that they didn't mind wading through the glacially cold streams up to their waists, or sleeping out without tents at night at 10,000 feet – or the fact that in the Queen's Palace there was no provision of any kind for heating.

Peter Steele, an English doctor and explorer, had done a goitre survey of Bhutan and couldn't understand why he kept breaking needles when he injected them. He measured their skin and found it nearly twice as thick as his own. Little known facts to add to your collection.

The national sport is archery. One day we went down Ha Valley about ten miles of horseback and our servants challenged the head man (or Thrimpon) of Ha to an archery contest. It went on all day and we won. The "prize" was 2 bottles of Bhutanese rum, a spirit closely related to methylated spirits, tasting like a rubbery version of paint stripper.

The archery grounds are 150 yards long, with a wooden target 3 feet high, 1 foot wide at each end. You have two shots each, alternate players from each team. Two points for hitting the target; if no one hits it, one point for the nearest to it. You fire your shots and run down the other end to dance in front of the target and disconcert your opponents, or invoke a variety of deities to blow the arrows off target or blur the shooter's vision. It is very exciting, and the teams get quite out of control sometimes, taking out their immense knives made out of old jeep springs and lopping off the hands, ears etc. of opponents who have done too well or otherwise driven them temporarily out of their skulls. The men of Bhutan probably spend 50% of their adult lives on archery, from what I could judge. The women, on the other hand, spend their lives tilling the fields, or building the houses, or having children, or carrying huge loads on their backs. At the same time they are highly independent, and divorce is quite a simple affair; sexually they are very free, and before marriage they sleep with anyone who takes their fancy. The Bhutanese generally discuss sex a great deal. But then who doesn't?

The Queen returned from Thimbu, having recovered from her flu. She is Bhutanese, part Sikkim etc. She was educated in India, Switzerland and England. She is 35 years old; small and delicate, though very tough, in fact, physically – so often went for camping trips on mule back, and walked for miles over rough tracks, collecting flowers. The history of the politics of` the Royal Household is too tangled to relate, but suffice it to say that she and her husband live apart and each has his and her own sphere of influence, though the king is virtually all-powerful, whereas the Queen's power is mainly with the monks and the Church.

She speaks quite good English, and is excessively polite and soft spoken. She is also surrounded by toadies, all of them quite useless, from her idle and incompetent secretary (always to be found on the archery grounds, though he's not even good at that) to her doctor, a devious Sikkimese gentleman with no medical qualifications whatever. There are also the court painter, responsible for all the decoration of the monasteries throughout the land, all the masks and dresses for the religious dances, saddle-cloths for the king etc. etc. (he had 250 people working for "him") and a court musician, Dope, by name, Dopey by nature, who often sang at her feet of an evening, incredibly long and boring ballads. We had many musical evenings; I had brought my guitar, which I was glad of, for they enjoyed being sung to, and all responded with songs and ballads of their own. Particular favorites with Her Majesty, you will be interested to hear, were "Polwarth on the Blue" and the "Sinking of the Titanic."

Then we set off for the East, along the new road, only open since January (this was May), to visit Punakha, the ancient capital of the country, and cross over the Pele-la, the highest point of the roads in Bhutan, about 11,500 ft. Some of the passes are far higher, and can be crossed with difficulty on mules; I think there is a pass 20,000 ft. high!

We set off with 3 jeeps, five palace servants and the Queen's ADC, the amazing Captain Rinzi Dorji, hitherto mentioned. It was very hot until we came to the first pass out of Paro valley, the Doichu-La (La is Tibetan for pass), and started climbing up through rhododendron forests, up into cold mist, and down into the Punakh valley. The drive took seven hours. When we reached Punakha it was about 3pm, and an hour was spent recruiting local labor to transport our camping gear, food etc. on foot up the valley. The Queen had given us permission to stay in the King's game reserve, and fish in the Mo River in the part reserved for him and his family. Holy Cow what a place! A great hurtling green glacial stream, roaring straight down from the high Himalayas, its bed littered with huge boulders, and full of colossal trout. It was like no fishing I've ever seen; the river is icy cold, yet the banks are virtually tropical. The vegetation grows right down to the edge of the water, tangled briars, bushes, shrubs and trees of every description, out of which come six foot long cobras, and through and around which glide quantities of black swallowtailed butterflies (Papilio Paris and Papilio Krishna, I later ascertained) the size of small birds. Many, many butterflies fly all around; from tiny skippers and blues to silverlines and hairstreaks, fritillaries and tortoiseshells, huge white ones, rich brown ones, azure with chocolate stripes (the Chocolate Tiger), and Birdwings, the greatest of all butterflies, nine or ten inches across, flying so fast you can't believe it.

The first thing I did was tell the servants to make me a butterfly net. They appropriated the mosquito net belonging to the Queen's nephew, who was accompanying us ("Us" being myself and Pamela Egremont, who was the means of my entry, she being a friend of the Queen's), and produced in a flash a gigantic net, 2 feet across, and lashed to a small tree 8 feet long. From then on they fell about themselves with Bhutanese howls of laughter as Monsieur Hulot's Holiday was acted and reenacted before their slanting eyes, with me leaping and plunging after these amazing butterflies: I caught over 30 different varieties in about 4 days of hunting.

In addition to the butterflies there were insects of every conceivable variety, from giant grasshoppers no smaller, I swear, than medium sized fox terriers to stick insects and tortoise beetles which are brilliant, polished gold with circular plexiglass skirts -- [drawing] sort of. At night our tents shook from the impact of vast unknown flying things, and you could hear leopards coughing. There are tigers, too, but we never saw or heard one.

In the day we fished for trout. We used flies, which the Bhutanese had hardly seen before (a few had, such as the ADC who had been to England), and, to judge from the results, the trout had *never* seen.

The fish ran up to 25 pounds, maybe much more, since no one had really fished for them. Luckily, I brought my fly-tying equipment – the fish had very sharp teeth and tore the flies to pieces in no time. I hadn't tied flies for many years, any more than I had caught butterflies, but found myself gripped with the fervor that I felt at 15, chasing High Brown Fritillaries in Alice Holt Forest, or turning out a deadly Olive Quill. [drawing; not available] I recommend it, it is amazing therapy.

Well, we spent some days in this strange place, and then went over the Pele-La, on the new road. It was raining torrents and the whole thing was crumbling and crashing around us, rocks six feet across thundering down onto the road in front and behind, the

jeep getting stuck in slimy mud. Finally we got over the top and down the other side, but only for about 13 miles, when we were brought to a definite halt by a really grown up landslide, which looked as if it would take ten years to shift.

We stayed up there for the inside of a week, finding all sorts of plants and flowers, including woods full of Lilium Giganticum Superbum, whose name is far from hyperbolic – the lily is snow-white and seven feet high, with a scent that hangs in the woods like velvet drapery. Then we had a very hairy drive back, just getting through as the monsoon started in earnest. We went to Thimbu, the capital. There is a night club in Thimbu. It is called the Pelki Club. It is just a wooden shack with a painted sign outside, but it is the only night club in Bhutan, and it is run by the king's half brother.

The ADC suggested we should go. "Wonderful Floor Show," he said. We couldn't wait. So at 7 pm sharp we sat in the smelly darkness of the Pelki Club and admired the decor – stag antlers rounds the walls, red velvet, and checked linoleum on the table tops. The other clients consisted of 4 Indian road engineers having a very noisy curry. But the *band*! They were Indian, a quintet. Drums, steel guitar, sax, trumpet, piano. They all played simultaneously, as hard as it is possible to beat drums or blow a trumpet, but with absolutely no reference of any kind one to the other, nor, collectively, to a single tune at any given moment. About one every five minutes the Law of Averages appeared to decree that several of them played a vaguely recognisable phrase from say, "Night and Day," or "The Sunny Side of the Street," at the same time. Otherwise, it flowed forth like the Ganges. They would stop, apparently obeying a herd instinct, and then the leader would announce a new number, and it would start up again.

I swear if you put them on an LP they would sell a billion in royalties, for no art could have conjured up such an indescribable and hilarious cacophony. The next thing that happened was that I was announced by the ADC as a visiting vocal star from Scotland. So I sprang onto the platform and launched into "When the Saints Go Marching In." Horrors! The band started up behind me, fired by a now uncontrollable enthusiasm. The trumpet went berserk, hitting higher notes in his mind than Harry Jones ever knew existed, and producing some inhuman braying noises that, being blasted straight into the 1941 vintage BBC type microphone, knocked out the amplification. However, the band now couldn't be stopped – chorus after chorus came tumbling out, the key, when it was possible to locate it, varying wildly between Bb and F, the melody totally unrecognizable, the tempo speeding up every few bars. After quarter of an hour, perhaps half an hour, of standing on the platform bellowing soundlessly into the howling hurricane, I figured the only way to stop it was to step down, which I did. The band went on to a final frenetic climax, all standing up, jostling each other for a share of the defunct microphone. The applause at the end, from the king's half brother and the 4 engineers, was deafening, overwhelming. I was mobbed, the band were beside themselves, a five year contract was mentioned, paper and a pen were called for. Finally the pandemonium subsided and the floor show came on. This consisted of the king's half brother's 13 year old Nepalese mistress jerking nervously about the pitch dark club (a red spot had been rigged) dressed in her bra and panties, knocking over glasses and shivering, the whole thing accompanied by a truly miraculous version of "The Stripper" delivered at full speed by the now totally out-of-control band.

Anyway, we emerged alive, after what seemed like a long night and got to bed in the Royal Guest House by 8:45 pm.

In the next few days we saw the main administration building, where all Government business is conducted – the capital city of Thimbu is not a city, just two rows of wooden stores (the Pelki among them) and residences of officials scattered down the valley; all the action is in the Dzong, the big monastery-type building – it actually contains a monastery as well as everything else, a *huge* building, maybe 300 yards long, or square. God knows what goes on in it – almost anything could be accommodated, from archery matches to Army manouevres. After that we went to meet a famous holy man, a Tibetan called Kenchi Rimpoche. He was preaching, and had been preaching, 8 hours a day, for *3 months* when we saw him. He had another month to go. I believe he was expounding the gospels of Milarepa, a Buddhist saint. He had a big tin-roofed building which had been specially erected for him, and hundreds of people came from as far away as Ceylon to hear him. He was over seventy, and although we spent no more than 10 minutes with him, talking through an interpreter, he gave off the strongest vibes of saintliness I've ever come across. I'll never forget him, Kenchi Rimpoche, the Real Thing.

And that really winds up the bare bones of the story. There are so many other scenes in my mind, so many people and places, strange feelings and smells and sights. Most of all the feeling that you are utterly isolated, with people who know and care nothing about the outside world, though that is changing fast. No doctors within perhaps days of travelling, no medicines, no drugs, no telephones, no electricity, and yet unlike other wild places in the world, a relatively old and developed culture and society. I never saw anyone really angry (except at archery) the whole 7 weeks I was there, just conviviality and jokes and songs. So if you've reached this far, you've proved you have the stamina for the trip. I don't think the Queen has a court poet; if you can stand the food, I'll write a letter of introduction (longer than this one).

Love to Pat
& Wayne
& to you
Rory

Rory McEwen was "a painter, best known for his watercolors of leaves and flowers on vellum. He died (too young) in 1982. But his work remains: in the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, in museums and private collections all over the world…. [C]onversation was what he loved most: rich, allusive, and exploratory conversation. *We all have what I would call Heart Groups*, he wrote. *And by that I mean a widening personal circle of love and affection, starting with our closest and dearest and dying out in the shallows of distant acquaintanceship.*

"His pleasure in letters and letter-writing allowed him to maintain such 'conversations' with a surprisingly wide number of people. *Goodness I do enjoy getting letters!* he

wrote to me once. *I think the only reason I write letters is in the hopes of getting them back: and basically it makes no odds what the letter is like, short or long, coherent or incoherent*…."

Christian McEwen, "'Music Hiding in the Air,' A Memoir of Rory McEwen (1932-1982)," *Archipelago,* Vol. 4, No. 3 http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-3/mcewen.htm.

Ron Padget "was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1942. With Ted Berrigan and others, Padgett reinvented the New York School of Poetry in the mid-1960s. He has published over fourteen books, including GREAT BALLS OF FIRE, and is regarded as the definitive translator of Blaise Cendrars and Apollinaire."

Poetry Daily http://www.poems.com/younepad.htm

On the Surface Landscape. Under It the Human Element.

On photographs by Karen Halverson, Mark Klett, and Edward Burtynsky

Verna Posever Curtis

Photographs often deceive us because they stand in for fact. But, ultimately, photography is an interpretive medium. A photograph works best when we accept its pretext of documentation yet acknowledge the opinion it conveys. This is similar to the written word. Through the eye, the photographed picture excites the mind in a wondrous way. It permits us, ourselves, also to form an opinion about a place in time, though we are not the photographer, who was there. If we look deeply, the photograph might strike chords in our memory. Then, we can see it metaphorically, like a poem.

I have selected several contemporary landscape photographs from the immense holdings in the Library of Congress — "contemporary landscape photographs" meaning they comment upon what they behold. Two are newly acquired favorites and one is a pending acquisition. All of them share the American West as their subject. As a curator, I want to understand their commentary. I cannot resist placing them in sequence, as if they were sentences. I begin with Karen Halverson's slant on the Sierra Nevada foothills, follow with Mark Klett's reading of Central Arizona, and end with Edward Burtynsky's ode to "new" California hills. Taken in this sequence, the photographs warn and inform me of what happened in the twentieth-century American environment.

As in writing, the photographer makes choices, if not about form and words, then the type of camera, lens, and film. With these she emphasizes the truth of what her eye perceived -- or produces distortion. Perspective, view, composition, detail, texture, quality of light, black and white or color, all are factors over which the photographer has control. Using intuition as well as conscious selection, he frames a location and commits to it with a click of the shutter. Through editing and after printing, we arrive then to contemplate the artful photographer's vision.

Karen Halverson captured a scene in the Sierra Nevada near Lone Pine, California, in the colors of plain daylight. Some years earlier, Ansel Adams, America's most famous photographer, felt an emotional pull to that same mountain range. He worked in black-and-white, and his choice of dramatic vistas and natural lighting allowed us to experience the awe he felt while in these mountains. Halverson wanted a clear view of the warm desert rock, soil and scrub brush. Her horizontal format elongates the range of hills, de-emphasizing the sky and expanding the landscape view. A dirt road leads our eye to the Alabama Hills, foothills of the Sierra. Swinging left from the same corner and stopping in the center of her frame, the road's presence disturbs the continuity of Nature. More jarring

yet is the battered Jeep, its doors and hatchback flung open. By being partially cut off at the bottom margin and close to us in the foreground, it seems almost capable of entering our real space. Chalky white, rectangular, the car trespasses on the soft, warm grays and blues of the flowing, organic terrain. We see what the photographer meant when she said,

> The car has come to be part of the photographic landscape for me. It is my companion and protector even while it is an obvious intrusion, in the same sense that my own presence is an intrusion. The car is what makes the desert accessible. Yet when you see it set against the vast space, it is small, alien, and vulnerable.

But is this true: is it the car that is vulnerable in this photograph? Or is it the landscape? Acting as an anchor and adjunct to the road, the car, it seems to me, all but dominates the scene. In a place that otherwise could be timeless, its presence forces us to confront contemporary time. We are face to face with our impulse to traverse forbidding, uninhabited places. After we get there, as Halverson has, comes the realization that our presence has changed them.

Many of us experience our environment in passing, a view from a vehicle on the ground or in the air. While the square format Mark Klett has chosen approximates the experience of such a momentary look through a window, we know right away from its jagged double border that the photographer, in fact, has created a particular artifact on paper. He shows us the full image he saw, even to the edges of the separator paper of his positive-negative film.

This "framing" device is intended as a conceit of the painstaking photographic process employed by the first American photographer-explorers to visit the West during the nineteenth century. These photographers prepared their heavy glass-plate negatives with wet chemicals right in the field, a tedious procedure. They had to use a commercially available solution, known as gun cotton (ordinary cotton that had been soaked in nitric and sulfuric acid, then dried), dissolve it in a mixture of alcohol and ether with potassium iodide, and pour it evenly onto the negative plate. Within seconds, they would need to sensitize the plate in a solution of silver nitrate before inserting it, while still wet, in its holder into the camera. These negatives were very much handmade. After exposure, the cameraman would retreat to his portable darkroom tent to develop the negative.

Polaroid's Type 55 sheet film makes it much easier for Klett to produce his initial negative. The sheet is actually a package, which contains the black-and-white positive, the negative, and a pod of reagent. When processing the film, which can be used as a way for the photographer to proof the image in the field, he peels apart the package and immerses the negative in a sulfite solution to fix and wash it. Choosing black-and-white, Klett also recalls the monochromatic past of photography. The film type and today's large 4" x 5"-negative format produce sharpness, fine grain, and continuity in soft, mid-range grays. All of these enhance the reading of his Arizona subject.

Klett has organized the horizon line and glistening light to force us to see the water in a canal. Though the canal appears to be far away, he makes it accessible to us by placing it dead center in his picture. The almost perfect symmetry of the composition directs our attention to the Central Arizona Project, a man-made engineering wonder fifteen years under construction to carry Colorado River water uphill to the parched south. With the sun pointing the way from above, we feel the essence of what Klett saw without the need for words: Man has been playing God in this place.

Edward Burtynsky has put Westley, California, another place where humans have been at work, in his sights. Here the flat earth of a canyon in the California coastal range gives way in the foreground to the donut-shaped forms rampaging in piles of circles and ellipses as far as we can see. To the left is a big mountain of countless piled tires, parting in the center of the photograph. To the right, we make out Nature's shapely contour beginning to be transformed by a consuming swarm of more tires. They seem out of control. They may be taking over.

What we can't see in this view is the fire in an adjacent recycling dump, brought on by Nature during an electrical storm and burning out of control as it pollutes air, soil, and groundwater. Because it was an environmental disaster waiting to happen, the State of California has since ordered Oxford Tire Recycling to clean up the 40-acre mountain of seven million tires, which had been accumulated since the 1960s and was one of the world's largest tire piles. The scene Edward Burtynsky witnessed no longer exists.

Author's note: The recently acquired Kent and Marcia Minichiello Collection of environmental landscape photography in the Library of Congress, which includes Halverson's and Klett's photographs, was a gift to the nation on the occasion of the Library's Bicentennial celebration.

Karen Halverson, American, born 1941
"Alabama Hills, near Lone Pine, California," 1987
Chromogenic color print
Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division,
Kent and Marcia Minichiello Collection, Library of Congress
website: http://www.karenhalverson.com/ email: khalv99@yahoo.com

Mark Klett, American, born 1952
"Granite Reef Aquaduct near Mile Marker 100," 1984
Gelatin silver print
Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division,
Kent and Marcia Minichiello Collection, Library of Congress
Mark Klett manages this website. www.thirdview.org

Edward Burtynsky, Canadian, born 1955
"Oxford Tire Pile #5, Westley, California," 1999
Chromogenic color print
Courtesy of Charles Cowles Gallery www.cowlesgallery.com, New York; email: info@cowlesgallery.com.
Burtynsky's website: www. edwardburtynsky.com

> Year that trembled and reel'd beneath me!
> Your summer wind was warm enough, yet the air I breathed froze me,
> A thick gloom fell through the sunshine and darken'd me,
> Must I change my triumphant songs? said I to myself,
> Must I indeed learn to chant the cold dirges of the baffled?
> And sullen hymns of defeat?
>
> —*Walt Whitman*, MEMORIES OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN

> We have faith that future generations will know that here in the middle of the Twentieth Century, there came a time when men of good will found a way to unite, and produce, and fight to destroy the forces of ignorance, and intolerance, and slavery, and war.
>
> —*Franklin Delano Roosevelt,* Address to White House Correspondents' Association, Washington, D.C., February 12, 1943

> Every European visitor to the United States is struck by the comparative rarity of what he would call a face.... To have a face, in the European sense of the word, it would seem that one must not only enjoy and suffer but also desire to preserve the memory of even the most humiliating and unpleasant experiences of the past.
>
> —*W.H. Auden,* "Hic et Ille," THE DYER'S HAND

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A Year in Washington, A Visitation of Ghosts

Katherine McNamara

A Visitation of Ghosts

In the week before Christmas the National Gallery was as quiet as museums used to be, when you could observe at your leisure. When I emerged into the afternoon, the weather had turned cold and sunny. Washington is not a metropolis, as has been observed, but it is an agreeable city, if you can ignore the fact of its segregated neighborhoods. I had a little flat just off Dupont Circle where I spent a good deal of time last year. I wanted to see, as closely as I could, how this President and his administration are changing our nation. The atmosphere in the capital is different than *out in the country*. Potomac fever rises like a mist from this once-swampy ground and cloaks every deed and small fact, every nuance of interpretation in a layer of opacity. Washington is a city of alarms and rumors, and knowing old hands who have already seen everything there is to be seen. The news becomes repetitive and questionable. If you were of the right age, you could say it is a city of ghosts.

Old friends and colleagues visited the District, ghosts of a private past. How odd it was to return to this ancient starting place, as if meaning to examine a life while still in the midst of it; while public matters demand intelligent attention, as the old year turning into the new booms with war talk like firecrackers packed with grape-shot.

I last lived in this city in 1974, during the impeachment hearings of President Nixon. He resigned rather than live with the disgrace of a guilty verdict, and so eased what had become a constitutional crisis. In 1972, not long before the *Post* reported the Watergate break-ins of that June, I had gone to work at the Peace Corps, not as a volunteer but a young staff member at headquarters in an office called "management information systems." I reported to two men who had come down from the Harvard Business School to serve in the Federal government. They were Republicans, because Richard Nixon was president. They believed that the "business model" – I don't recall if they used the phrase in those days – was an excellent plan for the government to adopt. What I learned first was their predisposition to secrecy. After having testified routinely about the agency before Congress, the director of our office told me he had not realized how much you had to explain to the public when you were in government, because you did not have to do it nearly so much in corporate life.

At Harvard Business School they must not have taught that the public sector had its own objectives, its governing purpose – the public weal – being different than the private sector's, profit and market share. That is what I thought, and what I may have said. My supposition must have been incorrect. A decade later, Mrs. Thatcher's dictum "There is no society: there are only families," formulated a politics of terrible disdain for the idea of the public. On this side of the Atlantic, President Reagan led the replacement of society, or the civic bonds that held us together as citizens, with "the economy," an atomizing, dis-unifying theory and practice of governance under which we live now. Then in 1989, the twentieth century ended, because (argued the historian John Lukacs) with the fall of Communism our historical consciousness changed. Capitalism had no competition now and could expand without limit and without check, unloosing the monopolistic energies inherent in its nature. It was responsible to no national governing power.

However, in the old days under President Nixon, a reorganization of the government had already begun, when the venerable Bureau of the Budget was replaced with OMB, the Office of Management and Budget. The OMB was devoted to a Harvard Business School-like plan of "zero-based" budgeting. As I learned in the MIS office, it was a system of classification in which everything that could be counted, was counted, in order to justify requests for spending, and in which intangibles such as values, traditions, neighborhoods, the environment, could be included only as special cases. Or "special interests," as

Rooseveltian social values came to be labeled. The system of counting *things* – bodies, for instance – had already been used to justify requests for more war, although Robert McNamara, no relative of mine, who had encouraged it, wrote afterward that early on he had doubted the war could be won.

Remember back to that time of amazement, if you can. Why had the Plumbers from CREEP (the Committee to Re-elect the President) broken into the Democratic Party's offices in the Watergate? They were looking for information about Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers. More important to them, they wanted to find out whether the Democrats had secret information about Nixon's White House. A few months earlier, they had broken into Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office looking for material with which to discredit or blackmail him. The burglaries were illegal. Nixon tried to cover up both what his operatives had done and his knowledge of it.

In the spring of 1971, Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony Russo had released the Pentagon Papers to the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. These seven thousand pages bound into forty-seven volumes were an immense, secret history, written on McNamara's commission, of America's diplomatic and military antecedents to, and prosecution of, the Vietnam War. This secret history was highly classified and had probably not been read (or, perhaps, even known about) by succeeding Secretaries of Defense. The newspapers printed them, arguing that the public had a right to know how its leaders had determined to wage that war. Their publishers' attorneys had stood before the Supreme Court to defend that right under the First Amendment of the Constitution, and the Supreme Court had upheld it. The folly, miscalculations, doubts, and grievances, the ideological rationalizations and political necessities of Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson and their advisors were laid out, the costs in lives and treasure were told, the vast unlikelihood of winning made clear.

Nixon then had escalated the war.

I was in the District when the story of Watergate broke. I used to ride my bike from Capitol Hill, where I lived, down the Mall – not nearly so many buildings then, nor so many people – to my office, at the corner of Lafayette Square. On fine days during the summer of the Watergate hearings, friends and I used to pick up boxed lunches at the new little gourmet shops, take our picnics up to the Capitol, lounging on the grass below the East Front, watch the press come and go. I always hoped to catch a glimpse of Senator Ervin or Congresswoman Jordan. I miss their voices.

This September, I gave a series of talks in Virginia public libraries, in part detailing the threat of the USA PATRIOT Act to our civil rights under the First and Fourth Amendments. Someone – a librarian, no doubt – asked, "Would the Watergate break-ins be legal now?" No, they wouldn't. Break-ins and burglaries are still illegal. She meant, Would

the Nixon people have been able to search the records legally, if the USA PATRIOT Act and FISA had been law in 1972?[1]

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[1] The passage following is from "America's Secret Court," by Paul DeRienzo and Joan Moossy, Penthouse.com. I quote it because of the incongruity of its source, yet its being a neat summary of the background of the FISA Court, a legal entity of broad powers about which most readers may be unaware. Note: the article is undated but was written before the September 2001 attacks, and the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act (see Senator Russell Feingold, *Archipelago*, Vol. 6, No. 2, http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-2/feingold.htm) and the recent Homeland Security Act. These laws have only increased the intrusive powers of the Federal government. The following passage offers some background.

> The roots of FISA lie in the social upheavals that convulsed the country in the 1960s and '70s. During that time, countless citizens were drawn into a plethora of political-activist groups, from the civil-rights movement to anti-war organizations. Demonstrations and riots rocked cities and college campuses as Americans began to question seriously the government's war in Vietnam. The federal government moved quickly to stanch the tide of opposition and social change through a program of dirty tricks and unprecedented violations of personal rights and privacy, often justified as necessary for national security.
>
> The government's abuse of the Constitution eventually reached its height with the Watergate break-in and subsequent scandal that resulted in the near-impeachment and consequent resignation of President Nixon, who had ordered break-ins, known as black-bag jobs, against his Democratic opponents in the 1972 election. To defend his actions, Nixon argued that the president has an "inherent authority" as chief executive to suspend the Constitution in an emergency. Abraham Lincoln had limited habeas-corpus rights during the Civil War, and Franklin Roosevelt had interned thousands of Japanese-Americans in camps after Pearl Harbor.
>
> Public outrage over Nixon's abuses led to a 1976 investigation by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. Testimony before the committee, which was headed by Senator Frank Church of Idaho, revealed that the nation's intelligence agencies had consistently ignored and violated the Constitution for more than a quarter century. Among other abuses, the FBI was held responsible for the infamous COINTELPRO counterintelligence program that targeted those whom Hoover and Nixon perceived as political enemies: the Black Panther party, the American Indian Movement, and a host of popular leaders, including the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X. To Senator Church, all this was "one of the sordid episodes in the history of American law enforcement."
>
> The findings of the Church Committee clearly established that there needed to be strict separation of federal domestic law enforcement from the government's counterintelligence activities. Ever since passage of the Omnibus Crime Control Act of 1968, electronic surveillance in criminal investigations has required a warrant signed by a judge. But the '68 law had left open an exception in cases of national security, a loophole exploited by Nixon and his cronies. As designed ten years later, the primary purpose of FISA was to gather counterintelligence information, not to make criminal prosecutions. Surveillance would be conducted under the guidance of the Justice Department, employing a team of lawyers to work with the attorney general and the FBI An innovation proposed by then Attorney General Griffin Bell created a special court of sitting federal judges who would approve FISA wiretaps the same way judges approve criminal wiretaps.
>
> The main targets of FISA were supposed to be foreign intelligence agents working as part of their country's diplomatic missions in the United States. Although the U.S. Supreme Court has yet to hear a FISA case, lower courts have ruled that "once surveillance becomes primarily a criminal investigation ... individual privacy interests come to the fore and government foreign-policy concerns recede." Yet the fact that evidence acquired from a FISA surveillance can be used to make a criminal prosecution has led some critics to charge that the FBI is taking advantage of the law to make arrests…. (continued in six parts at http://www.penthouse.com/features/9906f_secret_court/; readers are advised to proceed with caution because of possible spam.)

Links to other Websites for information about FISA follow these notes.

Hear me!

So many young women and men around Dupont Circle and on Capitol Hill wear faces glowing with the heady sense of nearness to power. Compromise and the presence of the media mask their elders. A new friend from an established family assured me that nonetheless the arts were lively and you didn't have to socialize with Republicans *or* politicians, if you didn't want to. In the permanent Washington, explained my *doyenne*, what matters is not money, as such, but position. The official city is a great inter-leaved hierarchy where protocol assigns and reaffirms precedence. The novels of Henry Adams and Gore Vidal are still lively and accurate guides for the newcomer. At dinner parties the women are as usual fascinating. You see them evaluate a room in a quick glance, placing every man and woman in it in ranks of advantage, possibility, or dismissal. Then they turn to you and are charming, even kind. Perfectly nice people have unexpected histories. An older gentleman with lively eyes tells you courteously that he is an international lawyer who writes books on political theory and chairs a committee on NGOs that seems to have something to do with the U.N. Later you learn the committee on NGOs is in fact sponsored by the Unification Church, which also publishes the *Washington Times* (read by "senior people"); while his books are reviewed in *Foreign Affairs*, and he himself was once a translator in Egypt for Orde Wingate. Orde Wingate, a British general and hero to Israelis for having organized their defense forces in the Thirties, is buried in Arlington Cemetery. This is not fiction, you realize in wonder. The real American novel would be a melodrama of politics, biography, and manners.

During my year in the flat on Dupont Circle, I became a devotee of C-Span. C-Span – the "C" should stand for "citizen" – is our essential window on the triune system of separate powers our government claims to be. Where else can I look in on conferences sponsored by the Brookings Institution or the Heritage Foundation, or laugh wryly when Aaron McGruder, who draws the *feuilletoniste* comic "Boondocks," asks why a cartoonist is the only one criticizing the government? Where are the journalists, he asks? *"It is the responsibility of any thinking individual with a voice to say whatever they can say within their medium. You can't underestimate the power of one voice."* I sit up when, still indignant, he says that the *coup* of the 2000 election happened not when the Supreme Court decided for Bush, but when Gore gave up the challenge and left the huge majority that had voted for him with no place to go.[2] (Who speaks for me, now?) I felt hope when twenty-seven Democratic

[2] Aaron McGruder, "Boondocks" http://www.boondocks.net/, *The Nation*, and many local newspapers, although not those who intermittently stop carrying it because of its political content; see *The Progressive*

representatives stood together and said the President was making a terrible mistake by leading the country to war on Iraq. C-Span ran that clip throughout the day and night before the House vote on the war-powers resolution. The House gave the President his blank check.

Pacing before the small screen, I watched the noble Senator Byrd defend the Constitution in the well of the Senate against the President's drive toward a first strike. "Hear me!" he cried, waving the copy of our sacred text he carries in his pocket. But he was not heard.[3]

You can go down to Congress and sit in the galleries. You can even, possibly, attend hearings. This was a pleasant, even instructive, activity when the Capitol was open to citizens and they thronged the halls looking in on their representatives. After the attacks of 2001, entering the Capitol became more difficult. The people had to go around to their senators' or congressperson's offices to get passes for admission. I was skeptical of all this security. Who, in fact, was being kept out? An old colleague, now a congressman, told me that before crashing in Pennsylvania, United Flight 93 had been aimed at the Capitol. The trajectory of the flight plan had been worked out, and was clear. "Imagine this great Dome melted down onto the Mall," he said, still shaken.

"That day they had no evacuation plan. Nobody knew what to do, or where we should go. We were all standing out in the parking lot waiting for our leaders to tell us what to do. Somebody with a hand-held missile launcher – a lady pushing a baby stroller – could have taken out the Congress right there."

I said to myself, Steady. Anything is possible. The only weapons the attackers had used, until they turned the planes into missiles, were boxcutters.

Missiles over Alaska

Two summers ago the President withdrew unilaterally from the Antiballistic Missile Treaty with Russia and announced he was going ahead with plans to build a missile defense shield. On December 18, 2002, the *Times* reported: "President Bush today ordered the Pentagon to field within two years a modest antimissile system. If it works, it could

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http://www.progressive.org/0901/roth0102.html and Altnet http://www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=11859. See also, Christopher Lyden's commentary http://www.christopherlydon.org/viewtopic.php?topic=963&forum=5.

See also, McGruder, "Free Speech in a Time of War," Emory University, Center for Ethics, September 10, 2002, video, available from the C-Span Store http://www.c-spanstore.com/172558.html.

[3] See also, Senator Byrd's up-to-the-minute web site http://www.senate.gov/~byrd/ and click on "U.S. Provided Iraq with Bioweapon Building Blocks."

intercept a limited attack from a state like North Korea." *If* the "modest" system works, it will also put weapons into space commanded solely by the U.S. I thought about a meeting I had in Fairbanks two summers ago with Dan O'Neill, author of THE FIRECRACKER BOYS, a journalist's thorough account of Project Chariot. Project Chariot was a hare-brained scheme of the early Sixties to explode a huge thermonuclear device off the coast of Point Hope, Alaska. Point Hope, an Iñupiat village, is one of the two oldest continuously inhabited settlements in North America. Reading back, I heard an eerie echo. Early on, Dan O'Neill had taken a satiric look at the missile-shield enterprise.[4]

"Let's imagine, for a moment," he wrote in a column published in the Fairbanks *News-Miner* in 1998, "that the military was interested in our ideas on the important questions, that it held a real town meeting, and that an absolutely truthful colonel took public comments and questions from the floor. Here's how it might go:

PUBLIC: Can you say a little about the history of the ABM idea?

COLONEL: Certainly. It was promoted in 1960 by Father of the H-bomb, Edward Teller. At the time, Teller was also proposing to excavate an instant harbor in Alaska by detonating a string of nuclear bombs. His ABM idea was to launch nuclear-tipped rockets that would explode in the vicinity of incoming missiles and knock them out. Scientists called the idea costly and ineffective. But we built one such ABM facility anyway. In North Dakota. It protected only a battery of our own ICBM's. It was finished in 1975, at a cost of $7 billion, and scrapped the next year. Congress determined its upkeep was a waste of money.

PUBLIC: Didn't the Star Wars program come next?

COLONEL: Exactly. The Strategic Defense Initiative, or Star Wars, was the most expensive military program in the history of the world. By far. Tens of billions were spent on little more than the hope of a laser missile defense system. Weapons scientists called it "a fraud" and "impossible to accomplish." Defense contractors thought it was the next best thing to printing your own money. Needless to say, the system does not exist.

PUBLIC: So now you guys are back pushing a scaled-down version?

COLONEL: Correct.

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[4] See also, "The Bear," Endnotes, *Archipelago*, Vol. 5, No. 3; link, below.

PUBLIC: Will this one work?

COLONEL: Not really, no. You see, there are easier ways for an Iran or a Libya to attack the US than to try to build ICBM's. They could smuggle a bomb across one of our borders. Or bring one into a city's harbor onboard a ship. Or launch a short-range missile from a ship offshore. If they did build an ICBM, they could build ones that release multiple decoys, thereby reducing our chances of hitting the actual warhead (assuming that we figure out how to hit one at all-our last nine tests have failed). And remember, the missile defense system we are proposing would only build 20 interceptors. So, for $10 billion (our critics say much more) we would not be buying any real security.

PUBLIC: Tell me again why we should do this.

COLONEL: It will deliver mega-dollar hardware and construction contracts to the home states of some pretty influential senators.

PUBLIC: Like Alaska?

COLONEL: Affirmative. Sen. Ted Stevens says he doesn't care where the ABM is based, just so long as it can defend all 50 states. Well, North Korea is just 2,000 miles from Attu Island at the end of the Aleutian Chain. North Dakota is nearly 4,000 miles from Attu. So even if North Dakota could launch an interceptor at the same instant that North Korea launched an ICBM toward Attu, the Korean missile would get there first. Sen. Stevens has got this figured.

PUBLIC: OK, I see what's in it for the politicians and the recipients of pork. But what's in it for you?

COLONEL: A $600,000 salary at one of the missile defense contractors after I retire from government service.

PUBLIC: Is there anything we can do about this?

COLONEL: Yes sir. You can insist on culverts.

North Korea is 2,000 miles from Attu: very black humor indeed. The grim joke may be on the President. Don't we have a division of soldiers defending Seoul, near the border,

in direct range of North Korean artillery? What happens if the North Koreans shoot at them?

The situation it has made cannot be resolved by war

Archipelago gained a new contributing editor during the year, my old colleague Arthur Molella, an historian of science and director of the Lemelson Center at the Smithsonian. Dr. Molella was co-host of a symposium last March on the play "Copenhagen" and America's development and use of the atomic bomb.[5] Michael Frayn's historical drama, in which he imagines the fateful private meeting in Copenhagen, September 1942, between the physicists Neils Bohr and Werner Heisenberg, had reopened the question of the complex morality of nuclear weapons. Bohr, who had escaped from the Nazi-controlled Denmark, urged Churchill and Roosevelt to support the Allies' atomic program because (he believed) Germany was trying to develop a bomb. The historian and journalist Richard Rhodes reminded us that fifty-five million lives were lost during World War II, and argued that the carnage was brought to an end because of President Truman's use, twice, of the atomic bomb. In the nearly fifty-seven years since, wars have claimed about a million lives every year: but, terrible as this is, the wars have remained at the level of conventional weaponry.

Rhodes argued that war remains conventional – historical, not universal – because of the fact of nuclear energy. He thought Bohr was correct in believing that the weapon is so dreadful that *no* nation would dare use it again, *because the situation it has made cannot be resolved by war*.

Then last spring the administration leaked a Pentagon report, the Nuclear Posture Review, proposing that the American military consider seven nations to be targeted by our nuclear arsenal in case they acted up against our interests. During the alarmed media outcry, the President's security advisor explained soothingly that the Review also proposed reducing our nuclear stockpile. Nonetheless, the lunatic idea was out and circulating again: "tactical" nuclear weapons are a possibility.

Around that time, I gave a little dinner in my new flat for Dr. Molella. Over fresh pasta and a light Italian wine, we talked about how atomic visions had formed our childhood. Sardonically, we remembered the "duck and cover" drills in grade school, the black-and-white propaganda films in school assembly, fallout shelters in people's back yards. Threat of nuclear disaster spooked our generation. We were trained to be afraid; our imaginations were seized by atomic terror. We riffed on Hollywood movies – "The Day

[5] See also, "The Colossus," *Archipelago*, Vol. 6, No. 1, and "The Colossus, 2, Vol. 6, No. 2; link, below.

After," "Silkwood," "The China Syndrome," "Fail-Safe," "On the Beach," "The Invisible Boy," "Thirteen Days," "Godzilla," "Atomic Café," "Russia House," "Dr. Strangelove, Or How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Bomb." We wondered whether we shouldn't look at the movies again. Why not organize a film series? We could invite specialists in film and cultural history and rocket science to lead public discussions. We believed in the liberal value of public discussion of the issues. Perhaps we – I, at least – believed that, if people recalled the history of nuclear weapons, they, too, would be appalled by the prospect of their redeployment, and would say so to the government.

However. According to a *Washington Post*-ABC News poll (December 18), "Most Americans favor using nuclear weapons against Iraq if Saddam Hussein attacks U.S. military forces with chemical or biological weapons in a war that the public believes is virtually inevitable."[6]

But the headline and analysis were somewhat deceptive, because when you read further down you found that "the new survey also found that 58 percent of those interviewed would like to see President Bush present more evidence explaining why the United States should use military force to topple the Iraqi leader, up from 50 percent in September. And while most Americans view Iraq as a major threat, fewer than half said it poses an immediate danger to this country."

The article quoted a citizen, Rebecca Wingo, a thirty-five-year-old trucking dispatcher in Johnstown, Ohio, as saying, "We need to get Saddam Hussein out of power, even it means using nuclear weapons, particularly if they attack us with dirty weapons. When you're dealing with people like him, the only thing they understand is brute force."

Rebecca Wingo's view of the world was perhaps the result of bitter experience, or else the naïve acceptance of propaganda. Did she know that America had already used nuclear weapons, nearly thirty years before she was born? Or, had the indeterminate risk of biological weapons become even more frightening, now, than atomic terror?

These opinions attributed to all Americans came from 1,209 adults chosen randomly and willing to answer the pollsters' questions between December 12 and December 15, 2002. They thought Iraq was a "major threat" but did not pose an "immediate danger" to this country. How did they decide this?

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[6] "Most Favor Nuclear Option Against Iraq," Richard Morin, *Washington Post*, December 18, 2002, p. A18.

The Second Inaugural

The Lincoln Memorial is beautiful at night. Across the Potomac, the illuminated Custis-Lee mansion rises on a Virginia hillside above Arlington Cemetery. The eternal flame at JFK's grave burns as a small beacon in the dark. Just down the Mall, in shadow amid a grove of trees, is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. In the presence of these dead and their memory, part of our history, Lincoln's temple is a place of contemplation and solace for a troubled heart.

The Second Inaugural, March 4, 1865, is engraved on the wall beside the colossus of Lincoln, who is seated not in majesty but somber isolation.

> ……..
>
> One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war…. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses; for it must needs be that offenses come, but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."…

One night, I stood under the portico and looked down the Mall toward the Capitol. The dome had just been constructed when Lincoln addressed the nation that day. Reporters had noted how it rose above his head against a cloudy sky, and that the sun came out after he finished speaking.

I tried to imagine what Martin Luther King would have seen, standing down there by the reflecting pool before a quarter of a million people, most of whose ancestors had once been slaves. The country seemed to me now as inexorably divided as before the Civil War. The matters at issue were not bondage and civil war but what kind of nation we have become, how we should conduct ourselves in the world and treat our own people at home. To whom were we responsible? We were riven by our incompatible theories and practices of power and our belief, or lack of it, in civil society, the polity, the whole citizenry.

Lincoln, not expecting re-election, had held the Union together as a force of spiritual illumination. He had feared the awful judgment of the Almighty and knew in humility that both North and South were subject to God's wrath. Thus, he had concluded:

> With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan – to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.

His standard was too high for us to attain; we have not attained it. Yet, what if after the attacks of September 11, we ourselves, citizens, had been asked by our current President to do service to a nation that is grander than our small selves, rather than continue to go shopping while the government looked after our safety? No, what he asked of us was – banal. The people were let down. The President could have changed the world (people say) – he could have dropped food and medicines in Afghanistan before dropping bombs (they argue), or, instead of dropping bombs. I did not know if I believed this, however.

Is this country at war? Or, is it "at war"? For, what on earth is a "war against terrorism"? Although I don't doubt the fabled al-Qaida is up to no good for us, I am not sure "we" and "they" are in the same war. I feel all is veiled by propaganda and fear.

What ought our country to do with all its power? We know the description: the American nation is the greatest military power there ever was in the world, our military budget – and, I suppose, capacity – greater than the next fifteen nations' put together. Our

President warns the world that we will brook no opposition; indeed, no hint of opposition: we will act the aggressor, to prevent any rise of an opposing power.

Is this Alexander the Great? Is it Napoleon?

Warfare is the business of killing

A few days before Christmas, I phoned a friend with long experience in the Pentagon, a man who calls himself a Truman Democrat, a physicist with a degree from MIT and experience in the planning of war and weaponry. A year ago in June he had written me, "Mr. Rumsfeld is well on the way to making a thorough mess, for all his claims about new ideas and change." Patiently, he had been explaining what he meant, until the September attacks interrupted our conversation and the essay by him I had hoped to publish.

"Are we really going to war against Iraq?" I asked him directly.

He was quiet for a moment, then said carefully: "You notice the military is chary about going to Iraq. Warfare is the business of killing, and you'd like to think they would find every other alternative first. Herman Kahn used to talk about playing 'Chicken,' when young men race cars to the edge: you show up as drunk as you can be and then throw the steering wheel out the door.

"Clearly, some kind of psychological warfare is going on. We have to hope they will learn….

"But I wonder," he went on: "when will we have thrown the steering wheel out the window? The President may still be maneuvering, or may think he is doing so. But, when you send in troops, after what point can you no longer withdraw them but must commit them to making war?"

I could not emulate his humane detachment, but had a bitter copper-taste. Reading the Pentagon Papers, Daniel Ellsberg concluded that presidents make wars not because they have inferior or wrong information, or are misled by their advisors: they make war because they believe some greater good is to be gained, some goal of policy, or defeat or containment of a grim enemy, at a cost of life and treasure they are willing to pay. They believe the country also is willing to pay that cost. Having released the papers to public scrutiny, Ellsberg learned then that the electorate, too, and for its own reasons, could make irrational choices.[7]

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[7] See, for instance, Nicholas Lemann, "Paper Tiger, Daniel Ellsberg's war," *The New Yorker* http://www.newyorker.com/critics/books/?021104crbo_books, November 4, 2002:

From whom would sacrifice be expected in the coming war? The White House announced, straight-faced, that the war would not cost nearly as much as was thought, in terms of billions of dollars expended. We were expected to believe this, although the White House lied to us all the time about fiscal and other matters, according to the economist and *Times* columnist Paul Krugman, and embroidered, misused, and invented facts, according to the *Post* reporter Dana Milbank.[8] Rep. Charles Rangel, D.-NY, proposed re-introducing the draft, in order (he said) that the sacrifice of life will be equal among all classes. I wondered if he meant to take the proposition of war into every home and provoke an anti-war movement at the grassroots. The Vietnam draft was not levied equally. The boys of my class – that is, middle-class college students – more often didn't go to war, unless they went willingly when drafted, or could not escape the draft, or volunteered. There were many ways to stay out of that unjust war, although those ways were often unjust to those who went. Rangel's proposition is interesting, I thought. Let every household study the prospect of war. The Vietnam War poisoned my generation, and I think we have not healed from it.

When you go to the Wall of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, you walk down into silence and grief, until the lists of the dead engraved on the black granite walls rise over your head. It is as though the light has been cut off. Your breath is caught in your throat. Men are kneeling, tracing a name with their finger and weeping. A red carnation, a white carnation, a folded note are set into the cracks. Slowly, you walk on. Gradually, the ground slopes upward, until you emerge again into the world. Maya Lin, who designed the Memorial, said, "I went to see the site. I had a general idea that I wanted to describe a journey...a journey that would make you experience death and where you'd have to be an

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> For Ellsberg, the shattering revelation of the Pentagon Papers was that the American Presidents who made decisions about Vietnam had actually been well informed. Nobody was lying to them about the probability of success of American engagement, and they engaged anyway. All this contradicted not only Ellsberg's own explanation for mistaken judgments but a whole way of seeing the world, in which if decision-makers can be given good information they will make rational choices. But even after reading the Pentagon Papers, Ellsberg remained loyal to the tenets of decision theory; in leaking the Papers to the press, he was simply changing jurisdictions, trading in a faith that perfectly informed Presidents will make rational decisions for a faith that a perfectly informed public will force rational decisions on misguided Presidents. That's why Ellsberg comes to regard "deception," "secrecy," and "lies" as the devils responsible for bad policy – they were other names for misinformation. Hidden within the morally outraged and civilly disobedient radical, in other words, was the soul of a wronged decision theorist. The publication of the Pentagon Papers presented a new kind of Ellsberg paradox: providing the public with complete information didn't have the effect that Ellsberg expected….

[8] For instance, see Paul Krugman, "Dead Parrot Society," *The New York Times* http://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/25/opinion/25KRUG.html?ex=1036557273&ei=1&en=c385786bbc5d6626, Oct. 25, 2002. See also, Dana Milbank, "For Bush, Facts Are Malleable, Presidential Tradition Of Embroidering Key Assertions Continues," *The Washington Post*, Tuesday, October 22, 2002, Page A01.

observer, where you could never really fully be with the dead. It wasn't going to be something that was going to say, 'It's all right, it's all over,' because it's not."

The people who are now planning to send soldiers and weapons in order to kill, avoided war in their private lives, except for General Colin Powell, who served in Vietnam and the war in the Persian Gulf.

Among certain journalists you heard the word "incompetent" used to describe the President's people, particularly those at the Pentagon. For instance, it seemed the principal actors knew nothing about life in Iraq but, rather, believed that, if they used the right code-words in sentences – "democracy," for instance, or "liberation," – what they *said* was what would happen there. Just before Christmas, North Korea, whose people are being starved by their murderous regime, called the President's bluff. He refused to negotiate with them. Within days, he ordered the Pentagon to make the missile defense shield operational within two years.

But, I asked my friend the old-Pentagon hand, what if the North Koreans didn't send a missile over Alaska; what if they fired on the American division defending Seoul?

He said: "The division is ready to fight a war – World War I. No one has asked what the risks are of keeping it there, when it should be held in reserve, as a highly mobile attack force. The reason for that is politics. Politics and prior commitments keep it in a defensive, not offensive posture."

"Yes, but what would happen if the North Koreans acted?"

"The division there is within range of North Korean artillery. It would be chewed up. And if that happens, the commander should be court-marshaled, and the president impeached."

What do we, citizens, make of the game of power? Power is real; it isn't smoke and mirrors. We can only hope that diplomacy will carry the day.

The Gulf War (although I know this was not true) seemed imaginary to me, a media event, not the stuff of experience. On television, the censored tapes we were shown of aerial bombing looked like video games. Our soldiers were not among the hundred thousand burned on the infamous Highway of Death. Our leaders, and we ourselves, have never been called to account for prosecuting warfare from on high. After Vietnam, when war was revealed to the country night after night, year after year, on television, the military learned a lesson. In the Persian Gulf, during thirty-nine days of air strikes and four days of ground war, it controlled the media with censorship and propaganda.

Yet, Saddam Hussein claimed victory because he was not forced out of power. Millions of people in the Arab world accepted this as true, we are told. The poison of

Vietnam courses through our veins, my generation's, to which the President and his warhawks belong, and so I wondered: do they fear that the war in the Gulf has yet to be won?

I do not forget that on Sept. 11, Air Force One did not return to Washington for most of that day, but flew from air base to air base, nor that the President did not address the nation until evening. News correspondents commented sharply on his absence, even as Mayor Giuliani was visible in the wrecked streets. Why did the President not return at once to Washington, the seat of our government? Here is where our national laws are made; here is where our founding documents are kept. I think the President was afraid. When you have been afraid you do not easily forget that dismal feeling of helplessness and panic. You couldn't think clearly. You wanted your mother or father to protect you and make the threat go away. You flinched; you kept flinching, until you were certain you had built up your defenses; but then you are never certain your defenses are strong enough.

A lessened sense of hope

About ten days before the general election in November, with more than 100,000 other people, mostly middle-class, many of them of my generation, I marched in Washington against the President's coming war, then saw that march under-reported in the media, which was unable to tell the story. No doubt many of us will march again in January. No doubt many will keep marching until the war-machine wears down. But I do not suppose it will wear down soon.

Yet, during my Washington sabbatical I think I became a better citizen. For decades I had done the minimum: voting and, occasionally, contributing to a candidate or a cause. I had formed opinions and spoken out. In Washington, however, I learned an interesting fact, and it surprised me, probably more than any other. It is this. Our elected officials work very, very hard at politics and legislation. I would not say they work for "us," because our winner-take-all system does not allow for proportional representation, and I am in a large minority. Rather, they work to enact a political will. They work to make things happen. That is the definition of power, I understand: to make things happen.

Although he denied having done so, Robert McNamara had commissioned the writing of a secret history of the Vietnam War. Are secret histories being written now, I wonder; have they been written; and will the Administration's doctrine of secrecy require another Daniel Ellsberg to bring them to light?

But so much of what lies before us is not secret. A single party now controls the three branches of the Federal government. Its present leaders have never disguised their

desire for power and its unlimited use for the benefit of their supporters, nor concealed their belief in their right to power. We who are ordinary citizens stand and watch our civil rights taken away by Congress and an increasingly reactionary Court, and we do nothing, for our protests are scattered and therefore useless, unless we have sought and won the political power that will allow us to act. Liberal "tolerance" has brought people like me to "value" "diversity" of opinion. Shall we "tolerate" and "value" government secrecy, such as that which will keep presidential papers hidden for decades from public scrutiny? Shall we sanction the police power allowing the FBI to examine our most intimate records, without our knowing, on the merest suspicion of some vague possible threat from someone we once sat next to on an airplane? Shall we accept the rule that authorizes the Immigration and Naturalization Service to track our movements even beyond our borders? Shall we accede to the order endowing John H. Poindexter with the weird, shocking authority to collect every electronic record about every American citizen into a national database? Let us not forget: this is the same Admiral Poindexter who was convicted of crimes in the anti-constitutional Iran-Contra arms sales.[9]

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[9] See Arthur L. Limon, "Hostile Witnesses," *The Washington Post*, August 16,1998.

> The Iran-contra scandal burst upon the scene in November 1986 when it was first reported in a Lebanese newspaper that President Ronald Reagan had approved the sale of missiles to Iran in exchange for American hostages in Lebanon. Later, Justice Department lawyers found evidence that proceeds from the arms sales had been diverted to illegally fund the contra anticommunist guerrillas in Nicaragua in circumvention of the Boland Amendment banning U.S. aid to the rebels. It was an audacious, covert scheme – known by its participants as "the Enterprise" – carried out largely by a small group of top administration officials and private operators without the knowledge of Congress. And when it began to unravel, the foremost question congressional investigators faced was the classic one echoing from the days of Watergate: What did the president know and when did he know it?
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> Arthur L. Liman, a renowned New York corporate lawyer who had been involved in many big-time cases, was brought in as chief counsel for the Senate special committee set up to investigate. Liman helped conduct 40 days of controversial public hearings that made Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North a household name but were inconclusive about Reagan's role. Liman's memoirs, which are being published posthumously next month, recall those days when a president's fate hung in the balance.
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> Liman died last year before Whitewater metamorphosed into Monicagate, but he almost certainly would have stuck to the view expressed in his memoirs that the high crimes and misdemeanors alleged in Iran-contra posed a far more serious threat to American democracy and our system of checks and balances. Even Watergate – a bungled burglary followed by a White House-orchestrated cover-up – was less threatening, Liman argued. He saw Iran-contra as a deliberate effort to conduct foreign policy in secret by using a private organization motivated by profit and accountable to no one. Whitewater, by contrast, involved mainly pre-presidential financial activities that posed no constitutional issue or question of presidential accountability, according to Liman, who said the country could not afford to incapacitate a president by a drawn-out investigation that questioned his legitimacy…. (continued at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/irancontra/contra1.htm)

We are watching our rights vanish before our eyes, and no one seems to be able to stop the action. Is it still possible to make the political process answer to those of us who were in the majority in 2000, and a hair's breadth away from it in 2002? The accumulated power of the presidency looks monolithic, while the opposition absents itself from the fray.

I've been sobered by Washington and leave, sensibly, with a lessened sense of hope. I am going back to Virginia, to my own house. During the Congressional campaign last autumn I volunteered on behalf of our local candidate, who lost to the incumbent by a huge margin although she carried our relatively liberal city. The system of redistricting congressional seats is weighted toward the incumbents. It seems just the moment to go to work. I am a member of our City Democratic Committee. I wish to learn three things in my tenure: One, what does the Democratic Party stand for? Two, what do moderate Republicans believe? Three, do we share any common ground?

See also:

Anatol Lieven, "The Push for War: Anatol Lieven considers what the US Administration hopes to gain," *The London Review of Books*, Vol. 24, No. 19, 3 October 2002.

C-Span http://www.c-span.org/

U.S.A. Patriot Act: Some Web Sites:

Senator Russell Feingold, "On Voting Against the U.S.A. Patriot Act," *Archipelago*, Vol. 6, No. 2 http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-2/feingold.htm

Library of Congress, "Legislation Related to the Attack of September 11, 2001" http://thomas.loc.gov/home/terrorleg.htm

Library of Congress, "HR3162: Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT Act) Act of 2001" http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d107:h.r.03162:

Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression http://www.tjcenter.org/

Center for Constitutional Rights The USA PATRIOT Act: What's So Patriotic About Trampling on the Bill of Rights? 1 http://www.ccr-ny.org/whatsnew/usa_patriot_act.asp

Nancy Chang, SILENCING POLITICAL DISSENT (Seven Stories Press) http://www.sevenstories.com/Book/index.cfm?GCOI=58322100208840

ACLU: USA Patriot Act Boosts Government Powers While Cutting Back on Traditional Checks and Balances *An ACLU Legislative Analysis* http://www.aclu.org/congress/l110101a.html

American Library Association: Libraries and the Patriot Legislation http://www.ala.org/washoff/patriot.html

ALA Office for Intellectual Freedom http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/

On the USA Patriot Act http://www.ala.org/alaorg/oif/usapatriotact.html

Association of American Publishers, Freedom to Read http://www.publishers.org/abouta/patriot.htm

Congressional Research Service Report for Congress (PDF) http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RS21203.pdf

The USA PATRIOT Act and Patron Privacy on Library Internet Terminals *By Mary Minow* Law Library Resource Exchange http://www.llrx.com/features/usapatriotact.htm

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The Jurist – "The USA PATRIOT Act and the US Department of Justice: Losing Our Balances?" Professor Susan Herman, Brooklyn Law School http://jurist.law.pitt.edu/forum/forumnew40.htm

The FISA Court:

"Secret Court Rebuffs Ashcroft, Justice Dept. Chided on Misinformation," Washington Post, Friday August 23, 2002, p. A1 http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A51220-2002Aug22.html)

"The Secret FISA Court" http://www.monitor.net/monitor/10-30-95/fisa.html.

"Activists Sentenced to Long Prison Terms" http://www.washingtonpeacecenter.org/articles/activitssentenced.html

"Wisconsin Espionage Case" http://www.webactive.com/webactive/pacifica/demnow/dn980618.html

Previous Endnotes:

Lies Damned Lies; The Colossus (2) http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-3/endnotes.htm
The Colossus http://www.archipelago.org/vol6-2/endnotes.htm
The Bear http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-4/endnotes.htm
Sasha Choi Goes Home http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-3/endnotes.htm
Sasha Choi in America http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-2/endnotes.htm
A Local Habitation and A Name http://www.archipelago.org/vol5-1/endnotes.htm
The Blank Page, Vol. 4 http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-4/endnotes.htm
The Poem of the Grand Inquisitor http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-3/endnotes.htm
On the Marionette Theater http://www.archipelago.org/vol4-1/endnotes.htm
The Double http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-4/endnotes.htm
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On Memory http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-2/endnotes.htm
Passion http://www.archipelago.org/vol3-1/endnotes.htm
A Flea http://www.archipelago.org/vol2-4/endnotes.htm
On Love http://www.archipelago.org/vol2-3/endnotes.htm
Fantastic Design, with Nooses http://www.archipelago.org/vol2-1/endnotes.htm
Kundera's Music Teacher http://www.archipelago.org/vol1-4/endnotes.htm
The Devil's Dictionary; Economics for Poets http://www.archipelago.org/vol1-3/endnotes.htm
Hecuba in New York; Déformation Professionnelle http://www.archipelago.org/vol1-2/endnotes.htm
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FOREST OF THE NIGHT: A Declaration of Independence

George Garrett

In a remarkably open and interesting essay about his life and his work, written for CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS: AUTOBIOGRAPHY SERIES (Volume 11, 1990, pp. 171–187), Madison Jones said of this book, his second published novel: "FOREST OF THE NIGHT would turn out to be, I believe, the least successful of my novels. Yet I sometimes feel that it could have been my best." He goes on to say that the last third of the novel suffers from his own impatience, that its last part is, as a result, hurried and not fully realized. He is entitled to that judgment. He wrote the story and he alone knew and knows now what he hoped to achieve with FOREST OF THE NIGHT. But, by the same token, the sympathetic reader is entitled to deal with the experience at hand, what the book in fact is, not what it might have been. If that reader happens to be, as I am, a teacher of literature and a novelist, himself, he may feel, as I do, that the author's judgment of the work is too severe and finally not strictly relevant to the reader's experience.

It is entirely in character and appropriate that Madison Jones should demand more from the story than he feels he created and presented. On the other hand, the engaged reader might well argue that the novel, public property as it has been since 1960, requires a quickly moving narrative line for its final act, some change and even relief from the tightly focused intensity of the first two-thirds. And a reader, this one, would have to report that there is no novel, even among the acknowledged masterpieces of the canon, that does not at some point reward the reader and his involved impatience with a more rapid working out of the established premises and promises. Otherwise there would never be an end to any of them. And — and I suspect Madison Jones knows this well — if a serious and gifted writer were ever able to achieve in any one work the perfect model of what he has imagined, there would be no good reason to create another. What we learn from the experience of writing a novel is how we should have done it in the first place. If the novel is, in Jones's terms, "successful" (by which he clearly means not the success of sales or even of critical appreciation, but purely and simply, aesthetic satisfaction), it is because the writer has managed, by craft and art, to camouflage overt and inherent flaws and to disguise the undeniable truth that this is only one way among many possible ways that a given story can be viewed and told. We aim always for the sense of inevitability with the neatness of a balanced equation, yet we always know that there is a kind of trickery or magic, smoke and mirrors, involved — the successful novel only *seems* inevitable. That is the most that we can ever hope for, though, of course, we begin and begin again and again, always hoping for something more.

All of which adds up to the desperate wisdom of the Wizard of Oz when Judy Garland and the others discover his duplicity: "Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain."

As for the other more mundane ways of measuring success, FOREST OF THE NIGHT seems not to have sold a great many copies, at least not enough to give Madison Jones the one thing most writers hope for, the gift of more time and freedom to get on with their work. It was not reviewed as widely or as well as his first novel, THE INNOCENT, which had earned respectful attention, including a highly favorable notice in *Time* ("South in Ferment," February 25, 1957). FOREST OF THE NIGHT was by no means ignored, but did not earn as much national space or as unmixed praise as his first novel had. *Kirkus* praised the immediacy and authenticity of the story while complaining about the "brutality" of it. *Library Journal,* perhaps more influential then than now, wasn't very helpful, inaccurately describing the book as "a portrayal of small town drudgery," and faulting the writing for "a style full of introspective platitudes," concluding in final judgment that it was "a waste of reading time." FOREST OF THE NIGHT earned a positive, if mixed, notice in the *Herald Tribune Book Review,* complaining that the book was "too dark."

This kind of thing, though it may hurt the writer's feelings, is chiefly important in another way. Publishers tend to take the initial reviews more seriously than larger and longer views. The chief concern of the publisher is the "shelf life" of the book at hand. In 1960 the shelf life of a novel, other than a bestseller, was about four months. Now it is more like four weeks. Madison Jones's relationships with publishers are typical enough to be emblematic of most of the serious — or, to use the more recent term, "literary" writers of our generation. With the notable exception of a mere handful of American writers — John Updike is an example — most of our novelists have moved restlessly from publisher to publisher according to the critical and commercial success of their books. I count seven different publishers for the works of Madison Jones, four of them from among the major commercial publishing houses of the times — Harcourt, Viking, Crown, and Doubleday. The truth is, that is a fairly stable record for our era. My own record is probably more typical: sixteen different publishers, five of them large commercial houses. In his autobiographical essay for *Contemporary Authors,* Jones shows himself to have been cheerfully innocent at the outset of some of the problems and details of modern publishing. He earned only three rejections of *The Innocent* before Harcourt Brace accepted it and those rejections troubled him more than they might have if he had known the publishing histories of many of his contemporaries.

More important to the writer, at least before mergers and conglomerates took over American commercial publishing, was serious critical attention conferred by literary critics of reputation and integrity. Their criticism could make (or break) careers. Their essay-reviews and critical pieces, if any, come on the scene too late, usually, to have any direct effect on sales and journalistic reviews. The major literary reviews and quarterlies appear months, sometimes years after a given book had come and gone. With the support of his mentors and admirers, people like Donald Davidson, Allen Tate, Andrew Lytle (to whom FOREST OF THE NIGHT is dedicated), Walter Sullivan, and Monroe Spears, and friends like Flannery O'Connor, Madison Jones received a good deal of respectful critical praise. Two

books in particular led to considerable encouraging attention. AN EXILE (1967), which became a film, I WALK THE LINE, with Gregory Peck, and A CRY OF ABSENCE (1971), which earned a prominent place on *The New York Times Book Review*'s bestseller list. Perhaps most important and helpful was "A New Classic," by Monroe Spears (*Sewanee Review*, Volume 80, number 1, Winter 1972, pp. 168–172) in which Spears celebrated A CRY OF ABSENCE as "an authentic, pure, and deeply moving tragedy," and praised the novel as "a major work of art."

Partly because of the well-earned attention given to A CRY OF ABSENCE, the earlier and less conventionally successful FOREST OF THE NIGHT has subsequently received less critical attention than it might have. Ashley Brown's piece in the special edition of *The Chattahoochee Review* (Volume 17, number 1, Fall 1996), "Experience in the West: Madison Jones's Immersion in History," is an outstanding and valuable exception, as is M. E. Bradford's earlier "Madison Jones" in *The History of Southern Literature,* edited by Louis D. Rubin, Jr., 1985. Bradford wrote of FOREST OF THE NIGHT: "There is no more powerful expose of the myth of the New Eden in our literature." Not long after the original publication, critic Arthur Mizener, in a chronicle review, "Some Kinds of Modern Novel," of eight recent historical novels for *The Sewanee Review* (Volume 69, number 1, Winter 1961, pp. 154–164), praised FOREST OF THE NIGHT as the best of the lot, though he somewhat undercut the praise with extended comments on the limits and faults of the historical novel as a form. Ashley Brown's important piece places FOREST OF THE NIGHT in a Southern literary context: "Lytle and his contemporaries almost inevitably wrote novels about the history that was accessible to them. . . . But the next generation, that included Eudora Welty and Peter Taylor, then Elizabeth Spencer, were seldom interested in the historical subject, and Flannery O'Connor and Walker Percy (a late-comer to fiction) shunned it on principle. This is largely true of Madison Jones; the exception among his books is FOREST OF THE NIGHT. . . ." (Bear in mind that Brown's essay appeared before NASHVILLE 1864 was published.)

The conventionally correct, and probably the most fruitful way to talk about FOREST OF THE NIGHT is to deal with it, both in general and in detail, within the context of all his work so far. Certainly, as critics and reviewers early and late have noted, there are close connections in all his work, more intensely so than is the case with many of his contemporaries. In an essay published in SOUTHERN FICTION TODAY: RENASCENCE AND BEYOND (1969) edited by George Core ("The New Faustus: The Southern Renascence and the Joycean Aesthetic," pp. 1–15), Walter Sullivan, dealing specifically with AN EXILE, writes: "The novel is clear, and the book like all of Jones's work is full of bucolic imagery, of sequences flagrantly calculated to show the evil of urbanization and the questionable nature of material progress." Thus Sullivan assumes, and it proves to be a safe and useful assumption, that there are both thematic and technical kinships in all of Jones's books. It is an observation made by an anonymous critic for the *Virginia Quarterly Review* (Volume 44, Number 1, Winter 1968, p. viii) likewise commenting on AN EXILE and its relation to the other stories: "Not many present-day writers are able to evoke an atmosphere of terror so overwhelming nor to conjure so artfully a sense of anxiety and dread." Others have noted the similarity, with variations, of his protagonists to each other. And there is some value in

comparing and contrasting Jonathan Cannon of FOREST OF THE NIGHT with Duncan Welsh of THE INNOCENT, Percy Youngblood of A BURIED LAND, Hank Tawes of AN EXILE, Hester Glenn of A CRY OF ABSENCE, Jud Rivers of PASSAGE THROUGH GEHENNA, etc. Though they are each distinctly different, and aptly representative of their particular times, they have in common, whether they realize it or not, the wound of Original Sin. Madison Jones has been unflinchingly explicit about this. "Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and was cast out forever, and we all share his condition. Evil is a prime fact in our existence: we may be forgiven for it but we cannot escape it." (CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS). Speaking of Percy Youngblood in A BURIED LAND, he points out the pattern that links him to other protagonists: "Here my hero, in flight from a world he finds intolerable, like Duncan and Jonathan before him, commits himself to a different world where imagined redemption lies. But what awaits him is not redemption. No worldly rejection can separate us from the evils that are ours." The allusion is to the passage (on the reverse side of the theological coin) of St. Paul in the eighth chapter of Romans: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is Jesus Christ our Lord."

Jones tells us in FOREST OF THE NIGHT that he set out to write "a terrible ballad or legend," "a controlled nightmare," "a story about the making of a Harpe." It was originally to be a story of the Harpe brothers, savage and brutal outlaws of Tennessee and the Natchez Trace in frontier days. But the story of the Harpes, told directly, was limited by being too well known. So instead, though the Harpes do, indeed, appear in person and in character, he wrote of a young man of high hopes and Jeffersonian ideals and of admirable character who, bit by bit, slowly and surely, and in spite of all his better angels, becomes a kind of Harpe, himself: who is, in fact, taken by others to be one of the Harpes. And in the feverish nightmare of the final part of the story, he comes to suspect that this is somehow true. Here is what Madison Jones had to say about the essential weakness of his central character in FOREST OF THE NIGHT: "My hero, Jonathan Cannon, is a young idealist with Rousseauesque ideas (ideas that entered importantly into the thinking of makers of our constitution) about the goodness of man in the state of nature, and evil as mere negation created by the dead hand of the past." Jonathan's initiation comes in the opening scene when he tries to comfort and help a terribly wounded and dying Indian who uses the last of his vital energy and strength to try to kill Jonathan. Jonathan has come west into the wilderness, coming from Virginia in the year 1802 in the hope of being a schoolmaster in Nashville or one of the settlements. As he tells Judith Gray, who will become the woman in his life: "Someday there'll be schools for everybody — free. That's what President Jefferson wants.... Did you ever think what a difference it would make if there were schools for everybody, rich and poor? I don't believe most people dream how much good it would do." Badly wounded by the dying Indian at the outset of his story, Jonathan imagines his father's voice explaining what has just happened: "He was blind with pain and in his blindness blamed you because you are a white man. You see how blindness inspired the act. Or, rather, delusion, nothing. It was an act without any real cause.... Because the blame lies with everybody and nobody. Whom would he have attacked? He could have done it only in

blindness. And who can blame a blind man for not seeing? To understand is to excuse. Not to excuse him would be to keep the evil alive."

Evil turns out to be alive and well in Tennessee in 1802 and awakes in the heart and soul of Jonathan Cannon whose enlightened views are tossed aside as he is inexorably reduced to a kind of brutal and loveless savagery. It is a dark story set in a dark world. It is, in Ashley Brown's words, "suffused with death." But, even so, through it all there is an older man, Eli, friend to Jonathan, an exemplary man of courage, honor, and simple purity of character who sees what is worthwhile about Jonathan and who manages, several crucial times, to save him from others and himself. Finally asked why and what for by Jonathan, Eli allows: "Like I owed it to you to learn you something." Jonathan answers: "You couldn't have taught me anything... And it's too late now." To which Eli says, "Maybe it ain't . . . for you. It'll get to where you can live with it if you keep on living. But just don't never forget it." Not exactly a conventional happy ending, then, but also not without some solace. Life is at least possible "if you keep on living."

Synopsis — and the best I have seen is in Ashley Brown's essay — does not begin to do justice to the power and subtlety of the story line, a well-made, virtuoso narrative rich and full with incident, urgent suspense, and complex, fully dimensional characters. Similarly a more abstract approach, focusing tightly on the basic themes and ideas that are dramatized in and by the narrative, tends to be schematic at the expense of the experience. Like all art, the novel has to be taken, first of all, as a sensory affective experience. It has to be felt before it can be considered analytically. The problem for the writer (and the reader) is compounded when the work is historical and set back in time far enough to be at least somewhat alien to the reader's experience. The writer cannot allude to or easily summon up an alien and vanished world. It must be created by credible and authentic concrete details, by vivid sensory engagement. Here Madison Jones's acute sensitivity to nature, not the sentimental pastoral of the urban dilettante, but hardscrabble knowledge of a working farmer, joined with an awareness of the mystery and implacable indifference of nature to our comings and goings, all our doings, pays off handsomely. From beginning to end of this story, the vast wilderness, touched hardly at all by the lonely farms and the few rude settlements that pass for civilization, broods over the action of the story. It filters through the leaves of tall trees and pays out shapes and shares of light and shadow. Most of the story comes to us through the perceptions and consciousness of Jonathan. But it is not entirely a third-person, limited point of view. Rather it is omniscient and the first consciousness that we encounter is that of a bear "standing in shaggy, brutish immobility," not so much a symbol of the wilderness as the creature of it:

> Then he stood upright. To a human eye the action might have suggested mockery; or else some secret power of metamorphosis in brute nature. The bear's posture revealed his age, the scars and slick, black patches of hide, the breast of an old warrior. Standing so, he seemed the type of the great passionate sire, begetting and murdering his kind throughout all the wilderness. Now his head, tilted a little upward, swung to left and right in deliberate inquiry. It stopped. He was all attention to something beyond the reach of human ears. With dignity he dropped onto four feet again. He

> angled across the road at a casual, lumbering walk. Before an opening between two trunks he paused and looked back down the road.

Who sees the bear? Only the invisible narrator and the reader, not even Jonathan who is coming down the road breaking the silence. Much later in the story he is clawed by a bear that might as well be the same one.

There are other abrupt switches of point of view, here and there, as needed; and at the tag end of the book, as Ell and Jonathan wait for some Indians to ferry them and their horses across a river, it is the Indians, like the bear of the beginning, who are the observers: "They waited close to the water's edge. As the boat slipped in toward the bank, the Indians stopped their poling. They stood upright, without motion now, and fixed upon the two white men the brooding gaze of the wilderness."

During a considerable part of the story Jonathan suffers from a nameless fever and thus his perceptions are (long before "magic realism" came to North American attention) distorted and hallucinatory. At times he hears voices. So did the author, who writes in his autobiographical essay — "There are times in the woods when unexplained voices call to you." The triumph of FOREST OF THE NIGHT is that the author has managed to translate those voices for us into a living language and to create a compelling, vividly realized story that questions some of our most cherished and comfortable assumptions.

Madison Jones has continued writing fiction, a series of important and influential books, all of them aesthetically successful, several successful in more mundane terms. The question that inevitably arises among readers, if not often from veteran professional writers, is how has he done so much so well and yet not (yet) been appropriately recognized and rewarded. It is a question too complex to be easily answered. But a few things can be said. Like others among our finest literary writers, he has become the victim of new trends and the economics of commercial publishing. There has also been a critical change, a movement away from interest in and appreciation of the South and its writers. Once again, as in the years from 1865 at least until the turn of that century, Southern writing is respectable in literary circles only insofar as it confirms presuppositions devoutly maintained by others. Since there is no way to deny the achievement of the earlier generation, the generation of Faulkner and the Fugitives and others, it is easier to write off the generations that have followed after. After FOREST OF THE NIGHT came the decade of the 1960s, which witnessed the transformation of everything, from high art to soda pop, into political statement. Which witnessed new threats to literature from all sides, from death by theory to the contagion of functional illiteracy. Which witnessed a radical change in American values and the rapidly spreading fungus, on a global level, of a vulgar popular culture that celebrates and hugely rewards rock stars, rap singers, slam dunkers and honors celebrity for its own sake. Reviewing (Southerner) Tom Wolfe's HOOKING UP in *The New York Times Book Review* (5 November 2000, p. 6), Maureen Dowd points out the obvious — that his satire cannot keep up with American reality: "By the time we got to the Molière bedroom farce of Clinton and Lewinsky, America had grown so wacky and gossipy and shameless and solipsistic and materialistic, satire was simply redundant." It is as if the very wilderness that Jones created

in FOREST OF THE NIGHT, having vanished, has reappeared as inward and spiritual in an urban setting.

If so, then where is the place in all our culture for the serious and gifted writer who dedicates his life and art to the exploration of serious issues? There is, of course, no answer. Except for the fact that good work has been done and continues to be done and is waiting to be found.

Madison Jones is the author of ten novels: THE INNOCENT, FOREST OF THE NIGHT, A BURIED LAND, AN EXILE, SEASON OF THE STRANGLER, TO THE WINDS, A CRY OF ABSENCE, NASHVILLE 1864: THE DYING OF THE LIGHT, PASSAGE THROUGH GEHENNA, LAST THINGS. *A member of the Fellowship of Southern Writers, he has won the T.S. Eliot Award. See also "Madison Jones"* http://www.auburn.edu/academic/classes/jrnl/4480001/madison/.

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