Encyclopedia of the Essay

Edited by Tracy Chevalier

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Encyclopedia of **THE ESSAY**

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Editor

TRACY CHEVALIER

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The entries in this book were chosen primarily by the advisory board (listed on page ix), with advice from contributors when appropriate. Choosing what is to go in reference books is notoriously difficult. There are the subjects that must obviously have entries, and those that must obviously not. In between lies a vast block of those for which an argument can be made for or against. This is where the problems lie, and I expect our choices will inevitably raise a few quibbles.

Some gaps reflect the nature of the essay and essay scholarship rather than ignorance. There are markedly fewer entries on women, for instance, because historically women's opinions have not been encouraged, certainly not in written form. Moreover, when women did write they usually chose genres that made them money; the essay has not been known for being lucrative. In the 20th century women at last gained both leisure time and an authoritative voice; that change is reflected here in the greater number of entries on contemporary women writers. Nor does every country have a survey, even when there are several entries on individuals. Italian essay writing, for example, dates from Machiavelli, but there has never yet been any consideration of the Italian essay as a whole.

While the majority of the entries are biographical, in a handful of cases when an author's oeuvre is not sufficiently essayistic to warrant an entry and yet he has written a significant individual essay, that essay has its own entry: e.g. John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* or Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Criticism*.

The Essays and Related Prose lists at the end of biographical entries are selective rather than comprehensive, listing the most important essay works; the date following the title is of first publication, followed sometimes by a modern edition. Also listed are available selections and compilations. Further reading lists have as a rule been suggested by contributors.

Names and phrases in bold throughout the text indicate topics with their own entries.

Individual essays mentioned in the text are followed by the date of first publication, either in periodical or book form, though occasionally the date written and the date published are both listed if they are far enough apart to be noteworthy.

I would like to thank the advisory board for their spirited advice which helped me launch the project, and the contributors for their enthusiasm which kept me going through the endless days and nights of it. In particular, I am grateful for the help of Melba Cuddy-Keene, who wrote the first entry (on Virginia Woolf) and showed us all the way.

Thanks go to Mark Hawkins-Dady, Susan Mackervoy, Tracey Mais, and Carol Jones for their work on various parts of the book; also to Jonathan Drori for explaining the mysteries of the computer, e-mail, and the Internet, as well as for putting up with piles of manuscript in a corner of our flat for three years. Thanks too to Lesley Henderson, long-time partner in reference crime, who could be relied on for both sound editorial advice

and a good line on the sometimes absurd nature of our work.

Thanks, finally, to my editor Daniel Kirkpatrick, who taught me how to make reference books in the first place; he paid me his highest compliment by leaving me alone for two years to get on with it, and then came along and quietly corrected my many and varied mistakes, making it a better book.

It has been a pleasure rather than a trial to work on this volume. Every time I go into a bookstore and see a newly appointed Essay section I am more certain that the appearance of *Encyclopedia of the Essay* reflects a growing interest. It's nice to feel relevant.

TRACY CHEVALIER

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PREFACE

An encyclopedia of the essay sounds at first like a paradoxical enterprise: how can the essay's elusive multiplicity of forms and themes be contained within the systematic scope of an encyclopedia? The essay is often characterized by its spontaneity, its unpredictability, its very lack of system. Yet precisely these qualities have made it the little noticed (though much practiced) of the literary genres, and hence the most in need of some kind of comprehensive guide. Of course there can be no complete mapping of such a diverse literary form: to define all of its varieties and enumerate all its practitioners would take a much larger volume than this. Nevertheless, the *Encyclopedia of the Essay* does bring together the essential information for exploring this protean form of writing, and each entry has a section of suggestions for further reading.

The *Encyclopedia* does not apply a rigid, exclusive definition of what is or is not an essay, nor does it aim at exhaustive cataloguing of every author who has ever written an essay. Rather, it provides several types of entry as ways to access the vast and heterogeneous field of essayistic writing: 1) *generic*—considerations of different types of essay (moral essay, travel essay, autobiographical essay, for example) and different adjacent forms (aphorism, chapter, *feuilleton,* sermon, and so on); 2) *national*—entries on the major national traditions (French, British, Japanese, for example); 3) *individual*—entries on those writers who have produced a significant body of work in the genre. In addition, there is consideration of 4) the significance of *periodicals* in creating a market for essay writing, and entries on particularly important journals, along with 5) a few entries on especially significant single essays. Those interested in the theory of the essay are referred to the entries on Lukács, Adorno, and Bense—curiously, in view of the fact that the European essay first established itself in France and England, the theorists of the genre have come mainly from the Germanic cultural sphere. The four main categories of entry—formal, national, individual, and periodical—give four different routes into the territory of essayistic literature.

Despite the huge variety of its forms, there are certain features which recur often enough to give the word "essay" a specific though not rigid meaning. Generally it is used of nonfictional prose texts of between one and about 50 pages, though in some cases book-length works are also called essays. The term also frequently connotes a certain quality of approach to a topic, variously characterized as provisional and exploratory, rather than systematic and definitive. The essay can be contrasted with the academic article, which is usually a contribution to a recognized discipline and to a collaborative inquiry, previous inquiries being taken account of by means of quotations and footnotes. The essay tends to be personal rather than collaborative in its approach, and usually lacks this kind of scholarly apparatus. The essayist's authority is not based on formal credentials or academic expertise, but on his or her personality as reflected in the style of writing. Persuasiveness is based on distinctiveness of style rather than on the use of an

accepted professional or technical vocabulary. The essay typically eschews specialized jargon and is addressed to the "general reader" in a friendly, informal tone. It also avoids the application of pre-established methodology to particular cases, but rather works from the particular toward the general, and even then is not concerned to produce conclusions applicable to other cases. Its concerns are personal and particular, more than professional and systematic.

Nevertheless, the essay can flourish around the margins of academic disciplines or at their origins. A topic that initially forms the subject matter of essays can later be treated within a discipline. For example, many of Freud's short texts are classics of essayistic inquiry, even though Freud considered them contributions to a systematic science of psychoanalysis, despite their literary references and style. Within the European context, the modern essay originated at the same time as modern science, in the late 16th century, and shares many characteristics with it, chiefly the stress on empirical investigation rather than on established authorities such as Aristotle. Bacon, the founder of the English essay, was also the first writer to lay out a program for what we now call science. Yet as science became collectively organized it tended to become less essayistic. The essay stayed on the margins of science, as a vehicle either for unorthodox speculations or for communicating some of science's results to a non-specialist audience, as in the writings of Stephen Jay Gould and others. Another example of an essayistic topic being institutionalized is Cultural Studies. Essayists like Robert Louis Stevenson and George Orwell wrote about "penny dreadful" comics, dirty postcards, and pulp fiction long before these topics were taken up in the academy and made into the matter of research within a new discipline.

Literary theory is another interesting case. Informal speculative essays like T.S.Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent" or Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" can acquire almost canonical status within academic theory, even though they were produced outside that context. Roland Barthes wrote highly theoretical works, but also quite personal, semi-autobiographical essays. Current literary theory seems partly in tune with the essay in the common stress on the provisional, unfixed nature of meaning, yet out of sympathy with the essayistic assumptions of a distinctive, autonomous personality and a concretely rendered reality.

The essay can provide a home for academics wanting a broader context and a wider audience for their work. Some who begin their writing within a disciplinary framework later move outside it into essayistic inquiry. Philosophy provides several examples. Heidegger moved from systematic philosophy to short poetic meditations and essays on poets like Hölderlin, Benn, and Rilke. Nietzsche forsook academia altogether and devised his own form of essayistic philosophy-writing which has paradoxically become influential in academia once again (though in literature rather than philosophy departments). Although academics can also be essayists, many essayists have been independent writers, without academic affiliations.

Besides its ambivalent relations with institutional discourses, the essay is also usually perceived as marginal to other literary genres. Just as the essay is considered to be "not quite" science or philosophy or theory, it is also "not quite" art. At least, it is not perceived "great" art, since it is a seemingly "minor" form. Many, perhaps most, essayists have made their reputations in other genres. The example of Montaigne, who

founded the essay form and wrote in it almost exclusively, was not followed often. Essayists are commonly also poets, philosophers, theorists, and so on, though usually this statement is put the other way round: poets and the others are also essayists. This way of stating the matter reflects the ancillary or secondary status of the essay as the least prestigious of the literary forms. T.S.Eliot's essays have had as much influence as his poetry, yet they have had much less attention as literary works in their own right. Virginia Woolf's essays are at least as important as her fiction, yet they are still often used as a quarry for insights into the fiction. Orwell's essays are of higher literary quality than many of his novels, yet the prestige of the fictional form means that they are relatively neglected.

There are, however, signs that this critical neglect is ending, in the publication of works such as my own book *The Observing Self: Rediscovering the Essay* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988) and Claire de Obaldia's *The Essayistic Spirit: Literature, Modern Criticism, and the Essay* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), as well as a number of shorter studies listed in the bibliographical entries. This renewal of critical interest coincides with the continuing flourishing of the genre itself. The number of current or recent essayists included in this encyclopedia testifies to the vitality of the form, which has seen as rich a harvest in the 20th century as in any of the preceding ones. Many of the most famous Modernist authors, like T.S. Eliot, D.H.Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Virginia Woolf, Thomas Mann, Paul Valéry, and W.H.Auden have left outstanding collections of essays, while among contemporaries, Susan Sontag, Joan Didion, Barry Lopez, or Stephen Jay Gould could be cited among many others as skilled practitioners of the art. Moreover, the success of recent anthologies such as John Gross' *The Oxford Book of Essays* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), Phillip Lopate's *The Art of the Personal Essay* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), and Robert Atwan's *The Best American Essays* series (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986–) indicates that there is an appetite among the general public for essays.

The *Encyclopedia* reflects the geographical and historical concentration of the essay form in the Euro-American world from Montaigne to the present. But the classical antecedents of the form in Greece and Rome are also noted in several entries, and the global dimension of the form is also amply represented. The Japanese and Chinese essay each receive an entry, contrasting the prose forms which predate Montaigne with the later Western-influenced types of essay. In the 20th century the list of individual authors treated includes African, Australian, Asian, as well as European and North and South American writers. The range of locations of contributors to the *Encyclopedia* also reflects the breadth of interest in the form. The essay has become truly global as the preconditions for it become more widespread: a sufficient number of suitable periodicals, a regime which tolerates criticism, an informed general readership, and writers who cultivate a distinctive, individual view of culture.

At heart, the essay is the voice of the individual. Wherever that is heard and heeded, the essay will flourish. Orwell in the 1940s pessimistically foresaw the perishing of the essay (and other forms of realistic prose, such as the novel) in the coming age of totalitarianism. The success of his own essays, particularly "Politics and the English Language," in the postwar period disproved his prediction, at least temporanly. This

Encyclopedia, besides providing a guide to the enormous richness of the essay's past and present, is also a good augury for its continuing vitality in the future.

GRAHAM GOOD

A

Achebe, Chinua

Nigerian, 1930–

Chinua Achebe is the first major African novelist to be widely read and recognized both inside and outside Africa, and is also renowned for his role as the founding editor of the African Writers series published by Heinemann. His career as an essayist is limited to two collections of essays, *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (1975) and *Hopes and Impediments* (1988), as well as *The Trouble with Nigeria* (1983), a long essay which diagnoses the reasons for the political stagnation of post-colonial Nigeria. However, the influence and importance of his essays have far exceeded their actual number. They have been instrumental in establishing the critical and theoretical issues with which other African writers such as **Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Wole Soyinka,** and the *bolekaja* critics (Chinweizu and Madubuike) have had to grapple, and along with the work of the Frantz Fanon are among the earliest examples of the type of critical writing that has come to be known as "postcolonial" criticism.

Achebe's essays are mainly conversational in nature, written for lectures that he has been invited to give in response to specific questions and situations. In the essays in *Morning Yet on Creation Day* and *Hopes and Impediments* (which reproduces five essays from the earlier collection), he articulates three characteristic concerns in his self-appointed role as spokesperson for the African novel. In essays such as "Colonialist Criticism" (1974), he is critical of the failure of European critics to understand African literature on its own terms. In their demand that African fiction be concerned with issues and themes that are "universal," Achebe sees European critics as perpetuating a colonialist attitude which views "the African writer as a somewhat unfinished European who with patient guidance will grow up one day and write like every other European." For Achebe, evidence of the autonomy and uniqueness of African literature from its European counterpart can be seen, for example, in the very different role that the African writer must have toward his or her society. In "The Novelist as Teacher" (1965), he attacks the notion that the African writer should adopt the Western Modernist pose of the angst-ridden writer living on the fringes of society. The African novelist has an obligation to educate, to "help society regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement." Achebe is aware this might mean that "…perhaps what I write is applied art as distinct from pure. But who cares? Art is important, but so is education of the kind I have in mind." The Igbo ceremony of *mbari,* a festival of images

in which every member of the society participates, provides him with an example of artistic production in which "there is no rigid tension between makers of culture and its consumers. Art belongs to all and is a 'function' of society" *(Morning)*.

More controversially, Achebe has defended the use of English and other European languages in the production of African fiction against those critics who suggest that authentic African experience can only be represented in an African language. On the one hand, this is because for Achebe, English—being "a language spoken by Africans on African soil" *(Morning)*—is an African language. As he suggests in "The African Writer and the English Language" (1964), English (as well as French and Arabic) also makes it possible for there to be national literatures in Africa which cut across the enormous linguistic differences present within each nation. Although he feels that the English language can express his experiences as an African, it is important to recognize that "it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its African surroundings" *(Morning)*—a point which critics of Achebe's stance have often failed to understand.

One of Achebe's most famous and important essays—an essay which he has described as his "standard-bearer" *(Hopes)*—is "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" (1975). While admitting that Conrad is "undoubtedly one of the great stylists of modern fiction," Achebe draws attention to the fact that he is nevertheless "a thoroughgoing racist." In Achebe's opinion, Western critics have praised Conrad's novella while never addressing the racism at its core; Conrad depicts Africa as incomprehensible, frenzied, dark, grotesque, and dangerous, and Africans as ugly, inarticulate, inhuman, and savage. Achebe criticizes this failure, and effectively deals with a range of rejoinders which might be used to "save" Conrad from being labeled a racist. For example, while it may be possible 'to see these attitudes as those of Conrad's character Marlow, Achebe claims that Conrad "neglects to hint, clearly and adequately, at an alternative form of reference by which we may judge the actions and opinions of his characters." While it is now common for literary critics to approach fictional works through a consideration of issues such as race, Achebe's criticism of Conrad is an early and influential example of the shift of literary criticism toward a more explicit treatment of the broader politics of fiction.

Since the publication of *Hopes,* Achebe has produced little in the way of either essays or fiction. As the founding editor of *Okike: A Nigerian Journal of New Writing* (begun 1971; subtitle later changed from *Nigerian* to *African*), he has nevertheless continued to play a prominent role in providing a forum for literary and critical writing in Africa. The main thrust of his critical writing has remained the same throughout his career: "What I am saying really boils down to a simple plea for the African novel. Don't fence me in" *(Morning)*.

IMRE SZEMAN

Biography

Born Albert Chinualumogu, 16 November 1930 in Ogidi. Studied at Government College, Umuahia, 1944–47; University College, Ibadan, 1948–53, B.A. (London), 1953.

Worked in various positions for the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation in Lagos and Enugu, 1954–66. Married Christiana Chinwe Okoli, 1961: two sons and two daughters. Founding editor, Heinemann African Writers series, 1962–72, and director, Heinemann Educational Books (Nigeria), and Nwankwo-Ifejika (later Nwamife) publishers, Enugu, from 1970; chair, Citadel Books, Enugu, 1967. Senior research fellow, 1967–73, and professor of English, 1973–81, now emeritus, University of Nigeria, Nsukka; also visiting professor or lecturer at various American universities, 1972–90. Served on diplomatic missions for Biafra during the Nigerian Civil War, 1967–69. Founding editor, *Okike: An African Journal of New Writing,* from 1971; founder and publisher, *Uwa Ndi Igbo: A Bilingual Journal of Igbo Life and Arts,* from 1984. Pro-chancellor and chair of the council, Anambra State University of Technology, Enugu, 1986–88. Awards: many, including the Margaret Wrong Memorial Prize, 1959; Nigerian National Trophy, 1960; New Statesman Jock Campbell Award, 1965; Commonwealth Poetry Prize, 1973; Nigerian National Merit Award, 1979; Commonwealth Foundation Award, 1984; honorary degrees from 16 universities. Member, Order of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1979; Honorary Member, American Academy of Arts and Letters, 1982.; Fellow, Royal Society of Literature, 1983.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose
Morning Yet on Creation Day, 1975
The Trouble with Nigeria, 1983
Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays, 1965–1987, 1988
Other writings: five novels (*Things Fall Apart,* 1958; *No Longer at Ease,* 1960; *Arrow of God,* 1964; *A Man of the People,* 1966; *Anthills of the Savannah,* 1987), two collections of short stories, a collection of poetry, and books for children.

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Addison, Joseph

English, 1672–1719

Joseph Addison's major reputation as a moralist, stylist, and critic in the 18th and 19th centuries was based primarily on his essays for the ***Spectator*** (1711–12), a daily periodical he edited in conjunction with **Richard Steele**. After a short intermission the journal was revived in 1714 under Addison's control. The *Spectator* was a development from Steele's ***Tatler*** (1709–11) and led on to the *Guardian* (1713), both of which Addison wrote for. It was considered exemplary in both style and morality by 18th-century critics such as **Samuel Johnson** and Hugh Blair. In the 19th century **Thomas Babington Macaulay** (in "Life and Writings of Addison," 1843) was to praise Addison's cumulative essays for the journal as "perhaps the finest…both serious and playful, in the English language." There were many imitations, notably Johnson's ***Idler*** (1758–60) and ***Rambler*** (1750–52), John Hawkesworth's ***Adventurer*** (1752–54), and Robert Dodsley and Edward Moore's *World* (1753–56), as well as continental *Spectators* in French, German, Italian, and other languages.

Addison was not a professional journalist and his venture into essay writing was in some respects "time out" from the more serious aspects of his career. He had begun as an academic, spending 12, years at Oxford, where he became a Fellow of Magdalen College. He had then entered the service of the Whig party, achieving high office as secretary to the Earl of Wharton, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. It was his loss of office with the fall of the Whigs in 1710 that provided him with the leisure for sustained periodical journalism, which he quit on resuming his political career after the death of Queen Anne. His last venture into essay writing was with the *Freeholder* (1715–16), the title of which is

indicative of the Whig association of political freedom with men of independent property. It is Addison's immersion both in the world of academic learning and in the work of the politicized civil service which gives particular experiential weight to his essays. But, although written at a time of bitter partisan controversy in politics and religion, the essays endeavor to be nonpartisan in expression. Their success, in this respect, is indicative of Addison's major historical role in establishing the parameters and discourse of a generally acceptable "polite" culture in the 18th century.

That polite culture was centered upon "the club," both in the real world (where Addison was a member of a Whig literary group, the Kit-Cats) and in the fictional world of "Mr. Spectator." As the first numbers of the *Spectator* indicate, it purports to be the record of a small club of representative gentlemen, including Sir Roger de Coverley (an old-fashioned country squire), Sir Andrew Freeport (a man representative of the trading interest), Captain Sentry (the military), Will Honeycomb (a man about town and a wit), and "a clergyman, a very philosophic man, of general learning, great sanctity of life, and the most exact breeding." The Saturday *Spectators* are a form of lay sermon by Addison (earning him the sobriquet "parson in a tie-wig"), and major influences in the promulgation of Anglican rationalism. Mr. Spectator himself claimed to write the papers of the club and is a peculiarly neutral figure, being a man of learning who has traveled widely, frequents London as an observer, but keeps free from political and religious strife.

The creation of a club of characters was an important element in providing variety in the journal and establishing the modes of discourse which united a wide-ranging body of contributors. Individual columnists were invited to assume an appropriate persona, with that of the Addisonian Spectator as normative. This was a new mode of organization of the journal as miscellany, as represented by the earlier *Tatler* and the subsequent *Guardian*. It has its roots in Horace's **satires** and epistles (rather than in the formal model of the Senecan **philosophical essay**) and in the Socratic and Ciceronian symposium. Diverse points of view are put in friendly exchange. The Horatian statement *nullius addictus iurare in verba magistri* (it is not my habit to swear by the words of any master) had been recently adopted as the motto for the Royal Society, and this skeptical empiricism (rather than dogmatic enthusiasm) was the sign of polite society. To the classical examples should be added **Montaigne's** equally skeptical essays and those of the weary, worldly-wise Epicurean, **Sir William Temple**.

These formal models carry an ideological implication. Even in summary it is apparent that this is a masculine society and the readership was being shaped from male norms. Within the club itself certain members are privileged over others. Sir Andrew Freeport represents all that is best in developing commercial society, whereas Sir Roger, although a delightful comic eccentric, signifies an out-of-date, small-world squirearchy (and thus votes Tory). In morality, the clergyman is normative, whereas Will Honeycomb carries with him certain aspects of "Restoration" society whose libertinage had been corrected or purged by societies for the reformation of manners. Likewise, in matters of taste, a correct canon of literature is representative of proper thinking. Addison was a major influence in establishing *Paradise Lost* as an English classic (Milton being purged of his republican and regicide views expressed elsewhere).

The enormous success of Addison in shaping polite society seems to have been

achieved by his ability to present his substantial learning in an accessible manner and to clarify complex arguments. This is done with good-humored wit, in an easy tone, and always from a moral viewpoint. He claimed, "I have brought Philosophy out of Closets and Libraries, Schools and Colleges, to dwell in Clubs and Assemblies, at Tea-Tables, and in Coffee-Houses" (*Spectator* no. 10). He is thus a popularizer who found (and made) a public eager to learn but alienated by pedantry, obscurity, and vicious partisan controversy.

Certain groups of essays provide (in easy "sound-bites," as it were) both the most accessible, and the most advanced, treatment of current topics. In literature the series on "The Pleasures of the Imagination" (nos. 411–21) constitutes an important source for the development of Romantic theory and sensibility emerging from Lockean psychology, establishing key terms such as "fancy" and "beauty" (as well as "imagination" itself) and distinguishing between primary natural sources and those to be found in literature. Addison's social agenda is always prominent: "A Man of a Polite Imagination is let into a great many Pleasures, that the Vulgar are not capable of receiving. He can converse with a Picture, and find an agreeable Companion in a Statue. He meets with a secret Refreshment in a Description, and often feels a greater Satisfaction in the Prospect of Fields and Meadows, than another does in the Possession" (no. 411).

The religious agenda is implicit in setting the long series of essays on *Paradise Lost* on Saturdays, the lay-sermon days (nos. 267–369), but the emphasis here is on the pleasure of a great Christian poem, amply represented by quotation and easily placed within the classical tradition: "I have therefore bestowed a Paper upon each Book, and endeavoured not only to prove that the Poem is beautiful in general, but to point out its particular Beauties, and to determine wherein they consist. I have endeavoured to show how some Passages are beautiful by being Sublime, others, by being Soft, others, by being Natural; which of them are recommended by the Passion, which by the Moral, which by the Sentiment, and which by the Expression" (no. 369).

But for many readers it has been Addison's and Steele's Sir Roger de Coverley who runs away with the text. In this respect he is a median figure between Shakespeare's Falstaff (who destabilizes the ideology of the History plays) and characters in the sentimental novel like Laurence Sterne's Uncle Toby in *Tristram Shandy*. His objection to anyone sleeping in church except himself (no. 112), his remedy for love in fox hunting (no. 115), or the account of his death by his servant, Edward Biscuit (no. 517), show both how much the essay here owes to drama, and how much it is involved with the development of the heteroglossia of the novel. Thus, Biscuit: "Upon his coming home, the first Complaint he made was, that he had lost his Roast-Beef Stomach, not being able to touch a Sirloin, which was served up according to Custom: and you know how he used to take great Delight in it. From that Time forward he grew worse and worse, but still kept a good Heart to the last."

Equally important for the development of the novel is Addison's critical banter on gender relations. "The Moral World, as consisting of Males and Females, is of a Mixt Nature, and filled with several Customs, Fashion and Ceremonies, which would have no place in it were there but *One* Sex. Had our Species no Females in it, Men would be quite different Creatures from what they are at present; their Endeavours to please the Opposite Sex, polishes and refines them out of those Manners which are most Natural to

them…" (no. 433). This is a constant motif, but the account of Amazons and hermaphrodites which follows may now have acquired an unforeseen comedy. Paradoxically it is in the area in which his essays were particularly effective—the education of "the fair sex"—that Addison's writing may have acquired a provocative edge which originally it eschewed.

MALCOLM KELSALL

Biography

Born 1 May 1672 in Milston, Wiltshire. Studied at Charterhouse, London, where he met Richard Steele, 1686–87; Queen's College, Oxford, 1687–89; Magdalen College, Oxford, 1689–93, M.A., 1693. Fellow, Magdalen College, 1698–1711. Received a government pension, 1699, and traveled on the continent, 1699–1704. Moved to London, 1704; became a member of the Kit-Cat Club; served the Whig party, holding various appointed positions, 1704–10, including secretary to Lord Wharton, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1709–10; Member of Parliament for Lostwithiel, 1708–10, and Malmesbury, 1710–19. Contributor to Richard Steele's *Tatler,* 1709–11, and the *Guardian,* 1713; editor of the *Whig Examiner,* 1710, the *Spectator,* with Steele, 1711–12, and alone, 1714, and the *Freeholder,* 1715–16. Secretary to the Earl of Sunderland, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 1714–15; appointed commissioner for trade and the colonies, 1715. Married Charlotte, Dowager Countess of Warwick, 1716: one daughter. Secretary of state in the Sunderland cabinet, 1717–18. Died in London (as a result of a degenerative heart condition and dropsy), 17 June 1719.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose

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Adorno, Theodor W.

German, 1903–1969

Theodor W.Adorno, the son of a Jewish merchant and an Italian singer, became famous as a philosopher and aesthetic theorist, not only for his many essays on literature and art, but chiefly for the critical theory he developed together with Max Horkheimer at the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. His most famous work, written with Horkheimer during the years of exile in America, is the *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1947; *Dialectic of Enlightenment*), which tackles the question of how the horror of National Spcialism could have happened in a highly civilized country. In answering this question Horkheimer and Adorno provide a general critique of the modern age and capitalism, which reaches far beyond the narrow historical context of World War II to examine how

Enlightenment thought made way for positivist philosophy as a"myth" of reality. With the resulting disintegration of reality into isolated facts, Western rationalism reaches its limit. This terminal state of affairs has had a destructive effect on the Western world itself.

In this work, and in his second, pessimistically tinged philosophical work, the *Negative Dialektik* (1966; *Negative Dialectics*), Adorno stands in opposition to his more optimistic colleague Ernst Bloch, whose *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (1953; *The Principle of Hope*) he dismissed as naive. In what is known as the positivism dispute, Adorno also accused conventional philosophy (Karl Popper and **Martin Heidegger**) of positing an object independent of the subject, when the object is in fact subjectively defined and equally arbitrary. This, according to Adorno, obscures the real interrelations between individual and society, subject and object, essence and appearance. He therefore calls for a fundamental redefinition of the evaluating subject in society and art. In consequence, the posthumously published *Ästhetische Theorie* (1970; *Aesthetic Theory*) refers mainly to the concept of art in the context of the modern age, a bias that is also apparent in the subjects of his many essays on art and literature produced from 1930 onward.

Both Adorno's style of philosophy and his critique of social systems, based on the theories of Hegel, **Marx,** and **Freud,** are shaped by his predominant dialectic mode of thought. In historical reality and therefore also in philosophical thought, Adorno sees contradictions that cannot be resolved. These contradictions also give art a dual character: on the one hand art is socially determined, yet on the other the work of art is autonomous and independent of the social conditions that produced it. According to Adorno, we should not seek to resolve this contradiction but rather should accept it as it is, using the work of art as a means to achieve knowledge. He therefore criticizes the rigid, dogmatic conception of realism in art (as represented by **Georg Lukács** and Marxist aesthetics), which assumes that art's only function is to reflect social injustices. On the other hand, Adorno declares himself in favor of an art of protest, an art that refuses to endorse existing social conditions. His essays give new form to the concept of the avant-garde. Especially in the period following World War II, after his return in 1949 from exile in America, Adorno produced some of his most important writings on art and literature, written in his distinctive dialectic-artistic style; these works can themselves be considered as avant-garde works of art.

An impressive example of Adorno's artistic style of writing is provided by the manifesto-like "Der Essay als Form" ("The Essay as Form"), first published in the *Noten zur Literatur I (Notes to Literature)* in 1958. Here, following his earlier theories, according to which the increasing power of science had led to the demythologization of the world and of thought, Adorno accords particular importance to the essay form, as it avoids both absolute concepts and strict definitions. According to Adorno, the essay as a genre comes close to being a form of art, operating in the sphere of unmediated thought, where the different logical stages have not yet been separated from one another. As Adorno notes at the beginning of his essay, the essay as a form has been accorded less recognition than it deserves, precisely because of its position halfway between art and the objectivizing sciences. Although the neglect of the essay form had also been lamented by Lukács, Adorno sees this neglect as the logical consequence of an overemphasis on the scientific method of discovering truth. In this work, Adorno describes the way the

perceiving subject organizes concepts within the essay form by comparing it with the behavior of a traveler who finds himself in a foreign land with no formal education and has to view concepts in their experiential context in order to understand them. Formal philosophy, by contrast, gets out a grammar book and dictionary, losing sight of the broader context which is created by the essay. The essay, with its provocative, skeptical outlook, treats science and the concepts of formal philosophy "in a systematically unsystematic way." Therefore, although the essay by definition cannot claim to achieve completeness or objective truth, it does succeed, through the very negation of these claims, in coming close to the truth of the matter. Thus the essay's "art-like quality" consists in this "awareness of the non-identity of representation and object." For Adorno this also means that the concepts used in the essay are related to theory, although the essay itself is not, as Lukács assumed, derived from theory. Adorno agrees with **Max Bense** that the essay is "the critical form *par excellence*" and therefore also a tool for the critique of ideology. It is precisely because the essay can also incorporate untruth, and because it includes its own negation, that it does not conform to rigid, hierarchical ideological schemes. This means, finally, that the essay is an anachronistic form, caught between an omnipotent science and the last remnants of a philosophy retreating into abstract realms.

This pessimistic but aesthetically productive analysis of the state of the essay form in the late 20th century seems to have inspired Adorno to produce many of his essays in the *Notes on Literature*. The title of this work in itself (which could equally be translated as "notes for literature") indicates that Adorno accords poetic language a central significance, viewing literature in terms of musical composition. Most of the essays consider the role of language in society and in the modern age. In his essay "Zum Klassizismus von Goethes *Iphigenie*" (1974; On the classicism of Goethe's *Iphigenia*), for example, Adorno recognizes the redemptive power of language as a medium of truth and appeasement in **Goethe's** classical work. Language helps unravel the entanglement of barbarism and civilization. "Language becomes the representative of order and at the same time produces order from freedom, from subjectivity," is Adorno's verdict on Goethe's treatment of the Iphigenia story. Here, Adorno turns against the traditional view that Goethe's work "denied the power of negativity and fabricated a spurious harmony." He quotes directly from the text to show that Orestes "by dint of his stark antithesis to the myth, threatens to fall victim to it." In this way, according to Adorno, Goethe's play prophesies the transition from Enlightenment to mythology. This farsighted and controversial critique of the Enlightenment through the interpretation of Goethe's *Iphigenia* can succeed only because Adorno presents it in the form of the essay, which can incorporate antithetical elements and in which a dialectical method of argumentation can be deployed to the full.

The contradictions which, according to Adorno, arise from the fact that language simultaneously represents and creates order, are becoming ever more acute as the modern age progresses. Just as the possibility of order seems to be increasingly elusive, so the utopia of language is disappearing in the representation of this impossibility. For this reason, as Adorno describes in his essay on Beckett ("Versuch, das *Endspiel* zu verstehen" [1961; "Attempt to Understand *Endgame*"]), the language of modern art is now no more than a differential of silence. The failure of language, which Beckett

expresses in a number of ways, is interpreted by Adorno as the crisis of an existential terror which is literally lost for words. Beckett's existentialism gives expression to the catastrophe of the modern age, by reducing the drama *(Endgame)* to silent gestures. The organized meaninglessness that characterizes Beckett's work is apparent in the fact that the play has neither beginning, end, nor dramatic progression in between. Instead the whole drama is composed using techniques of reversal and negation. For Adorno this is a dramatic depiction of the final stage in the historical disintegration of subjectivity. The suffering of the figures in the play, and that of the reader who recognizes this existential finality, become for Adorno the measure of human awareness.

The foundation for Adorno's detailed and reflective analyses of many other literary texts can be found in his view that the disinterested contemplation of art is the only honest form of historical contemplation. Eichendorff, Heine, Balzac, **Valéry,** Proust, **Thomas Mann, Dickens,** George, Hochhuth, and Wedekind are just a few examples of the many authors and subjects Adorno considered in his essays. In refusing to give itself over to superficial beauty, art—and especially the art and literature of the modern age—was taking the guilt of the world upon itself. Thus for Adorno the modern work of art takes the empty place of Christ, a view demonstrated with particular clarity in his essay on Hölderlin's poetry ("Parataxis," 1965). In this way art fulfills the task of depicting the negative aspects of the world as it is.

Adorno's dialectic procedure in the essayistic description of his objects brings him close to the methods of some of his colleagues from the Frankfurt School, especially **Walter Benjamin**. Adorno also quotes Max Bense with approval. However, a feature that is uniquely characteristic of Adorno as a philosopher and ideological critic is the inversion of all relations that had previously been viewed as static, a product of his "negative dialectic" mode of thought. In this way he turns away from conventional, formal philosophy on the one hand, while at the same time reworking its conclusions in his own artistic-essayistic style of thinking and writing. Even Adorno's famous doctrine that after Auschwitz no more poems could be written is no rigid dogmatism, but the point of departure for a process of reflection which really does view its object from all sides. For Adorno this process is a prerequisite, not only for the essay as a literary form, but also for his entire philosophical undertaking.

AGNES C.MÜLLER
translated by Susan Mackervoy

Biography

Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno. Born 11 September 1903 in Frankfurt-on-Main. Studied at the University of Frankfurt, Ph.D., 1924; studied music composition under Alban Berg, from 1925; postgraduate studies in Frankfurt. Associated with the Institut für Sozialforschung (Institute for Social Research), Frankfurt, from 1928. Editor, *Anbruch* (Beginning) music journal, Vienna. Fled Nazi regime to Oxford, 1934, then to New York and Los Angeles, 1938. Married Gretel Karplus, 1937. Head of music study, Institute Office of Radio Research, Princeton, New Jersey, 1938–41, and in California, 1941–49; returned to Frankfurt, 1949; assistant director, 1950–55, codirector, 1955–58, and

director, 1958–69, Institute for Social Research, Frankfurt; professor of philosophy and sociology, University of Frankfurt, 1958–69. Awards: Arnold Schoenberg Medal, 1954; Critics' Prize for Literature, 1959; Goethe Medal, 1963. Died (of a heart attack) in Visp, near Zermatt, Switzerland, 6 August 1969.

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The Adventurer

British periodical, 1752–1754

Together with **Joseph Addison's** *Spectator* and **Samuel Johnson's** ***Rambler,*** the *Adventurer* was one of the three most influential English-language periodicals of the 18th century. Published serially twice a week by London bookseller John Payne, and running to 140 numbers between 7 November 1752 and 9 March 1754, it was consciously designed to succeed the *Rambler,* which made its final appearance on 14 March 1752, but greatly outstripped the *Rambler's* popularity, peaking at a circulation three times that of Johnson's publication. A contemporary hack journalist, Arthur Murphy, author of the competing *Gray's Inn Journal,* complained in print about the "attachment to the Adventurer" felt by so many readers and the impediment such loyalty placed in the way of his own efforts to generate a reliable circulation (no. 53, 20 October 1753). Another indication of the *Adventurer's* success was the personal profit it brought to the publisher John Payne, who netted the then considerable sum of £422 from the sale of the 2000 sets of the second edition of the complete *Adventurer* and an additional £120 from the sale of half the copyright.

When Payne decided to follow up the *Rambler* with another serial of moral, aesthetic, and reflective essays, he turned to John Hawkesworth, then a little known but widely employed journalist and a fellow member of the Ivy Lane Club, which met at the King's Head, a tavern and beefsteak house located in Ivy Lane near St. Paul's Cathedral. Hawkesworth was a particularly astute choice on Payne's part: he was a regular contributor to Edward Cave's *Gentleman's Magazine,* where he worked closely with Samuel Johnson and developed an essayistic style so like Johnson's that contemporary and subsequent readers have struggled to distinguish among their many contributions to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Furthermore, Johnson had used the weekly Tuesday night meeting of the Ivy Lane Club to test and develop ideas for his *Rambler* papers. Johnson was the star attraction of that literary society, whose membership included, with Payne and Hawkesworth, the dissenting clergyman Samuel Dyer, the magistrate and editor John Hawkins, and three physicians, William McGhie, Edmund Barker, and Richard Bathurst. The Ivy Lane Club became Hawkesworth's finishing school as an intellectual, and it was there that he learned to emulate so convincingly the moral and literary voice of Johnson.

The *Adventurer* followed Johnson's *Rambler* in its thematic content and varied in style only in being a little less difficult in its vocabulary and less baroque in its sentence structures. There were, however, two deliberate breaks with the editorial practice of the *Rambler:* Payne decided to solicit contributions to the *Adventurer* from several hands, rather than leave the entire burden of the writing to Hawkesworth; and it was decided

from the outset that the number of issues would be finite. The number of 140 was determined with an eye to publishing the complete *Adventurer* in ready sets as soon as the final paper had been issued. seventy essays printed in folio made an ideal single volume, and Payne guessed from its conception that the *Adventurer* would sell best as a two-volume first edition in folio and a four-volume second edition in pocket-sized duodecimo. Whatever moral excellence we may now attribute to the *Adventurer's* reflective essays, its format was entirely determined by a bookseller's understanding of what would be the most valuable way to approach the marketplace.

Along with Hawkesworth, the principal contributors to the *Adventurer* were Johnson himself, the literary critic Joseph Warton, and the journalist Bonnell Thornton, author of the periodical the *Connoisseur*. Various individual papers have also been attributed to Thomas Warton, his sister Jane Warton, the early feminist Elizabeth Carter, Hester Mulson, George Colman, and Catherine Talbot. Certainly Hawkesworth and Payne approached a wide community of possible contributors with the intention of insuring that the *Adventurer* offered a variety of style and opinions in its essays. Despite the ultimate range of hands evident in the *Adventurer,* Hawkesworth found himself solely responsible for most of the early papers. Johnson first appears with *Adventurer* no. 34; he would contribute 29 essays in all. There is some speculation that Richard Bathurst of the Ivy Lane Club was originally solicited to contribute but failed to do so, and that Hawkesworth urged Johnson to take Bathurst's place as the periodical prospered and Hawkesworth himself felt the strain of compensating for the delinquent Bathurst. At any rate, the three main authors of the papers each took up different essayistic approaches: Johnson contributed papers that continued the moral reflections which had characterized the *Rambler;* Joseph Warton wrote on aesthetic matters, producing papers on literary criticism, taste, and scholarship, including memorable pieces on Shakespeare; and Hawkesworth, who wrote the lion's share of the periodical, was particularly predisposed to contribute short fiction, especially oriental tales.

The *Adventurer* combines aspects of both the *Spectator* and the *Rambler* in defining its own place in the history of the essay. As a sort of sequel to the *Rambler,* it sustained that periodical's philosophical disposition and its determination to instruct its readers in morality and conscience. It reached back to the *Spectator* in its ambition to attain a popular readership. Where the *Rambler* is meditative and solitary in its ruminations on the human scene, the *Adventurer* tends more toward the conversational and the social. Certainly, the *Adventurer* must be credited with demonstrating the importance of collaboration in sustaining variety and debate in a periodical, especially where the essay was concerned. Looking back on its accumulated achievement in the final issue of the *Adventurer,* Hawkesworth emphasizes this collaborative effort as crucial to the paper's popular success. Essays from several hands were essential, he writes, "not because I wanted sufficient leisure, but because some degree of sameness is produced by the peculiarities of every writer; and it was thought that the conceptions and expressions of another, whose pieces should have a general coincidence with mine, would produce variety, and by increasing entertainment facilitate instruction" (*Adventurer* no. 140).

The influence of the *Adventurer* was, perhaps, strongest in the late 18th century, when Edinburgh fostered a resurgence of interest in the periodical essay. The *Mirror,* the *Lounger,* and the *Bee* would all be conceived after the collaborative model of the

Adventurer, acknowledging the truth of Hawkesworth's simple assertion.

STEPHEN W.BROWN

Editions

The Adventurer, 140 nos., 7 November 1752–9 March 1754; in 2 vols., 1753–54; in *The Works of Samuel Johnson* (Yale Edition) vol. 2: *"The Idler" and "The Adventurer",* edited by Walter Jackson Bate, John M.Bullitt, and L.F.Powell, 1963; selections in *Essays from the Rambler, Adventurer, and Idler,* edited by Walter Jackson Bate, 1968

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Agee, James

American, 1909–1955

Although James Agee produced journalism, review essays, and short nonfiction pieces throughout his career, his reputation as an essayist derives primarily from his book with Walker Evans, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (1941), a long study in prose and photographs of the lives of three Southern sharecropper families. Agee both documents the lives of his human subjects—families with whom he and Evans lived during the summer of 1936—and reflects on the problems of documenting without either inventing or concealing. Because Agee confronts the philosophical problems of truth-telling so directly in this work, because he enacts these problems stylistically, and perhaps above all because these have been critical, recurring questions for the essay throughout the genre's history, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* holds great interest for students of the essay, as well as a place of increasing importance in the canon of 20th-century American literature.

For Agee, as for **Montaigne,** the essay was not a form for conveying a whole and universal truth clearly perceived; on the contrary, it was useful for highlighting both the partiality of any one observer's vision and the great difficulties involved in perceiving the

world and communicating one's experience of it to an audience. A form of truth is possible, says Agee, if one is as faithful as possible to one's own knowledge and experience of the world, but it will, of course, be at best a relative truth. Moreover, it is no simple thing to confront that world in an immediate way, "without either dissection into science, or digestion into art, but with the whole of consciousness, seeking to perceive it as it stands"; to do so an observer must strip his or her consciousness until it stands "weaponless" before its subject. This confrontation of two existents, observer and subject, is crucial to Agee's understanding and use of the nonfiction essay form because the meaning of his real, human subjects does not derive from the writer's work (as it does in fiction); both the subject and the writer's writing about this subject have their meaning in the fact that subject and writer both exist. Thus the essayist's responsibility is not to "art" but to that experience, the confrontation of living people. The essay is a form that Agee uses to reveal himself as a "spy," one with the specific goals of observing, recording, and exposing the lives of these families. He uses the reflective, questioning, and self-revealing aspects of the essayistic persona to give voice to the moral and ethical problems of his position—that of an anxious, indignant, and sensitive person, alive to his subjects and at times agonizingly self-conscious about what he is doing.

Agee's style is sometimes called "baroque"; critics have often found his syntax and vocabulary dense, mannered, even "tortured." Certainly his inversions of word order, the intricate syntax of some of his clauses, and his occasionally unorthodox punctuation make careful reading imperative; Agee himself cautions that the reader will have to listen carefully to his prose. But the effects of this are to draw attention to the prose as a thing composed, constructed; thus the reader is discouraged from seeing the writing merely as a transparent "screen" through which to read the world, and encouraged to see it as a reconstruction of the original experience—perhaps a problematic one at that. Although one reviewer of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* doubted Agee's ability to write a clear sentence, Agee had certainly developed a range of styles from which to choose. Much of his writing, here and in his journalism, displays a simple, more "transparent" style, one in which verbs do more of the work and prepositions less. In such "straightforward" passages, however, Agee often makes heavy use of figures of speech to mark the experience as distinctly his.

The critical reception of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* has been varied. Reviewers both praised and criticized its variety and stylistic innovations; some found Agee's *tour de force* "dazzling," brilliant in its very failure to satisfy conventional expectations, "a distinguished failure," while others thought it self-indulgent and self-important. Commercially the book was not a success, but it did attract a certain following among the literary establishment after **Lionel Trilling's** favorable review in 1942. It was not until its reissue in 1960 that it began to gain in popularity and influence; it was embraced by young activists eager for social reform, and had a particular impact among practitioners of **New Journalism,** who, like Agee, questioned the possibility of objectivity, favored recreations of personal experiences, and pushed their craft to stylistic extremes.

Of Agee's other nonfiction, the journalistic pieces he wrote for *Fortune* reveal flashes of the style and voice of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men,* but the articles are, for the most part, journalism rather than essays; he allows himself (or his editors allow him) no reflective excursions from the facts at hand. One exception to this is "Southeast of the

Island: Travel Notes" (*Collected Short Prose,* 1968); tellingly, the piece was never published by *Fortune,* for whom he was working at the time. The film reviews he wrote for *Time* and the *Nation* are more essayistic in their occasional meditations on art, philosophy, and the American culture of the day. Much of Agee's fiction is autobiographical; the novel *A Death in the Family* (1957) drew so heavily on his childhood experiences that at least one reviewer called it a memoir, and two of the early stories anthologized in the *Collected Short Prose,* "Death in the Desert" and "They That Sow in Sorrow Shall Reap," both feature the intercutting of narrated experience and reflection characteristic of the essay, as well as being stories which, according to editor Robert Fitzgerald, were based on real occurrences. Yet for all the essayistic elements and overtones of his other work, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* stands as Agee's preeminent work of nonfiction prose. In no other work of nonfiction are his voice, his style, and his ideas about writing given freer rein or clearer expression. In itself, the book has made Agee's reputation as one of the great writers of nonfiction in this century.

MAURA BRADY

Biography

James Rufus Agee. Born 27 November 1909 in Knoxville, Tennessee. Studied at Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, New Hampshire, 1925–28; Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he edited the *Harvard Advocate,* 1918–32, A.B., 1932. Reporter and staff writer, *Fortune,* 1932–39. Married Olivia Saunders, 1933 (divorced, 1937). Book reviewer, from 1939, and feature writer and film reviewer, 1941–48, *Time* magazine. Married Alma Mailman, 1939 (later divorced): one son. Film columnist, *Nation,* 1942–48. Married Mia Fritsch, 1946: one daughter. Codirector of the film *In the Street,* 1948. Awards: Pulitzer Prize, for *A Death in the Family,* 1957 (posthumous). Died (of a heart attack) in New York, 16 May 1955.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose
Let Us Now Praise Famous Men, photographs by Walker Evans, 1941
Agee on Film: Reviews and Comments, 1958
Collected Short Prose, edited by Robert Fitzgerald, 1968
Selected Journalism, edited by Paul Ashdown, 1985

Other writings: two novels (*The Morning Watch,* 1951; *A Death in the Family,* 1957) and several screenplays (including *The African Queen,* with John Huston, 1951; *The Night of the Hunter,* 1955).

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Die Akzente

German journal, 1954–

D*ie Akzente: Zeitschrift für Literatur* (Accent: journal for literature) is one of Germany's most important post-World War II literary journals, both enabling the recovery of literary movements and works brutally suppressed by the National Socialists, and encouraging avant-garde poetry and drama. Founded in 1954 by Walter Höllerer and Hans Bender, with the original subtitle *Zeitschrift für Dichtung* (Journal for poetry), the journal continues to appear in bimonthly issues, and has a circulation of about 4500. *DA* has presented works by nearly every major postwar German writer, from fiction by **Günter Grass** and Gabriele Wohmann to essays concerning aesthetics and politics by **Theodor W.Adorno** and **Martin Heidegger**. It has also been an important source of literature and criticism from other European countries and North America. Recent issues of the periodical have included works by Thomas Bernhard, Tankred Dorst, and Günter Kunert.

Essays in *DA* have often provided the theoretical basis for reclaiming German Modernist literature and for encouraging postwar artistic and cultural movements. Essays in the first years of *DA* discuss dadaism and surrealism, expressionists such as the poet Georg Heym, and Bertolt Brecht's epic theater, helping to reestablish the importance of these movements and authors. Indeed, Höllerer has remarked that the recovery of these works, and of German literary tradition in general, was a primary motivation for establishing the journal. The first issue of *DA* (February 1954) included works from the literary estates of the philosopher and cultural critic **Walter Benjamin** and the Jewish poet Gertrud Kolmar, both of whom had been killed by the Nazis. The same issue included three essays concerning **Robert Musil's** influential Modernist novel, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (1930–43; *The Man Without Qualities*). Other essays of this period concerning the radio play and the form of the novel, such as Adorno's "Form und Gehalt des zeitgenössischen Romans" (August 1954; Form and content of the contemporary novel), suggest the importance of *DA* for the development of postwar German literary aesthetics. *DA* was also an important source of works and criticism by members of Gruppe 47 (Group 47), a union of writers who demanded discussion of the Nazi period and its implications for postwar German culture. Similarly innovative works by the novelist Uwe Johnson and the documentary dramatist Peter Weiss have often appeared in the periodical.

Most characteristic of *DA,* however, has been its focus on poetry. Höllerer, who is himself a poet and playwright, encouraged other writers of experimental and avant-garde poetry and is largely responsible for the journal's early emphasis on the lyric. Bender, too, has contributed many essays on poetry to *DA* and other periodicals, and has edited several anthologies of poems. Poems have appeared by such central figures as Helmut Heissenbüttel and **Hans Magnus Enzensberger,** and poetry continues to play an important role in the journal.

It has always been an important source of works in translation, and has included essays and literature by writers from the United States, England, France, Scandinavia, and Eastern Europe. In 1956 it published essays by **Roland Barthes,** Luc Estang, and Alain Robbe-Grillet, providing an important forum in Germany for these French thinkers. Robbe-Grillet's essay concerning the contemporary novel, "Für einen Realismus des Hierseins" (August 1956; For a realism of the present), also helped fuel German literary debate and conceptions of the postwar German novel. In 1958 *DA* introduced the Beat poets to many German readers, publishing works such as Gregory Corso's essay, "Dichter und Gesellschaft in Amerika" (The poet and society in America). The February 1968 edition of *DA* featured works by Americans Richard Brautigan and **Susan Sontag**. Since the reunification of Germany in 1990, much attention has been given to writers in the East. In the February 1992 issue of *DA,* a section of the periodical was devoted to Estonian poets including Doris Kareval and Viivi Luik.

In 1968 Walter Höllerer left *DA* and Hans Bender became the sole editor of the journal. At that time, Bender changed the subtitle to *Zeitschrift für Literatur,* indicating more fully the diverse forms of writing included in the journal. Shortly after Höllerer's departure, Michael Krüger was named co-editor, becoming sole editor in 1981, a position he retains today. Krüger continues to include the combination of literature and essays that has characterized *DA* since its inception. The format of the journal has largely remained

the same as well. Booksize, it includes few illustrations or advertisements. With the first issue of 1981, *DA* began to include photographs on the front cover and in various sections of the journal.

Under Krüger's editorship of *DA,* editorials have become more polemical, and more willing to discuss specific political and social issues. In 1992, for instance, the opening editorial discussed two ostensible Western "victories": the War in the Persian Gulf, and the dissolution of the East European communist governments. Subsequent issues of *DA* have brought attention to the literature and culture of Iraq and Bosnia.

While editors of *DA* have tended toward political liberalism, their understanding of *Kultur* has changed little since the journal's initial appearance. Krüger, for instance, maintains *DA*'s long tradition of distinguishing between what he calls a German "Vernunftskultur" (high culture) and a "Subkultur" (low culture). Common targets of Krüger's editorials are the media and particularly television, and the destabilizing influence of postmodernism.

CHRISTOPHER P.MCCLINTICK

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Alain

French, 1868–1951

Alain's career was closely connected with the educational system in France, since he served as professor of rhetoric at the Lycée Henri IV from 1909 until 1933, and bad a profound influence on the thinking of a generation of French intellectuals. In his essays he often adopted a professorial position, providing insights and stimulating thought in a concise, meditative prose style. As with so many French essayists, Alain was a philosopher in the style of **Montaigne** rather than of Descartes. He did not leave a systematic philosophy, nor a major opus, but a large and disparate collection of personal observations that are both penetrating and amusing. The substance of his thought, however, was profoundly influenced by rigorous Cartesian logic.

Starting in 1906 he began writing daily articles, under the pseudonym Alain (in homage to the 15th-century Norman poet Alain Chartier), for *La Dépêche de Rouen* (The

Rouen dispatch), which he entitled "Propos d'un Normand" (Remarks of a Norman). These *propos* had a set length (two small pages of handwritten script) due to journalistic constraints, and focused on a specific issue in an unpretentious style. In the course of the next eight years over 3000 *propos* appeared, written on a wide variety of topics, including politics, society, and psychology. The first series of *propos* ended in 1914, but was followed by two other periods (1921–24 and 1927–36). His writings on specific topics were collected and published, from 1908 until the 1930s, and enjoyed great success. Although in later years Alain wrote more fully developed works, it is the *propos* that remain synonymous with his name.

Alain once considered becoming a novelist, but rejected both the length of the form and the fictionality of its content. Being a philosopher, a lover of wisdom, he favored the short, fleeting images of the storyteller, who is more free to blend diverse materials and examine the paradoxes of actual, everyday events. Alain preferred to give his thought and imagination the liberty to follow their own course, and develop their own associations, without the constraints of traditional generic conventions. In each *propos,* the progression is usually thematic rather than argumentative, since ideas and images spiral around a central point, providing different, unexpected perspectives on the main issue. Capable of rigorous thought, as seen in many passages of his work, Alain nonetheless presented his ideas as an interruption in the daily routine, a reexamination of common beliefs. Usually each piece ends with a memorable final statement, which may summarize the preceding ideas with a fresh insight or indicate a practical lesson or action to take. In short, his brief prose pieces are each highly crafted artifacts which are both artistically pleasing and pragmatically useful.

In the *Propos sur le bonheur* (1925, 1928; *Alain on Happiness*), Alain contended in general that passions are the major cause of unhappiness, which affects us physically as well as emotionally. Willpower plays a central role in these *propos,* as in so many others, but Alain was quick to recognize that while we are not able to control our thoughts or emotions, control of the physical body and movement can modify or alleviate causes of unhappiness. It is not through accident that we are happy or unhappy, and happiness must be cultivated, since it is only through individual efforts that we can attain our own *bonheur*. The physical and mental faculties cannot be separated. The wise and happy person should strive for a healthy mind and body, which will serve for both reflective thought and judicious action. Happiness is equated with virtue, liberty, and justice, as revealed in the wisdom of the classical writers of antiquity, of whose work Alain was a passionate and happy admirer.

A contemporary of **Freud,** Alain disagreed with the founder of psychoanalysis on the importance of sexuality in human conduct, as well as with Freud's views concerning the composition and role of the unconscious in mental activity. The basis for Alain's disagreement can be found in his belief that the soul, and by extension consciousness and thought, are not states of being, nor entities apart, but functions of an integrated self. For him, there can be no unconscious which exists separately, or which contains material hidden from the self. But rather than attempt to refute what he considered "Freud's ingenious system" with logical arguments, he chose instead to refuse it, claiming that Freud's views on psychic activity were vague and ultimately useless.

According to Alain, consciousness, thought, judgment, and reflection are all

interconnected, so that critical reasoning and examination are elementary to all conscious states. By opposition, the unconscious, including sleep, is merely an absence of functionality and rationality. Alain applied his theories on states of consciousness in his observations (*Les Arts et les dieux* [1958; The arts and the gods]) on **Paul Valéry's** *La Jeune Parque* (1917; The young fate), a poem describing the transitional states of mind. Consciousness is characterized as reflection and light, which allows no partial states, but either is, or is not. Alain also commented on Proust, who "speaks of the unconscious, but doesn't need to in order to account for human actions and passions" ("Propos de littérature" [1922; Remarks on literature]). As for thought, which reveals consciousness, it is considered to be primarily a critical, negating activity. Alain's style of writing is aphoristic in nature; one of his better-known sayings is "Thought is saying no, and it is to itself that thought says no" ("Propos sur la religion" [1924; Remarks on religion]). By these negations consciousness is highly moral in its workings, frequently contrasting an ideal self with the real self. It is the morality of the human will that Alain placed in opposition to Freud's model of the unconscious.

Alain's concept of the interconnection between body and mind was primarily Cartesian, with its emphasis on the role of physical, corporeal determinants. He believed that Freud misinterpreted the symptoms and signs of human behavior, and attributed motives incorrectly to an autonomous and murky unconscious. Physiology plays a more important role in behavior than Freud allowed, and this led him to create an unruly unconscious to explain what are often, in fact, physical causes. As for dreams, they are not the messengers of a hidden spirit, but the weakened, distorted perceptions of a drowsy mind. Finally, Alain did not trust the complicated mechanisms of Freud's concepts, preferring a simpler, more practical, natural explanation of mental phenomena. He saw in psychoanalysis an overly pessimistic view of humankind, which emphasized misery and depravity rather than encouraging nobility of action and the exercise of the will.

With regard to another major influence on modern thought, **Marx,** the writings of Alain again reveal criticism and reservation. Although he can be considered a socialist, Alain espoused a dialectic which was more specific, emphasizing the individual and each person's role within the class struggle. He was also much less of a dogmatic absolutist than Marx, and his views of politics and history do not reveal the same systematic approach or the inevitability of social revolution. As for war, whose horrors he witnessed firsthand between 1914 and 1917 and which occupied his later thought, he also disagreed with Marxist ideology. He criticized the Marxists for oversimplifying historical and social causes; they blamed capitalists and their greed for causing war when in fact the causes were far more complex, and involved in addition a kind of collective madness of a people intent on war. In *Mars* (1921) the importance of passion, both individual and collective, and its relationship to war, a "crime of passion," are explored at length. Alain, a determined pacifist, believed that a Marxist state would be just as militaristic as a capitalistic one, since all governing groups have a will to power which tends to be expressed in warfare. Each individual is tempted by the moral perversions of war and violence, which are so often justified by false claims of a transcendent or ultimate justice.

Whatever the content of his writing, Alain often used concrete and innovative images to capture his reader's attention or make a point. These images are often taken from everyday life: a crying baby, a loaf of bread, or a farmer resting in his field. Besides these

arresting, poetic images, he formulated his thought in striking phrases, which comprise a stockpile of **maxims**. He saw ideas as instruments which allow us to grasp reality and to conduct our life with dignity and morality. The issues he discussed were often quite complex, but stated in a simple prose, without philosophical terms or jargon. Although his writing often opposed prevailing thought, the freshness of his style and the rigor of his thought earned him a great reputation. During the first half of the 20th century, a period marked by global atrocities, his *propos* indicated a path for humankind's secular salvation through reflective thought and moral action.

ALLEN G.WOOD

Biography

Born Émile Auguste Chartier, 3 March 1868 in Mortagne-sur-Huisne (now Mortagne-au-Perche), Normandy. Studied at lycées in Alençon, 1881–86, and Vanves, 1886–89; École Normale Supérieure, Paris, 1889–92, agrégation in philosophy, 1892. Taught at lycées in Pontivy, 1892–93, Lorient, 1893–1900, Rouen, 1900–02, Lycée Condorcet, Paris, 1903–06, Lycée Michelet, Vanves, 1906–09, Lycée Henri IV (where he taught **Simone Weil, Henri Massis,** and Jean Prévost), Paris, 1909–33, and College Sévigné, Paris, 1917–33. Columnist of *propos,* occasionally, 1903–06, and daily (called "Propos d'un Normand," 1906–14), from 1906, which he signed "Alain" and which appeared in *La Dépêche de Rouen,* 1903–14, *Libres Propos,* 1921–24 and 1927–36, and *L'Émandpation,* 1924–27. Served in the French Army, 1914–17. Married Gabrielle Landormy, 1945. Awards: National Grand Prize for Literature, 1951. Died in Le Vésinet, 2 June 1951.

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Amar y Borbón, Josefa

Spanish, 1749–1833

During the last few years of the 18th century, Spanish letters focused almost exclusively on the essay. These writings, much maligned by 19th-century Romantics who saw little of value produced during the Spanish "enlightenment," provided a critical step in the development of the modern Spanish essay. Josefa Amar y Borbón belongs to a group of intellectuals who read prohibited books, met periodically to discuss issues of concern, and wrote extensively on topics that were bound together by a common theme—a concern for the decadent conditions of Spain and a desire to rectify the situation through education. Whether these writings were called *discursos* (speeches), *cartas* (letters), *memorias* (memoirs), or *ensayos* (essays), they are recognized today as basic elements of the Spanish essay.

Aragonese by birth, but reared and educated in Madrid, Amar y Borbón was the product, as well as an example, of the enlightened elite in Bourbon Spain. Well versed in Greek, Latin, French, English, and Italian, Amar y Borbón translated many works from these languages into Spanish. In the 1780s she began publishing essays and treatises whose subjects fall into three broad categories: those concerning science and medicine, those dealing with the study of letters and the humanities, and those combating superstition. Aside from her translations, the author's original literary production, as catalogued to date, includes eight essays published between 1783 and 1787, and a book, *Discurso sobre la educación física y moral de las mugeres* (1790; Discourse on the physical and moral education of women).

Each of Amar y Borbón's essays has three main structural components: authority, tradition, and synthesis. Authority is expressed by numerous citations of classical sources. These *autoridades,* whom the author quotes in the original language before translating, are from all epochs. Tradition refers to Spanish customs; this component not only provides a point of comparison and contrast with "authority," but is also a minute description of 18th-century society. Tradition also provides the reader with some insight concerning Amar y Borbón's point of view in many instances. The last component, synthesis, combines what "should be" (authority) with "what is" (tradition) to form what "might be"—the synthesis.

While these structural components appear in most of the author's essays, her style is

far from simple, for like many of her contemporaries, she interjects numerous digressions in the form of philosophical musings: questions about the nature of religion and the religious education of children; diatribes against current practices in Spanish society such as men reserving all honors, awards, and recognition for themselves and wishing to deprive women of their intellects; or historical cataloguing of a subject such as the history of corsets from ancient times to the 18th century.

Authority, tradition, synthesis, and abundant digressions form the basic structure of the essayist's work: these elements are combined as in a mathematical formula; however, the "solution" is seldom stated. Indeed, in many cases Amar y Borbón leaves the solution of the issue to the readers, whether she does so overtly or not. As she defined her style as an essayist, she perfected the rhetorical form of argumentation that moves from the general to the specific. Most of her essays begin with a statement introducing the major theme. Then, as if in a musical variation, the same theme is presented in a series of analogous and yet distinct forms.

Within this basic structure and development, Amar y Borbón presents the reader with a healthy dose of wit and sarcasm. For example, when she describes the benefit of good health for women in her book, she states the obvious need for women to be fit for physical work and interjects that "all ladies, and those not worthy of being called so, must be physically fit for pregnancy, childbirth, and nursing." At other times her sarcasm is not as subtle. For example in her essay, "Discurso en defensa del talento de las mugeres…" (1786; *Essay in Defense of Women's Talent*), written in response to Francisco, Conde de Cabarrús' fear that allowing women to participate in the Economic Society of Madrid would ruin the organization, she states: "It is obvious that men and women should live entirely separately, and this separation should be complete and forever …but…this scenario remains impossible—there being a thousand reasons for men and women to come together… not the least of which is that the opposite would bring the destruction of the human race…"

Like her contemporaries, Josefa Amar y Borbón wrote a form of literature characterized by multiple topics bound together by a common major theme: education, enlightenment, and progress. These writers added to the traditions established in the Spanish Golden Age and began to define the literary style later recognized as the modern essay.

CARMEN CHAVES TESSER

Biography

Born February 1749 in Saragossa. Grew up and studied privately in Madrid, tutored in Latin, French, Greek, and literature; taught herself Italian and English. Married Joaquín Fuertes Piquer (died, 1798), 1764: at least one child (a son). Returned to Saragossa, 1772. First female member, Aragonese Economic Society, 1782; member of Ladies' Group, Madrid Economic Society, 1787; member, Medical Society of Barcelona, 1790. Died in Saragossa, February 1833.

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American Essay

1. The Colonial Age

In its broadest denotation, the essay has existed in America almost from the arrival of the first English settlers in 1607. While 17th-century colonists had little or no leisure time in which to produce *belles-lettres,* there did exist what we might now call nonfictional literature, ranging from a paragraph or two of the almanac—short expositions that questioned natural phenomena—to the long chronicle histories. Growing out of the almanacs were early science essays, primarily on astronomical observations but also on other branches of science such as agriculture, zoology, botany, mineralogy, and meteorology. The clergy of the time, who were often the most educated of the colonists,

generally adopted the belief that while God's mysteries were forever unknowable to humans, it was still their duty to ponder those mysteries. Hence, the end aim of science was contemplation. This purpose meant that their scientific writings (which appeared not only in almanacs but also in journals and letters to members of England's Royal Society) were not coldly scientific but tended toward moral interpretation.

The short prose works of the time, in fact, fell into definite literary types, including the "**pamphlet** of newes" (which described the new country), papers of timely interest on witchcraft and matters of immediate concern, the almanac (which contained short pieces of a moral or scientific nature), and the sermon—in which, apart from spiritual matters, ethics, manners, and social and national progress were also discussed—as well as its related form, the **meditation,** in which was displayed the most prolific and perhaps most creative prose of the time.

Cotton Mather (1663–1728) wrote what is considered the first verifiable book of American essays, *Bonifacius* (1710; the later edition was called *Essays to Do Good*). The book is divided into sections which are similar to 17th-century essays in being axiomatic and didactic philosophical reflections on abstract subjects, commentaries emerging from the wisdom and experience of the author. Nevertheless, the book is a departure from the writings of the early Puritans in that it contains no tedious laudatory biographies of ministers, no accusations of witchcraft, not even the display of pedantry and scriptural learning ordinarily associated with Mather. Instead it provides, in brief, simple, and forthright prose, a discussion of daily conduct, rules of behavior for ministers, doctors, and teachers, and objections to intemperance and corporal punishment. Each essay (and Mather uses the word literally, meaning "*attempts* to do good") is complete in itself, and each is suggestive rather than exhaustive; the work is unique for its time in both spirit and method.

2. The 18th Century: The Development of the Periodical and Serial Essays

The American essay began in earnest with the mushrooming of American periodicals in the early 18th century. It was modeled closely on the essays of the great contemporary British periodical essayists—**Steele, Swift, Goldsmith,** and especially **Addison**. Most early American essays were Addisonian in the sense that they were informal in tone, occasionally satiric, often humorous, most often brief. And like the British essays, American periodical essays were personal, always establishing a sociable intimacy between author and reader. The *NewEngland Courant,* a Boston weekly established by Benjamin Franklin's older brother James in 1721, was the first colonial newspaper to carry original essays. In his *Autobiography* (begun 1771 and published in full only in 1868), **Benjamin Franklin** (1706–90) recalled that his brother James "had some ingenious Men among his Friends who amus'd themselves by writing little Pieces for this Paper, which gained it Credit, and made it more in Demand." The group, who called themselves the "Couranteers," included Matthew Adams, John Checkley, Dr. William Douglass, and a mysterious Mr. Gardner. Initially unbeknownst to James was the fact that Benjamin himself was also a part of that group. Franklin submitted his earliest essays to his brother's newspaper with the signature "Silence Dogood" (1722). In these 14 pieces,

Franklin deliberately copied the style of Addison's ***Spectator***. However, he also took the Dogood papers beyond mere imitation, primarily because the *Spectator* claimed never to have "espoused any Party with Violence," while Mrs. Silence Dogood is a frugal, industrious, prosaic widow, sworn mortal enemy "to arbitrary Government and unlimited Power." Moreover, for all his English borrowings and choice of conventional subjects, Franklin succeeded in imparting to the Dogood essays a measure of originality and American coloration.

Mather Byles (1706–88), grandson of the clergyman Increase Mather, nephew of Cotton Mather, and lifelong friend of Franklin's, was also an early periodical essayist. He joined former Couranteer Matthew Adams and his grandson John Adams (1704–40) to write a serial for the *New-England Weekly Journal* (1727–41). Called *Proteus Echo,* it contained essays and poems and appeared weekly for a year. It was more didactic and less diverting than the Dogood papers, containing moral essays on such deadly sins as avarice, idleness, envy, and pride, philosophical essays on the ardor for knowledge, the way love blinds man's reason, and the love of country, and, finally, essays on manners and character. It was more nearly Addisonian than the Dogood papers, particularly because Proteus Echo is an old bachelor and widely traveled scholar like Mr. Spectator. While Franklin's Dogood papers are on balance the more successful of the two (Silence Dogood has more earthy vitality and dramatic energy, and the papers contain a sense of native idiom and environment that is almost wholly missing from *Proteus Echo*), the two serials firmly established the tradition of periodical essays in Boston, and led the way for others, which soon appeared in Philadelphia, Annapolis, Williamsburg, and Charleston.

Franklin left Boston for Philadelphia in 1723, and six years later launched a new essay serial in the *American Weekly Mercury* (1719–46) called *The Busy-Body*. He wrote the first four essays in the series and parts of two others, then withdrew; Joseph Breintnall finished the series, which when it ended in September 1729 contained 32 papers in all. The *Busy-Body* papers range through all the conventional subjects for periodical essays except criticism: manners, morality, philosophical reflection, character, humor. The liveliest entries are those by Breintnall which focus on the battle of the sexes.

Later in the 18th century—during the two decades before the Revolution—the chief outlet for essay serials became the magazine rather than the newspaper, and it was in magazines that the most notable American literary serials appeared. One of these, called *The Prattler,* appeared in the *American Magazine and Monthly Chronicle for the British Colonies* (1757–58), a magazine which promised that part of each issue would be "set aside for MONTHLY ESSAYS, in prose and verse" and that it would try to print every essay submitted "so far as they tend to promote peace and good government, industry and public spirit, a love of LIBERTY and our excellent constitution, and above all a veneration of our holy undefiled CHRISTIANITY." *The Prattler* generally appeared over the name "Timothy Timbertoe," but was probably the work of several hands. Timbertoe is a dilettante, most at home gossiping over tea tables or in coffeehouses and gathering scandal.

A more ambitious and successful serial was *The Old Bachelor,* which appeared in the *Pennsylvania Magazine; or American Monthly Museum* (1775–76). **Thomas Paine** (1737–1809) was a contributing editor to the magazine and also one of the principal authors of *The Old Bachelor,* though he seems to have contributed only to the early

numbers, and left the rest to be written by Francis Hopkinson (1737–91), whose three-volume *Miscellaneous Essays and Occasional Writings* (1792) includes not only his *Old Bachelor* contributions but essays published in other periodicals. The old bachelor had been a convention in the periodical essays of England, and Hopkinson's creation—a character named George Sanby who is inconvenienced by being a bachelor but too chauvinistic to get married—is as good-natured, old-fashioned, and eccentric as any of his British predecessors or American followers (who would include Philip Freneau's Hezekiah Salem, Joseph Dennie's Lay Preacher, William Wirt's Dr. Robert Cecil, and **Washington Irving'**s Jonathan Oldstyle).

The *Maryland Gazette,* established in Annapolis in 1727, carried one literary serial, *The Plain-Dealer,* though of its ten essays only two were original. Southern periodical essays got a surer foothold seven years later when the *Virginia Gazette* (1736–66) was established in Williamsburg. The serial in that newspaper, *The Monitor* (1736–37), conformed closely in manner and matter to the English periodical essay. It managed the conventions and ranged through the traditional subjects in a lively way. As in other early American serial essays, there was heavy emphasis on manners, and the Monitor and his assistants discussed subjects such as French fashions, being in love, keeping one's temper, and good nature. Maintaining the essentially lighthearted tone of *The Monitor,* the subject of morality was seldom broached.

The *South-Carolina Gazette* was established at Charleston in 1731–32, and ran, with occasional interruptions, until 1775. Individual essays began appearing as early as the second number, and in 1735 *The Meddlers Club,* a serial whose name calls to mind Franklin and Breintnall's *Busy-Body,* ran for a short time. The only full-fledged literary serial in the *SouthCarolina Gazette,* however, appeared in Winter 1753–54, and was authored by "The Humourist." This series again covered the conventional subjects, with special attention to manners and literary criticism. In fact, the relative lack of topicality in *The Humourist* and the emphasis on literary criticism reflect the influence of Samuel Johnson's *Rambler* essays, which the *South-Carolina Gazette* began reprinting at the end of 1750.

With the rise of the magazine in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the essay became perhaps the most clearly defined and popular American literary form. Essayist Nathan Fiske (1733–99) remarked near the turn of the century that any periodical without an essay series was doomed. Dozens of anonymous contributors with names like "The Censor," "The Hermit," "Gentleman at Large," and "The Lady's Friend" filled the magazines with comments on fashion, education, manners, courtship, social life, and other topics common to the tradition of Addison, Steele, and the rest. In the rush to print, few essayists distinguished themselves.

One who did was John Trumbull (1750–1831) who, while a graduate student and tutor at Yale, produced two serials, *The Meddler* (published in the *Boston Chronicle,* 1769–70) and *The Correspondent* (published in two series in the *Connecticut Journal,* 1770 and 1773). *The Meddler* had the stated purpose (from the first number) of publishing "essays, chiefly of the moral, critical and poetical kinds, upon miscellaneous and mostly unconnected subjects…[which] carefully avoid all strokes of party spirit and personal satire, with everything that had the least tendency to immorality." Indeed, *The Meddler* was noncontroversial—as well as frequently clumsy and amateurish—choosing instead to

depict the coquette and fop so popular with 18th-century readers and to castigate false wit. *The Correspondent,* while also part of Trumbull's apprenticeship as a serial essayist (he later found his literary calling more successfully in poetry), was a more ambitious serial than *The Meddler,* instructing the reader more and diverting him less than the Meddler had done. The Correspondent was a more contentious, less genial character than the Meddler, and he frequently attacked Church authority in Connecticut; there was even one essay against slavery, written at a time when almost the only anti-slavery advocates in America were Quakers.

Philip Freneau (1752–1832) was also best known as a poet, though he produced over 400 prose pieces in his career, publishing them in a variety of literary serials. *The Pilgrim* essays (1781–82) appeared in the *Freeman's Journal;* six years later, in *The Miscellaneous Works of Mr. Philip Freneau* (1788), the series was extended and renamed *The Philosopher of the Forest*. In both incarnations, the speaker resembled Addison's Mr. Spectator in being an old bachelor who wished simply to observe life, though there were partisan essays Freneau was strongly anti-Tory—in which the angry voice of the author was clear and unmistakable. His serial *Tomo Cheeki* (1795) appeared in the *Jersey Chronicle* with a grave and melancholy title character based on an historical figure. Freneau had him visit Philadelphia, where he made observations on manners and morality and offered philosophical reflections, all tending to elevate the Native American above the white population. In general, it was a more relaxed and conversational series of essays than *The Pilgrim*. *Hezekiah Salem* (1797) is a wholly whimsical series of seven essays with titles such as "On the Culture of Pumpkins" and "A Few Words on Duelling." Freneau's most extensive and impressive serial was *Robert Slender* (1799–1801), published in the *Aurora* (1794–1822, 1834–35), the foremost Republican newspaper of the day. The *Slender* letters were the most steadily partisan of Freneau's literary serials, though the character of Robert Slender and his Philadelphia milieu were full bodied and alive. It was a series in the British coffeehouse tradition—witty and filled with strong opinions.

In 1794 Joseph Dennie (1768–1812) characterized American essays as having been "hitherto unmarked except for flimsy expression & jejune ideas, they have allowed me the praise of reviving in some degree the Goldsmith vivacity in thought & the Addisonian sweetness in expression." He was at the time writing his first literary serial, *The Farrago* (1792–95), and in the first number of that series, he commented on the continuing popularity of essays: "To a lover of abstruse science, desultory essays may appear a minor species of literature. But the majority of mankind are not scholars… They content themselves with the simplest dishes of the literary banquet. Hence the currency of Essays…" Dennie's essays were widely popular, but his unsuccessful attempts to have them published in book form contributed to the literary eclipse into which he was to fall after his death.

Judith Sargent Murray (1751–1820) produced two concurrent serials from 1792 to 1794: *The Repository,* 27 short moralistic essays, and *The Gleaner*. Both appeared in the *Massachusetts Magazine* (1789–96). Murray was married to John Murray, the founder of universalism in America, and was eventually accused of using her essays to propagate universalism; this led to her serials for the *Massachusetts Magazine* ending in 1794. While in publication, though, her essays distinguished themselves in several ways from

the great bulk of other serials of the late 18th century. *The Gleaner,* which in some of its numbers had a mildly partisan flavor, biased toward Federalism, also showed Murray's concern for the future of American drama. These essays stood out because they appeared at a time when American writers were uncertain of how to develop an American tradition (an uncertainty that would, in fact, last for at least another century). Perhaps *The Gleaner's* most important contribution to American literature was a sentimental novel—*The Story of Margaretta*—embedded within the framework of a series of moral essays, allowing Murray not only to tell the story as if it were true (a favored method of making a sentimental novel respectable), but also to make observations on the proper role of the novel in American life.

Another essayist who made it his concern that the new nation have a literature of its own was William Wirt (1772–1834), a Virginian who published three serials, first in local newspapers, then in book form: *The Letters of the British Spy* (1803), *The Rainbow* (1804–05), and *The Old Bachelor* (1810–11). *The British Spy* provided evidence that the Addisonian essay had all but run its course in America, since Wirt employed only one Addisonian convention (the foreign visitor). Instead, the series contained elements of the travel essay then coming into vogue, especially in its descriptions of the Virginia landscape. *The Old Bachelor* was undeniably a literary serial, more Addisonian in its manner and matter than *The British Spy*. It was a series devoted to morals: "virtuously to instruct, or innocently to amuse," as Wirt phrased it. The Old Bachelor sought, as he said in 1811, "to awaken the taste of the body of the people for literary attainments" and to "see whether a group of statesmen, scholars, orators, and patriots, as enlightened and illustrious as their father, cannot be produced without the aid of such another bloody and fatal stimulant [as the Revolutionary War]." Publication of the series in book form in 1814 helped solidify the reputation of *The Old Bachelor*. Wirt himself confessed, "I am afraid that both the Old Bachelor and the British Spy will be considered by the world as rather too light and *bagatellish* for a mind pretending either to stability or vigor," but critics well into the 19thcentury highly regarded *The Old Bachelor*.

Also of note in the last part of the 18th century were the writers who adopted the essay form largely for political purposes. Its most significant practitioners included **Thomas Paine** (1737–1809), who achieved instant success and lasting fame with his pamphlet *Common Sense* (1776), and Alexander Hamilton (1757–1804), James Madison (1751–1836), and John Jay (1745–1829), who together anonymously published in 1787–88 a series of political essays called *The Federalist Papers* in support of the proposed U.S. Constitution. Later collected in book form and called *The Federalist,* they provide a classic exposition of the U.S. federal system.

3. The 19th Century: The Familiar Essay and Other Essay Types

Washington Irving (1783–1859) provided the last link in American essay writing to the periodical essay which had dominated the 18th century. Irving began his career as a serial essayist and only later moved into writing familiar essays along the lines of the great English Romantic essayists **Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt,** and **Leigh Hunt**. Irving made his first foray into essay writing with the *Oldstyle* letters he published in his brother

Peter's *Morning Chronicle* (1802–03). The nine letters from Jonathan Oldstyle were highly conventional—three of the letters focusing on manners, the other six on theatrical criticism. Despite their popularity, Irving quickly distanced himself from the essay serial altogether by parodying it in *Salmagundi* (1807–08), a periodical published irregularly by Irving and a group of young New Yorkers, including the other principal writer, James Kirke Paulding (1778–1860). The work quickly became a bestseller and remained in print throughout the 19th century.

After the War of 1812, the didacticism of the "morals and manners" type of essay gave way to the kind of subjectivity more common to the familiar essay. Irving matured as a familiar essayist with *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent*. (1819–20), then all but abandoned the essay for the tale, travel romance, history, and biography. Still, through his choice of subject and the development of his own style, he gave the familiar essay a particularly American feel, and is considered by many to be the first American essayist.

If any essay form is particularly indigenous to American soil it is the nature essay. French-American J.Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur (1735–1813) wrote *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782), which are concerned with the plight of the colonial farmer, politics, and economics, but also closely scrutinize phenomena as disparate as snakes, hummingbirds, snowstorms, and anthills. The essays are seasoned with an antipathy toward urban life and industrialism, and give vivid, idealistic pictures of the emergent New World. William Bartram (1739–1823), a more skillful observer of plants and flowers, wrote of his travels in Georgia and Florida. John James Audubon (1785–1851) interrupted the technical descriptions of his ornithological biography to insert charming vignettes of southwestern life, which ranged in subject matter from Mississippi squatters and Kentucky deer to scenes of bird life on the Florida Keys. The American nature essay would later in the century reach a high point in the work of **John Burroughs** (1837–1921), who wrote over 100 essays devoted chiefly to the birds and flowers and forest paths of the Adirondacks. A contemporary of Burroughs, **John Muir** (1838–1914), had his own significant influence on American attitudes toward ecology by writing vigorous essays in support of forest conservation, many of them detailing his walking journeys through the northwest United States and Alaska.

Earlier, however, at the same time as the familiar essay was gaining popularity in America, the founding of the great American magazines and quarterlies—the *North American Review* (1815–1940), the *Western Review* (1819–21), the *American Quarterly Review* (1827–37), the *Southern Review* (1818–32), and others—was encouraging the production of longer, more serious, philosophical or **critical essays**. Many of the most important and influential of these essays were written by the transcendentalists—including **Ralph Waldo Emerson** (1803–81), **Henry David Thoreau** (1817–62), **Margaret Fuller** (1810–50), and Amos Bronson Alcott (1799–1888). Emerson and Thoreau exerted frequently acknowledged influence on American literature, but Fuller was also a fixture in the transcendentalist scene, as editor of the *Dial* (1840–44) and writer of both critical essays and longer personal nonfiction such as *Summer on the Lakes in 1843* (1844). Alcott left his impression on the essay with his *Concord Days* (1872) and *Table Talk* (1877).

Emerson was an agitating and fermentative force, a liberator from convention and timidity, a questioner and an instigator to valor. He did more than any other man, said

John Jay Chapman, "to rescue the youth of the next generation and fit them for the fierce times to follow. It will not be denied that he sent ten thousand sons to war." The form in which he spread his original beliefs was not always the essay: his earliest compositions were sermons, and he turned from the sermon to the lecture. His essays grew out of this form of public speech, but it was only with the appearance of his second published volume, *Essays: First Series* (1841), that he placed himself before his readers explicitly in the role of essayist. Once there, his work constituted a new kind of American essay—abstract and aphoristic in a way that probably no writer since has been able to match. Emerson pieced together his essays from his **journals,** often leaving out explicit transitions from one sentence or one paragraph to the next, for he was willing to leave some of the work of thinking to his readers; he thought of continuity not as a logical but as a superlogical principle. His essays do, however, have a compositional wholeness, and a more orderly one than that in the essays of one of his true influences, **Montaigne**. As an essayist, Emerson was a masterful rhetorician, not only gifted in crafting the single sentences or phrases that can be lifted from their contexts and quoted with delight, but also blessed with a strong and delicate talent for ail the rhythms of English prose.

Thoreau's fascination with nature gave rise to almost all his most important works, including *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849), *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (1854), *The Maine Woods* (1864), *Cape Cod* (1865), and *A Yankee in Canada* (1866). An exacting sense of detail marks Thoreau's writing about nature, and he wrote in a style deliberately meant to awaken his readers—through surprising plays on language, arresting turns of speech, unusual images or metaphors. He became and remains one of the strongest influences on American nature writers. His influence also extends into politics. In 1845 he refused to pay his poll tax as a form of protest against the Mexican War and against slavery. He was jailed, an experience which led him to write "Civil Disobedience" (1849), one of his most famous essays. It became a guiding document for eminent 20th-century proponents of passive resistance such as Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr.

Even with the dominance of transcendentalism among the best American essayists of the early to mid-19th century, the conversational essay practiced earlier by Washington Irving did not die. In fact, it flourished so much in the works of **Oliver Wendell Holmes** (1809–1914) that his collections became the most popular American works in England since Irving's *Sketch Book*. Holmes, a physician who wrote many controversial and ground-breaking **medical essays,** gained his greatest popularity beginning in 1857 with his Breakfast-Table essays, which were published monthly in the new ***Atlantic Monthly*** (1857–). They were often poetic essays filled with wise and witty observations, and threaded through with narratives. Different incarnations of the Breakfast-Table essays ran until 1890.

The greatest American poet of the second half of the 19th century, Walt Whitman (1819–92), published in 1870 a small book called *Democratic Vistas,* intended to explain the role of the poet in the success and failure of, on the one hand, American civilization and, on the other, civilization as a whole. "Above all previous lands, a great original literature is surely to become the justification and reliance (in some respects the sole reliance) of American democracy," he wrote. The essays contained the pragmatic idea that democracy is not so much a political institution as a "training school" in character

formation. Whitman's other prose publication was *Specimen Days and Collect* (1882), the title essay of which is based on diary notes of Whitman's observations during the Civil War. To fill out the book, he added "Democratic Vistas" and a "Collect" of his prefaces and literary essays.

The **humorous essay** had many practitioners in the second half of the 19th century—including the popular Artemus Ward (1834–67) and David Ross Locke (1833–88), both of whom wrote primarily for newspapers—but few of their works hold up today anywhere near as well as do those of **Mark Twain** (1835–1910). Twain was of course a popular novelist and a lecturer, but his essays—which often combined fictional and nonfictional elements, and so are sometimes difficult to categorize—displayed his deep talent as a humorist just as well as his other work did. Never limiting himself to short pieces, Twain engaged instead in a broad range of essay forms, from travel letters to memoirs to social and political commentary. Though some of his pieces Were journalistic and ephemeral, and others—especially later in his career—were polemical and pessimistic, what characterized almost all of his nonfiction work was not only humor but an interest in storytelling, whether a brief anecdote or a full-fledged account. Such a style complemented his skills as a lecturer—though they were much different skills from those of other popular American essayist-lecturers such as, for example, Emerson. For Twain, essays were about the "high and delicate art" or "how a story ought to be told."

Literary essays by lesser-known writers had also taken their place in the American essay tradition in the early to mid-19th century, many of them under the intangible influence of Washington Irving. Soon after his success, American writers began to develop a faculty for the criticism of literature as well as its creation. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–82), whose volume of essays *Outre-Mer* was published in 1835 after he had traveled for three years in Europe, was one of the most prominent critical essayists, despite the fact that his criticism was chiefly appreciative rather than analytical. He succeeded, as far as the essay is concerned, in conveying instruction at the same time as he imbued his writing with his personality, never overstepping the bounds of the familiar essay and veering into didactic formality. Edgar Allan Poe (1809–49) made his most famous contributions to the field of critical essays with "The Poetic Principle," "The Rationale of Verse," and "Philosophy of Composition"—all careful and brilliant studies in the art and aesthetics of authorship. One of the few essayists of the 19th century who made criticism his life's work to the exclusion of all other forms of literary creation was Edwin Percy Whipple (1819–86). He wrote finished, formal essays distinctively American in that they emphasized grit and determination and were filled with moral earnestness. James Russell Lowell (1819–91) wrote both critical and **personal essays**. His first prose work, *Conversations on Some of the Old Poets* (1845), revived the neglected dialogue essay, and among his later books of criticism was *Political Essays* (1888). Other writers of both critical and personal essays include George William Curtis (1824–92), who collected his writings for ***Harper's*** (1850–) in two volumes called *Essays from the Easy Chair* (1892, 1897), and Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1823–1911), who wrote reminiscences of great 19th-century writers. Higginson's tendency to look backwards was perhaps prescient, since the next stage in the life of the American essay would have as its focus the essay's impending death.

4. The "Death" of the Essay

The titles and dates tell the tale: "The Passing of the Essay" (1894), "Once and for All" (1919), "A Little Old Lady Passes Away" (1933), "A Disappearing Art" (1933), "The Lost Art of the Essay" (1935), "On Burying the Essay" (1948), "No Essays, Please!" (1951), "A Gentle Dirge for the Familiar Essay" (1955), and "The Essay Lives—in Disguise" (1984). The story of the modern American essay has been the story of its "death," a death that like Mark Twain's has been greatly exaggerated, for even as critics declared it dead, the essay thrived by taking up new subjects, reworking old forms, and accommodating new voices.

What was actually dying was not the essay, but a particular kind of essay and the age and essayist associated with it. This type of essay was variously described as the genteel, light, or Lambian essay, and for at least the first four decades of the century American essayists were preoccupied with whether the essay could be anything but light. The alternatives, it was argued, were the column or the article, both of which were largely seen as less literary and more journalistic than the essay. Their ascendancy marked the death of the essay. What at least a few astute critics and some of the practitioners of these new forms recognized was that many columns or articles were actually essays: they were personal in subject matter and familiar in style in the way that the essay has always been. What has changed during the 20th century is that the essay has become increasingly political, revealing, and weighty.

5. The Turn of the Century and the Genteel Tradition

The genteel tradition held sway in American letters at least until World War I. Promoted by an interlocking network of literary critics, magazine editors, and Ivy League English professors, this tradition argued for art that reflected uppermiddle-class American values, Christian morality, the classical unity of truth and beauty, and a belief in the progress of (Anglo-American) civilization. Many, if not most, of the leading figures of the genteel tradition were essayists, and much of the tradition's cultural work was done in that genre. These "custodians of culture," as Henry May labeled them in his *The End of American Innocence* (1959), were troubled by the industrialization of America during the Gilded Age and sought to ameliorate the accompanying materialism by holding tight to Christian traditions and British literary conventions. They distrusted the new waves of immigration, the new rich, and America's new role as a leader in international affairs. These essayists produced work that was generally sentimental, idealistic, nostalgic, and sometimes pious. They often sported three names and were sometimes more "English" than their English counterparts. They adopted a tone that was decidedly conversational and sometimes even chatty, and cultivated a view of the essayist as a "friend." In order to maintain this chumminess they kept their subject matter light and noncontroversial. If politics or religion was broached, it was discussed matterof-factly, with the assumption that the reader would agree with what "we," all right-thinking people, thought. More often, however, their essays took as their subjects gardening, reading, Christmas dinner,

or the family pet. Some representative titles suggest the standard tone and subjects—*Reveries of a Bachelor* (1850) by Donald Grant Mitchell (1822–1908), *My Summer in a Garden* (1871) by Charles Dudley Warner (1829–1900), *Days Off, and Other Digressions* (1907) by Henry Van Dyke (1852–1933), *Among Friends* (1910) by Samuel McChord Crothers (1857–1927), *Days Out, and Other Papers* (1917) by Elisabeth Woodbridge Morris (1870–1964), and *Like Summer's Cloud* (1925) by Charles Brooks (1878–1934). The work of these essayists was tremendously popular and influential; *Reveries of a Bachelor,* for example, led Scribner's list for 50 years.

These writers sometimes published in other genres, usually poetry or the short story, and often worked as academics or book reviewers. Some were regular critics for outlets of "higher journalism"—Paul Elmer More (1864–1937) and Stuart Pratt Sherman (1881–1926) in the *Nation,* Hamilton Wright Mabie (1846–1916) in the *Outlook* (and later, the *Ladies Home Journal*), Bliss Perry (1860–1954) in the *Atlantic Monthly,* and Robert Underwood Johnson (1853–1937) in the *Century*. Their **review** essays were generally conservative and prescriptive, often enforcing what was called "the parlor table" or "young girl" standard, which specified what reading material was fit to appear on a family's parlor table and, more particularly, to be read aloud by a father to his daughter.

6. The 1920s and 1930s: The Rise of the Columnists and Other Developments

The relatively settled world of the late Victorians, which had allowed the whimsical dalliance with the everyday as well as the enforcement of a strict understanding of good manners, may never have been quite as ordered and sedate as it sometimes appeared, but certainly by the turn of the century it was being challenged by the revelations of the muckrakers, the flood of new immigrants, the rise of the "New Woman," and the gathering war clouds in Europe. In literature, naturalism and imagism were shaking up fiction and poetry respectively, but the essay was slower to change. Soon, however, World War I began to force essayists out of their libraries and gardens. As **Agnes Repplier** (1855–1950) put it in a 1918 piece entitled "The American Essay in Wartime," "The personal essay, the little bit of sentiment or observation, the lightly offered commentary which aims to appear the artless thing it isn't,—this exotic, of which Lamb was a rare exponent, has withered in the blasts of war."

Repplier's lament may have been a bit hyperbolic, but things were changing. In 1911, Harvard philosopher and cultural critic **George Santayana** (1863–1952) had named the genteel tradition and argued that it was an outmoded form of New England parochialism. Randolph Bourne (1886–1918), along with Van Wyck Brooks (1886–1963) and **H.L.Mencken** (1880–1956), built on Santayana's analysis in their critique of "Puritanism" and search for what Brooks called a "usable past." Bourne died early and Brooks focused on literary criticism, but Mencken, in a prodigious outpouring of personal commentary and cultural criticism, did more than anyone during the immediate prewar and postwar periods to redefine the American essay. His sarcasm and irony poked fun at the genial tone of the light essay, and his love for, knowledge of, and talent at employing a distinctly American idiom helped do for the American essay what Twain had done for

fiction and Whitman for poetry—Mencken took the essay from the hands of the Anglophiles who had dominated it and showed that it could be written in American.

The work of Mencken and other new essayists during the 1920s to modernize the essay was undertaken in a rapidly changing social and cultural climate. Thousands of soldiers, including midwestern farm boys and African American sharecroppers from the South, had traveled through New York and other eastern ports on their way to and from war. After the war many of them returned to the cities and stayed on, often working in the fast-growing automobile industry. All of the cities of the North and East were growing, but it was New York that was the center of modern culture. Motion pictures, radio, and mass circulation magazines told New York's story, but so too did the many new syndicated newspaper columns.

Columns or departments had already begun to appear in American newspapers—Eugene Field's (1850–95) "Sharps and Flats" ran in the Chicago *Daily News* from 1883 to 1895, and Bert Leston Taylor's (1866–1921) "A Line o' Type or Two" appeared in the Chicago *Tribune* between 1901 and 1920– but the 1920s and 1930s marked the heyday of the column. Not all of the new columns were strictly in the essay tradition. Some were editorials or political commentary, others were a hodgepodge of jokes and jingles sent in by readers. Sunday editions often offered a dozen or more columns on specialized topics such as gossip, sports, movies, fashion, radio, and books, as well as how-to columns on subjects as varied as cooking, bridge, and grammar.

There were also "essay" columns that were more personal, familiar, and discursive. These columns might indulge in gossip, review a book, or tender some light verse, but they consisted mainly of the author's thoughts and stories about everyday life. The popularity of these columns led to versions of them appearing as well in newly established magazines like the ***New Yorker*** (1925–) and the *Saturday Review of Literature* (1924–86). As such, they were more modern, somewhat less bookish versions of departments like "The Editor's Study" and "The Easy Chair" in *Harper's* or "The Contributor's Club" in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

Many major critics of the period, including Henry Seidel Canby (1878–1961) in "Out with the Dilettante" (1922), Burton Rascoe (1892–1957) in "What of Our Essayists?" (1922), Carl Van Doren (1885–1950) in "Day In and Day Out: Manhattan Wits" (1923), Stuart Sherman (1881–1926) in "Apology for Essayists of the Press" (1924), and Simeon Strunsky (1879–1948) in "The Essay of Today" (1928), argued that several of these columnists were negotiating their daily deadlines successfully enough to have begun to create a new kind of American essay, one that observed life in the American cities, especially New York, and evoked the idiom of city streets. They praised, in particular, Heywood Broun (1888–1939), Robert Cortes Holliday (1880–1947), **Christopher Morley** (1890–1957), **Robert Benchley** (1889–1945), Frank Moore Colby (1865–1925), Don Marquis (1878–1937), and Franklin P.Adams (1881–1960).

These "colyumnists," as they called themselves, took different approaches, but all were essentially essayists. Marquis parodied Modernist poetry by pretending his columns were written by a cockroach named Archy whose use of lowercase was not a choice (as it was for e. e. cummings) but a consequence of the fact that he could hop on only one key at a time and so was unable to hit the shift key at the same time. Morley, a more old-fashioned Anglophile, wrote largely about books in "The Bowling Green," which ran first

in the New York *Post* and then moved to the *Saturday Review of Literature*. Broun argued for various left-liberal political positions, but, like Benchley, also adopted a kind of bumbling "little man" persona in order to tell stories about himself. Adams began with a column called "A Little of Everything" in the *Chicago Journal* in 1903, but gained greater fame when he moved to New York and created the syndicated column "The Conning Tower," which was a kind of potpourri of light verse and readers' contributions, with occasional mock diaries in the manner of Samuel Pepys in which Adams revealed the goings-on of his Algonquin Round Table pals, a group of literary types who met regularly at the Algonquin Hotel to drink and talk.

On the whole, these men were highly educated: Benchley and Broun were Harvard graduates, Colby taught at Columbia and New York Universities, Morley was a Rhodes Scholar. And yet, as **E.B.White** remarked of Marquis, they were "never quite certified by intellectuals and serious critics of *belles lettres*." Though considered hopelessly middlebrow by more academic critics, the "colyumnists" saw themselves as having sought popularity by choice, as having chosen to write for andv educate a broad readership. Their pieces retained some Victorian traits, but on the whole tended to emphasize the humorous and nostalgic over the prim and proper. In his defense of the New York wits, Sherman noted that these "busy newspaper men" had "blazed their way out to the new public" that was "truly democratic," the "wide circle composed of every man and woman who reads a newspaper." Van Doren agreed and added that these essayists were not a completely new phenomenon. "They are," he said, "toWn wits, as Addison and Steele were in their merry London, as Irving and Paulding were in the New York of a hundred years ago."

Perhaps the most important event in the development of the American essay during this period was the founding in 1925 of the ***New Yorker*** by Harold Ross (1892–1951). Influenced by the columnists (Benchley was an early and frequent contributor), Ross' magazine, especially in its "Talk of the Town" department, told the rest of the nation what was going on in New York even as it claimed (perhaps somewhat disingenuously) not to be for the "little old lady in Dubuque." It was in the *New Yorker* that the most popular essayists of the 1930s and 1940s developed their styles. **James Thurber** (1894–1961) built on Benchley's little man persona in a number of comic autobiographical pieces (as well as short stories such as "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"). **E.B.White** (1899–1985) developed his own mild-mannered, somewhat genteel, wellread man-on-the-street persona in "Notes and Comments." Alexander Woollcott (1887–1943) poked fun at his own version of the effete urban dandy in a series of celebrity profiles and his back-page column, "Shouts and Murmurs."

1925 also marked the publication of *The New Negro,* an anthology of essays and other work edited by Alain Locke (1886–1954) that launched the Harlem Renaissance and with it several African American poets and fiction writers who also wrote essays, especially Langston Hughes (1902–67), Richard Wright (1908–60), and Zora Neale Hurston (1891–1960). These younger writers worked out of a tradition of African American autobiographical nonfiction in which the writer revealed a life in order to claim selfhood, but brought to it the new rhythms of black speech and music emerging from the growing black urban communities of the North, especially Harlem. These voices ranged from the angry polemics of Wright to the affirmative comedy of Hurston, but they were all more

informal, less academic, and more likely to employ dialect than the previous generations of African American essayists, which included, besides Locke, the political conscience of freed slave **Frederick Douglass** (1818–95), antilynching crusader Ida B.Wells Barnett (1862–1931), and the magisterial voice of **W.E.B.Du Bois** (1868–1963).

The work of the columnists offered probably the most widely read kind of essay and the most important development in the form during the period between the wars, but essays were also put to other kinds of use during this period. Many modern American novelists wrote essays, most notably Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961) in his war dispatches and F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896–1940) in a series of pieces for *Esquire* about his mental breakdown. Leftist literary critics such as **Edmund Wilson** (1895–1972), Mike Gold (1894–1967), and Meridel Le Sueur (1900–96) wrote reviews and **polemical** essays that were only occasionally more personal. Finally, high Modernists such as William Carlos Williams (1883–1963), **T.S.Eliot** (1888–1965), **Ezra Pound** (1885–1972), and Gertrude Stein (1874–1946) used the essay mainly to explain and defend their experiments in other genres.

Despite the use of the essay by writers primarily known for their work in fiction or poetry, and the popularity of the essays appearing in magazines and newspaper columns, the essay, especially the personal essay, remained under attack during the 1930s. As editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature,* Henry Seidel Canby tried to temper and control the debate over the death of the essay, but found this harder to do as the 1930s grew more and more politicized. Katharine Fullerton Gerould (1879–1944), along with Agnes Repplier, had long been leading the defense of the traditional light essay. Throughout the 1920s Gerould had decried the rise of commercialism, the lowering of standards, and what she called "the plight of the genteel." In 1934, Canby let Gerould call for a "plebiscite" on the essay in the pages of his magazine. "The perfect essayist," she wrote, "could write a good essay on Hitler or on hogs, and I should be enchanted to read it—but he has not done it yet, and I am not yet enchanted." Harking back to a distinction **William Dean Howells** (1837–1920) had noted as early as 1902, Gerould asked if readers wanted mere "articles," or rather the leisure, the meditations, and the light touch of the genteel essay. Then, making her distinction into a dogmatic either/or, she asked if they wanted "news" or "truth." Her appeal backfired: she and the essay were branded as retrograde. As one reader put it, "Mrs. Gerould is complacent, slightly irritating. My plebeian vote is in favor of the present and the future against the past." The editor of Scribner's got on the bandwagon as well, writing to Gerould that "this is not an age of polite letters, and writing has ceased to be the province of the cultured." He polled his readers, proudly quantified the results, and notified Gerould that only three per cent wanted a return to her kind of essay. For the time, the debate seemed to be over. Gerould and the genteel essay had lost.

7. The 1940s: The Example of E.B.White

It was E.B.White, himself an Ivy League-educated son of the same Eastern genteel upper middle class that Gerould defended, who provided a way out of the dilemma that threatened to kill the essay. However, he had to leave the *New Yorker* and become

haunted by the rise of fascism in order to do it. In 1938, tired of weekly deadlines and Ross' insistence that he use the editorial "we," White decided to leave New York for Maine and the *New Yorker* for *Harper's*. For the next five years he wrote a monthly column entitled "One Man's Meat." In these pieces (collected in a book with the same title in 1942), he found a voice that was at once personal and public. He talked about everyday life on his saltwater farm but also attacked fascism, defended democracy, supported American intervention in Europe, and anticipated the United Nations by calling for world government, or what he called "supranationalism."

White's ability to talk about such politically charged issues in the quiet voice of a Yankee farmer (or at least New York writer playing Yankee farmer) set a precedent and did much to solve a problem that had been facing the American essay since the first challenges to the genteel tradition around the turn of the century. He added weight to the light essay, allowing it to take on controversial public issues while retaining the charm of its familiar style.

In 1943 White returned full-time to the *New Yorker,* and if he never burned with quite as blue a flame as he had during the period of "One Man's Meat," a period he referred to later as "one of those rare interludes that can never be repeated, a time of enchantment," he would still write enough wonderful essays to remain the dominant voice in the field for at least another 20 years. White continued to write familiar, sometimes almost folksy, pieces, but the political commitment that had fueled "One Man's Meat" remained a part of him; his essays of the 1950s and 1960s spoke eloquently to issues such as civil rights, nuclear testing, and the environment.

8. The 1950s: Political Voices in a Quiet Time

White was hardly the only essayist to take political stands during the 1950s. On the contrary, that decade, usually seen as quiet and complacent, witnessed the appearance of many strong, committed nonfiction writers. But White was the exception in the sense that his voice was generally more personal than those of **Lionel Trilling** (1905–75), **Irving Howe** (1920–93), Alfred Kazin (1915–), **Mary McCarthy** (1912–89), Harold Rosenberg (1906–78), Elizabeth Hardwick (1916–), Stanley Edgar Hyman (1919–70), and Leslie Fiedler (1917–). Primarily literary critics (or in Rosenberg's case, art critic), these New York intellectuals had roots in 1930s radicalism, were associated with journals of cultural criticism such as ***Partisan Review*** (1934–) and *Dissent,* and were public intellectuals in the tradition of Edmund Wilson (himself still quite active in the 1950s) rather than personal essayists like White.

The decade also saw the emergence of three young writers who, though they saw themselves as novelists first, will perhaps be best remembered for their work in nonfiction—**James Baldwin** (1924–87), **Norman Mailer** (1923–), and **Gore Vidal** (1925–). All three brought deep political commitment (Mailer and Vidal both ran for public office) as well as their experience as fiction writers to their essay writing. Sometimes, they also seemed to live their private lives in public: Baldwin and Vidal were openly gay even before the Stonewall Rebellion of 1968, and Vidal and Mailer acquired celebrity status through their work in films and on television. They used their essays to

create these well-defined, sometimes defiant public personae.

9. The 1960s and 1970s: Social Upheaval and the New Journalism

Mailer's propensity for putting himself as a character into his narrative essays (and often referring to that self in the third person) made him a pioneer of the **New Journalism,** which has had a tremendous impact on the development of the personal essay at the end of the century. Many New Journalists used techniques similar to Mailer's to challenge what they felt to be an impossible obsession with objectivity on the part of traditional journalism. Mailer, **Tom Wolfe** (1930–), Gay Talese (1932–), and others borrowed techniques from fiction such as the extensive use of dialogue, developed scenes, sensory details, experimental punctuation, colloquialisms, and neologisms, and in so doing made their magazine articles more essayistic. Many of these New Journalists focused on longer, book-length pieces, leading to their association (particularly in the case of Truman Capote [1924–84]) with the "non-fiction novel," but even then their chapters sometimes had the feel of self-contained essays. All in all, they had a major influence on the essay by creatively blurring some of the old distinctions between journalism and *belles-lettres* that had long dogged the essay.

These and other practitioners of the New Journalism such as Pete Hamill (1935–), Dan Wakefield (1932–), Seymour Krim (1922–89), and **Joan Didion** (1934–) changed not only the form of creative nonfiction but also broadened its subject matter by reporting as participating observers from the turbulent centers of their times—Mailer marching on the Pentagon to protest the Vietnam War, Krim hobnobbing with his fellow Beats, Didion mixing with the star culture of Los Angeles and Hollywood, and Wolfe spending extended periods with everyone from acid-dropping hippies to straitlaced astronauts.

Debates over the future of the novel, intersections with European culture (especially French critical theory after May 1968), the founding of the *New York Review of Books* (1963–), accounting for the boom in Latin American literature, and other developments in and out of the academy prompted much activity among more formal, intellectual essayists during this period. As with the New Journalism, much of this work was done by practicing novelists including Didion, **William H.Gass** (1924–), John Barth (1930–), **Susan Sontag** (1933–), **Cynthia Ozick** (1928–), and Stanley Elkin (1930–95). These writers wrote a personal, richly allusive, highly stylized kind of critical essay on subjects ranging from the nature of fiction to the role writers should or should not play in the political movements of the times.

10. The 1980s to the Present: The Revival of the Essay

The political movements of the 1960s and 1970s had a tremendous effect on the development of the essay. Through the experiments of the New Journalists, not only did they make the already loose form of the essay even more open than it had been since at least the 1920s, they also led to new voices using the essay to speak to new constituencies of readers. The result has been an explosion in the number of skilled essayists publishing

in America at the century's end.

The civil rights movement, for instance, forced much debate and discussion of issues of race, and the personal essay was a form particularly suited to testimony, witness, and stirring anecdote. During the 1960s leaders of the civil rights movement such as Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929–68), Eldridge Cleaver (1935–), and George Jackson (1941–71) used the essay to advance the cause. The intersection of the women's movement with the civil rights movement resulted in several new voices that focused on the interconnectedness of racism and sexism, among them **Alice Walker** (1944–), Angela Davis (1944–), Toni Morrison (1931–), and Audre Lorde (1934–92). Other struggles for democratic rights during this period have led to essays emerging from communities that had not normally been associated with the form in the past. Among these new voices are Maxine Hong Kingston (1940–), Richard Rodriguez (1944–), Judith Ortiz Cofer (1952–), Gary Soto (1952–), Leslie Marmon Silko (1948–), and Naomi Shihab Nye (1952–). The success of many of these movements has led to the establishment of new areas of specialization within the academy, the recovery of lost texts, and the insertion of new voices into the canon of Western literature. The backlash against these changes during the Reagan years led to the culture wars of the late 1980s and early 1990s, during which a number of minority academics made names for themselves while using the personal essay to argue their case; these included Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1950–), Gerald Early (1952–), bell hooks (1955?–), and Shelby Steele (1946–).

The second wave of feminism in the 1970s also swept in a number of new writers intent on breaking down barriers between the personal and the political. Besides the minority feminists listed above, other women who have found the essay particularly conducive to this goal are **Adrienne Rich** (1929–), Gloria Steinem (1934–), Katha Pollitt (1949–), and Nancy Mairs (1943–).

A final kind of essay which has attracted a considerable number of skilled practitioners in recent years is the nature essay. Working from a strong tradition that developed in the 19th century, and energized by the environmental movement, mid-20th-century greats such as **Aldo Leopold** (1886–1948), **Loren Eiseley** (1907–77), and Rachel Carson (1907–64) have been joined by a new generation of nature writers, including practicing scientists such as **Lewis Thomas** (1913–93), Edward O. Wilson (1929–), **Stephen Jay Gould** (1941–), and popularizers of science such as **John McPhee** (1931–) and David Quammen (1948–). A host of other writers produce both fiction and nonfiction, but in their nonfiction have often focused on nature and landscape; these include Edward Abbey (1927–89), **Edward Hoagland** (1932–), **Annie Dillard** (1945–), **Barry Lopez** (1945–), **Gretel Ehrlich** (1946–), and **Scott Russell Sanders** (1945–).3

11. Conclusion

The view that the essay is inherently precious and irrelevant persists. In the preface to the most recent full-length study of the genre, *The Observing Self: Rediscovering the Essay* (1988), Graham Good admits that he launched his project with some trepidation because the word "essay" still "conjures up the image of a middle-aged man in a worn tweed jacket in an armchair smoking a pipe by a fire in his private library in a country house

somewhere in southern England, in about 1910, maundering on about the delights of idleness, country walks, tobacco, old wine, and old books…"

Despite Good's concerns, the essay seems more alive than ever, even if it "lives in disguise," as Phillip Lopate (1943–), an important contemporary American essayist and anthologist, put it in a 1984 essay. Whether it is labeled New Journalism, creative nonfiction, or just nature writing, the American essay has, at least since Fitzgerald's pieces about his mental breakdown or E.B.White's essays about Hitler and hogs in *One Man's Meat,* been moving inexorably toward subjects that are at once more intimate and more public than the safe and chatty reveries of the genteel essayists of the late Victorian era. Today the most respected American essayists write uninhibitedly and skillfully about issues as personal as their own addictions and maladies and as public as women's liberation and environmental awareness, often within the same essay.

DAN ROCHE (PARTS 1–3)
NED STUCKEY-FRENCH (PARTS 4–11)

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The American Scholar

American journal, 1932–

Every issue of the current *American Scholar* begins with a personal essay by "Aristides," the *nom de plume* of editor and renowned essayist Joseph Epstein. His familiar writing on such topics as napping, name-dropping, and personal musical tastes is not at all academic in the traditional sense, but then, despite its title, the *American*

Scholar is not a traditional scholarly journal. Rather it draws its name from the 1837 Phi Beta Kappa address at Harvard University by the great American essayist **Ralph Waldo Emerson,** who enlarged the definition of a scholar to "man thinking." In this speech, which James Russell Lowell called "an event without any former parallel in our literary annals" and **Oliver Wendell Holmes** hailed as "our intellectual Declaration of Independence," Emerson declared that "Man is not a farmer, or a professor, or an engineer, but he is all. Man is priest, and scholar, and statesman, and producer, and soldier." Unfortunately, Emerson concluded, in our time these functions have been divided one from another so that each person inhabits only one aspect of his or her potential. The *American Scholar* strives to mitigate this trend by helping its readers embrace all aspects of this Emersonian selfhood.

The *American Scholar* began publication in 1932, as the successor to the *Phi Beta Kappa Key,* publishing for members of PBK (the national academic honor society) as well as "for all who have general intellectual interests." In its first issue, the editorial board promised that the *American Scholar* would be "devoted to general scholarship," an assurance reiterated over 60 years later by the current editorial team, who characterized the publication as "fill[ing] the gap between learned journals and good magazines for a popular audience." In its current format, each quarterly issue leads off with general essays, followed by more specifically **topical essays** (marked by their smaller print) on the arts, sciences, social sciences, literature, politics, legal issues, and current events, as well as categories such as "memoir" and "reappraisal." Book reviews, some poetry, and the occasional book excerpt fill out the journal's offerings; as one reviewer noted, it is "an ideal magazine to be read leisurely." Commenting on the magazine's continuing interest in the current affairs of the world, the Winter 1939–40 editorial noted that "The table of contents of a journal of contemporary thought, such as *The American Scholar* aspires to be, may reflect, more than its editors are aware, the salient features of the modern scene."

Although the magazine's first essays were strictly formal, by the 1940s the tone was becoming increasingly familiar as the journal began including more addresses and speeches, thus easing its transition into publishing informal essays. It is this personal tone, one which recognizes that sophisticated and erudite readers not only appreciate serious discussion about wide-ranging issues but also have both a compassionate interest in their fellow humans and a sense of humor, that remains at the forefront of the *American Scholar's* publishing sensibility. During much of its history, the magazine has included in every issue a long-running series of **familiar essays** by a single author, including philosopher Irwin Edman's "Under Whatever Sky" (1945–54), **Joseph Wood Krutch's** "If You Don't Mind My Saying So" (1955–70), and Epstein's quarterly "Aristides" essay (1975–). While the journal has also regularly published more formal essays, including René Dubos' "The Despairing Optimist" series (1970–77), it is the magazine's personal, informal essays, following in the tradition of **Addison, Steele, Edmund Burke,** and **Montaigne,** that have contributed to the popularity of the essay form in contemporary culture. According to Epstein, "The familiar essayist lives, and takes his professional sustenance, in the everyday flow of things," and the American audience has responded well, giving the journal a circulation of 26,000 (as of 1993), large for a magazine of its type. The *American Scholar* has clearly played a leading role in

claiming for the personal essay its own territory in the American literary landscape.

For a magazine so long-lived, the *American Scholar* has had a remarkable consistency of editors. The founding editor, William Allison Shimer, held that position until 1943, when he joined the armed forces to fight in World War II. Marjorie Hope Nicolson, president of the United Chapters of PBK, served as interim editor for one year before handing over the reins to Hiram Haydn, editor from Autumn 1944 until his death in 1973. During Haydn's tenure, the magazine was subtitled "A Quarterly for the Independent Thinker," reminding readers of the journal's Emersonian roots. Following Haydn's death, editorial board member Peter Gay served as acting editor for two issues until Joseph Epstein stepped into the editorial role, a position he still holds. This consistency of leadership has also been expressed in the journal's physical appearance, for the packaging of the magazine remains very similar to that of the first issue—quiet, understated, and discreet. The editorial board has seen far more diversity, having included such disparate thinkers as **Hannah Arendt,** Jacques Barzun, Saul Bellow, Ralph Ellison, Erik Erikson, John Erskine, John Kenneth Galbraith, Clifford Geertz, Lillian Hellman, Randall Jarrell, Judith Martin, Margaret Mead, Daniel P.Moynihan, and Robert Penn Warren, many of whom are themselves innovators of the essay in its various manifestations.

In Winter 1976–77, the editors paused to commemorate the Phi Beta Kappa bicentennial and reexamine the purpose of the *American Scholar,* one of the honor society's major public activities. Epstein and the editorial board noted that the journal—and by extension the essay genre itself—linked society and the intellectual world, striving to play the same role that **David Hume** (quoted in that issue's editorial) attributed to his own essay writing: "I cannot but consider myself as a kind of resident or ambassador from the dominions of learning to those of conversation, and shall think it my constant duty to promote a good correspondence betwixt these two states, which have so great a dependence on each other." In fulfilling this function, the *American Scholar* has changed its focus very little over the years. Echoing the journal's first editorial policy, Epstein recently remarked, "We hope chiefly to be interesting and entertaining to people who are interested in ideas and culture"—people, that is, who are American Scholars.

KAREN A.KEELY

The Anatomy of Melancholy

by Robert Burton, 1621; subsequent revised editions

Robert Burton (1577–1640) was one of the most prolific essayists of the 17th century. He published only one book; yet that book, *The Anatomy of Melancholy,* was his life's work. Nor did that single volume cramp the range of his style, which flowed, he wrote in his preface, "now serious, then light; now comical, then satirical; now more elaborate, then remiss, as the present subject required, or as at that time I was affected." Burton's claims for the variety of his style are not exaggerated. The title of the work suggests a twofold narrowness of focus, yet Burton somehow escapes the confines of both types of

narrowness.

The first restriction is a structural one suggested by *Anatomy:* an anatomy is both analytical and synthetic, distinguishing a thing into its constituent parts, and highlighting relationships of each to each and each to the whole. Such a genre suggests a clinical, scientific style, which Burton supplies where necessary: "The upper of the hypochondries, in whose right side is the liver, the left the spleen; from which is denominated hypochondriacal melancholy." Yet within each of the compartments of the anatomy Burton feels free to indulge a more personal, subjective style, echoing his preface, wherein he urges the reader not to read his book, for "'Tis not worth the reading" and "thou canst not think worse of me than I do of myself." Further freedom comes from the nature of anatomy: interconnecting all aspects of melancholy not only allows but requires Burton to touch on a variety of subtopics.

The limitation of the major topic presents the second restriction, one of content. Yet in Burton's treatment, to write about melancholy is to write about the human condition, the subject of all great writing. To discuss melancholy is to discuss war, love, religion, imagination, sorrow, fear, or virtually any other essential element of human nature. Within the rigid structure of the anatomy Burton has imbedded essays on topics as manifold as **Montaigne's** or **Bacon's**.

While Burton's style may vary from scientific to personal, one element is constant: his prose is macaronic, playing Latin off against English. To some extent, this is true of almost all Jacobean prose: Latin intrudes more or less naturally in the works of educated writers of all European languages in the 17th century. Yet what is remarkable about Burton's Latinity is that it confines itself to parenthetical quotations and, sometimes, to word order: it has comparatively little effect on his diction. The Latinate "inkhorn" terms so prevalent in the writings of his contemporaries appear much less frequently in Burton's, and those that do tend to be personal favorites used habitually rather than nonce-words. For every *constringe, clancular,* or *calamistrate* in Burton's prose, we find half a dozen Anglo-Saxon colloquialisms such as *gubber-tushed, fuzzled,* or *dizzard*. The native vocabulary increases his verbal range, as English, in his century as in ours, has by far the largest vocabulary of any European language: to confine oneself to Latinate diction, even with inkhorn neologisms, is to narrow one's range severely in comparison to English. Burton's sentence structure also tends to be less Latinate than that of many contemporaries; rarely subordinating, his clauses and phrases tend to progress by apposition or accretion.

Structurally Burton's style illustrates the early 17th-century reaction to the Elizabethan imitations of **Cicero's** Latin style. Ciceronian prose triumphed in the periodic sentence, lengthy constructions filled out by subordinate clauses and balanced antitheses. Burton and many of his contemporaries (particularly **John Donne** in his sermons, and **Sir Thomas Browne**) imitated the contrasting Silver Age style of Seneca and Tacitus, characterized by epigrammatic concision. The epigrammatic unit of Burton's Senecan style, however, was usually the clause, not the sentence, making his sentences as long as any Ciceronian period, but less symmetrical. The lack of balance and parallelism created the illusion of spontaneity; parallelism is obviously an artistic choice, whereas a Burtonian list or parenthesis sounds like a sudden outburst.

The impression of spontaneity and colloquialism in Burton's prose is all the more

delightful for its ironic context: *The Anatomy of Melancholy* is a bookworm's distillation of a long life spent in libraries. The word "anatomy" suggests a logical order which this particular anatomy demonstrates only on the surface, in its table of contents and chapter headings. Within an individual topic, which can often be considered a separate essay, Burton's organizing principle seems to be not logical connection but rather free association. One anecdote suggests another, tangentially related, which suggests another, related more to the second than the first, so that a section might end quite a distance from its starting point. This syntactical looseness makes Burton's prose sound quite modern to many 20th-century critics.

JOHN R.HOLMES

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Andersch, Alfred

German, 1914–1980

Alfred Andersch had a prolific career as an essayist: besides composing a lengthy treatise on the state of German literature after two world wars, he published four volumes of collected essays, produced and hosted numerous radio programs (among them the "radio-essay") for West Germany's leading broadcasting companies, and founded two important journals—*Der Ruf: Unabhängige Blätter der jungen Generation* (The call: independent journal of the young generation) and *Texte und Zeichen* (Texts and signs), which nurtured the essay tradition among the postwar generation of German writers. The scope and depth of his essays are as diverse as the roles he took on as author, editor, journalist, publisher, and radio man. Scattered among his many literary essays are astute social and political commentaries, art, film, and theater reviews, travel prose, author portraits **(Thomas Mann, Ernst Jünger), aphorisms,** and short philosophical glosses. The recent critical attention being given to Andersch's essays and radio work not only provides a glimpse into a brilliant career as a nonfiction writer, but also demonstrates in Andersch an important media figure and cultural talent scout. While foregrounding Andersch's interest in issues concerned with writing, cultural literacy, and aesthetics, the essays reveal a dynamic style that seeks to mediate continually between the historical, political, and socioeconomic contexts of modernity.

Andersch's capacity as editor and journalist for *Der Ruf* sparked his foray into essay writing. Along with Hans Werner Richter, Andersch sought to produce a journal that would capture the energy of the new generation of postwar writers and intellectuals. Throughout his career as an essayist, Andersch published essays in some of West Germany's principal literary and political journals, including *Frankfurter Hefte* (Frankfurt numbers), *Merkur* (Mercury), *konkret* (concrete), and *Kürbiskern* (Pumpkins). With the first meeting of the Gruppe 47 (Group 47) in 1947, which he organized, and the publication of the treatise *Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung* (German literature at the turning point) in 1948, Andersch established himself as a perceptive critic of German literature and advocate of Germany's younger generation of writers. When he began work in broadcasting at Radio Frankfurt (later Hessischer Rundfunk) in 1948, these convictions became guiding forces. Andersch spent the next ten years of his life working for the leading broadcasting companies in West Germany. His creation of such programs as the *Abendstudio* and the "radio-essay" expanded the role of radio beyond reporting to include literary and artistic productions. In the *Funkkurier* (1955; Radio courier) Andersch described the "radio-essay" as a "poetic document of the reality of our world and of the life of men in that world." The unique synthesis in the "radio-essay" of artistic and political expression, musical and literary pieces, forged such critically acclaimed endeavors as the series entitled "Die Professoren" (The professors), which invited scholars like Walter Jens, **Theodor W.Adorno,** Walter Muschg, and **Max Bense** out of the classroom and into the studio to perform their ideas and put their theories into

practice. The popularity of these talkbased programs stemmed from the expertise which they assumed of their audience, and made Andersch a household name. It is from his development of the "radio-essay" that his conception of the essay is brought forth. Influenced by Adorno's notion of the "constellation," Andersch's inclusion of music, literature, criticism, and politics in any one broadcast allowed for a montage of constantly shifting discourses, thereby illustrating the multifarious nature of the modern world. Andersch himself emphasized the word "trial," seeing the essay component of these radio broadcasts as providing for "the lively character of the trial or attempt, which remains continuously open to all possibilities." This intriguing definition of the "radio-essay" acts as an underlying premise for Andersch's written essays, and thus suggests some motifs common to his essays, radio broadcasts, and editorial ideals.

The essays highlight an attempt to reanimate the spirit of German Modernism, which had fallen victim to the Third Reich. The treatise *Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung,* the essays "Thomas Mann als Politiker" (1955; Thomas Mann as a politician) and "Achtzig und Jünger: Ein politischer Diskurs" (1975; Eighty and Jünger: a political discourse), and the review essays of work by young artists like Heinrich Böll, Arno Schmidt, Pierre Claudel, and Elio Vittorini speak to Andersch's desire to reconcile the tradition of German Modernism (Mann, Jünger) with the postwar generation's resuscitation of an avant-garde style attested to in *Europäische Avantgarde* (1949; European avant-garde), an anthology he edited. Andersch's work with the technological medium of the radio influenced the pieces he wrote and produced for his weekly features. His realization that his capacity as both radio broadcaster and author magnified the intensity of consumerist culture prompted such radio features as "Denk-Zettel für Kulturkonsumenten" (1959; Thoughts for cultural consumers) and written essays like "Die Blindheit des Kunstwerks" (1956; The blindness of art), "Notiz über die Schriftsteller und den Staat" (1966; Note concerning writers and the state), and "Literatur in den schweizerischen Massenmedien" (1977–78; Literature in the Swiss mass media).

Through Andersch's editorial ingenuity, which resulted in *Der Ruf, Europäische Avantgarde,* the brochure-series "studio frankfurt" (1951), and the literary journal *Texte und Zeichen,* young poets, artists, and essayists were given an intellectual venue where they could showcase their talents. The constellation of ideas set up by Andersch's role as essayist, radio figure, and editor sketches a trajectory between the height of German Modernism and the birth of a postwar literary tradition, between the machinations of the Third Reich and the economic miracle of the 1950s. The importance of these essays, the care and detail with which they were written and their perceptive analyses of contemporary German culture demonstrate in Alfred Andersch an essayist of great significance in a continued and lively tradition of essay writing in Germany.

DANIEL D.GILFILLAN

Biography

Born 4 February 1914 in Munich. Studied at the Wittelsbacher Gymnasium, Munich, 1924–28. Worked for a publisher, 1928–30. Member of the youth organization of the Communist Party, 1932, and as a result spent six months in Dachau concentration camp,

1933. Office worker, Munich and Hamburg, 1933–40. Married Angelika Albert, 1935 (divorced, 1943): one daughter. Served in the German army, 1940–41, 1943–44: deserted on the Italian front and became a prisoner of war in the United States, where he worked on *Der Ruf* prisoners' publication, 1945. Editorial assistant to Erich Kästner, *Neue Zeitung* (New gazette), Munich, 1945–46; coeditor, *Der Ruf,* Munich, 1946–47. Cofounder, Gruppe 47, 1947. Founder and director of *Abendstudio,* Frankfurt Radio, 1948–50, and of "radio-essays" for South German Radio, Stuttgart, 1955–58 (assisted by Hans Magnus Enzensberger). Married Gisela GroneuerDichgans, 1950: two sons and one daughter. Founder and editor, *Texte und Zeichen,* 1955–57. Moved to Switzerland, 1958, and became a Swiss citizen, 1973. Led an expedition to the Arctic, 1965. Member, German Academy of Languages and Literature. Awards: German Critics' Prize, 1958; Nelly Sachs Prize, 1968; Charles Veillon Prize, 1968; Bavarian Academy Literature Prize. Died (of kidney failure) in Berzona, 21 February 1980.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose
Deutsche Literatur in der Entscheidung, 1948
Wanderungen im Norden, 1962
Die Blindheit des Kunstwerks und andere Aufsätze, 1965
Aus einem römischen Winter: Reisebilder, 1966
Hohe Breitengrade, oder Nachrichten von der Grenze, 1969
Norden, Süden, rechts und links: Von Reisen und Büchern 1951–1971, 1972
Einige Zeichnungen, 1977
Offentlicher Brief an einen sowjetischen Schriftsteller, das Überholte betreffend: Reportagen und Aufsätze, 1977
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Aphorism

"Aphorism" is a general, all-encompassing term for a condensed sentence or statement. Short and concise, it is a written or spoken expression of an observation, principle, or precept of truth or advice. (The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the aphorism as a "short, pithy sentence expressing a truth of general import.") The etymology of the aphorism is revealing: *apo* plus *horizein* denote "away from a marked area or limited boundary." Thus it proceeds by a dual process, of initial divergence from the terms of a given discourse followed by a return to it, but importing an unusual perspective, a process often characterized by a fusion of logic and imagination, or wit. By the 18th century the aphorism had developed into an autonomous literary short form. Descending from the terse scientific-medical precepts of Hippocrates, it extended its range to include **Francis Bacon's** *Novum organum* (1620) and the 17th-century philosophical aphorisms of the French moralists such as **La Rochefoucauld, La Bruyère,** and Chamfort.

The aphorism has included such small forms of brief discourse as the reflection, the **apothegm,** the axiom, the sentence, the *aperçu,* the proverb, the adage, the motto, and the **maxim**. These definitions are determined by a variety of criteria, such as whether the statements are oral or written, authorial or anonymous, practical or theoretical, prosaic or

poetic, concrete or metaphorical, descriptive or prescriptive, etc.

The various studies of the aphorism agree in regarding it as a specific mode of inquiry or a particular intellectual response to the relationship between the individual (author, reader) and society. Further, that relationship is articulated through a distinct verbal structure, a literary representation which renders concrete the tension and conflict between individual observation and abstract reflection. Thus, the aphorism is often said to express the uncertainty of experience or a crisis of consciousness.

For many literary critics and theorists, the aphorism remains the sole form of discourse to refuse integration into any system or dominant order of thought. But in breaking up or subverting the status quo from the perspective of observation and presentation, the aphorism simultaneously implies an Other, a contrary order of the "not yet realized." The aphorism uses rhetorical verbal structures like antithesis, parallelism, proportion, oxymoron, chiasmus, metaphor, and paradox, in a concise, emphatic manner to address this matrix of oppositions.

Like all literary constructions, the aphorism mediates an insight or perception through language. However, the aphorism is highly conscious of the manner in which this mediation occurs. Indeed, it has often been called the literary form that is most aware of itself. But the resulting relationship between writer and reader is neither direct nor conversational, thus differing from that created by the essay. The aphorism's meaning is not immediately obvious; indeed often at first glance it is impenetrable. It typically works dialectically, through paradox, pun, mixed metaphor, or similarly unexpected verbal and semantic juxtaposition, forcing the reader to rethink, to complete the dialectical process of an active search for an unexpected meaning. Writer and reader require both logic and imagination: first to establish or recognize the digression, the antithesis, the paradox, the hiatus across the linear progression of discourse, and second to make the reconnection.

The essay and the aphorism share many borders, but also demonstrate key contrasts. Both forms require a high degree of learning and sociocultural sophistication by the writer and the reader; both are anti-systematic in their modes of discourse. But the essay is something much greater than an expansion and extension of an aphorism, and an aphorism is more than merely the nucleus of an essay. Whereas the essay is the discourse of experience and observation by the author, subsequently related to an idea or theme, the aphorism proceeds more independently from individual experience. It begins *in media res* with the initial idea turned inside out. With its greater self-consciousness of language and its closed, inverted form—it is read in an instant, but encourages, even requires, multiple rereadings—the aphorism provides insight but does not provide a basis for dialogue or a dialogic stance by the author toward the reader. In contrast, the essay requires a substantial period of time for its reading, and encourages, with its looser, more open form, a dialogue of thought between author and reader. The aphorism is essentially dictatorial, while the essay is suggestive.

RALPH W.BUECHLER

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Apothegm

Since the Renaissance, "apothegm" has been virtually synonymous with **"aphorism"**—a short, pithy statement of a general truth. Earlier, however, an aphorism was a statement of

principle or scientific knowledge, while an apothegm was a statement of ethical, moral, or religious advice from a wise person.

The apothegm emerges in the tradition of "wisdom literature" that stretches back to ancient Egypt. As early as 2500 BCE, Egyptian kings and courtiers instructed their sons or protégés by means of short sayings on good and wise conduct. Jews living in Egypt adopted this practice and, after their expulsion, adapted it to augment religious teachings from the Torah and Talmud. Written records of these oral teachings form the earliest body of wisdom literature.

The early Christians inherited both traditions. In the 4th century, the apothegm appeared as a piece of profoundly considered and heartfelt advice from a holy sage to a seeker after God. At this time, in remote areas of Egypt, an ascetic movement arose: Christians, seeking pure knowledge of God, isolated themselves in the deserts, praying, fasting, and enduring lives of extreme privation, believing that discipline of the flesh brought them closer to God. Some of these anchorites gained reputations as holy men, and younger seekers came to them craving "a word," in the belief that the older men, through their experience, would be able to direct the younger men's way to God. Eventually, accounts of the advice thus given were recorded, and came to be known as *apophthegmata patrum* (sayings of the fathers).

The apothegm as transmitted from the sage to the seeker differs from the *bon mot,* with which it has more recently been identified. First, the apothegm was delivered to a particular person under particular circumstances: the seeker described his situation and requested guidance; the sage gave advice suited to that unique request. Moreover, the words of advice did not necessarily form the entire message. The face-to-face interaction of seeker and sage—wherein a look or a sign or simply a general sense of the other—was considered a significant element of the transmission of wisdom. Thus the apothegm was not intended to be written down for subsequent generations to apply to their own lives. Nevertheless, sayings were recorded as a way of preserving at least some part of the desert experience, and were later treated as wise sayings of general application. Second, although many hundreds of apothegms came to be collected, so that a medieval monk might read several a day, there might not have been more than a few such sayings received by any one seeker. One story tells of a man who got a word of advice from a sage, practiced it for 20 years, and then returned for another "word." A single saying, from one who distrusted words to begin with, was a rare event, worthy of much rumination.

The collections of *apophthegmata* to some extent preserved the context of the sayings by reporting the circumstances under which advice was sought. Although some apothegms are very short ("Abba Alonios said, 'If I had not destroyed myself completely, I should not have been able to rebuild and shape myself again'"), some are intricate stories of over 1000 words, reporting the condition of the seeker, his relation to the sage, and the circumstances of the question and reply. Thus a longer apothegm resembles a fable.

These sayings were passed down during the Middle Ages in the eastern part of the Christian world, and also made their way, translated and transcribed, into medieval Europe. It seems likely that the transmission process altered the character of these apothegms over time, retaining emphasis on the kernel of the sage's advice and

neglecting the contextualizing story, until by the late 16th century the apothegm was understood among the literate in England as a well-said truth of any sort.

The apothegm clearly influenced the essays of **Francis Bacon,** who would have been familiar with sayings from the writings of St. Basil the Great, John Cassian, and others. Bacon preserved something like the original concept of the apothegm, in that he treated it as a bit of stored wisdom and sometimes included information about context to clarify the meaning of the saying. With Bacon's emphasis on scientific knowledge, however, the apothegm lost some of its earlier status. In his hands it was no longer the quintessential counsel of an anchorite, but a notable quotation from a famous person. Accordingly, the degree of wisdom that Bacon attributed to the apothegm also diminished. Whereas in ancient times it was the clearest possible statement of transcendent knowledge, with Bacon the apothegm became a rhetorical resource, a means of reinforcing or embellishing an idea already stated. It was the aphorism that was, for Bacon, a vehicle of clear and simple truth; the apothegm was a kind of seasoning or enhancement. Nevertheless Bacon considered this seasoning an important means of making ideas intelligible for a reader, and recommended that apothegms be memorized and used to enliven a text. In Bacon's essay "Of Revenge" (1625) after declaring, "Revenge is a kinde of Wilde Justice…" he adds, among other things:

> Cosmus Duke of Florence, had a Desperate Saying, against Perfidious or Neglecting Friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable: *You shall reade* (saith he) *that we are commanded to forgive our Enemies; But you never read, that wee are commanded, to forgive our Friends*.

The anthology *Apophthegms New and Old* (1625), edited by Bacon, contains nearly 300 examples. His essays, like those of later essayists, are sprinkled with quotations. Because the ideas of such quotations were more important to the essayist than the sources from which they came, however, the sources of quotations were often omitted, and the apothegm became simply the pithy statement of truth that we know it as today.

WILLIAM ZEIGER

Anthologies

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The Wisdom of the Desert: Sayings from the Desert Fathers of the Fourth Century, translated by Thomas Merton, New York: New Directions, 1960

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Arciniegas, Germán

Colombian, 1900–

The two main forms of literary activity that have earned Colombia's Germán Arciniegas a prominent place in the Latin American essay are his mastery of a distinctive variation of the Spanish and Latin American newspaper column ("Arciniegas' column style," as it is known) and his talent for direct, interesting, and revealing commentary on history. "Elegant," "lucid," and "entertaining" are some of the standard descriptions bestowed by his critics. In both variations of his literary craft (Arciniegas is a writer rather than an informative journalist or bestselling popularizer of history), Latin America—and its relationship with the United States, Spain, and Europe—is the focus of his writings. In the case of the U.S., his essays reveal the uncanny perception of a Latin American observer, making Arciniegas a promiment figure on the level of such figures as **Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, José Martí,** and **Rubén Darío**.

For Arciniegas, the mystery of Latin America is a "problem," a temptation, a provocation, and an intellectual challenge. This explains why, in his view, the essay has so often been used to explore the unique features of Latin American culture and the hidden dimensions of its most prominent historical figures, its political and economic factors, and its cultural development. He writes that the essay in Latin America "is not literary entertainment, but an obligatory reflection on the problems that each epoch has imposed upon us. These problems challenge us in more definitive terms than in any other region of the world." Thus, the fitting title of one of his essays is "Nuestra América es un ensayo" (1963; Our America is an essay).

For most of this century readers of the op-ed pages in literally dozens of Latin American newspapers have rarely skipped the articles of the undisputed dean of this journalistic venture. There are crucial explanations for this addiction. When asked by a press syndicate of which he was the founding contributor to provide a clue on how he wrote his columns, Arciniegas said: "I write with the innocent intention of communicating certain personal experiences that give pleasure only to myself, and I invite others to partake in this pleasure…the problem is that I am interested in things lacking importance… I have a sort of inclination for subjects which are dead for most of

the people, but they are alive for me" ("Asuntos vivos y asuntos muertos" [1979; Live topics and dead topics]). Arciniegas converts insignificant non-news events or trends into relevant features fit for columns. Circumventing the passage of time, his newspaper contributions can still be read as literature. It is not surprising that a collection of his best columns was edited and enriched with grammatical exercises as a textbook for learning Spanish in U.S. universities because of the clarity of his language, the currency of the subjects, and (most difficult) their attractiveness to young readers belonging to another cultural tradition. Anything might find itself the subject of an Arciniegas column: a black-out in New York, the multiple dimensions of U.S.-Latin American relations, Midwest towns, Christmas in New Jersey, Cuban verbosity, the problems of youth, local conferences and groups, and the lesser-known aspects of literary and political figures, as well as hidden corners of the cities he has visited. His limitless cadre of topics is a characteristic shared with other contributors to Latin American and Spanish newspapers, in contrast to the more specialized U.S. syndicated pundits.

The unique personal form of his columns combines the most outstanding features of both the traditional journalistic *crónica* and the modern *columna* in Spanish. Early on Arciniegas understood that newspaper readers do not have the time to discover the hidden message of a column cloaked in convoluted language. Readers are first hooked by a catchy title summoned from his cultural background, a technique Arciniegas uses in the titles of some of his books, such as *En el país de los rascacielos y las zanahorias* (1945; In the land of skyscrapers and carrots) or *El continente de siete colores* (1965; The seven-colored continent). Then, instead of offering a summary of the facts as in an information story, Arciniegas complies with the aesthetics of the *crónica* and gives the reader an opening paragraph full of paradoxes, contradictions, exaggerations, and "news" in personal experiences or in history. From this intriguing beginning, the reader is obliged to follow Arciniegas' argument until he offers a convincing and usually unforgettable ending which is, in reality, a return to the main point or salient aspect of the piece. Adhering to one of the most important tenets of modern journalism, Arciniegas never overwhelms his readers with unnecessary proof of scholarship or signs of empty erudition. On the other hand, he never insults their intelligence and culture with obvious, elementary facts or interpretations. "Keep the reader in mind" is an American journalism motto which has been mastered best in Latin America by Arciniegas. It is not surprising that his best-known books consist of carefully crafted structures of short columns and essays, each paragraph revealing his distinctive, personal, and humanizing style.

Over the course of his career, Arciniegas has worn many hats—as lawyer and diplomat, minister of education and university professor, newspaper editor and novelist, and member of the Colombian academies of language and history. He has managed at all times through his writings to contribute to the open-ended search to explain Latin American culture with humility, clarity, and good humor.

JOAQUÍN ROY

Biography

Born 6 December 1900 in Bogotá. Studied at the National University, Bogotá, law

degree, 1914; delegate to the first National Student Conference; founder and editor, *La Voz de la Juventud* (The voice of youth) magazine, 1919–10; helped to unionize students in Colombia. Professor of sociology, National University, Bogotá, 1925–28. Founder and editor, *Universidad,* 1925–29; founder, Ediciones Colombia publishers, 192.6. Married Gabriela Vieira, 1926: two daughters. Editor, 1928–30, London correspondent, 1930–33, and editor-in-chief, 1933–39, *El Tiempo* (The times) newspaper. Vice consul, London, 1930. Member of the Colombian Parliament, 1933–34, 1939–40, and 1957–58, and minister of education, 1941–42 and 1945–46. Chargé d'affaires, Buenos Aires, 1939–41. Director, *Revista de las Indias* (Review of the Indies), 1939–44; codirector, *Revista de America* (American magazine), 1945–57. Taught at Columbia University, New York, 1947–59. Ambassador to Italy, 1959–62, Israel, 1960–62, Venezuela, 1967–70, and the Vatican City, 1976–78. Director, *Cuadernos* (Notebooks), Paris, 1963–65, and *Correo de los Andes* (Courier of the Andes), 1978–79. Dean of Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, University of the Andes, Bogotá, 1979–81. Awards: Dag Hammarsjkold Prize, 1967; honorary degrees from two academic institutions.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose
La universidad colombiana, 1932
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Arendt, Hannah

German/American, 1906–1975

Hannah Arendt's chief mode of expression was the essay. Several of her books consist of essays she wrote and later assembled and published in book form or added to another work. She preferred the essay genre, because its dialogic form and flexible nature suited her dialectical method of argumentation. Greatly influenced by the German philosophers **Martin Heidegger** and Karl Jaspers, both of whom she studied under, Arendt was introduced to German *Existenz* philosophy combined with Søren Kierkegaard's angst and existential themes such as man's solitude and meaningless existence. Moreover, as a German Jew she was influenced by the question "Die Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein" (to question what it means to be) and by Heidegger's "being-question." Throughout her life she explored concepts such as the meaning of existence and the nature of being.

Arendt's first work, the dissertation *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin* (1929; *Love and St. Augustine*), consumed her for many years. Arendt was obsessed with the concepts of love and goodness, and all of her later topics—political morality, the human condition, evil

and totalitarianism, Christian love, and God's love—were related to the ideas she explored in her dissertation. In *The Human Condition* (1958) she wrote: "Love, although it is one of the rarest occurrences in human lives, possesses an unequaled clarity for the disclosure of WHO, precisely because it is unconcerned to the point of total unworldliness with what the loved person may be, with his qualities and shortcomings no less than with his achievements, failings and transgressions… Love, by its very nature, is unworldly, and it is for this reason that it is not only apolitical but anti-political, perhaps the most powerful of all antipolitical human forces."

For Arendt's mentor Heidegger, the question of being, the relationship between subject and object, and the problem of truth and rational language signaled the end of traditional philosophy. The pre-Socratic philosophers were already occupied with the question of being and the "unhiddenness" *(Unverborgenbeit)* of being, a question which proves impossible to understand by rational philosophy. Heidegger thought philosophy's most important task was how to bring being into the "openness" of its essence. Man must clear the "dark forest," as was claimed by Giambattista Vico, whose work provided the framework for the humanist controversy raging at the time. From this controversy emerged Heidegger's assertion that philosophy has come to an end as metaphysics. Arendt preferred to sidestep this issue, concentrating instead on human action, judgment, and affirmation of man's ontological world and the need for justification of our reality and our connectedness to the world and ourselves. Her philosophical and personal quest, both as a human and as a Jew, was to view the world we live in as more secure and less alien. For Arendt, life is fleeting and precarious, based ontologically on appearance; only judgment allows the historian or philosopher to bestow meaning on our past, our memory, our historical narratives, and our worldliness.

Originally a student of philosophy, Arendt became involved in political theory with the rise of Nazism. Only later did she find her way through political thought back to philosophy. The tension between philosophy and politics represented for her a major impasse; she claimed that the activity of thinking can make philosophers unwilling to go along with political action and inclined to favor tyranny. Historically, she explained, this discord had not always been present. In the days of the Greek *polis* (city-state), for example, speech and thought went hand in hand. Each Greek had a *doxa* (opinion), and there were many different views. All this changed with the death of Socrates. Arendt believed his death produced Plato's opposition to politics, as well as his attempt to replace pluralism with absolute truth, something Socrates never dared.

This historical schism between philosophy and politics became even more acute in Arendt's own life experience. In 1933, when she and other Jews were in danger from Nazism, Heidegger, her mentor and intimate companion of many years, proclaimed his affiliation with the Nazis. This eye-opening experience taught her that indeed there may be a link between philosophy and tyranny. In a 1946 essay on German *Existenz* philosophy, she blasted Heidegger's views and compared him to Karl Jaspers, who always opposed Nazism and behaved more responsibly politically, and in her judgment was a better philosopher; with him there was no impasse between philosophy and politics, or between thought and action. Yet, despite the high esteem she held for Jaspers, she chose to disregard his advice to pay attention to **Max Weber,** who envisaged violence as at the core of all politics. Nevertheless, Arendt came close to Weber's

assertions in her work on tyranny and totalitarianism. She did not call for imitation of Christian goodness as a response to totalitarianism, but insisted on the need for and responsibility of every citizen to keep the world free of tyranny. In the paper "Collective Responsibility" (wr. 1968) she wrote: "In the center of moral considerations of human conduct stands the self; in the center of political considerations of conduct stands the world. If we strip moral imperatives of their religious connotations and origins we are left with the Socratic proposition: it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong… The political answer to the Socratic proposition would be: what is important in the world is that there be no wrong…never mind who suffers it; your duty is to prevent it."

For Arendt what was unprecedented in totalitarianism was the event of totalitarian domination itself and its relation to racism and racist theories. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), a study of Nazism and Stalinism whose publication linked her name with controversy and made her both famous and infamous, Arendt reiterated that totalitarianism is a new, unprecedented, and terrible phenomenon. It is not simply a form of tyranny, or a special form of cruelty: what is at stake, she believed, is human nature. She wrote of totalitarianism's attempt to "change human nature," not by making something new and good but, much more sinister, by trying "to rob a human being of his nature under the pretext of changing it"; in that way her characterization of totalitarianism is "absolute" and "radical evil." She cited as an example the extermination camps as "laboratories in which the fundamental belief of totalitarianism that everything is possible is verified," by a process in which men became subhuman, deprived of human freedom or moral responsibility, reduced to "ghastly marionettes with human faces who march docilely to death." Arendt claimed that what was truly sinister was the attempt to turn human beings into "specimens of human beast" by stripping men of any human action. Totalitarian regimes are absolute evil, for they destroy all forms of humanity for the sake of total tyranny and domination of members of the herd. Thus, she wrote to Karl Jaspers, men become "superfluous" as human beings. Moreover, the quest for human omnipotence dictates no human plurality. If man is to be omnipotent, human beings as individuals must disappear. The core idea of totalitarianism is the attempt to maintain total tyranny and prove that "everything is possible" by eliminating human plurality, moral decision making, and freedoms of all kinds to fit a predictable ideology. Tyranny and totalitarianism create a drive for expansion of power, "expansion for expansion's sake," as a self-propelled momentum to which everything else is sacrificed; this was manifested in Nazism, with global conquest on the one hand and "total domination" in the camps on the other.

Arendt believed the impetus for this deadly drive began with Western imperialism, particularly with the "scramble for Africa" in the 1880s. Although of economic origin, based on capitalism, the danger developed when a new kind of politics of cut-throat competition and global expansion emerged. Arendt maintained that racism was part of the ideology of imperialism, providing a comfortable excuse for the exploitation of natives removed from their dominated lands. Arendt feared, and wrote in *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* that although Nazism was finally defeated, racism would continue to be a problem.

Even more than 20 years since her death, Hannah Arendt continues to echo a contemporary voice, carrying humanistic and universal consciousness. Her work is

gaining new interest and popularity possibly because of her fears, premonitions, and timely warnings.

DALIA DANIEL

Biography

Born 14 October 1906 in Hannover, Germany. Studied at Königsberg University, B.A., 1924; University of Marburg; University of Freiburg; University of Heidelberg, studying under Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, from 1926, Ph.D., 1928. Married Günther Stern, 1929 (divorced, 1937). Worked for the Youth Aliyah, Paris, 1934–40. Married Heinrich Blücher, 1940. Emigrated to the United States, 1941, becoming a U.S. citizen, 1950. Research director, Conference on Jewish Relations, New York, 1944–46; chief editor, Schocken Books, New York, 1946–48; executive director, Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, New York, 1949–52. Professor at the University of Chicago, 1963–67, and the New School for Social Research, New York, 1967–75; also visiting professor at various American universities and colleges, 1955–60. Awards: many, including the National Institute of Arts and Letters Award, 1954; Lessing Prize, 1959; Freud Prize, 1967; Sonning Prize, 1975; honorary degrees from eight universities. Died in New York, 4 December 1975.

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Areopagitica

by John Milton, 1644

A*reopagitica* reiterates the title of an oration delivered to the Athenian assembly by Isocrates (436–338 BCE). The Greek patriot and teacher of rhetoric, who rarely spoke publicly himself, pleaded for the reinstitution of the ancient court of the Areopagus, named for Ares, god of war, and essentially a council of nobles. But John Milton (1608–74) would also expect his readers to have in mind St. Paul's address to the Council of the Areopagus (in Acts 1722–23). There the God of Christianity is proclaimed as the true object of the pagan altar to an unknown god.

Milton's tract, published rather than delivered, Ciceronian in style and redolent with the cadences of spoken English, is a plea to the English Parliament for the withdrawal of a new order for the licensing of book publication. Parliamentary reforms in the early 1640s had abolished Archbishop Laud's elaborate and repressive licensing measures and the courts of the Star Chamber and the High Commission that enforced them. Now Milton saw the new licensing measure, brought in as Presbyterian discipline and authority prevailed in Parliament over Congregational, as dangerously retrograde. Milton's target was not accountability for the printed word (in which he staunchly believed), let alone for obscene or pornographic materials, but front-end censorship of religious ideas, his own *Doctrine and Disdpline of Divorce* (August 1643) being an egregious target of the new measures. (His vision was not, however, wide enough to include toleration of Catholic writing, which he regarded as radically destructive of true religion and of the state itself.)

A*reopagitica* follows closely much of the standard rhetorical prescription for classical oration (narration, proposition, proof, etc.). It also runs through a considerable range of tones of address, first assuming the rationality, honor, and goodwill of its parliamentary

audience, and pleading for sober attention to "the voice of reason." Then it turns blisteringly polemical and, at the same time, staunchly patriotic in its mocking attack on censorship as Italianate and Catholic, reminiscent of Inquisition, inappropriate to a "nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit…not beneath the reach of the highest that human capacity can soar to." Pragmatism raises the problem of the censor, beleaguered by tedium and contamination. Idealistically the concept of the life of the reading intellect as a moral purifying by trial finds context in the spirit of Milton's "reforming of reformation itself." It also waxes heroic, celebrating the purifying effects of moral trial: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for not without dust and heat." Quintessentially protestant, it privileges individual conscience, without which a man may be a "heretic in truth": "There is not any burden that some would gladlier post off to another than the charge and care of their religion."

A*reopagitica,* like almost everything Milton wrote, situates its concerns mythologically within the cycle of fall and recuperation, which Milton characteristically reconstructs as the vitiation and reclamation of God's creation. The writing of books thus becomes a kind of reiteration of the creative act, and censorship thus mindlessly counters creation and Creator alike: "who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye." Milton's fall of man is quintessentially a fall of reason, Adam's and Eve's fall being an act of disobedience to God that is also constructed as an act of allowing their reason to be clouded by their appetites. *Areopagitica* construes man as morally adequate in a world unprotected by "a perpetual childhood of prescription" by virtue of the continuity of man's prelapsarian freedom of choice. "For reason is but choosing," Milton proclaims, in phrasing that in the later *Paradise Lost* (1667; 3.108) becomes God's defense of Adam's sufficiency, since "Reason also is choice."

A*reopagitica's* power as an essay depends in large measure on its projection from more primal bodies of mythology drawn by Milton from the classics. Thus the fall is seen to reiterate an *ananagnorisis* (recognition) in which Truth, like Osiris, is torn apart, and the reclamation of man's original state comprehends the obligation "to unite those severed pieces which are yet wanting to the body of Truth." Elsewhere man's restoration becomes a mythic reawakening in which the fall vanishes into nothingness like a nightmare past: "Methinks I see a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks." (Blake's conception of his audience as Albion, the giant sleeping form of the English nation, needful of a similar rousing from a state of mental and moral torpor, is obviously in Milton's debt.) Similarly, Milton's "eagle muing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam" constructs his vision on the folklore eagle that can gaze unblinkered at the sun and also on **Plato's** account of man's emergence from the cave (*Republic,* Book 7). Also reiterated here is the primal myth of a cosmos snatched from darkness that informs the Genesis creation account, reconstructed by Milton into an analogy of man's mental state in which "those also that love the twilight" are condemned to a state of intentional self-damnation. And finally there is the appropriating of the Gospel's reiteration of a primal myth of salvation as a harvest for which "the fields are white already."

RICHARD SCHELL

See *also* Pamphlet

Editions

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Arnold, Matthew

British, 1822–1888

Matthew Arnold's poetic works would be sufficient to establish him as one of the important figures of English literature. Poems such as "Dover Beach," "Thyrsis," and "The Scholar Gypsy" fuse, as Arnold himself says in a letter to his mother, some of Tennyson's "poetical sense" and "Browning's intellectual vigor." However, by the late 1850s he had written most of his poems, and for the next three decades until the end of his life devoted himself single-mindedly to the essay. In the 1860s he wrote numerous

essays of literary and social criticism; in the 1870s he concentrated on religious and pedagogical writings; and in the 1880s he returned to the essay of literary criticism. Arnold's poetic decade could be considered a preparation, a period of intellectual gestation. During this time he first considered the questions he later sought to resolve in his essays, an opus of such magnitude (*The Complete Prose Works* edited by R.H.Super comes to II volumes) that had Arnold not written a single poem he would still occupy an important place in the pantheon of Victorian sages. His movement between the two worlds of poetry and nonfiction prose is, nevertheless, to be understood in an organic sense: the poetry and the prose are part of the coherent growth of Arnold's mind.

Confronted with the advance of modern science, the decline of religion, the impact of industrialization and mechanization on labor and the worker, and the rise of intellectual skepticism, Arnold seeks in his essays ways to answer the age-old question of how a good life is to be lived in the rapidly changing modern world. While treating issues as diverse as literature, science, education, religion, the Bible, and culture in general, Arnold's aim remains constant: to guide and inspire modern man, both ethically and intellectually. His major essays retain a moral force that often surprises the serious reader today.

Although Arnold's intended audience was the ordinary man and woman, particularly those belonging to that middle class which his long experience as school inspector taught him to regard as narrow and lacking in authentic culture (but still educable), the essays were primarily read by the agents of cultural change, those he calls "the men of culture" and "the true apostles of equality" (*Culture and Anarchy,* 1869). Arnold hoped that the men of culture would transform the masses, bringing out in them what he calls in *Culture and Anarchy* the "best self." He therefore used the extended **philosophical essay** rather than more popular essay forms, such as the polemical pamphlet or the **familiar essay,** to reach those catalysts of social and intellectual change.

Arnold excels in the formal essay, using its impersonal, analytical approach even when engaging in polemics, as we can see in the tightly reasoned reply to **T.H.Huxley,** defending humanistic learning in "Literature and Science" (1885). But he also experiments with the humorous, **satiric essay,** as witness the dramatic letters of Baron Arminius von Thunder-tenTronckh, later collected as *Friendship's Garland* (1871). In any case, with Arnold we are always in the presence of the teacher and lecturer rather than the religious or political zealot or the utilitarian popularizer of ideas. Many of the individual essays, although later collected in various volumes, were first delivered as lectures or appeared in various Victorian periodicals, which served at the time as a forum for lively debate and exposition of ideas. His intellectual and academic conception of the essay—befitting a school inspector and an Oxford Professor of Poetry—influences not only the type of essay Arnold writes but also his prose style.

Arnold's style has many salient virtues, but also some flaws. His critics point to a certain syntactical stiffness, a stilted quality that deadens for some the very real vigor of his ideas. His defenders counter that what those critics are really objecting to are the requirements of austere detachment or objectivity inherent in the formal essay. Less debatable as faults in his prose are Arnold's tendency to repeat himself at times (probably a by-product of his didactic intent and professorial habit of mind) and to leave key concepts, such as the "best self" and "culture," somewhat vaguely defined. Arnold is,

however, a strict logician, and his respect for the exigencies of reason results in essays which are lucid, tightly argued, and convincing. They would have pleased classical rhetoricians like Aristotle.

Just as pleasing to a rhetorician is his sense of the essay's structure. Typically, the shorter Arnold essay has an engaging *exordium* or introduction, an ample expository section (containing both a refutation of opposing views and a defense of the thesis), and a clipped, rhetorically effective *peroratio* or conclusion. A good example of this classical structure can be found in "Literature and Science." His more expansive essays retain the structural coherence of the shorter pieces even though they present what Arnold in reference to his poetry called "the main movement of mind of the last quarter of a century," indeed a great panorama of some of the most important ideas debated in England and other parts of the Western world throughout the 19th century.

In the first two volumes of *Essays in Criticism* (1865, 1888), Arnold mainly evaluates through the works of authors from different periods and nations—Homer, Spinoza, Milton, Wordsworth, and **Tolstoi,** among others—the virtues of good literature: primarily an unadorned, plain style and seriousness or elevation of ideas. In these **critical essays,** which include the well-known "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" and "The Study of Poetry," Arnold mainly considers literature as a civilizing, ethical force. It is, therefore, not surprising that there is a connection between his literary and his social criticism. The most important of the latter is perhaps *Culture and Anarchy,* where Arnold posits that the "priests of culture" can deliver modern men and women from their idolatrous submission to the god of industrial materialism and help restore them to a condition of social and personal wholeness. In this work we encounter Arnold's famous notion of culture, derived mainly from **Johann Gottfried Herder,** which essentially entails an openness of mind that rejects the embracing of ideas because of tradition or convention.

O*n the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867) is another example of Arnold's combination of literary, political, ethnic, and racial criticism. It remains a delightful apologia for Irish and Welsh poetry, and his argument influenced the eventual establishment of a chair of Celtic studies at Oxford. *Irish Essays and Others* (1882), which includes "The Future of Liberalism" as well as prefaces to various editions of his poetry, contains essays on both literary and social topics and is an eclectic volume much like the earlier *Mixed Essays* (1879).

The religious essays are an important part of Arnold's work and in a sense can be considered an extension of his literary and social criticism. They also provide the reader with a vivid sense of Arnold as a moderately liberal Victorian representative of that brand of modern skepticism which remains sympathetic to what it disbelieves. *Literature and Dogma* (1873) and *God and the Bible* (1875) expound his theological relativism and propose an ethical system as a substitute for traditional religion's doctrinal strictures. Still, for Arnold the Bible and the Church remain important civilizing forces. *St. Paul and Protestantism* (1870) contains incisive analyses of the Church of England; *A Bible Reading for Schools* (1871), edited by Arnold, is basically a catechetical instruction for school children based on the prophecies of the Old Testament and the parables and stories of the New. Although skeptical of the supernatural teachings of Christianity, Arnold nevertheless remained convinced that the Bible and the Church, and even ritualistic

worship, are powerful sources of culture.

Arnold's vitality as a major English essayist has not diminished today. He embodies the classical traits of the great writers of expository prose: a humble but firm conviction that the humanist tradition he proposes can enrich both the individual person and society; a breadth of interests that encompasses many disciplines and intellectual traditions; a strong sense of responsibility toward the exigencies of the rational process; a respectful open-mindedness toward the past and the present; and an intellectual curiosity that best illustrates the Arnoldian concept of culture. Whether as a critic of literature, religion, the Bible, or society, in Matthew Arnold we meet that rare individual—the humanist who earnestly and honestly seeks, as does the reticent pilgrim of "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," "the high, wide star of Truth" wherever it may be found. It was natural, then, that the expansive and accommodating scope of the essay should recommend it as the ideal literary vehicle for his quest, and that Arnold should have been for the greater part of his career a tireless and prolific essayist.

ROBERT CARBALLO

Biography

Born 24 December 1822, in Laleham-on-Thames, Middlesex. Studied at Winchester College, Hampshire, 1836–37; Rugby School, Warwickshire, 1837–41; Balliol College, Oxford, 1841–44, graduated, 1844. Fellow, Oriel College, Oxford, 1845–46; assistant master, Rugby School, 1846; private secretary to Lord Lansdowne (lord president of the Privy Council), 1847–51. Married Frances Lucy Wightman, 1851: four sons and two daughters. Inspector of schools, 1851–86: sent several times to the continent to study education systems. Professor of Poetry, Oxford University, 1857–67. Contributor to many journals, including the *National Review, Fraser's Magazine, Cornhill Magazine, Macmillan's Magazine, Pall Mall Gazette, Victoria Magazine, Nineteenth Century,* and the *Fortnightly Review*. Died in Liverpool, 15 April 1888.

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Athenäum

German periodical, 1798–1800

This biannual publication was founded by the brothers Schlegel primarily as an outlet for their own writings, although they also printed contributions by others, notably the poet and novelist **Novalis** and the theologian Friedrich Daniel Schleiermacher. August Wilhelm Schlegel is now remembered primarily as a translator of Shakespeare and for his *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Literatur* (1808; *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*), which, translated into English and French, spread the doctrine of "Romantic poetry" throughout Europe. The essays he contributed to the *Athenäum* can be dealt with briefly. The first issue of the periodical begins with a long parody and criticism of a dialogue in praise of the German language by the poet Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, which is now at best of historical interest. His second contribution to the periodical, "Die Gemälde: Gespräch" (The paintings: dialogue), cowritten with his wife Caroline, mingles remarks on the theory of art with descriptions of paintings in the famous art gallery in Dresden. The speakers being a woman and two men, one of them an artist, the dialogue form is used to juxtapose different points of view, male and female, artist and critic. August Wilhelm Schlegel also displays his talent as an art critic in a long essay on John Flaxman.

The contributions to the *Athenäum* by **Friedrich Schlegel** were much more substantial: they laid the foundations of the German Romantic theory of literature. The bulk of the second issue of the periodical (Fall 1798) is taken up by a collection of **aphorisms** ("Fragmente"), mostly by him, but with substantial contributions by his friends; they

quickly became famous for their wit and incisiveness and at the same time notorious for their extravagant terminology. The same issue of the *Athenäum* also contains an essay about the most important German novel of its time, **Goethe's** *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795–96; *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*). According to the neoclassical canon that prevailed throughout Europe at that time, the novel was an inferior genre, "mere prose." Schlegel provided a structural analysis of *Wilhelm Meister* which showed that by an ingenious narrative technique, the use of contrasts and parallels, foreshadowing, echoes, and similar devices, Goethe had given his novel a kind of unity in diversity that rivaled that achievable in the classical genres and raised his work to the status of "poetry in prose." In his own essay, Schlegel attempted something similar. He held that critics should not merely provide an objective account of a work of art, but also communicate to their readers their own emotional reaction to the work—a task that is, he thought, best performed by poetry, i.e. by writing "a poem about a poem." In his essay on *Wilhelm Meister,* he did the next best thing: he wrote it in elevated, poetic prose—an unusual undertaking at that time for a critic.

By contrast, the form of Friedrich Schlegel's major essay in the *Athenäum, Gespräch über die Poesie* (1800; *Dialogue on Poetry*), is quite traditional: it follows the form of Plato's *Symposium,* though it does not, like that work, privilege a single speaker. In Schlegel's essay, six friends—four men and two women—meet from time to time to talk about literature. The four men give papers, which are discussed by the whole group. Together with the "Fragmente," these papers and discussions are the earliest, and arguably still the most important formulations of the German theory of Romantic poetry.

The two other essays that Friedrich Schlegel contributed to the *Athenäum,* "Über die Philosophie: An Dorothea" (1799; On philosophy: to Dorothea) and "Über die Unverständlichkeit" (1800; "On Incomprehensibility"), are less important. The first is interesting mainly because of its form: it is a fictitious letter to a real person—his mistress and later wife, the daughter of the philosopher **Moses Mendelssohn**. The second, with which Schlegel rang down the periodical when it folded in Fall 1800, is a brilliant exercise in sustained irony a welcome reminder of the fact that Friedrich Schlegel played such a central role in the modern history of this elusive term.

It is striking how often the Schlegels used the dialogue form in the *Athenäum*. Assertive and cocksure in their aphorisms and shorter reviews, they reveal in their dialogue essays their conviction that nothing can be more damaging to creativity than holding to a system. The dialogue form as they used it precludes systematization and reminds us of an older meaning of "essay": a tentative approach to a subject. This was, however, not seen by most of their readers. Their virulent attacks on a number of established and beloved writers and poets made them anathema to most of their older contemporaries, though Goethe appreciated and befriended them. Among the younger generation, the Schlegels had an ardent following; but while the young tend to be the most enthusiastic readers, they can rarely afford to be enthusiastic buyers. The *Athenäum* did not sell well enough to be continued past the third volume. Today, it counts as a major source for the study of German Romanticism and as a milestone in the history of literary criticism.

HANS EICHNER

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The Atlantic Monthly

American magazine, 1857–

The *Atlantic Monthly* was founded in Boston in 1857 by Francis Underwood (an assistant to the publisher Moses Phillips) and a group of New England writers including **Ralph Waldo Emerson, Oliver Wendell Holmes,** James Russell Lowell, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. Underwood had been trying for several years to launch a uniquely

American magazine that would publish primarily contributions from American writers—in contrast to other magazines in New York which relied heavily on pirating or importing English authors—and was finally able to get backing because he had the assurance of contributions not only from his founding collaborators but also from other important and popular writers of the time such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, **Henry David Thoreau,** Walt Whitman, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

Underwood and his cofounders, all Yankee humanists, had two additional goals. First, they intended the *Atlantic* to be an agent for propagating their own high ethical, aesthetic, and intellectual values; none of them doubted, as Higginson himself explained, that New England "was appointed to guide the nation, to humanize it," and the *Atlantic* was the focal point of this cultural mission. Second, and more specifically, the group wanted "to bring the literary influence of New England to aid the antislavery cause."

Lowell, popular as a poet and widely known for his spirited patriotism, agreed to be the first editor. Under his editorship (1857–61), essays in the *Atlantic* were characteristically literary, using brief observations of contemporary life as springboards for speculations on immutable truths of morality or human nature. During James T.Fields' tenure as editor (1861–71), the magazine tried to increase its popularity, in part by publishing essays which were more journalistic than philosophical, observing and recording the contemporary scene. Their subjects were more topical, their styles more direct and concrete. Fields also solicited travel sketches—especially the ones by Hawthorne which later became *Our Old Home* (1863)—and, knowing that half of his readers were women, he eagerly published several long series of domestic essays. These series, many of their entries written by Stowe under the masculine pseudonym Christopher Crowfield, influenced ***Harper's*** to initiate a domestic department—an imitation which suggested the two magazines were beginning to compete for readers.

Even with his eye toward a more general reading public, Fields did not deviate from the magazine's original goal of being a forum for the presentation of ideas. In fact, he published, among other essays of intellectual debate and inquiry, both Emerson's essay on Thoreau, Thoreau's own "Life Without Principle," Henry James, Sr.'s four-part investigation of the ethics of marriage, and Louis Agassiz's "Methods of Study of Natural History." Fields merely changed the mixture of the *Atlantic's* nonfiction prose.

Through the rest of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th, the *Atlantic* struggled to find a balance between its traditional literary essays and more journalistic articles, between highbrow intellectualism and the mass culture which was giving rise to higher-circulation magazines such as the *Century* and *Ladies' Home Journal*. During the editorships of Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1881–90) and Horace Elisha Scudder (1890–98), the magazine clung tightly to what it saw as its intellectual integrity, frequently publishing essays that discussed the major texts and authors of the Western canon. The *Atlantic* was, in fact, one of the last general periodicals to carry extensive commentary on the Greek and Roman classics and to defend the study of these works.

Though later, more progressive editors would decide such essays on the classics explored unpromising subjects for the magazine's audience, the *Atlantic* continued into the 20th century to be widely recognized as a leading exponent of high culture in America. Most of the writers whom editor Ellery Sedgwick (1909–38) chose to voice the magazine's views on culture and literature were women: **Agnes Repplier,** a prolific

writer of astringent essays on contemporary manners and morals; Margaret Sherwood and Cornelia Comer, who produced polite essays; and Katherine Gerould, an acute and reactionary Bryn Mawr professor. By 1918, however, as Repplier noted in the *Yale Review,* the **personal essay** of the type the *Atlantic* often published had "withered in the blasts of war." Gerould and other *Atlantic* essayists such as Henry Dwight Sedgwick, longing for the rapidly disappearing Victorian ethics of their childhoods, began to see themselves as futile relics of a dying culture.

Under the editorships of Ellery Sedgwick and Edward Weeks (1938–66), the *Atlantic* also renewed its interest in social and political issues, publishing essays such as Booker T. Washington's "The Case of the Negro," Bertrand Russell's "Individual Liberty and Public Control," and Woodrow Wilson's "The Road Away from Revolution." Throughout most of the 20th century, in fact, the magazine has continued to supplement its in-depth journalistic articles on public policy with long essays on related topics: for example, Albert Einstein's "Atomic War or Peace," George Kennan's "Training for Statesmanship," and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "The Negro Is Your Brother."

As far back as the 1860s, *Atlantic* editors had been aware that the magazine could be perceived, especially by the publishing industry in New York, as too literary, and hence sought out lighter essays which would serve as relief from the "Emersonian and Whippletonian articles"—and increase circulation. The magazine has consequently long been a major outlet for **humorous essays**. **Mark Twain** was one of the first—and certainly one of the most influential—humorists to write for the *Atlantic,* and there has been a long trail of humorists behind him, especially many who are more closely associated with the ***New Yorker:*** **James Thurber, E.B.White,** Garrison Keillor. In the past 25 years, under the editorships of Robert Manning (1966–80) and William Whitworth (1981–), the magazine has been an outlet for many short, humorous essays, often domestic in nature, which hark back to the genteel tradition preceding World War I, written by such contributors as Andrew Ward, Ian Frazier, and Roy Blount, Jr.

The *Atlantic's* devotion to cultural criticism has also led it to be an important voice on environmental issues. Literary essays on nature, in fact, began early, with **John Burroughs'** first piece in 1865, and have continued through **John Muir** and up to recent contributions from writers such as **Annie Dillard** and Gretel Ehrlich.

DAN ROCHE

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Auden, W.H.

British/American, 1907–1973

W.H.Auden produced an astonishing range of prose works, and his particular and quirky intelligence painted new and challenging portraits of such "major" artists as Shakespeare and **Goethe** as well as "minor" writers such as Walter de la Mare and **G.K.Chesterton**. The distinctions between essay and **review,** criticism and history, philosophy and anthropology, melt in Auden's prose, leaving the reader bewildered by a series of erudite, yet sometimes seriously questionable arguments. The two collections *The Dyer's Hand* (1962) and *Forewords and Afterwords* (1973) contain selections of his later essays, while Edward Mendelson's *The English Auden* (1977) provides a useful cross-section of the vibrant pre-1940 pieces.

In "Psychology and Art To-Day" (1935) Auden suggested that "To a situation of danger and difficulty there are five solutions." It was after rejecting the "solutions" of the idiot, the schizophrenic, the criminal, and the invalid that he accepted the positive and healing fifth solution shared by the scientist and the artist: "To understand the mechanism of the trap." Much of the syncretism and eclecticism that underlie the easy transitions in his prose between various political and religious issues, as well as between disciplines, resulted from his search for synoptic understanding "as the hawk sees it, or the helmeted airman."

Rarely providing an orthodox interpretation of books, events, or artists, Auden thrived on experimental creative error, and the liberties he took with established knowledge—in addition to the half-serious assertion that he "needed the money" —formed part of the price he asked for writing prose. In the early essays, for example, Auden's treatment of **Freud** and **D. H.Lawrence** demonstrated how he followed the spirit but rarely the letter of their theories, while in "The Good Life" of 1935 he observed, following **T.S.Eliot** and I.A.Richards, that "unless people have substantially the same experience, logical controversy is nothing more than systemised misunderstanding." The scientist in Auden saw through to the structures of knowledge and its transmission, hence his preference for "a critic's notebooks to his treatises."

In "Psychology and Art To-Day," Auden claimed that art consists in telling parables "from which each according to his immediate and peculiar needs may draw his own conclusions." For Auden the parable was a secular story, the "only kind of literature which has gospel authority." Politically charged in the 1930s, the later Auden sometimes used the parable as a means of speaking about Christianity at a distance, as in the 1954 essay "Balaam and his Ass": "To illustrate the use of the master-servant relationship as a

parable of agape, I will take two examples…" In "The Guilty Vicarage" (1948) Auden found in the detective story a Christian parable of existential guilt. These analogies are typical, and Auden's acknowledgment that "Man is an analogy-drawing animal" applies particularly to himself.

Auden's remark in "The Prolific and the Devourer" (1939) that he found pornographic stories more erotic than physical sexual encounters emphasizes the importance of language and story to Auden's sense of self; this is reflected in his prose when the artist tempers the scientist. The 1938 article "In Praise of Gossip," for example, emphasized the importance of telling a story well, rather than adhering to some notion of veracity which ultimately tames and reduces a narrative to a tedious and factual account. Auden's own tendency toward the anecdote and the **aphorism** fulfilled this demand throughout his work, while his eye for the revealing quotation was often employed in an arch fashion, as when he complained about the lack of privacy in published letters and then reproduced the most personal letters himself. It is not surprising, then, that as an epigraph to *The Dyer's Hand* Auden selected **Nietzsche's** aphorism, "We have Art in order that we may not perish from Truth."

In the autobiographical poem "Letter to Lord Byron" (1936), Auden tells us that it was his precocious desire to observe the "various types of boys" that shocked the matron at his public school; the amateur but perceptive anthropologist was another of Auden's roles. In a later essay, "Notes on the Comic" (1952), Auden described the abuse hurled between truck drivers and cab drivers on the New York streets as a form of flyting, arguing that the participants were more interested in playing with language than insulting each other.

Auden's homosexuality rarely surfaced in his prose, but he occasionally offered some thoughts on the subject (as in the essay "C.P.Cavafy," 1961). When he did discuss homosexuality it was without guilt, sensation, or prevarication; it was simply a choice of object, the important point being the quality of a relationship rather than its constitution. His obvious enjoyment in discussing the sex life of J.R.Ackerley in the essay "Papa Was a Wise Old Sly-Boots" (1969) is a fine example of Auden's double standard when considering biographical material, complaining that Ackerley never said what he "*really* preferred to do in bed."

Auden's essays combine the confessions of the innocent, the certainty of the dogmatist, the schematizing of the scientist, and the skepticism of the man in the street. These traits occur time and again from the earliest pieces, brash with "youth's intolerant certainty" to the pose of the "booming old bore" of the late prose. Hence while the tone of his later essays emulated the curmudgeonly don rather than the bright young schoolmaster, Auden remained an entertaining teacher, utilizing techniques of defamiliarization alongside a sometimes shocking familiarity. But whether written in the role of parable promoting politician or grand old man of letters bristling with *ex cathedra* statements, Auden's prose acknowledges itself as a limited and partial offering, revealing a writer intensely aware that his voice is one among thousands, and that an air of impropriety or even charlatanism hangs over his words. There remains a deceptive, studied informality in Auden's prose which allowed him to make risky and unsupported judgments through the pose of the homely amateur. His 1956 inaugural lecture as Professor of Poetry at Oxford captures this tone: "I shall now proceed to make some general statements of my own. I hope they

are not nonsense, but I cannot be sure."

In the essay "Hic et Ille" (1956), using the mirror as an analogy for the ego, Auden stated that "Every man carries with him through life a mirror, as unique and impossible to get rid of as his shadow." The roles Auden played in his prose constitute a series of ingenious games played with his "mirror," and take on retrospective meaning from his remark that "We shall be judged, not by the kind of mirror found on us, but by the use we have made of it, by our *riposte* to our reflection." Auden's unique blend of storytelling and analysis, his self-conscious manipulation of knowledge, and his ability to discuss the underlying structures of power and identity constitute a *riposte* that at once disarms and disquiets.

PAUL HENDON

Biography

Wystan Hugh Auden. Born 21 February 1907 in York. Studied at Gresham's School, Holt, Norfolk, 1920–25; Christ Church, Oxford, 1925–28, B.A. in English, 1928. Lived in Berlin, 1928–29. Taught privately in London, 1930, at Larchfield Academy, Helensburgh, Scodand, 1930–32, and at Downs School, Colwall, Herefordshire, 1932–35. Married Erika Mann, daughter of the writer **Thomas Mann,** so that she could get a British passport, 1935. Staff member, GPO Film Unit, London, 1935–36. Traveled in Iceland with Louis MacNeice, 1936, and in China with Christopher Isherwood, 1938; gave radio broadcasts for the Republican forces during the Spanish Civil War, 1937. Emigrated to the United States, 1939, and became a U.S. citizen, 1946; lived primarily in New York, though from 1957 spent summers in Kirchstetten, Austria. Taught at various schools and universities in the U.S., 1939–53. Relationship with the writer Chester Kallman, from 1939. Member of the editorial board, *Decision* magazine, 1940–41, and *Delos* magazine, 1968, and editor, Yale Series of Younger Poets, 1947–62. Major with the U.S. Army Strategic Bombing Survey in Germany, 1945. Member, American Academy, 1954. Professor of Poetry, Oxford University, 1956–61. Awards: many, including King's Gold Medal for Poetry, 1937; American Academy Award of Merit Medal, 1945, and Gold Medal, 1968; Pulitzer Prize, 1948; Bollingen Prize, 1954; National Book Award, 1956; Feltrinelli Prize, 1957; Guinness Award, 1959; Poetry Society of America Droutskoy Medal, 1959; Austrian State Prize, 1966; National Medal for Literature, 1967; honorary degrees from seven colleges and universities. Died in Vienna, 29 September 1973.

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The English Auden: Poems, Essays, and Dramatic Writings 1927–1939, edited by Edward Mendelson, 1977

Essays and Reviews and Travel Books in Prose and Verse, vol. 1: *Prose 1926–1938,* edited by Edward Mendelson, 1997

Other writings: many volumes of poetry (collected in *Collected Poems,* edited by Edward Mendelson, 1976), plays with Christopher Isherwood, and several libretti. Also edited many anthologies of poetry; translated works by Goethe and Scandinavian writers.

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Australian Essay

Henry Savery (1791–1842), transported to Van Diemen's Land for forgery, is best known

as the author of the novel *Quintus Servinton* (1831). It is widely accepted, however, that under the *nom de plume* of "Simon Stukeley" he also wrote a series of 30 sketches of Hobart Town and its inhabitants which, appearing in the *Colonial Times* through 1829, were published in the following year under the title *The Hermit in Van Diemen's Land*. This work makes him the first essayist in Australian literary history.

Following *The Hermit in Van Diemen's Land,* the next significant contribution to the form was *The Australian Sketch Book* (1838), written when its author, James Martin (1820–86), was only 18, and in acknowledged imitation of **Washington Irving**. Thereafter, H.M.Green asserts in his *History of Australian Literature* (1961, revised 1985) that between 1850 and 1890 "the only example of the essayist pure and simple was Richard Birnie." For 18 years from 1870 Birnie (1808–88) was retained to write a regular column for the *Australasian,* the weekly supplement of the Melbourne *Age*. Some of these were published as *Essays: Social, Moral and Political* in 1879. High minded and hortatory, they seem badly dated today.

The prose of other colonial writers, however, retains a livelier appeal. Among them were two short-term visitors from Britain, Richard Rowe (1828–79) and Frank Fowler (1833–63). Rowe's contributions to a range of Sydney newspapers and journals were collected in 1858 as *Peter Possum's Portfolio*. In the following year, and after he had returned to England, Fowler produced *Southern Lights and Shadows*. Like Rowe, he had written for a number of Sydney publications, and had indeed been the founding editor in 1857 of the *Month*.

Between the later 1860s and the early 1880s Australia's most important essayists lived in Melbourne, and wrote for its leading newspapers, the *Argus* and the *Age*. Among the earliest and probably the best was **Marcus Clarke** (1846–81), most widely remembered for his convict novel, *His Natural Life* (1874). Clarke, who had emigrated to Australia in 1863, began writing for newspapers and magazines soon after his arrival. Most notably from 1867 to 1870, and using the *nom de plume* "The Peripatetic Philosopher," he contributed a series of sketches of city life to the *Argus* and the *Australasian*.

Another shrewd and lively recorder of Melbourne's low life was John Stanley James (1843–96), who came to Australia by way of the United States in 1875. From late 1875 to late 1877 he contributed "Notes on Current Events by a Vagabond" to Melbourne *Punch*. In 1876 he began writing for the *Argus* under the same pseudonym. His columns proved so popular that they were collected in 1877 and 1878 as *The Vagabond Papers*. Michael Cannon, his modern editor, described James' normal method as "the straightforward, sympathetic, never sentimentalized description of his experiences and observations …a cool unemotional statement of the survival technique of a man who has almost no money and no home of his own." A third writer to chronicle the life of colonial Melbourne through the prose sketch was Edmund Finn (1819–98), who used both "An Old Colonist" and "Garryowen" as his *noms de plume*. The *Garryowen Sketches* (1880) reflect an earlier Melbourne than the observations of either Clarke or James.

By the turn of the 19th into the 20th century, more than 100 years of European experience in Australia had produced a substantial body of literature offering scope for interpretation through the **critical essay**. Individuals like Douglas Sladen (1856–1946), George Burnett Barton (1836–1901), Henry Gyles Turner (1831–1920), and Alexander Sutherland (1852–1902) had all advanced the understanding and knowledge of Australian

writing both at home and abroad well before the 1890s. However, it was that decade which saw the emergence of Australia's first major literary essayist. A.G. Stephens (1865–1933) used his editorship of the Sydney *Bulletin's* Red Page (a full-page literary section) both to encourage native talent and to create a matrix of critical discussion within which the creative writers might develop their skills. Through his own writing as well as through his editorial authority, Stephens made a major contribution to the development of an informed critical environment in Australia; *The Red Pagan* (1904), a collection of some of his *Bulletin* writings, is a landmark volume in the development of the Australian literary-critical essay.

Probably Stephens' most formidable contemporary in the domain of criticism was the poet C.J.Brennan (1870–1932). Around 1900, Brennan wrote a number of substantial critical essays which were included in the edition of his prose works by A.R.Chisholm and J.J.Quinn in 1962.

The decade of the 1890s has acquired legendary status in Australian literary history, a phenomenon partly explained by the appearance of a number of reminiscences by individuals who had participated in the events of those years. Among the most important of these are *Those Were the Days* (1918) by G.A.Taylor (1872–1928), *Knocking Round* (1930) by John le Gay Brereton (1871–1933), and *The Romantic Nineties* (1933) by A.W.Jose (1863–1934).

In the years between the two World Wars there was a steady output of recollections and nostalgia of one kind or another. Bush life in pioneering days, for instance, was a popular subject represented by Mary Fullerton's (1868–1946) *Bark House Days* (1921) and Mary Gilmore's (1865–1962) *Hound of the Road* (1922). Pen sketches of old bush ways merged readily into descriptions of the bush itself, ranging from the observations of amateur nature lovers to the more exact observations of serious natural historians. The various works of R.H.Croll (1869–1947) are toward the amateur end of this spectrum, as are the books of Donald Alister Macdonald (1857–1932), James Edmond (1859–1933), Bernard Cronin (1864–1968), and Charles Barrett (1879–1959). The apogee of the lyrical evocation of Australian nature was reached in *Images in Water* (1947) by Elyne Mitchell (1913–), largely devoted to the alpine regions in the southeastern part of the continent, while probably the most prolific and influential nature writer over many decades was A.H.Chisholm (1890–1977). An intermittent English visitor, Grant Watson (1885–1970), combined scientific inquiry and metaphysical speculation in some highly original essays, some of which were collected by **Dorothy Green** in *Descent of Spirit* (1990).

In the middle 1930s two anthologies of essays marked the success the form by that time had achieved: *Essays: Imaginative and Critical, Chosen from Australian Writers* edited by George Mackaness and J.D.Holmes (1933), and *Australian Essays* edited by George H.Cowling and Furnley Maurice [i.e. Frank Wilmot] (1935). The editors of the latter had this to say, *inter alia,* in their introduction: "The Australian essay is the product of that most potent force in the cultural development of Australia, the newspaper. The magazine and review have not flourished here…most of our essays have seen the light of day in the columns of newspapers, especially in the Saturday journals, rather than in more ambitious periodicals. The essay began in Australia with the example of **Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt,** and **Leigh Hunt** before it, and it has flourished in their tradition. Reminiscence, description and discussion are its modes." Their observation was, with

only minor qualifications, to prove as accurate in prospect as it was true in retrospect.

One medium for comment at essay length not recognized by Cowling and Maurice was radio, which enjoyed considerable popularity and influence through the 1930s and 1940s. The book reviews of **Vance Palmer** (1885–1959), one of the leading literary figures of the day, reached a wide audience through his weekly broadcasts over the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC). Vance's wife **Nettie Palmer** (1885–1964) also occupied an influential position in the literary community; some of her best and most representative work in the essay form appears in *Modern Australian Literature 1900–1923* (1924) and *Talking It Over* (1932).

Undoubtedly, however, the supreme practitioner of the essay in Australia during the first half of the 20th century was **Walter Murdoch** (1874–1970). His prose pieces, which cover an astonishing array of subjects from the most trivial to the most profound, are unmistakably in the tradition of Lamb, Hazlitt, and Hunt. Appearing in the press over more than four decades, they were brought together in a number of volumes of which *Speaking Personally* (1930) and *Selected Essays* (1956) are representative. Murdoch remains a rare figure in the Australian literary landscape—an essayist first, last, and foremost.

Not all the essayists of the 1930s were content to write within purely belletristic conventions. At least three deserve mention for the intellectual weight and polemical passion they brought to their subjects: John Anderson (1893–1962), P.R. Stephensen (1901–65), and Rex Ingamells (1913–55). For many years professor of philosophy at Sydney University, Anderson used the essay form to expound his own version of the liberal tradition as well as to explain and defend the achievement of then new and challenging writers like James Joyce. Some of his essays were brought together under the title *Art and Reality: John Anderson on Literature and Aesthetics* (1982) by Janet Anderson, Graham Cullum, and Kimon Lycos. Stephensen's *The Foundations of Culture in Australia* (1936) was a strongly nationalistic tract which in turn inspired Ingamells, the founder of the Jindyworobak movement, to write (with Ian Tilbrook) *Conditional Culture* in 1938.

At the other end of the spectrum from such high seriousness, the interwar years also had their quota of essayists who looked at life from a comic point of view. Hal Eyre's *Hilarities* (1929) touched its subjects with a light brush. Later and more robust humorists included Lennie Lower (1903–47), Ross Campbell (1910–82), and Bernard Hesling (1905–88). Their tradition is continued by current writers like Barry Oakley (1931–), Morris Gleitzman (1953–), and Wendy Harmer, all of whom have contributed regularly to the metropolitan press.

World War II brought something of a hiatus to the development of the essay in Australia. While established writers like Murdoch and the Palmers maintained their positions of eminence, it was not until the late 1940s and early 1950s that any significant new names began to appear. By then there was at least a handful of serious literary and cultural journals capable of publishing sustained analytical essays on literary, cultural, social, and political matters. The career of A.A. Phillips (1900–85) was thus closely associated with *Meanjin Quarterly,* the best of his critical pieces being collected in 1958 as *The Australian Tradition,* a volume which remains admired today. *For the Uncanny Man* (1963) by Clement Semmler (1914–) has also stood up well to the passage of time.

Phillips and Semmler were both literary critics rather than creative writers. Since 1958, however, some of the most distinguished collections of literary essays have come from poets or novelists. They include *Poetry and Morality* (1959) by **Vincent Buckley** (1925–88), *Because I Was Invited* (1975) by **Judith Wright** (1915–), *The Pack of Autolycus* (1978) and *The New Cratylus* (1979) by **A.D.Hope** (1907–), *The Peasant Mandarin* (1978) and *Persistence in Folly* (1984) by Les Murray (1938–), *The Music of Love* (1984) by **Dorothy Green** (1915–91), and *The Lyre in the Pawnshop* (1986) by Fay Zwicky (1933–).

Closely allied to the critical essay is the study which fuses literary insight with comment on broader historical and cultural issues. Many examples of this genre have appeared over the past 20 to 30 years, some of the most impressive being *Ockers* (1975) and *The Unknown Great Australian* (1983) by Max Harris (1921–95), *Days of Wine and Rage* (1980) by Frank Moorhouse (1938–), *Gallipoli to Petrov* (1984) by Humphrey McQueen (1942–), *Hot Copy* (1986) by Don Anderson (1939–), and *Soundtrack for the Eighties* (1983) by Craig McGregor (1933–). In the introduction to this last collection, McGregor asks, '"Why a book of essays?" His reply to his own question indicates the essential continuity of the genre from its beginnings with Savery to the present day: "I've always liked the essay ever since reading Hazlitt at school … So to a certain extent this is a deliberate exercise in an honourable and enduring literary form…a conscious attempt to stretch and expand the traditional essay form."

Other essayists have had less lofty intentions, a number, for instance, being content to continue the tradition of reminiscences of people and places—A.R.Chisholm's (1888–1981) *Men Were My Milestones* (1958), for instance, or John Morrison's (1904–) *The Happy Warrior* (1987). Probably the most accomplished Australian essayist since World War II was Charmian Clift (1923–69). Returning to Australia in 1964 with her novelist husband, George Johnston, she was soon writing a weekly column for the Sydney *Morning Herald* which both acquired a wide popular readership and represented the most elegant writing in the belletristic mode since Walter Murdoch. Her topics ranged from the challenges of expatriation through the pangs and pleasures of family life to the changing urban experience of Australians. After her death Johnston brought together many of her best pieces as *The World of Charmian Clift* (1970).

While Clift did not fully realize her gift as an essayist until after her return home from a long period overseas, it is necessary to conclude this survey by observing that some notable Australian writers have followed the opposite path on their way to achieving a deserved reputation in the essay form. Morris Lurie (1938–), Clive James (1939–), Kate Jennings (1948–), and Meaghan Morris (1950–) have all published collections of essays of real interest and distinction—but only during or after periods of residence away from their native land. Lurie's *The English in Heat* (1972) transports the Australian capacity for deflating comedy to London of the 19608, while Clive James in a collection like *Visions Before Midnight* (1977) focuses a sardonic eye on British television. Kate Jennings has turned her residence in New York City to real advantage in *Save Me, Joe Louis* (1988) and *Bad Manners* (1993), while Meaghan Morris' *The Pirate's Fiancée* (1988) brings a powerful intelligence to bear on contemporary issues in feminism, cultural politics, film, and literary theory.

It is fair to say that the essay as a literary genre has never occupied a central place in

the history of Australian writing. Its most important literary practitioners have, with few exceptions, reserved their principal energies for the cultivation of other forms—fiction, poetry, or drama. Literary critics, most notably in the 20th century, have used the essay to offer an interpretation of the emerging corpus of creative achievement. Starting from their own disciplinary base, leading figures in other areas of intellectual endeavor—history, philosophy, science, politics, sociology—have made important contributions. By and large, however, the essay in Australia has developed no distinctively local features of style or structure. The result is a body of work providing a valuable commentary on the changing concerns of Australians and rising at its best to an elegance of expression and force of argument which are part of the common currency of good writing anywhere.

HARRY HESELTINE

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Autobiographical Essay

The autobiographical essay may be viewed either as a kind of essay recounting some part of the writer's own life or as short autobiography having the character of an essay. Both approaches disclose the formal tensions shaping autobiographical essays: their participation in two genres—essay and autobiography—which, although traditionally distinguished, are here so joined as to foreground the historical dynamism and instability of each.

Although autobiographical essays are found occasionally among the works of the older essayists, their proliferation is largely a 20th-century phenomenon. The term itself

appears only at mid-century, despite the much earlier establishment of its components, "essay" (about 1600) and "autobiography" (about 1800). One sometimes finds "autobiographical sketch" used by earlier writers to designate essay-length texts which, from a contemporary standpoint, look like genuine autobiographical essays (e.g. Abraham Cowley's "Of Myself," 1668) as well as applied to short self-narratives that lack the ruminative texture of essays (e.g. Sir Thomas Bodley's "Life," 1609). Only in recent years has the autobiographical essay begun to assume theoretical status as a "type" which, though often incorporating features of other essay "types" (e.g. the **travel essay,** the **moral essay,** the **critical essay**), is marked by its focus on retrospection and remembrance (Graham Good, 1988).

As modern practices, both autobiography and the essay have their roots in the European Renaissance and enact that cultural epoch's reconception of the individual life. The essay's matrix is meditative and epistolary, and, despite its early anti-rhetorical cast in both French and English, its formal affinities lie with the thematizing schemata of commonplace books. Autobiography, on the other hand, may be understood as a confluence of traditions whose characteristic modes are narrative: allegory, hagiography, and history, specifically biography. If both autobiography and the essay are, broadly speaking, genres of self-representation, it is the culturally and historically variable impetus to recount the writer's own life that informs autobiography and the projection of the writer's point of view—the reflective and often reflexive gaze provisionally shaping observation and experience—that directs the essay. The autobiographical essay, then, may be viewed as a practice at the intersection of autobiography and essay, a movement between the narratively self-centered imperatives of the former and the worldly discursiveness of the latter. Alfred Kazin's much-cited delineation in *The Open Form: Essays for Our Time* (1961) of the essay's domain—"not the self, but the self thinking"—brings into sharp relief the problematical hybrid character of the autobiographical essay's simultaneous concern with both "the self" *and* "the self thinking." The essay as autobiographical space attempts to accommodate and to bring into artful relation autobiography's traditional search, by way of writing, for a significant personal past and the essay's more or less self-conscious immersion in the pleasures and aporias of writing as such. Certain well-known autobiographical essays assume their very form through the negotiative processes entailed in this accommodation. **Thus Montaigne's** "De l'exercitation" (1588; "Of Practice") embeds a selfrevising piecemeal account of an accident in an expanding selfmeditation; **Walter Benjamin's** "Berliner Chronik" (1932,; "A Berlin Chronicle") configures the life of childhood as personal and cultural topography; Virginia Woolf's "A Sketch of the Past" (1940) juxtaposes then and now in an ever-shifting and evolving retrospective framework; Katherine Anne Porter's "St. Augustine and the Bullfight" (1955) interweaves a continually deferred autobiographical anecdote with digressive speculation about the autobiographical act itself; Yukio Mishima's *Taiyo to tetsu* (1968; *Sun and Steel*) joins reminiscence and confession to literary and social commentary in a discourse that calls itself "confidential criticism."

More typically, it is through various foreshortenings and dispersals of narrative that the essay, with its conventions of fragmentariness and provisionality, assimilates to its relatively short span and its characteristically discursive modes the task of recounting the writer's life. Essays may scale down the amplitude of autobiography by narrowing their

retrospective gaze to a single significant experience, as in **Washington Irving'**s "The Voyage" (1819), **William Hazlitt'**s "My First Acquaintance with Poets" (1823), **G.K.Chesterton'**s "A Piece of Chalk" (1905), **George Orwell'**s "Shooting an Elephant" (1936), **W.E.B.Du Bois'** "The Guilt of the Cane" (1948), or **Graham Greene'**s "The Revolver in the Corner Cupboard" (1951); or by focusing on a formative stage of the writer's life, the places and people associated with it, as in **Thomas De Quincey'**s "The English Mailcoach" (1849), **T.H.Huxley'**s "Autobiography" (1889), **W.B.Yeats'** "Reveries over Childhood and Youth" (1914), Eudora Welty's "A Sweet Devouring" (1957), **Wallace Stegner'**s "The Town Dump" (1959), **Nadine Gordimer'**s "A Bolter and the Invincible Summer" (1963), or Shiva Naipaul's "Beyond the Dragon's Mouth" (1984). Most commonly, essays limit their autobiographical scope by pondering some aspect or crux of the writer's creative, social, or spiritual existence, e.g. Jonathan Edwards' "Personal Narrative" (1739), **David Hume'**s "My Own Life" (1776), Zora Neale Hurston's "How It Feels to Be Colored Me" (1928), F.Scott Fitzgerald's "The Crack-Up" (1936), Elizabeth Bowen's "Out of a Book" (1950), Margaret Laurence's "Where the World Began" (1971), or **Alice Walker'**s "Beauty: When the Other Dancer Is the Self" (1983). This alternative has had particular appeal for distinguished writers in languages other than English, as exemplified in **Lev Tolstoi'**s *Ispoved'* (1884; *A Confession*), **Ernest Renan'**s "St. Renan" (1883), Franz Kafka's "Brief an den Vater" (1919; "Letter to His Father"), **Thomas Mann'**s "Okkulte Erlebnisse" (1924; "An Experience in the Occult"), **Albert Camus'** "La Mort dans l'âme" (1937; "Death in the Soul"), **Jerzy Stempowski'**s "Księgozbiór przemypników" (1948; "The Smugglers' Library"), **Christa Wolf'**s "Blickwechsel" (1970; "Changing Viewpoint"), and José Donoso's *Historia personal del "boom"* (1971; *The Boom in Spanish American Literature: A Personal History*). In all such instances it may be said that, even as autobiography urges its quest for self as life story upon the essay, so, in turn, the essay conducts that quest on a scale suitable to its own rhetorical habits. Nowhere is this generic transaction more intricately sustained than in the autobiographical book composed as a series of separately titled, and sometimes independently published, pieces, e.g. Vladimir Nabokov's *Speak Memory* (1966), Sara Suleri's *Meatless Days* (1989), and Tobias Wolff's *In Pharaoh's Army* (1994); a notable early example is **Jean-Jacques Rousseau'**s *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (1782; *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*). While the chapters that make up such books work as selfcontained essays, their internal resonances, thematic coalescences, and cumulative effects create the amplitude, if not the continuity, of autobiography.

Beyond all such patently autobiographical essays lies the larger body of texts drawing upon autobiographical material whose narrativity is so attenuated or diffuse and so persistently subordinate to wide-ranging speculation that many students of the genre would be hard put to call them autobiographical essays. Most of Montaigne's *Essais* (1580, 1588) belong here, as do, among the works of the early writers, the "Meditations" of **John Donne'**s *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (1624) and, among those of later practitioners in English, William Hazlitt's miscellaneous essays, much of Washington Irving's *Sketchbook* (1819), **William Makepeace Thackeray'**s *Roundabout Papers* (1863), and countless 20th-century essays traditionally labeled "familiar" or "informal." Indeed, selfnarrative may recede to the vanishing point in works that are, nonetheless,

deeply self-revelatory and/or passionately apologetic (e.g. **Henry David Thoreau'**s "Life Without Principle," 1863, **Robert Louis Stevenson'**s "An Apology for Idlers," 1876, and **E.M.Forster'**s "What I Believe," 1939). The strongly personal character of all such essays suggests deep affinities with autobiography as a mode of self-location; at the same time, it raises difficult, if highly productive, questions about the relationship between the autobiographical essay and what has throughout this century (at least as far back as Virginia Woolf's 1905 piece, "The Decay of Essay Writing") been termed "the **personal essay**." From one standpoint, the emergence and modern flowering of the autobiographical essay appears as a specialization of this broader "type" in which the writer's perspective and sensibility (what writers such as Woolf called "personality") move into the foreground. On this account, the autobiographical essay represents the most focused historical enactment of the anti-systematic and antiinstitutional tendencies that have marked the essay since its beginnings.

But what if, like many students of the essay past and present, we regard the "personal" as characterizing not a certain range of essays but the genre as a whole? To appreciate the persistence of this view we need only observe how widespread in critical and pedagogic literature has been the sometimes deliberate, sometimes inadvertent, conflation of the terms "personal essay" and "essay," no doubt because of the normative sway of Montaigne's eminently "personal"—some would say "autobiographical"—*Essais* over the genre's multifarious practices. The theoretical implications of this terminological slippage for both traditions, essay and autobiography, are considerable. Scholars such as Hugo Friedrich (*Montaigne,* 1949) and Michel Beaujour (*The Poetics of the Literary Self-Portrait,* 1980) read Montaigne's influential work not as autobiography but as selfwriting of a kind that Beaujour terms "autoportrait" (a genre which might claim such postmodern texts of the self as *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes,* 1975). Suppose, however, that the autobiographical mark of Montaigne's essays is their recounting not of the writer's "life" as a past to be recollected but of the autobiographical act *per se* as self-inscriptive process; the autobiographical essay, in this view, opens the door to a kind of meta-story. Thus the status we assign to Montaigne's *Essais* positions our conception of both essay and autobiography as discourses of the "personal" and frames our theoretical accounts of such salient notions as "narrative" and "self." In its academically transgressive guise as "autobiographical" or "personal" or "narrative" criticism, the contemporary autobiographical essay engages these and other issues, now explicitly, now implicitly, and demonstrates yet again the protean energies of the two genres in which it participates.

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Ayala, Francisco

Spanish, 1906–

Having studied political philosophy and sociology in Germany and earned his doctorate in law from the University of Madrid, Francisco Ayala published essays in numerous professional fields, as well as an abundant output of fiction. As a critic for **José Ortega y Gasset'**s prestigious literary periodical, ***Revista de Occidente*** (Western review), his literary and cultural essays reflect that master philosopher's tutelage. He has written legal, sociological, and philosophical treatises while teaching at the University of Madrid, journalism and works on political science during his Latin American exile, and studies in linguistics, history, literary theory, and culture. In other words, there are few subjects that have not come under Ayala's scrutiny.

Ayala's essays and fiction are closely interrelated: writings in both genres explore existential alienation, ethical dilemmas, pedagogy, the abuse of power, philosophical and moral questions concerning the mass media, corruption in government, and terrorism. The basic, underlying problem he explores in his essays is the tension between individual liberty and social order, between personal dignity and equality and the common good. Ayala's essays and fiction often contemplate the power exercised by human beings over others, viewed as usurpation capable of destroying basic humanity and degrading humans

to animalism. Degradation through loss of liberty (expressed in Ayala's fiction by metaphors of bestiality) appears in his essays as an ethical problem of equilibrium between personal freedom and tyranny or dictatorship.

In *Derechos de la persona individual para una sociedad de masas* (1953; Individual rights in mass society) and *El escritor en la sociedad de masas* (1956; The writer in mass society) Ayala paints a portrait of a society in crisis. Concern with juvenile gangs, gratuitous violence, and disregard for the rights of others inspires many pages in these collections and numerous fictional works. Without overt moralizing, Ayala depicts the results of pervasive abdication of moral responsibility (an attribute of the "mass man" mentality analyzed by Ortega). Dehumanization resulting from socialized conformity is a frequent motif. Ayala examines demagoguery, propaganda, censorship, and "information management" calculated to mislead public opinion, exposing (as had Ortega) artifices calculated to deprive the masses of the exercise of conscience. In *La crisis actual de la enseñanza* (1958; The current educational crisis) and *Tecnología y libertad* (1959; Technology and liberty), he critiques permissive educational policies, juvenile delinquency, antisocial activity, and gratuitous crime, analyzing discrepancies between technological and moral progress, examining material civilization and the "culture lag," contemporary political institutions' inability to cope with state invasion of individual privacy.

R*azón del mundo* (1944; Worldly reason) examines historiography and relationships between history and fiction, arguing that philosophy, history, and fiction all attempt to provide orientation and guidance. Without undue insistence upon history's being written by the victors, Ayala suggests its frequent fictionality, implicitly including "official versions" of the past with other forms of usurpation. Challenging readers to think autonomously, he exposes the weaknesses of historical and philosophical dogma. *Realidad y ensueño* (1963; Reality and daydreams) considers intuition sometimes superior to reason in its epistemological epiphanies. Existentially, Ayala (like Ortega) shows more concern for epistemology than ontology, but balances the psychological and sociological.

Ayala's work, whether fiction or nonfiction, constitutes a continuing linguistic probing of the human condition as a moral and aesthetic project. Seamlessly interfacing reality and literature, he explores and reexamines the implications of their relationship while elaborating his personal, intellectual perception of historical process. As Ortega's disciple, Ayala made contributions to the master's historiographic "method of generations." Profoundly preoccupied by his observations of moral mutability, Ayala offers reflections upon creativity, freedom, power, and poetry in the context of social flux, paradox, and fragmentation. The wide-ranging, polyfaceted nature of his essays overwhelms the average reader, obscuring his significant contributions to literary theory (narratology, genre theory, perspectivism), theory in the social sciences (sociology, political science, history), and more abstract philosophical theorizing (epistemological speculation, reflections on the role of memory, analysis of the psychology of everyday experience in relation to the established order and traditional culture).

Many critical works treat fields related to Ayala's teaching of Spanish literature: Cervantes, the *Lazarillo,* Quevedo, the Golden Age, Galdós, and major Spanish and Latin American writers of the 20th century. Ayala believes criticism's role is to help

reconstruct circumstances at the moment of writing, but he also writes theoretical criticism, documents his readings, identifies antecedents, and traces points of coincidence. Further critical interests include dreams, tragedy and comedy, and relationships between comedy and the grotesque, autobiography and creativity, and an author's sociohistorical reality and his or her work. Ayala's essays also facilitate understanding of his own fiction, indirectly indicating intertexts, apocryphal citations, and tricks on the unwary reader.

Writing with irony and humor, inspired by news items and current events, Ayala frequently addresses themes in his essays such as responsibility and guilt in the anonymous "mass society," existential authenticity, and the ambivalence accompanying recognition of individual responsibility. He treats radical solitude, the difficulties of authentic communication, alienation, and helplessness or desperation in both fiction and essays, believing the writer should investigate the meaning of human life and ultimate mysteries, penetrate profound questions of contemporary existence, and seek answers to questions concerning time, death, and oblivion.

JANET PÉREZ

Biography

Francisco de Paula Ayala y García-Duarte. Born 16 March 1906 in Granada. Studied at the University of Madrid, law degree, 1929, Ph.D., 1931; studied in Germany, 1929–30. Married Etelvina Silva, 1931: one daughter. Professor of law, University of Madrid, 1932–35. Diplomat for the Spanish Republic, 1937; exiled in Buenos Aires, where he taught sociology and founded *Realidad* (Reality) magazine, 1939–50, Puerto Rico, where he founded *La Torre* (The tower), 1950–58, New York, 1958–66, and Chicago, 1966–73. Professor at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, University of Chicago, and New York University. United States representative to UNESCO. Began visiting Spain, from 1960, and returned to live there, mid1980s. Elected to the Royal Spanish Academy, 1983. Awards: National Critics' Prize, 1972; National Literature Prize, 1983; National Prize of Spanish Letters, 1988; Cervantes Prize, 1991.

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Azaña, Manuel

Spanish, 1880–1940

Although Azaña the President and statesman has overshadowed Azaña the essayist and novelist, this tragic figure of Spanish liberalism never retreated from the belief that rational public action, like art, must arise from an all-embracing aesthetics which he referred to as a collective "style." But if his driving intellectual passion was to be the architect of this new order characterized by rhetorical excellence and rational cordiality, his introspective aloofness as a writer often placed him at a remove from his own grand design. Toward the end of his life in his *Memorias* (Memoirs) he drifted finally into personal detachment in ironic and self-conscious musings over his failures.

In several essays Azaña professed a special fondness for the writings of 19th-century novelist and essayist Juan Valera. Critics J.Ferrer Solà and Francisco Daudet, among others, claim to detect in his own prose a certain imitative resemblance to his predecessor in the archaic overtones, impeccable lexical purity, and classical tenor of his phrasing. Yet unlike Valera, Azaña resisted the lure of belletrism for its own sake; for him art and ideology remained inseparable, although one must add that they did so as an unresolved personal conflict. For if Azaña leaned intellectually toward ideology, his art and oratory remained grounded in vibrant aesthetic instincts. Thus in *El jardín de los frailes* (1927; The friars' garden), a partially autobiographical novel of his student days in the Escorial, the young protagonist finds consolation for his prison-like confinement in the pleasurable, almost erotic contemplation of pure beauty, a beauty suggested by the interplay of real and imaginary light reflecting a baroque and sometimes grotesque material world. His vision is at once sensuous and sensitive yet defined at more or less

regular intervals by introspective rational markers tinged with occasional self-doubt and, for his opponents, frequent sarcasm. As a result of these binary swings between lyric exuberance and critical scrutiny his style exhibits a syncopated cadence that suggests both a predisposition to psychological testimonialism and an affinity for baroque syntax, qualities that seemed to serve him better as an orator than as a novelist or essayist.

The essays of Azaña veer closer in style to his oratory than to his novels. In the latter his penchant for detachment and distance seemed to prevail over the fundamental realism which, generally speaking, was predominant in the other genres he cultivated. It is particularly significant in this regard that for Azaña the creation of a style involved not only the search for a relevant ideological and literary posture before the world but also the means of escaping from it. At his dialectical best in the essay, Azaña achieves a superior level of persuasive communicativeness by the precise logical structure of his prose and by the rigorously clear exposition of arguments informed by a unique view of Spain.

Azaña has been described as "a man without a generation," but even though he publicized his disagreements with the Generation of 1898, he shared with his older compatriots much of their "landscape lyricism" and the literary temperament that informs their work. Furthermore, within his own generation he exhibited with **José Ortega y Gasset, Eugenio d'Ors, Ramón Pérez de Ayala,** and Juan Ramón Jiménez a Modernist penchant for metaphorical precision and conceptual elegance.

In the *Memorias* and other essays an ironic note serves Azaña as a means of distancing himself from the technical incompetence, backwardness, and bad faith of certain contemporaries. As a general rule, his procedure consists of creating a spiral of contrasting images before suddenly demolishing them with a verbal *contre-coup* that reveals in unmistakable clarity not only the person's shortcomings but the author's contempt for mediocrity. Irony in the essays often introduces moments of sarcastic humor which serve to counterbalance the somber intervals of private reflections. Thus he delights in ridiculing the pompous speeches of other political figures, in caricaturing professional groups such as medical doctors, and, occasionally, in poking fun at himself.

In a general way, these moments of irony and humor serve to alleviate a style that tends toward the transcendent. Functionally, therefore, they act as humanizing components by making the text more accessible and, ultimately, more understandable. Nevertheless, the same acerbity of this irony and humor may also point to personal flaws. At times the hauteur that slips into his language seems to betray an impatient, supercilious intellectual who, though sincere and intimate with an anonymous public, scorned his less gifted peers.

Both the style and the person of Manuel Azaña raise contradictory questions. Undeniably of classical, even elitist propensities in his native literary preferences, he nevertheless sought to create a democratic ideological style for the Spanish masses. He inclined naturally to art for art's sake yet stubbornly insisted publicly that art must be subservient to ideology. And although as President of the Republic he kept watch over Spanish liberalism during its most tragic period, he also jealously guarded and cultivated an inner personal domain remote from politics and devastation, though replete with sympathies for the human condition at the nadir. It was a personal region of ideal hues and sensuous resonance articulated by the aesthetic sentiments of a literary purist. Most

likely there, beyond his ideological obsessions, is where one must seek his most enduring legacy.

HAROLD RALEY

Biography

Manuel Azaña y Díaz. Born 10 January 1880 in Alcalá de Henares. Studied at the Real Colegio de Estudios Superiores, San Lorenzo de El Escorial, 1893–97; University of Saragossa, law degree, 1898; University of Madrid, Ph.D., 1900; also studied in Paris. Secretary, 1913, and president, 1930, Ateneo cultural center, Madrid. Founder, with José Ortega y Gasset, League of Political Education, 1913. Joined the Reformist Party, 1913. Cofounder, *La Pluma* (The pen), 1920–23, and *España,* 1923–24. Founder, Political Action republican group, 1925. Married Dolores Rivas Cherif, 1929. Minister of war, 1931, Prime Minister, 1931–33, and President of the Republic, 1936–39; then exiled to France. Awards: National Literature Prize, 1926. Died in Montauban, France, 3 November 1940.

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Azorín

Spanish, 1873–1967

Early in his career, José Martínez Ruiz adopted the pen name "Azorín," under which he published novels, short stories, literary essays, plays, and countless articles in multiple turnof-the-century magazines and newspapers and, beginning in 1905, in the leading conservative Spanish newspaper, *ABC*. Azorín was one of a group of important Spanish writers who began publishing in the 1890s and attained their greatest achievements between 1900 and 1930. With **Miguel de Unamuno,** Antonio and Manuel Machado, Pío Baroja, Jacinto Benavente, Ramón del Valle-Inclán, and others, Azorín undertook a reexamination of the Spanish nation and the modern Spanish subject. Formerly, critics divided these writers and their contemporaries into two distinct groups, the "Modernistas" and the Generation of 1898, but recently the trend has been to collapse this distinction and to classify all as "Modernistas" and to link them more broadly with the Anglo-European Modernist project while allowing for cultural variations according to local historical and social conditions. Modernism represents a break with the traditional sociosymbolic order and a search for new modes to express new experiences and perspectives.

Azorín's essayistic writing demonstrates a Modernist rejection of the rationalist and scientific discourses that prevailed in the late 19th century and introduces a subjective, impressionistic, and highly poetic style. In some respects, it forges a link with the powerful but abbreviated production of the Romantic writer **Mariano José de Larra,** but in others it cultivates new modalities of writing in response to new modes of perception. Azorín's "essays" include both literary criticism and studies of the Spanish character and landscape; frequently these two categories blend in a single text. *La ruta de don Quijote* (1905; Don Quixote's route) chronicles Azorín's retracing of the wanderings of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in La Mancha, with a continuous melding of literary reminiscence and contemporary commentary. *Lecturas españolas* (1912; Spanish readings), *Clásicos y modernos* (1913; Classics and moderns), and *De Granada a Castelar* (1922; From Granada to Castelar), among others, offer highly personal rereadings of classical and contemporary texts. In works such as *Los pueblos* (1905; The villages), *España* (1909; Spain), and *Castilla* (1912; Castile), literary criticism also appears, but in the service of a re-creation of the Spanish and, in particular, of the Castilian landscape, peoples, and history.

Like many of his contemporaries, Azorín distrusted official history and the 19th-century belief in the objective reconstruction of facts; consequently, his texts repudiate the dispassionate tone, the emphasis on politics, and the reliance on government documents that characterize historical discourse of the period. In contrast, they foreground literary texts as a means to access the past and feature the lesser-known, sometimes anonymous figures of rural and small-town life as better guides to a reconstruction of previous periods than the biographies of notable public statesmen. In

novels as well as essays, Azorín obsessively explores the theme of time and its passage, confronting the accelerated rhythm of modernity with a languorous exploration of the past as captured in the nonurban areas of Spain.

Azorín also breaks with literary and journalistic traditions in style and structure. His syntax represents a sharp departure from the heavily rhetorical style of 19th-century oratory, eschewing long sentences with multiple dependent clauses for short sentences with coordinate clauses. In keeping with a desire to bring the Spanish past into the present without sacrificing the cultural and linguistic specificity of Spain, Azorín and his contemporaries employ a rich lexicon that borrows freely from other languages while simultaneously resurrecting forgotten Spanish words drafted from specialized rural vocabularies.

Structurally, Azorín's texts often defy traditional generic boundaries. Many of the "essays" incorporate techniques borrowed from narrative and poetry, and dialogue is a frequent visitor in Azorín's essayistic writing. *Castilla,* one of his most widely-read publications, deliberately questions the established generic divisions through the careful construction of a collection of essays that move from conventional essay form through those incorporating poetic discourse, to those that take on a decidedly narrative form, and finally to the closing set of three that borrow strongly from dramatic techniques. Furthermore, the final essays introduce yet another form through the use of ekphrasis and the introduction of visual art, thus questioning the borders of literature itself.

Many critics view Azorín's experimentation with language and form as pure aestheticism, with no social or political implications. However, theorists of Modernism have refuted such a separation of content and form, and Azorín's writing can benefit from a revision along the lines that have guided other rereadings of Anglo-European Modernist writers. Notwithstanding the emphasis on Castilian texts, landscape, and culture, Azorín's publications insistently explore margins and boundaries, revising the canon, revisiting and reconstructing the past according to new visions, and denying the separation of art and life.

E*spaña,* another important collection, demonstrates the insistence on multiple perspectives that cross traditional lines of separation and open up new possibilities for the perception of modern experience. The book combines the diachronic and the synchronic; the first 15 texts follow a chronological order, with each connected to a specific date, while the last 15 essays deal with contemporary issues and are devoid of historical references. Many of the essays emphasize the continuity of the past, while others foreground a disjointed historical evolution that places past and present in opposition.

Moreover, the marginalization of Spain, whether by its own choice or by foreign design, receives close scrutiny. Notwithstanding the title and the insistent examination of Spanish countryside, history, and culture, the text opens with an epigraph from Petrarch which appears in Italian and closes with an epilogue that was written in the French Pyrenees. Throughout the essays, the text speaker intrudes on the materials discussed in a constant reminder of the influence of the observer on what is observed and described, thus debunking any pretense of objectivity. Azorín's essays thus reflect the Modernist impulse to develop new modes of writing and thinking in order to represent the complexities of modern experience.

MARY LEE BRETZ

Biography

Born José Martínez Ruiz, 8 June 1873 in Monóvar, Alicante. Also used the pseudonyms Cándido and Ahrimán. Studied at the Colegio de los Padres Escolapios, Yecla, 1881–88; law at the University of Valencia, from 1888. Moved to Madrid, 1896. Journalist for various newspapers, including ABC, *El País* (The country), El *Progreso* (Progress), and *El Imparcial* (The impartial). Elected deputy to the Spanish Parliament, 1907. Married Julia Guinda Urzanqui, 1908. Undersecretary for the Ministry of Public Instruction, 1917, 1919. Drama critic during the 1920s. Elected to the Royal Spanish Academy, 1914. Columnist for *La Nación* (Buenos Aires), 1930–67. Lived in Paris, 1936–39. Died in Madrid, 2 March 1967.

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B

Bacon, Francis

English, 1561–1626

Francis Bacon was the first master of the essay form in English and a philosopher of this and other literary formulas for spreading enlightened thought. While he wrote in an astonishing variety of styles, as to the essay he was essentially a one-book author. But there were three versions of this book. While the *Essayes* of 1597 marked the first appearance of the term as part of an English book title, it contained only ten compositions, and these were hardly more than little collections of sharp sayings. The Baconian masterwork in the genre is clearly the third version, *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall* of 1625. Standing alone like the 1612 edition, but enlarged "both in number and weight," it is indeed the "new work" which the dedication advertises. There are 58 essays (20 more than in 1612), and those carried over are reordered and revised, and fattened by quotation, authority, and a flow of insinuating reasoning. Of this version Bacon thought well and predicted much. While in summarizing his literary motives he called the work a "recreation," he added at once that the *Essayes* had been the easy road to his fame. It was the most popular of his writings then and has been ever since. Bacon had the final version translated into Latin (with small variations) and expected that "in the universal language" it may "last as long as books last." He included the work among the "civil and moral writings" to be inserted in *The Great Instauration,* his vast collection of useful arts and sciences that could give man power over his environment. The civil and moral writings show what powers are truly useful, and they elaborate on civil powers such as the nation-state and moral powers such as the work ethic.

Bacon's *Essayes* is a variation on **Montaigne's** *Essais,* which was published first in 1580 and then in its full three volumes in 1588. After 1600 a wave of imitative volumes appeared in English, most citing and quoting one of Bacon's versions, but others showing the influence of the *Essais.* Bacon himself refers only once to Montaigne, but it is in the first essay, "Of Truth," and as a sly guide in attacking truth, particularly religious truth. "Of Truth" develops circumspectly the universality and power of falsehood, not least in religious matters. Montaigne saw the worldly passion beneath the pretense; he "saith prettily" that he who lies fears God less and men more.

Like Montaigne, Bacon found in the essay form an informal and winning appeal, which served not least to circumvent the authority of theological works. The *Essayes* like the *Essais* are first and foremost in the vernacular, the language of the layman. Each is

composed of discrete little compositions, less likely to strain the ordinary attention span. Both have a casual and even disorderly tenor; they avoid the distant formality of an oration, or even of a comedy or tragedy. Bacon no more than Montaigne imposes exhortations, or satires and laments as to virtue and vice. Also, and substantively, the *Essayes* like the *Essais* entertains men's opinions. Each adopts a tolerant stance; neither imposes a righteous way. The *Essayes* is not an application of the Bible or a eulogy of ancient morals (except in quick bows to Seneca and the Stoics as the reader is maneuvered past theological morals and the Peripatetics).

Yet the work directs opinion, albeit indirectly. The *Essayes* is a self-help book, but the reader is directed deep into a novel spirit of self-help. The extraordinary essay "Of Goodness and Goodness of Nature" moves past charity through humanity, then redefines goodness as self-reliance, even the self-reliance of the maliciously ambitious founder of a state. At the foundation of politics is self-making and badness, rather than goodness, of nature. The *Essayes* appeals not so much to self-expression as to self-interest, and does so by supplying enlightened ways to satisfy one's interest. The essays have been popular, the dedication explains, because "they come home to men's business and bosoms." Typical titles are "Of Death," "Of Love," "Of Great Place," "Of Riches," and "Of Ambition." Still, all this guidance is under an appearance of reticence. Bacon in his way, like Montaigne in his, seems most unauthoritative. In the only essay devoted to literary style, Bacon explains how literary diffidence can go with literary leadership; it was a lesson that followers like **Benjamin Franklin** took to heart. "The honorablest part of talk is to give the occasion; and again to moderate and pass to somewhat else; for then a man leads the dance" ("Of Discourse").

Bacon's collection is both more succinct and less charming than Montaigne's. It is more "pragmatic"; his essays are "counsels civill and morall" which concentrate on advancing one's business and state. Montaigne appears eccentric, leisurely, pleasure-seeking, and bemused; he pointedly alludes to the pleasures of freedom, food, sex, talk, and friends. Bacon by contrast writes essays that are comparatively short, intense, and businesslike. The central essay of the *Essais* is the skeptical "Apologie de Raimond Sebond" ("Apology of Raymond Sebond") and is as long as Bacon's whole volume. The greatest of Bacon's essays, "Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates," advances ten compressed counsels for building a republican empire. This is a naval and economic variation on **Machiavelli**'s plan for a warlike and imperial republic; several examples come straight from *I discorsi* (1531; *Discourses on Livy*). While Montaigne concentrated on inducing skepticism about the old other-worldly faith and learning, reminding the reader of natural pleasures, Bacon could also offer a rival object of belief, a new project of security through a thisworldly nation-state. The *Essayes* are disciplined by such a plan, and by being one building block in a whole vision of progress, scientific and technological as well as economic and political.

Given the modified Machiavellianism in the content of the *Essayes,* one must wonder whether there is also a link in form, a relation between a Baconian essay and a Machiavellian "discourse." Bacon writes of speech as "discourse," and the discussions are colored by a Machiavellian concentration on efficacy: on force and fraud in literary "transmission." Still, Bacon's essays are more compressed and less apparently wandering than Machiavelli's discourses, forego the stalking horse of ancient Rome, and

thematically address civil, moral, and religious topics. In their focus they resemble Seneca's *Moral Epistles to Lucilius,* which Bacon once mentions as an "ancient" precedent. But Bacon transforms the precedent. Seneca's 124 compositions had little to do with politics and demonstrated little confidence in political reform. They meditate on the inevitable trials of life (e.g. "On the Futility of Planning Ahead") and exhort to moral restraint and a philosophic life. Bacon's essays are more devious; they follow Machiavelli's *Il principe* (wr. 1513, pub. 1532; *The Prince*) and the *Discourses* in replacing morality with modes of worldly success and meditation with comprehensive planning. Such considerations also dispose of the suggestion that a Baconian essay is like a Platonic dialogue. Bacon disdains Socrates' dialectical winnowing of opinions, as if one could get to wisdom through words rather than through managing forces. In "Of Seeming Wisdom," Bacon identifies dialectic with a wordy pretentiousness that plays with mere seemings and is "the bane of business."

What the essay is, and why Bacon favors it, is clarified in the formulations of literary theory in *Advancement of Learning* (1605) and its Latin version, *De augmentis* (1623). Both recommend sharp "fragments," rather than methodical or "magistral" texts, especially when attempting to change belief rather than confirm it. Pungent writings provoke the sharp and conceal from the dull. Being short and seminal, they encourage one's "initiative" in reconsidering "the roots of knowledge" and in progressing for oneself. But being "enigmatical," they baffle "vulgar capacities"; they reserve a teaching for "wits of such sharpness as can pierce the veil." The brief writing Bacon discusses is not the essay but the clipped sentence called the **aphorism:** "short and scattered sentences not linked together by an artificial method." A Baconian aphorism catches an observation at the core of matters. It catches especially the cause of an important effect. For example: "He that has Wife and Children, hath given Hostage to Fortune, for they are Impediments to great enterprises, either of Virtue, or Mischief" ("Of Marriage and Single Life"). The aphorism is the ammunition of the Baconian essay. The first essays of 1597 were like machine-gun fire, hardly more than staccato collections of these "dispersed directions" for pursuing one's interests.

The developed Baconian essay is typically fattened. Bland, often dense with lists, it oozes quotation and authority. This style seems both to baffle the lazy and to exhibit the politic sugar-coating recommended in *De augmentis:* introduce "knowledge which is new" with a gloss of the familiar, "with similitudes and comparisons." Govern speech by policy, and therefore with a view to obstacles in the way. This explains many of the apparently traditional doctrines in the developed essays and also the disorderly interspersing of replies to predictable objections. A typical Baconian essay starts with principles that sound like religious or moral orthodoxies and then suppresses or transforms these by degrees until they are replaced. The more closely one follows the precise terms of an argument, and its successive reformulations, qualifications, and manipulation of authorities, the more clearly a direction appears. For example, "Of Riches" begins by treating "riches" in a rather Aristotelian way, as merely "the baggage of virtue." But it jogs quickly to liberate wealth-getting from moral limit, and by the end elaborates the modes of multiplying "riches exceedingly" with only prudential limits. By adopting a disorderly receptivity to other views, one can provoke, guide, and lead—and the more effectively as one's control is hidden. One can "lead the dance" ("Of

Discourse"). Dancing with the opinions dear to others, Bacon turns traditional opinions toward enlightened opinions, doing so more effectively by disguising the transformation and the direction beneath the disorder. D'Alembert, in the "Preliminary Discourse" to the *Encyclopédie,* caught this art. The great Bacon used "subdivisions fashionable in his time," even "scholastic principles," for, despite "the most rigorous precision" of style, he was "too wise to astonish anyone." Hence he and his followers could "prepare from afar the light which gradually, by imperceptible degrees, would illuminate the world."

Perhaps one could show that the *Essayes* as a whole develops like each essay, that is, from undermining the old ways of Christian Europe to establishing enlightened new ways. It moves from corrosion of the most authoritative pieties, at its beginning ("Of Truth," "Of Death," "Of Unity of Religion"), to the production of a new-model, progressive nation-state and of the priority of self-preservation, in its middle ("Of the True Greatness of Kingdoms and Estates," "Of Regiment of Health"), to intimations of a new-model progressive civilization, at its end ("Of Vicissitude of Things"). There seem to be four stages. The first essays (nos. 1–19) chiefly commit sedition on morality, religion, and the established hierarchy of estates, church, and king. Insofar as innovations are proposed, such as the priority of one's own rising to great place and the priority of economic development, they borrow a traditional surface, such as duty and the priority of repulsing sedition. The second stage (20–29) tutors those under cover but consciously rising in the new politics. Counselors who seem to advance the business of kingdoms and estates can promote their own place in an expanding and rather republican nationstate. The third stage (30–46) concentrates on what is in the new project for individuals, especially rising individuals, and becomes more open in unveiling the corresponding possibilities of a rather self-regulating civil society based on mutual utility. Moral attitudes are recast as personal incentives, channeled to attract planters of economic colonies, entrepreneurs, investors, and financiers. The final stage (47–58) shows how a superior prince provides honors and other incentives for his superior followers, such as counselors and judges who will introduce the new state of things. In turn, such enlightened public figures will help raise a founding leader to the "sovereign honor"—the dominating fame—for which he is ambitious.

The *Essayes* is a plan for civil nations and civil states, of a kind that will support the scientific civilization that Bacon also proposes. It supplements Bacon's other political works, such as his models of a state-builder (*The History of the Reign of Henry* VII, 1622) and of a humane but autonomous scientifictechnological establishment (*New Atlantis,* 1626). The Baconian essay is a literary formula used to spread the new teachings to rising entrepreneurs and politicians, just as the form of political history appeals to founders and ministers of states, and that of a future-oriented scientific utopia, to visionary intellectuals.

ROBERT K.FAULKNER

Biography

Born 22 January 1561 in London. Studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1573–76; Gray's Inn, London, 1576, 1579–82; admitted to the bar, 1582. Attaché to Ambassador

Sir Amias Paulet, British Embassy, Paris, 1576–79. Member of Parliament for Melcombe Regis, Dorset, 1584, Taunton, 1586, Liverpool, 1589, Middlesex, 1593, Southampton, 1597, Ipswich, 1604, and Cambridge University, 1614. Bencher, 1586, Lent reader, 1588, and double reader, 1600, Gray's Inn; member of a committee of lawyers appointed to review statutes, 1588. Patronized by the Earl of Essex, from 1591, but took part in treason trial against him, 1601; queen's counsel extraordinary, 1595–1603, and king's counsel, from 1604; commissioner for the union of Scotland and England, 1603. Knighted, 1603. Married Alice Barnham, 1606. Solicitor general, 1607–13; attorney general, 1613–17; member of the Privy Council, 1616; lord keeper of the great seal, 1617–18; lord chancellor, 1618. Created Baron Verulam, and admitted to the House of Lords, 1618. Accused of bribery, found guilty by the House of Lords, and stripped of offices, fined, and temporarily imprisoned, 1621; later pardoned by the king. Created Viscount St. Albans, 1621. Died in Highgate, London, 9 April 1626.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose

Essayes, 1597; revised, enlarged editions, as *Essaies,* 1612, and as *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall,* 1625; many critical editions, including those edited by Michael J.Hawkins (Everyman Edition), 1973, Michael Kiernan, 1985, and John Pitcher, 1985

Francis Bacon (selections), edited by Brian Vickers, 1996

Other writings: longer works on history, law, science, religion, and politics, especially *Novum organum* (1620), which sets forth the experimental method of useful knowledge, *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), which recasts all learning, and the fable *New Atlantis* (1626).

Collected works edition: *Works* (including life and letters), edited by James Spedding, R.L.Ellis, and D.D.Heath, 14 vols., 1857–74, reprinted 1968.

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Baldwin, James

American, 1924–1987

For more than three decades beginning in the mid-1950s, James Baldwin was one of the most prominent and prolific writers on race and identity in the United States. Delving into almost every genre, he wrote six novels, three plays, a children's storybook, a book of short stories, a book of poetry, and more than 100 essays. Beginning with a **review** of a **Maksim Gor'kii** book in the *Nation* in 1947, his reviews, critiques, memoirs, and open **letters** were published extensively in some of the best-known publications, including *New Leader, Freedomways, Commentary,* ***Harper's,*** *Mademoiselle,* ***Partisan Review, Atlantic Monthly,*** *Saturday Review, Playboy, Esquire,* and the *New York Times*. Topics included his views on literature, film, history, children, and a host of prominent and notso-prominent individuals, always infused with the issue of race. For Baldwin the essay was a weapon for change. His reports on the civil rights activities of the 1960s provided a definitive analysis of its progress and made him an enemy of the state: James Campbell writes in *Talking at the Gates* (1991) that the U.S.Federal Bureau of Investigation alone accumulated a 1750-page file on him.

Baldwin's nonfiction is often defined by the autobiographical template he seems unable to escape. In the midst of flowing, poetic prose, he is apt to digress to his life in Harlem, Paris, or elsewhere. Such asides frequently relate the story of his strict Protestant upbringing, of being told by his cruel, minister stepfather—and believing—that he is ugly. This story also includes accounts of his early sexual ambiguities; his brief career as a teenage minister; his determination against all odds to become a writer; his numerous, dangerous encounters with policemen, bar owners, and restaurateurs; and the constant rage that engulfed him—that could ultimately have led to his death—causing him to flee to Paris in 1948.

Stylistically his essays are defined by two elements. The first is a rolling, sometimes convoluted (almost stream-of-consciousness) language, whose rhythms and imagery are born of the fire-and-brimstone sermons of the African American Protestant church. This is seen in what many believe to be his greatest work, *The Fire Next Time* (1963), when he writes: "…this urgency of American Negroes is *not to be forgotten!* As they watch black men elsewhere rise, the promise held out, at last, that they may walk the earth with the authority with which white men walk, protected by the power that white men shall have no longer, is enough, and more than enough, to empty prisons and pull God down from Heaven." Many of the titles of his nonfiction also bear witness to his reliance on religious themes and symbols: *The Fire Next Time* (biblical slave song), *No Name in the Street* (Job), *The Devil Finds Work* (a religious homily), *The Evidence of Things Not Seen* (St. Paul). The second, more subtle element is his bitingly sardonic, blues-inspired commentary, as in the streetwise metaphor he gives his last collection: *The Price of the Ticket* (1985). And in *The Evidence of Things Not Seen* (1985), he deconstructs the mythology of U.S. capitalism and its relationship to the slave auction: "*Honest toil and the magic of the marketplace* sums up Black American history with a terrifying precision, and is the key to our continuing dilemma. Our first sight of America was this marketplace and our legal existence, here, begins with the signature on the bill of sale."

Early in his career, as he painfully worked on his first novel, Baldwin earned a reputation as a literary critic of some merit, publishing exclusively in the *Nation, Commentary,* and *New Leader* from 1947 to 1949. He was also heralded as the next Richard Wright, an African American novelist and social commentator who befriended him and whom he idolized, but from whom he would later become deeply estranged. Both he and Wright were viewed as "protest" writers because of their persistent criticism of the legacy of racism that they perceived in the United States and Europe, but Baldwin eschewed "protest" as a shallow and futile goal. The role of the artist, he said, "is to illuminate that darkness, blaze roads through that vast forest, so that we will not, in all our doing, lose sight of its purpose, which is after all, to make the world a more human dwelling place" ("The Creative Process," 1962).

Baldwin's fiction was much influenced by Wright's masterwork novel, *Native Son* (1940), which was heralded as the quintessential **treatise** on the psyche of the black American. For Baldwin, Wright, who mentored the young writer, represented a kind of literary father figure. Yet in much the same way that Baldwin had undermined his minister stepfather's power over him by outdoing him as a teenage minister, he usurped Wright with devastatingly critical analyses of his novel. The first of these criticisms ("Everybody's Protest Novel") was published by a short-lived French publication, *Zéro*

(Spring 1949), and subsequently republished in *Partisan Review* (June 1949). Two years later, as a split developed between Baldwin and Wright, Baldwin would insure the schism with a thorough, accurate, but unflattering critique of *Native Son* in "Many Thousands Gone" (*Partisan Review,* November/ December 1951). *Native Son,* Baldwin says, is unquestionably "the most powerful and celebrated statement we have yet had of what it means to be a Negro in America." But, he opined, it is incomplete: "…though we follow [the anti-hero Bigger Thomas] step by step from the tenement room to the death cell, we know as little about him when his journey is ended as we did when it began; and what is even more remarkable, we know almost as little about the social dynamic which we are to believe created him." For Baldwin, therefore, Bigger Thomas "does not redeem the pains of a despised people, but reveals, on the contrary, nothing more than his own fierce bitterness at having been born one of them."

Though Baldwin's world view is frequently expressed in biting commentary, it is always tempered, paradoxically, with an urgent cry for blacks and whites to come together, in love, to liberate themselves from a history of racism. And his philosophical view of race remains constant throughout his career. Simply put, Baldwin believed that Europeans came to the New World as nationalities, but quickly became "white" as they unified in ritualistic violence, murdered the peoples they found there, and imported African slaves. In their attempt to deny the reality and horrors of the Native American and African "holocaust[s]," whites have trapped themselves in a mythological history that will not allow them to be rid of the guilt and shame of their actions. "Americans passionately believe in their avowed ideals, amorphous as they are, and are terrified of waking from a radiant dream," he writes in "Lockridge: 'The American Myth'" (*The New Leader,* 10 April 1948), a critique of Ross Lockridge's *Raintree County*. Almost four decades later, in an open letter to South African Bishop Desmond Tutu in the *Los Angeles Times* (21 January 1986), he says, "The wealth of England and my country, the wealth of the Western world, in short, is based on slave labor, and the intolerable guilt thus engendered in hearts and minds of the Civilized is the root of what we call racism."

A consequence of this falsified American history is that "[It] has allowed white people, with scarcely any pangs of conscience whatever, to *create,* in every generation, only the Negro they wished to see" ("A Fly in Buttermilk," 1958). Blacks, on the other hand, are expected to believe the lie, or, under pain of death (by vigilantes, policemen, or the state), at least to *act* as if they believe it. The price of such delusion—*The Price of the Ticket* he calls it in the title essay of his collected nonfiction—is, for blacks, self-hatred, or rebellion, or both. For the white American, the price is "to become white…nothing less," and to continue to live with the guilt. To illustrate the paradoxical nature of this "conundrum," he repeats, in scores of essays, some form of the dialectical paradigm: "… by means of what the white man imagines the black man to be, the black man is enabled to know who the white man is" ("Stranger in the Village," 1953). Or, conversely,"…if I am not what I've been told I am, then it means that *you're* not what you thought you were either!" ("A Talk to Teachers," 1963).

The resolution of this demented game falls heavily on African Americans in a kind of distorted, redemptive process that mirrored the 1960s civil rights movement, in which Baldwin became actively involved as a writer, interpreter, and demonstrator. For example, in August 1965 he writes: "… one enters into battle with that historical creation,

Oneself, and attempts to recreate oneself according to a principle more humane and more liberating; one begins the attempt to achieve a level of personal maturity and freedom which robs history of its tyrannical power, and also changes history" ("White Man's Guilt"). But, he is always careful to add, this cathartic confrontation must be accomplished with love: "And if the word *integration* means anything, this is what it means: that we, with love, shall force our brothers to see themselves as they are, to cease fleeing from reality and begin to change it" *(The Fire Next Time)*.

Baldwin's timely explanation of the imperative of nonviolent struggle made him the darling of the mainstream media of the 1960s. Though he sometimes published in African American publications such as *Ebony* and *Freedomways,* he wrote almost exclusively to whites, pleading for liberals to get on board, change their ways, before it was too late. Again, in *The Fire Next Time,* he describes the profound effect of his visit with Elijah Muhammad, the Nation of Islam's black separatist leader. He notes the unerring logic that brings Mr. Muhammad to an indictment against whites as devils whose reign must end, probably in violence: "All my evidence would be thrown out of court as irrelevant to the main body of the case, for I could cite only exceptions. The South Side [of Chicago] proved the justice of the indictment; the state of the world proved the justice of the indictment." Still, Baldwin concludes, "one has no choice but to do all in one's power to change that fate, and at no matter what risk—eviction, imprisonment, torture, death. For the sake of one's children, in order to minimize the bill that *they* must pay, one must be careful not to take refuge in any delusion—and the value placed on the color of the skin is always and everywhere and forever a delusion." Finally, he warns his reader in the last words of the book: "If we do not now dare everything, the fulfillment of that prophecy, recreated from the Bible in song by a slave, is upon us: *God gave Noah the rainbow sign, No more water, the fire next time!*"

After the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, when many African Americans had turned away from the civil rights movement and toward more militant strategies, Baldwin began to acknowledge the possibility of some inevitable, cataclysmic confrontation between the races. Though he still clung to his basic notion about the need for love and change, No *Name in the Street* (1972) ends with a hint that he might have come to the end of his rope:"…it is terrible to watch people cling to their captivity and insist on their own destruction. I think black people have always felt this about America, and Americans, and have always seen, spinning above the thoughtless American head, the shape of the wrath to come."

Some optimism would later return, particularly with the changes he witnessed with the appointment and election of African Americans in the political arena. But the slow progress made in South Africa against apartheid and his investigation of a series of child murders in Atlanta (*The Evidence of Things Not Seen,* 1985) kept alive the Baldwinian paradox, which he himself identifies, less than two years before his death, in his 1986 letter to Bishop Tutu: "I am sure that you believe, with me, this paradox: Black freedom will make white freedom possible. Indeed, our freedom, which we have been forced to buy at so high a price, is the only hope of freedom that they have."

HARRY AMANA

Biography

James Arthur Baldwin. Born 2 August 192.4 in New York City. Studied at Public School 134, Harlem, New York, and DeWitt Clinton High School, Bronx, New York, graduated 1942. Briefly a storefront preacher in Harlem during adolescence; worked at various odd jobs in New York, and in defense work, Belle Meade, New Jersey, early 1940s. Lived primarily in Europe (mainly Paris and Istanbul), from 1948, making frequent trips to the U.S. Contributor to many journals and magazines, including the *Partisan Review,* ***New Yorker,*** *Atlantic Monthly, Harper's, Freedomways, New Leader, Esquire, Ebony,* and the *Nation*. Awards: several, including four fellowships; American Academy Award, 1956; George Polk Award, for magazine articles, 1963; Foreign Drama Critics Award, 1964; Martin Luther King, Jr. Award, 1978; honorary degree from the University of British Columbia. Member of the American Academy, 1964; Commander, Legion of Honor (France), 1986. Died (of stomach cancer) in St. Paul de Vence, France, 30 November 1987.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose
Notes of a Native Son, 1955
Nobody Knows My Name: More Notes of a Native Son, 1961
The Fire Next Time, 1963
No Name in the Street, 1972
The Devil Finds Work, 1976
The Evidence of Things Not Seen, 1985
The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction, 1948–1985, 1985
Other writings: six novels *(Go Tell It on the Mountain,* 1953; *Giovanni's Room,* 1956; *Another Country,* 1962; *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone,* 1968; *If Beale Street Could Talk,* 1974; *Just Above My Head,* 1979), the collection of short stories *Going to Meet the Man* (1965), three plays, and poetry.

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Balzac, Jean-Louis Guez de

French, 1597–1654

Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac's production as an essayist spans his literary lifetime. Reflections on politics, literature, religion, and manners are found in all of his writings: **letters, treatises** (e.g. *Le Prince* [1631; *The Prince*]), discourses (e.g. *La Harangue célèbre faite à la Reyne sur sa Régence* [1641; The famous harangue made to the Queen on her Regency]). 'It was especially in his letters that his readers found his judgments most compelling, and it is because of the correspondence that literary historians have acknowledged Balzac as a definitive master of French prose. In the first half of the 17th century, he demonstrated to members of the literary and privileged social milieux how to write eloquent, forceful, and pleasing French.

Balzac's letters launched his literary career. From the beginning, his letters circulated in aristocratic homes and salons, where they were avidly read. They provoked admiration (Richelieu early encouraged Balzac to continue in this vein) and quarrels, for Balzac ridiculed the authority of the entrenched humanists at the Sorbonne. His criticism of pedantry constituted one of the first outbreaks of the Battle of the Ancients and the Moderns, destined to rage in the 1680s. The success and notoriety of his letters prompted Balzac to publish collections of them, the most famous being the *Premiéres lettres* (First letters) of 1624 and 1627. Letters appeared in diverse publications throughout his lifetime, and before the end of his life, Balzac had been preparing a new collection, published posthumously as *Les Entretiens* (1657; The conversations).

Balzac spent most of his adult life in solitary retirement in the countryside of the Charente, nursing a frail body, removed from the exhausting Parisian circles, and writing letters to influential men of politics, to literary friends and foes, and to intimates. He hoped that the success of these letters would earn him a brilliant position, where he could make a life for himself. In hindsight, it seems clear that because *The Prince* (Balzac's apology for Richelieu and Louis XIII's political program for the French state) failed to clinch the CardinaPs patronage, Balzac's aspirations were not to be realized; he had been passed over. However, after the treatise's disappointing reception in 1631, Balzac continued to write, suggesting that he never really gave up hope for a brilliant appointment on the basis of his literary accomplishments.

That Balzac could attach the practical consequence of receiving a position of power to his literary endeavors is apparent from the contents and style of his letters and from the very choice of the letter as a literary medium in which to shine. As Jean Jehasse (1977) notes, the humanist Jesuits, who schooled Balzac, accorded great importance to the epistle, conceived of as a literary exercise and occasion for their pupils to prepare persuasive essays on manners, politics, or literature. The *hermite* of Charente, withdrawn from influential circles, selected this medium as the appropriate means to address topical concerns that would establish and advertise his stand on issues pertinent to his readers—both the specific addressees and their milieux—as well as reveal his commitments and

loyalties. In his letters to Richelieu and to other figures of political power he promotes the value of public service and supports the authority of the State grounded in the centralized monarchy, which requires good ministers and subordinate nobles. His correspondence with other men of letters (who were more often to become his addressees as Balzac's hopes for a worthy appointment receded) situates him in the camp of the Moderns. He rejects the humanists' blind acknowledgment of the superiority of the Ancients and pedantic criticism of writing that does not strictly conform to classical models. Insisting on the superiority of judgment and of reason over unquestioning imitation, Balzac defends the educated person's power to assess reality and to act appropriately based on practiced judgment.

However, as an advocate of trained discernment, Balzac appreciates only too well the literary power of the Ancients, who indeed were capable of great writing because they exercised their judgment and aesthetic sense. Despite siding with the Moderns, he owes a debt to the Ancients, and his works testify to it throughout. Balzac sought to emulate them, especially the Roman writers—Cicero, **Seneca,** Pliny—who took upon themselves the hortatory roles of counselors to the powerful or judges of the state of human affairs. Balzac as a correspondent readily saw himself as an adviser. He set himself the task of persuading his readers about political and literary matters as effectively as possible in order to bring about appropriate thinking and behavior. In concert with the Ancients, he held this role to be a noble vocation, requiring untiring industry and continual polishing. This calling was also to serve as Balzac's ticket to immortality, as it had for the Ancients.

His letters, especially the *Premières lettres,* strike the modern reader as florid. His reasoning, though cogent, resides in an abundant display of classical rhetoric—images, antitheses, enumerations, crafted transitions—which calls attention to the artistry of the writing and implicitly, to the writer's talent. However, since these flourishes—learned from Roman oratory—are couched in letters, which naturally include direct address, compliments, and personal observations, the form relieves the weight of the pervasive Ciceronian style. The topical issues are necessarily brief, because of the conventions of the epistolary genre, but they were considered well-written because of their style. This balance of brevity and style, which satisfied the mind and aesthetic sensibility of his readers while not taxing them, made for a rewarding experience, to which the enthusiasm of Balzac's audience testifies. This correspondence became an ideal of intelligent discourse directed toward a cultivated though not necessarily learned readership (which included women). Thus, Balzac's letters contributed to the creation of *l'honnêteté,* an urbane, sophisticated, and elevated comportment, developed in aristocratic salons during Balzac's lifetime and designed to govern the intellectual, moral, and social life of the elite, giving it meaning and beauty. Balzac demonstrated, then, how to write a cultured and persuasive French.

PAMELA PARK

Biography

Born probably May 1597 (baptized 1 June 1597) in Angoulême. Studied at Jesuit colleges in Angoulême and Poitiers; Collège de la Marche, Paris, 1610; enrolled at the

University of Leiden, 1615; returned to Paris, c. 1616. Secretary to the Duke of Epernon and one of his sons; aided in the rescue of Marie de Medicis from prison at Blois, 1619; agent to Cardinal de la Valette, Rome, 1620–22; appointed historiographer of France, from 1624; visited Paris, 1624–25, 1626–28. Lived mostly in Angoulême, from 1628. Elected to the French Academy, 1634. Died (after a long illness) in Angoulême, 18 February 1654.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose

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Recueil de nouvelles lettres, 1637

Œuvres diverses, 1644

Lettres choisies, 2 vols., 1647

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Barańczak, Stanisław

Polish, 1946–

Stanisław Barańczak belongs to the so-called "Generation of '68" (after the student protests in 1968) in Polish literature, whose main discoveries were, as he himself put it (in an interview for *Na Głos* [Aloud], 1991), that in the age of collective values imposed by communism, "the attempt to save or to defend one's individuality and one's right to be an individual is a most subversive act of public significance"; that Marxism cannot be "revised" or improved; and that censorship renders cultural authenticity impossible. When martial law was introduced in Poland in 1981, Barańczak was a visiting professor of literature at Harvard University and he remained there as a full professor, joining the group of prominent Polish writers in exile. Although living in the United States, Barańczak is very much a presence on the Polish literary market with his poetry, essays, and translations.

Barańczak is a "translator" in both the metaphoric and the literal meanings of this term—a mediator between different spheres of life and literature, between English and Polish literature, and between East European experience and the West. He has published 12 volumes of poetry in which the political and the metaphysical coexist, 12 books of essays and literary criticism, translations of 12 Shakespeare plays, and numerous collections of English, American, and Russian poetry in translation.

Barańczak's most representative collections of essays—*Etyka i poetyka* (1979; Ethics and poetics), and *Breathing Under Water and Other East European Essays* (1990)—show his mediative talent in its full lucidity. The author's reflections on the likenesses, analogies, and contrasts between ethics and poetics involve the works of **Thomas Mann,** Dietrich Bonhoeffer, **Osip Mandel'shtam, Joseph Brodsky, Czesław Miłosz,** and **Zbigniew Herbert,** but also minor works of contemporary Polish authors. In the essay "Zmieniony głos Settembriniego" (1975; The changed voice of Settembrini) Barańczak discusses the possible foundations of a new ethics that is not supported by an irrational authority: in the world without God, any authoritative ethics would be pernicious; the only possible ethical measure is "the other man," hence everyone is individually responsible for his deeds and has to make his own choice. Poetry has a special mission in this new situation: not only must it adopt some of the traditional functions of the humanistic sciences—that is, as the vehicle of socially important ideas—it must also control the consequences of vague slogans and remote goals introduced into society by ideological dogma. Barańczak believes that poetry, with its inclination toward the concrete, demonstrates how those slogans are fulfilled and by what means the goals of

the ideologies are pursued. The dogma, which sets to work on the media, uses methods designed for subliminal persuasion and manipulation of the masses; poetry, on the contrary, rescues man from the automatism of his thinking and speaking—"it teaches him to think, to speak, and to act on his own and therefore responsibly." This new social mission of poetry, however, is not supposed to humble it to the level of the so-called mass audience. To be socially useful, poetry should rather try to uplift the reader ("Uwagi krótkowidza" [1972; Remarks of a shortsighted person]). Barańczak is to a great extent optimistic about the future of the new ethics without authorities. Thus, in "Notatki na marginesach Bonhoeffera" (1974; Notes on the margins of Bonhoeffer), he writes that it is not necessary for the Ten Commandments to disappear with the decline of Christianity. Pure atheism, he notes, reflecting Miłosz, is an unbearable burden; most people who simply want to "be good" feel obliged by Christian ethics even if they have no access to Revelation ("Summa Czesławn Miłosza" [1978; The *summa* of Czesławn Miłosza]).

In order to pursue its ethical tasks, literature must be born of doubt and creative disagreement, and awaken these in the reader. This seems to be Barańczak's main criterion as a literary critic in *Nieufni i zadufani* (1971; The diffident and the proud), *Ironia i harmonia* (1973; Irony and harmony), *Etyka i poetyka, Książki najgorsze* (1981, enlarged edition, 1990; The worst books), and *Przed i po* (1988; Before and after). Other indispensable qualities of good literature and especially of poetry, according to Barańczak, are the uniqueness of the individual poetic language (a theme explored in his study *Język poetycki Mirona Białoszewskiego* [1974; The poetic language of Miron Białoszewski] and summarized in the essay "Proszę pokazać język" [1974; Show your tongue, please]), and the taste for paradox and irony. Zbigniew Herbert's poetry, to which Barańczak devoted his book *Uciekinier z utopii* (1984; *A Fugitive from Utopia*), can be seen both as a source of these criteria and as their incarnation.

After years of mediating between life and literature, in the U.S.Barańczak also became a mediator between the political and cultural idioms of the East and the West. His collection of essays *Breathing Under Water* was praised by critics as "an impressive contribution to bridge-building between separate cultures" (George Gömöri, 1992). According to the author's own confession (in an interview for *Dziennik Poznański,* 1991), it follows the stylistic formula of George Orwell's essays: an "impossible" alloy of richness and simplicity, complexity and transparency The relation between ethics and poetics continues to be the main object of Barańczak's reflections, but now he concentrates, on the one hand, on great creative or public figures such as the 20th century's most important Polish writers, **Witold Gombrowicz,** Bruno Schulz, Alexander Wat, Czesław Miłosz, Miron Białoszewski, and Wisława Szymborska, as well as figures like Pope John Paul II, Lech Wałęsa, **Václav Havel,** Adam Michnik, and Miklós Haraszti; and, on the other hand, on the untranslatable phenomena of the communist era in East Europe, such as censorship, *samizdat* (underground publishing), and the "state artist." Once he has delineated America "under Eastern eyes," Barańczak distances himself from the Eastern European mindset and thus manages, if not to "translate" the Eastern reality into the language of the West, at least to explain it convincingly and to abolish the myth that communism is not necessarily antagonistic to creativity. It is clear from *Breathing Under Water* that anything of value that has been created under communism was born despite it or against it.

KATIA MITOVA-JANOWSKI

Biography

Born 13 November 1946 in Poznań. Studied at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, 1964–69, M.A. in Polish literature, 1969, Ph.D., 1973. Married Anna Barańczak, 1968: one son and one daughter. Assistant professor, Adam Mickiewicz University, 1970–77: expelled for political reasons, but allowed to teach again, 1980–81; invited by Harvard University as a guest lecturer, 1977, but had to wait four years for an exit visa; associate professor, 1981–84, and professor in Polish literature, from 1984, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Active in the Polish human rights movement in the 19808: one of the cofounders of KOR (Committee for the defense of workers, later renamed Committee for society's self-defense); editor of the underground literary quarterly *Zapis* (Record); blacklisted from 1975 for signing letters of protest; in 1983 the Polish consulate in New York refused to renew his passport and in effect exiled him. Awards: Kościelski Foundation Prize, 1973; Jurzykowski Prize, 1981; Terrence Des Pres Prize for Poetry, for *The Weight of the Body: Selected Poems,* 1989; Polish PEN Club Award, 1990.

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Breathing Under Water and Other East European Essays, 1990

Ocalone w tłumaczeniu: Szkice o warsztacie tłumacza poezji z dołączeniem maiej antologii przekładów, 1992

Zaufać nieufności: Osiem rozmów o sensie poezji, 1990–1992, 1993

Other writings: 12 volumes of poetry (including *Selected Poems: The Weight of the Body,* 1989). Also edited anthologies of English metaphysical poetry, English and American religious lyric, English and American love poetry, and English and American poetry; translated into English (with Clare Cavanagh) the poetry of Wisława Szymborska (*View with a Grain of Sand,* 1995); translated into Polish plays by Shakespeare, as well as poems by Dylan Thomas, Osip Mandel'shtam, Joseph Brodsky, Gerard Manley Hopkins, e. e. cummings, **John Donne,** Emily Dickinson, James Merrill, Philip Larkin, Robert

Frost, Robert Herrick, Andrew Marvell, Thomas Hardy, and **W.H.Auden**.

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Barthes, Roland

French, 1915–1980

Roland Barthes' intellectual course did not follow the traditional university path, due, among other things, to his recurrent health problems. Numerous relapses with tuberculosis prevented him from carrying out his doctoral research: this explains why he published more essays than substantial scientific studies. And because he was not attached to a particular university faculty, he was able to diversify his interests. To begin with, Barthes wanted to be a semiologist and analyze different systems of signification as they are revealed in language (*Le Degré zero de l'écriture* [1953; *Writing Degree Zero*]), everyday life (*Mythologies,* 1957), or clothes (*Système de la mode* [1967; *The Fashion System*]). The introduction to *Writing Degree Zero* specifies that we are reading an essay, in both meanings of the term. It consists of an attempt, "an introduction to what could be a History of Writing," but also of a marked commitment to an ideological concept of literature perceived as value and as institution. Writing has always functioned as a sign, so much so that the act of writing was claimed by the bourgeoisie as early as the 17th century. The utopia of denotation must therefore be denounced and semiology, among other things, embraced; hence the later editions of this first essay are completed by the *Éléments de sémiologie* (1965; *Elements of Semiology*). These two volumes supply the reader with the necessary tools to decode, with the linguistic apparatus, the different discourses that make up the social field.

All signs are full of connotations; that is, they consist of systems of second senses that are well marked ideologically, allowing many signs to reach mythic status. These myths

must be exposed, insofar as social objects tend to portray the cultural for the natural, to found common opinion in absolute truth. In *Mythologies,* then, Barthes points out the mythical dimension of "the face of Garbo," "steak and chips," "the Tour de France," or "the new Citroën," based on the two-level connotative system analyzed in "Le Mythe, aujourd'hui" ("The Myth Today"), the closing essay of the collection. In the same way, he studies the clothing code in a structuralist manner in *The Fashion System* by looking for the way this particular type of sign possesses its rhetoric and its poetry. With this semiological approach, it is not surprising that Barthes is fascinated by Japan and that the essay he dedicates to that country is entitled *L'Empire des signes* (1970; *Empire of Signs*). He considers Japan as another system, and discovers the symbolic in calligraphy, clothes, food, and urban geography.

But Barthes cannot be reduced simply to a systematic semiologist. On the one hand, he quickly takes issue with those who denounce the common opinion as a new totalitarian system ("Changer l'objet lui-même" [1971; Changing the object itself]); on the other hand, he continues to be fascinated by the classic literary texts of Michelet, **Chateaubriand,** or Proust. For a time he attempted to unite semiology and literature in an article that has become a classic, "Introduction a Panalyse structurale des récits" (1966; "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives"), where he again talks about the heritage of Russian formalists to try to extract the elementary functions that make up any narrative. But he quickly perceives that literary work cannot be reduced to a system. Already, in his first literary essay, *Michelet par lui-même* (1954; *Michelet*), he is more interested in reconstituting Michelet's "organized network of obsessions" in a "pre-critique" that clearly illustrates Barthes' own vocation as an essayist, than in attempting to formalize Michelet's writing style. In *Essais critiques* (1964; *Critical Essays*) and *Nouveaux essais critiques* (1972; *New Critical Essays*), Barthes multiplies the "plural" readings of authors as different as Brecht, La Fontaine, RobbeGrillet, **Voltaire,** and Kafka.

This freedom in analysis, which is hardly as concerned with critical machinery and philological designs as that practiced in the Sorbonne, was strongly reproached by the university circle when Barthes wrote *Sur Racine* (1963; *On Racine*). Raymond Picard wrote a pamphlet about him, *Nouvelle critique ou nouvelle imposture* (1965; *New Criticism or New Fraud?*), which reveals the tension between those who believe in traditional biographical criticism and those who take part in a renewed approach to literary criticism, open to the contributions of both semiology and psychoanalysis. Barthes answers these reproaches in *Critique et vérité* (1966; *Criticism and Truth*), denouncing the institution of a criticism which would be based on objectivity, good taste, and clarity, without grounding these self-proclaimed values scientifically. He continues his task of tearing down literary work, either by analyzing authors who prefer extremes (*Sade, Fourier, Loyola,* 1971) or by microanalyzing brief texts such as Balzac's short story "Sarrasine," dissected in 561 sequences in *S/Z* (1970).

In a way *S/Z* bids farewell to the structural utopia and to Barthes' pursuit of generalized systematization. The notion of text appears here (and this is Barthes' central point) as an opposition between "readable," i.e. classical texts that are no longer likely to be rewritten by the reader, and "writable"—texts that we can desire, write, and rewrite while reading. The text is also seen as a shattered, broken structure which allows itself to

be analyzed from many angles.

This idea of the personal dimension in the relationship with the text flourishes in *Le Plaisir du texte* (1973; *The Pleasure of the Text*), where 46 entries, classified in alphabetical order, demonstrate the pleasurable relationship Barthes maintains with literary narratives, in the form of an autobiography of him as a reader. The plural form of the text, the enjoyment of reading, the game of intertextuality, the importance of reading aloud, the texture of the voice and the dialogue—all important ideas in the theoretical debates of the moment—were developed here by Barthes, not in the form of theoretical postulates, but in subjective **aphorisms**.

The subjectivity of style asserts itself with more and more power and independence in relation to the intellectual styles of the moment. The distinction between the critical part of the work and its "literary" dimension decreases to the point that the critic who talks about the writer Barthes is none other than Barthes himself. *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* (1975; *Roland Barthes*) thus stages this passage to a writing that is no longer separate from critical and autobiographical activity. The essay plays unceasingly on ambiguity, since it begins with his handwritten words—"It must all be considered as if spoken by a character in a novel"—but is full of the author's photographs and souvenirs. Life, literature, and criticism intermix, with enjoyment as the only rule, as confirmed in these last, also handwritten words: "One writes with one's desire, and I am not through desiring."

It is therefore not surprising that Barthes' next essay is entitled *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* (1977; *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*). The first fragment, entitled "Comment est fait ce livre" ("How This Book Is Made"), insists on the importance of speech in the first person, "in order to portray an enunciation, not an analysis." Then Barthes evokes the listed "figures" of the feeling of love, the repertory of which is supposed to be systematic, but with variable contents. Their order is randomly set and their place in the book "absolutely insignificant" since it is based on the arbitrary nature of the alphabet. Without saying so, Barthes is setting the stage for an essay in these introductory directions.

He returns to literature in his study on *Sollers, écrivain* (1979; *Sollers, Writer*) and his *Leçon inaugurale* (1978; "Inaugural Lecture") to the Collège de France. Here he asks questions about intellectual power, language, literature, and semiology in a masterly synthesis of his great topics of reflection, but concludes by evoking the wisdom he has attained and defines as "no power, a little knowledge, a little wisdom, and as much flavor as possible." He looks for this flavor again in a last semiological investigation of photography. But *La Chambre claire: Note sur la photographie* (1980; *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*) is less a phenomenology of the image than an analysis of the emotional relationship Barthes maintains with the photographs, portraits, and landscapes he has encountered in his life. The time for remembering and admitting to intimate passions has arrived, as shown in the posthumous texts in *Incidents* (1987), which reveal the author's homosexuality and secret passions.

Since his death, Barthes' work has been constantly re-edited and commented upon. A three-volume complete edition of his works and articles has recently been published, a rarity for an essayist who appealed to the intellectual class more than to the public at large. Barthes' popularity in France and in the world, the pertinence and the originality of

his analyses, their diversity and lively actuality, all explain his exceptional posthumous survival.

MARC LITS

Biography

Roland Gérard Barthes. Born 12 November 1915 in Cherbourg. Studied at the Lycée Montaigne, Paris, 1924–30; Lycée Louis-leGrand, Paris, 1930–34, baccalauréat, 1934; the Sorbonne, Paris, from 1936, licence in classical letters, 1939, diploma in Greek tragedy, 1941, licence in grammar and philology, 1943. Contracted tuberculosis, 1934, and relapsed periodically, staying in sanatoria, 1934–35 and 1942–46. Taught at lycées in Biarritz, 1939, Bayonne, 1939–40, and Paris, 1940–41, and at the French Institute, Bucharest, 1948–49, University of Alexandria, 1949–50, and the Direction Générale des Affaires Culturelles, Paris, 1950–52; research appointments with Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1952–59; chair, 1960–62, and director of studies, 1960–76, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris; taught at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1967–68; chair of literary semiology, Collège de France, Paris, 1976–80. Cofounder, *Théâtre Populaire* (Popular theater), 1953, and *Arguments,* 1956; contributor to various periodicals, including *Communications, La Quinzaine Littéraire* (The literary fortnightly), *Les Lettres Nouvelles* (New letters), and *Tel Quel* (As is). Chevalier des Palmes Académiques. Died (as the result of a street accident) in Paris, 26 March 1980.

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Bataille, Georges

French, 1897–1962

Georges Bataille was an adventurer in the world of ideas and sensations, an explorer who, because he could not abstain from questioning every alternative as it was offered him, intrepidly embarked on an intellectual quest that would go beyond rationality. Endowed with a penetrating and nagging intelligence that he nourished by wide-ranging reading, with concentration on Hegel, **Nietzsche,** and **Heidegger,** he was never content with others' speculations even though he never succeeded in systematizing his own, perhaps because it was in their very nature that such a task would remain impossible.

Sharing fully in all the problems of what, at the opening of the essay collection *La Littérature et le mal* (1957; *Literature and Evil*) he characterized as a "tumultuous generation," Bataille's first endeavor to compensate for a difficult childhood was a failure, yet it was a tell-tale one. Brought up in the French lay tradition by his blind, paralyzed father, he first attempted to assuage the tempests of his inner life by embracing a religious vocation, entering the seminary of Saint-Fleur to train for the priesthood, and spending a period with the Benedictine congregation at Quarr, on the Isle of Wight. Though the Abbey had a reputation for deepening spirituality, particularly through the beauty of its liturgical observances, Bataille's mystic phase passed rapidly. Despite his faith he continued, as his critics have noted, to crave for deeper satisfactions than reason could offer; henceforth he would seek them not in religion but in the arts, especially literature, which he linked with anthropology.

Surrealism naturally attracted Bataille, though only for a time. As he explains in "Le Surréalisme au jour le jour" ("Surrealism Day by Day"), his restless mind could not brook André Breton's domineering ways, and, though like many other French intellectuals he was attracted by left-wing politics, the Communist Party could not count on his loyalty for long. He joined with Roger Caillois and Michel Leiris to form the socalled Collège de Sociologie and founded journals, but these enterprises were short-lived. Bataille's preference was for the lonely furrow, and his reputation was at its highest not during his lifetime but posthumously, when his thought was taken up and promoted in *Tel Quel* (As is) in the 1970s.

"A mystic without God," in Boisdeffre's phrase, Bataille discerned the source of all literary creation in the problem of evil, exploring the issue in *Literature and Evil*. In a wideranging series of essays that were originally published separately in the journal *Critique* and that are more accessible than some of his other writings, he discusses not

only Proust and, inevitably, Sade, **Baudelaire,** and Genet, but also Franz Kafka, William Blake, and Emily Brontë. He marvels that *Wuthering Heights* should have been written by a woman whose life was apparently so circumscribed and who still achieved such awareness of what for him are the most significant issues of existence. Bataille's interest in eroticism had found early expression in *Histoire de l'œil (Story of the Eye),* a novel published under a pseudonym because the frank, if somewhat limited, pornographic first-person narrative would have clashed with his chosen profession in librarianship. In *Literature and Evil* Bataille presents his case in the more acceptable guise of criticism. Eroticism takes a central place, affirming existence, releasing the individual from the isolation that is otherwise a fundamental concomitant of consciousness, and finding its culmination in death. Where an ancient philosopher might have placed a premium on the equanimity that is the reward of moderation, Bataille values anguish, the emotional turmoil that is the product of excess. This becomes all the stronger when excess can be experienced as transgression, with a genuine and alarming sense of going beyond all normal bounds in search of novel and unprecedented inner responses. The link with sexuality is, of course, strong, but not exclusive, for the special liberating response may equally be triggered by other exceptional stimuli. Bataille returns repeatedly and possibly with some retrospective elaboration to certain experiences, such as witnessing particular horrors at a bull fight. Paradoxically for him, cruelty has positive as well as negative aspects. These ideas, which some might think depend to some degree on religious and social orthodoxies that have been rejected but never totally forgotten, are developed by Bataille in his essay *L'Érotisme* (1957; *Eroticism*) and, with a rather different context, in *L'Histoire de l'érotisme* (History of eroticism).

Another approach to Bataille is through the art criticism that constitutes a significant and characteristically multi-disciplinary part of his work from early on. In 1955 he published not only an essay on Manet, dwelling in particular on the significance of the rejection of his art by his contemporaries, but also a study of the cave painting at Lascaux. Some of the anthropological statements can be considered speculative, but this study offers Bataille the opportunity for reflections on the nature of art and its role in human existence. Arguing that the true dawn of art dates not from ancient Greece but from the time of Lascaux, he salutes a major advance as humankind becomes differentiated from beasts when the self acquires an inner life in the awareness of death and the desire for communication. Previously humans had devoted their energies to practical ends, but now arose the possibilities for something that Bataille regards as far more important: the ludic, which leads directly to ritual and art.

Bataille can write with all the clarity and elegance conventionally regarded as typical of French authors. But he can also be difficult. Modern French prose has a tendency toward ellipsis, and that suits him well. He is content to present his thought in a way that engages his readers by leaving it to them to make connections as best they may, and he is indeed a master of the pregnant pause. He is also fearless in the employment of abstract nouns, the significance of which in the particular context he has created can remain puzzling. This means that reading Bataille can itself be a challenging intellectual adventure.

CHRISTOPHER SMITH

Biography

Born 10 September 1897 in Billom, Puy-de-Dôme. Used many pseudonyms, including Lord Auch and Pierre Angélique. In ill health all of his life, and suffered from periods of depression. Converted to Catholicism, 1914: renounced, 1912. Military service, 1916–17: discharged because of tuberculosis. Joined seminary at Saint-Fleur, 1917–18. Studied at the École des Chartes, Paris, 1918–22; fellowship at the School of Advanced Hispanic Studies, Madrid, 1922. Librarian and deputy keeper, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 1922–42: resigned because of tuberculosis. Married Silvia Maklès, 1928 (divorced, 1934): one daughter. Editor, *Documents,* 1929–31. Liaison with "Laure" (i.e. Colette Peignot; died, 1938), 1934–38. Cofounder, with André Breton, Contre-Attaque (Counter-Attack) political group, 1935–36; cofounder, Collège de Sociologie, 1936–39, and a secret society, which published *Acéphale* review, 1936–39; moved to Vézelay, 1942–49. Married Diane de Beauharnais, 1946: one daughter. Cofounder and editor, *Critique,* 1946–62; librarian in Carpentras, 1949–51, and Orléans, from 1951. Died in Paris, 8 July 1962.

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L'Érotisme, 1957; as *Death and Sensuality,* and as *Eroticism,* translated by Mary Dalwood, 1962

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Les Larmes d'Éros, 1961; enlarged edition, 1971; as *The Tears of Eros,* translated by Peter Connor, 1989

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Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939, edited by Allan Stoekl, translated by Stoekl, Carl R. Lovitt, and Donald M. Leslie, Jr., 1985

Le Dictionnaire critique, 1993

The Absence of Myth: Writings on Surrealism, 1994

Other writings: novels (including *Le Coupable [Guilty],* 1944; *L'Abbé* C, 1950; *Le Bleu*

du ciel [Blue of Noon], 1957), poetry, and works on art, eroticism, and literature.

Collected works edition: *Œuvres completes,* edited by Michel Foucault and Francis Marmande, 12 vols., 1970–88.

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Baudelaire, Charles

French, 1821–1867

Charles Baudelaire is chiefly known as the author of *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857, 1861; *The Flowers of Evil*) and of a collection of experimental prose poems, *Le Spleen de Paris* (1869; *Paris Spleen*). But he is also important as a critic of painting and, to a much lesser extent, of literature and music. The essays on art are usually published under the collective title *Curiosités esthétiques* (Aesthetic curiosities), those on literature and music under the title *L'Art romantique* (Romantic art; a title not chosen by Baudelaire). The *Salon de 1846* (Salon of 1846) first established his reputation as a writer and aesthete, and he is now judged one of the greatest art critics of 19th-century France. Over the last 50 years his **critical essays** have come to be considered an extension of his creative work because of the insights they provide into his aesthetics as a poet. The best exhibit the qualities one might expect of a poet—imaginative and emotional investment in his subject, allusive intellectual density, sensuous evocativeness—in keeping with

Baudelaire's conviction that the only aesthetics worthy of the name are *a posteriori,* the subsequent analysis of a richly sensuous lived experience, and not a matter of "principles" or abstract preconceptions about the beautiful. We can see this exemplified in "Richard Wagner et 'Tannhäuser' a Paris" (1861; Richard Wagner and *Tannhäuser* in Paris). Baudelaire's musical experience was limited, but a concert of excerpts from Wagner's music and the premiere of *Tannhäuser* in Paris in 1861 produced an overwhelming impression, evoked in the essay in terms of the poetic theory of *correspondances* (mystical correspondences) or synesthesia (in this case, sound suggesting qualities of light and color). Baudelaire referred to experience of this kind—sensation carried in the imagination to a point of almost preternatural intensity—as *le surnaturalisme* (supernaturalism). Wagner was to Baudelaire in music what Delacroix had been 15 years earlier in painting. A series of essays on drugs, published together under the title *Les Paradis artificiels* (1860; *Artificial Paradise*), explore similar states of heightened consciousness produced by alcohol, hashish, and opium, but Baudelaire's celebration of their poetic effects is counterbalanced by his condemnation of drugs in terms of irresponsibility, delusion, and moral disintegration.

The literary criticism does not have quite the same intensity, though Baudelaire's passion for Delacroix and Wagner was matched by his enthusiasm for Poe, whom he translated extensively. Poe provided not so much the revelation of a new experience as the confirmation of a theory of poetry toward which Baudelaire's own intuition was guiding him. His most important collection of essays on literature, *Réflexions sur quelques-uns de mes contemporains* (1861; Reflections on some of my contemporaries), was commissioned as a series of prefatory essays for an anthology of French poetry produced by Eugène Crépet. Many of the poets discussed would now be considered minor and do not engage Baudelaire's imagination in the same way as music or painting, the essays on Gautier and Hugo being exceptions. In these essays, Baudelaire, reflecting on the work of his contemporaries and thinking back over his own best poetry, comes closest to formulating his own ideal of a "pure poetry."

The "Salon"—a critical account of the annual exhibition of contemporary painting held in Paris—became, in the wake of Diderot, an essay subgenre in the 19th century. They were commissioned by leading Parisian papers and journals and often published separately as brochures. They were often written by established or avant-garde writers (Musset, Heine, Champfleury) and were typical of the cross-fertilization between literature and the fine arts that was a feature of the intense artistic life of Paris from the Constitutional Monarchy onward. The aim in the first place was to offer an intellectual tour of the paintings on view and to act as a guide and stimulus to bourgeois buyers. Baudelaire's first *Salon* in 1845 follows this format. A year later, electrified by his recent acquaintance with Delacroix, Baudelaire wrote the *Salon de 1846* and transformed the genre from a catalogue with commentary into an essay in high aesthetics. The *Salon de 1846* is intellectually taut in its construction and polemically committed. In it Baudelaire states his own convictions as an artist at the outset of his career and promotes the genius of Delacroix, seen as the representative of the Romantic movement in France. Much of the essay turns on the distinction and opposition of color (Delacroix) and line (Ingres). Line artificially separates objects and parts of objects from each other and creates stable conceptual identities; color blurs distinctions, including the distinction between subject

(the viewer) and object (the viewed) and tends toward a poetic state of coalescence. The opposition of Delacroix and Ingres, as the two main rival representatives of contemporary French painting, is repeated in the text Baudelaire devoted to the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1855, which is perhaps more interesting in the brief glimpses it affords of the impact of non-European art (for example Chinese art) on Baudelaire's sensibility. The Exposition made Baudelaire aware of the narrowness of the controversies (e.g. Romantic versus neoclassical) that were still feeding artistic debate in France.

Two essays on caricature, "Quelques caricaturistes français" (1857; Some French caricaturists) and "Quelques caricaturistes étrangers" (1857; Some foreign caricaturists), prefaced by a short metaphysical theory of the comic, "De l'essence du rire" (1855; The essence of laughter), show a Baudelaire fascinated by the moral suggestiveness of this genre, which he refused to consider as minor. On the contrary, caricature exhibits, in quintessential form, the processes of simplification and expressive generalization (what Baudelaire calls "idealization") common to all the visual arts.

Baudelaire's last *Salon* in 1859 is tightly organized around the concept of imagination, in the name of which he rejects realism as a philosophically untenable position. As a subjective idealist, he argues that we do not know nature in any objective sense; all we have are the ways in which individual imaginations totalize experience. Baudelaire's abiding commitment to Delacroix made him hostile to Courbet and unsympathetic to the contemporary developments in French landscape painting that would lead to impressionism (he could not tolerate the erosion of compositional values). It also blinded him to the novel genius of Manet. *Le Peintre de la vie moderne* (1863; The painter of modern life) is the fullest development of a preoccupation announced as early as the *Salons* of 1845 and 1846—the necessity for modern painters to find the material of their art in the reality and lifestyle of their own historical moment. A comparatively minor illustrator of worldly life, Constantin Guys, is hailed as the artist who has opened his eyes to the bizarre beauty of Second Empire Paris, its types, its fashions, and the whole new world of nightlife made possible by gas lighting. The essay was influential in creating the climate of thought and sensibility that made possible the work of artists like Toulouse-Lautrec, Degas, and, of course, Manet himself.

BERNARD HOWELLS

Biography

Charles Pierre Baudelaire. Born 9 April 1821 in Paris. Studied at the Collège Royal, Lyon, 1832–36; Lycée Louis-le-Grand, Paris, 1836–39: expelled; Pension Levêque et Bailly, Paris, baccalauréat, 1839; enrolled as a law student at the University of Paris, but led a bohemian life, contracted venereal disease, and fell into debt, 1839–40. Sent on a voyage to India by his parents, 1841, but left the ship at Mauritius and returned to Paris, 1842. Began a lifelong affair with Jeanne Duval, 1842. Lived on an inheritance from his father, from 1842: deprived by law of control over it by the Conseil Judiciaire, 1844. Cofounder, *Le Salut Public* (The public salute), 1848. Fought on the barricades during the Revolution of 1848; associated with Proudhon and opposed the coup d'état of LouisNapoleon Bonaparte, December 1851, but subsequently remained aloof from

politics and adopted increasingly reactionary attitudes. Involved with Marie Daubrun, 1854–55, 1859, and Apollonie Sabatier, 1857. Publication of *Les Fleurs du mal,* 1857, led to a trial for indecency, a fine, and suppression of six poems; extended stay in Brussels, 1864; returned to Paris and stayed in a sanatorium, 1866. Died aphasiac and hemiplagiac in Paris, 31 August 1867.

Selected Writings

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Salon de 1846, 1846; edited by David Kelley, 1975
Les Paradis artificiels, 1860; as *Artificial Paradise: On Hashish and Wine as a Means of Expanding Individuality,* translated by Ellen Fox, 1971
Réflexions sur quelques-uns de mes contemporains, 1861
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Selected Critical Studies, edited by Douglas Parmée, 1949
My Heart Laid Bare and Other Prose Writings, edited by Peter Quennell, translated by Norman Cameron, 1950
The Mirror of Art: Critical Studies, edited and translated by Jonathan Mayne, 1955
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The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays, edited and translated by Jonathan Mayne, 1964
Art in Paris 1845–1862: Salons and Other Exhibitions, edited and translated by Jonathan Mayne, 1965
Selected Writings on Art and Artists, translated by P.E.Charvet, 1972
Critique d'art; Critique musicale, edited by Claude Pichois, 1992

Other writings: poetry (including the collections *Les Fleurs du mal [The Flowers of Evil],* 1857 and 1861, and *Petits Poèmes en prose* [or *Le Spleen de Paris*], 1869). Also translated tales by Edgar Allan Poe.

Collected works editions: *Œuvres complètes,* edited by Jacques Crépet and Claude Pichois, 19 vols., 1922–53; *Œuvres complètes* (Pléiade Edition), edited by Claude Pichois, 2 vols., 1975–76.

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Raser, Timothy, *A Poetics of Art Criticism: The Case of Baudelaire,* Chapel Hill: North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures, 1989
Richardson, Joanna, *Baudelaire,* London: Murray, and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994
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Bayle, Pierre

French, 1647–1706

Pierre Bayle expressed his views on Protestantism and religious tolerance in brief prose forms (**letters,** thoughts, dictionary entries) which convey the style and methods of an essayist. He is often considered a forerunner to the Enlightenment because of his rigorous examination of religious dogma based on erudition and reason coupled with a perspective that respected a variety of belief systems. He relied upon Cartesian methods and tenets, as filtered through the writings of Malebranche, in the many domains covered in his writings.

Bayle grew up poor, provincial, and Protestant, which marked him an outsider in 17th-century Catholic France and had a profound effect upon his writing. He left his country, in fact, and spent most of his life in Holland to avoid religious persecution and enjoy the freedom of uncensored writing. In the *Lettre sur la comète* (1682,; Letter on the comet), enlarged a year later to *Pensées diverses sur la comète (Miscellaneous Reflections Occasioned by the Comet),* the letter form proved an effective means for his arguments disproving any supernatural significance attributed to comets, which Bayle showed to be natural phenomena explained by Cartesian physics. Even in this early text we find the lively, entertaining digressions which characterize Bayle's later style of composition.

He applied his scientific inquiry conveyed with a derisive tone to a review of history in the *Critique générale de l'Histoire du calvinisme du P.Maimbourg* (1682., 1683; General critique of the History of Calvinism by P.Maimbourg). In this work he adapted his Cartesian principles to the study of history, and stressed the need for historical objectivity and impartiality, based on a careful examination of sources. It signaled a new style of controversy, and one of its most contested concepts was the idea that superstition is the worst of our evils, even worse than atheism. The work was burned by the hangman in

Paris, and was a huge success in clandestine circulation.

Bayle's most important and influential work, the two-volume *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697; *An Historical and Critical Dictionary*), was the only work to bear his name. Its enormous success can be seen in the fact that it was the work most often found in private libraries in the 18th century. It consists of a series of concise biographies marked by a witty, impersonal style. His skepticism often touched on pessimism, and his critique of superstitious, dogmatic elements in all religions earned him enemies among Catholics and Protestants alike. Irony and satire were often used to strip away hypocritical notions and practices, as Bayle displayed the naked truth of human error. His ambiguous treatment of the Bible as an historical document appealing to faith but requiring scrupulous rational examination was one of the most controversial elements of the *Dictionary*. He believed the practice of supporting governments and justifying political and institutional systems by a biased interpretation of the designs of Providence to be a morally corrupt practice and subversion of the truth.

In Bayle's writing in general, as well as in the *Dictionary* in particular, the existing order of things is considered better than the chaos that change would entail. To this extent Bayle represents well the transitional period between the 17th and 18th centuries, between an acceptance, albeit critical, of contemporary political and ideological systems, and the more radical rejection of the status quo by writers of the Enlightenment. Bayle's thought reveals the fluid orthodox Calvinism prevalent during the reign of Louis XIV, which encompassed a variety of apparent contradictions (skepticism and faith, monarchy and dissent). But if he refused the role of a revolutionary, Bayle was an ardent and relentless reformer. He destroyed commonplaces, facile logic, and totems in his work, which tends toward an individualistic perspective on society, due perhaps in part to his Protestant background.

A second edition of the *Dictionary,* which was greatly augmented, appeared in 1702, and conveyed some of Bayle's more recent debates and philosophical arguments. Even in this work there is the journalistic aspect which characterizes so much of his writings, so that we can trace the evolution of his thought and of his polemical contests. His primary opponent was Pierre Jurieu, a fellow Protestant and former friend, who refused the spirit of compromise and tolerance toward the Catholics of France that can be found in Bayle's works. Since he fought dogmatism wherever he found it, all the dogmatists of the period were naturally allied against him. His last texts focused on these ideological conflicts: a five-volume *Réponse aux questions d'un provincial* (1703–07; Response to questions of a provincial) and the *Continuation des Pensées diverses* (1705; Continuation of the Miscellaneous reflections).

Bayle was not interested in the earthly rewards of money or honor, but was driven by a tireless pursuit of discovering and expressing the truth, a philosophical goal which he sought with a religious zeal. He can be considered a moralist to the extent that his theological views often emphasize the social consequences of beliefs, and the relationships among peoples as affected by their religious attitudes. He had a great impact upon **Voltaire,** who found encouragement in his work to criticize Christian doctrine. It was as much the strength of his arguments as his style of writing, humanly imperfect in its rambling digressions yet lively in its witty understatement and sarcasm, that distinguished him as a writer. In many ways he resembled more the humanists of the 16th

century than the philosophers of the 18th.

ALLEN G.WOOD

Biography

Born 18 November 1647 in Carla (now Carla-Bayle), southeast of Toulouse. Studied at home; Calvinist academy, Puylaurens, sporadically from 1666; Jesuit college, Toulouse, 1669, where he converted to Catholicism; reverted to Calvinism 17 months later and fled to Geneva to avoid exile as a lapsed Catholic; studied philosophy at the University of Geneva, 1670; tutor in Geneva and Coppet, 1672–74, and Rouen and Paris, 1674; taught philosophy at a Huguenot academy, Sedan, 1675–81, where he became friends with the Calvinist minister Pierre Jurieu; taught philosophy and history at the École Illustre, Rotterdam, 1681–93. *Critique générale* banned on first publication, 1682, and Bayle's brother Jacob was arrested in France as a result, dying in prison, 1685. Founder and coeditor, with Henry Desbordes, *Nouvelles de la République des Lettres* (News from the Republic of Letters), 1684–89. Deterioration of his friendship with Jurieu, from 1686. Died (of tuberculosis) in Rotterdam, 28 December 1706.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose

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Continuation des Pensées diverses, 2 vols., 1705

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Beauvoir, Simone de

French, 1908–1986

Simone de Beauvoir was a prominent French existentialist writer who worked alongside such notables as **Jean-Paul Sartre,** Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and **Albert Camus**. Among the hallmarks of existentialism, and hence of her thought, are an emphasis on radical freedom and its commensurate responsibility, a rejection of the traditional idealistic assumptions about the importance of rationality and universality in favor of an emphasis upon the non-rational and the individual, and a sensitivity to style of

expression. The existentialists wrote in a variety of different styles: novels, plays, short stories, as well as essays. Often their essays were more expository than analytic in style, and were occasionally lyrical.

Yet, at her best, Beauvoir is not quite like any of her fellow existentialists. Her unique voice emerged while she directed her thought to the problems affecting her. Sartre, her collaborator and intimate companion for over 50 years, said of her work in an interview in 1965: "I don't pay compliments and I say things simply. She seems to me a very good writer. She has achieved something which has manifested itself particularly since *The Mandarins*. It's apparent in the memoirs and in her book *A Very Peaceful Death,* which I consider the best thing she's written. What she has achieved is immediate communication with the public" (Madeleine Gobeil, "Sartre Talks of Beauvoir: An Interview with Madeleine Gobeil," in *Marks,* 1987). Sartre went on to describe how this immediacy had been achieved through a proper balance of intellectual and emotional reflection: "She has the right relationship with herself. That's what's meant by seeing oneself in perspective. It's not only a matter of literature, it's a matter of life."

Another hallmark of existentialism is the engagement of the author within his or her situation, referred to as "situated" or "committed" literature, in which writing both reflects the situation the author and readers are in and addresses itself to change and revolution rather than settling for the safe accuracy of benign description. This style of writing was meant to emerge spontaneously from a way of living. Unfortunately, this attempt was not always successful. The literary critic **Edmund Wilson** once said of Sartre—this surely applies to much other existentialist writing—that this style came off as contrived and self-conscious rather than as effective realism:"…a virtuosity of realism and a rhetoric of moral passion which make you feel not merely that the fiction is a dramatic heightening of life but that the literary fantasy takes place on a plane which does not have any real connection with the actual human experience which it is intending to represent" (Edmund Wilson, "Jean-Paul Sartre, the Novelist and the Existentialist," *New Yorker,* 2 August 1947). However, Beauvoir's essays became more and more effective—more situated and committed—as she found her voice.

Beauvoir enjoyed success with her novels, such as *L'Invitée* (1943; *She Came to Stay*), *Le Sang des autres* (1945; *The Blood of Others*), and *Les Mandarins* (1954; *The Mandarins*). While her initial fame as a novelist was well deserved, it has been eclipsed by the attention resulting from her essays concerning ethics, the social status of women, sexuality, politics, aging, and death. Through her own style of committed literature, she chronicled the myriad social changes of postwar Europe.

Her essay on ethics, *Pour une morale de l'ambiguïté* (1947; *The Ethics of Ambiguity*), was an attempt to develop an ethics from existentialism. Some have seen her account as the first step in moving away from the overly individuated world view characteristic of early existentialism toward the socially oriented approach existentialists would later adopt.

She is often seen as a pioneer of contemporary feminist writing. With her classic *Le Deuxième Sexe* (1949; *The Second Sex*), a style emerged which was unique among her existentialist cohorts as she began a tradition which describes the human predicament "in a different voice." While subscribing to both existentialism and Marxism, neither existentialism's theoretical emphasis on freedom and authenticity nor Marxism's

emphasis on class conflict was sufficient to account for woman's plight as a second-class citizen in a male-dominated world. Indeed, she foresaw an important threat within the promise of both these schools of thought: they must not be allowed to reduce the issues of woman's suffering into generic existential, social, or economic terms.

Beauvoir offers outstanding accounts of death throughout her career, describing the death of her friend Elizabeth Mabille ("Zaza"), the death of her mother, and finally the death of Sartre. In these works we see in excruciating detail how one comes to live in a world limned with death. The latter two deaths receive book-length analyses in *Une mort très douce* (1964; *A Very Easy Death*) and *La Cérémonie des adieux* (1982; *Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre*). Her account of aging and growing old in *La Vieillesse* (1970; *The Coming of Age*) provides a situated account of another topic our society has tended to avoid: aging is something which will happen to most of us, yet we tend to live as if it should not be discussed. Beauvoir effectively illustrates the social problems of relegating the elderly to the margins of society.

Beauvoir's four volumes of autobiographical reflections offer a valuable inside look into the world of a woman coming to recognize her own outstanding abilities, as well as the personal longitudinal account of aging, sexuality, her relationship with Sartre, her friendships, and the changing intellectual, political, and public scenes in France and elsewhere. These volumes offer a genuine and often courageous personal account from the perspective of a woman engaged in a lifelong struggle to speak, write, and live in a way best described as honest and free.

DUANE H.DAVIS

Biography

Simone Lucie Ernestine Marie de Beauvoir. Born 9 January 1908 in Paris. Studied at the Cours Désir, Paris, 1913–25, baccalauréat; Institut Sainte-Marie, Neuilly-sur-Seine, and Institut Catholique, Paris, 1925–26; the Sorbonne, Paris, 1926–28; École Normale Supérieure, Paris, 1928–29, agrégation in philosophy, 1929. Began a lifelong relationship with Jean-Paul Sartre, 1929. Taught at lycées in Paris, Marseilles, and Rouen, 1929–43. Founding editor, with Sartre, *Les Temps Modernes* (Modern times), from 1945. Lectured in the United States, 1947; liaison with the writer Nelson Algren, 1947–51; lived with the writer Claude Lanzmann, 1952–58. Cofounder and president, Choisir (Choose) feminist group, 1972, and president, League of Women's Rights, 1974. Awards: Goncourt Prize, 1954; Jerusalem Prize, 1975; Austrian State Prize for European Literature, 1978; honorary degree from Cambridge University. Died in Paris, 14 April 1986.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose

Pyrrhus et Cinéas, 1944

Pour une morale de l'ambiguïté, 1947; as *The Ethics of Ambiguity,* translated by Bernard Frechtman, 1948

L'Existentialisme et la sagesse des nations, 1948

L'Amérique au jour le jour, 1948; as *America Day by Day,* translated by Patrick Dudley, 1952

Le Deuxième Sexe: Les Faits et les mythes and *L'Expérience vécue,* 2 vols., 1949; as *The Second Sex,* edited and translated by H.M. Parshley, 1953; vol. 1 as A *History of Sex,* 1961; vol. 2 as *Nature of the Second Sex,* 1963

Privilèges, 1955; one essay as *Must We Burn de Sade?,* translated by Annette Michelson, 1953

La Longue Marche: Essai sur la Chine, 1957; as *The Long March,* translated by Austryn Wainhouse, 1958

Mémoires d'une jeune fille rangée (autobiography), 1958; as *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter,* translated by James Kirkup, 1959

La Force de l'âge, 1960; as *The Prime of Life,* translated by Peter Green, 1962

Djamila Boupacha, with Gisèle Halimi, 1962; as *Djamila Boupacha,* translated by Peter Green, 1962

La Force des choses, 1963; as *Force of Circumstance,* translated by Richard Howard, 1965

Une mort très douce, 1964; as *A Very Easy Death,* translated by Patrick O'Brian, 1966

La Vieillesse, 1970; as *The Coming of Age,* and as *Old Age,* translated by Patrick O'Brian, 1972

Toute compte fait, 1972; as *All Said and Done,* translated by Patrick O'Brian, 1974

La Cérémonie des adieux, 1982; as *Adieux: A Farewell to Sartre,* translated by Patrick O'Brian, 1984

Other writings: four novels (*L'Invitée [She Came to Stay],* 1943; *Le Sang des autres [The Blood of Others],* 1945; *Tous les hommes sont mortels [All Men Are Mortal],* 1946; *Les Mandarins [The Mandarins],* 1954; *Les Belles Images,* 1966), short stories, two plays, biography, and memoirs.

Bibliographies

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Francis, Claude, and Fernande Gontier, *Les Écrits de Simone de Beauvoir,* Paris: Gallimard, 1979

Further Reading

Barnes, Hazel E., *The Literature of Possibility,* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1959

Marks, Elaine, editor, *Critical Essays on Simone de Beauvoir,* Boston: Hall, 1987

Oakley, Judith, *Simone de Beauvoir,* New York: Pantheon, 1986

Schwarzer, Alice, *After The Second Sex: Conversations with Simone de Beauvoir,* New York: Pantheon, 1984

Beerbohm, Max

British, 1872–1956

In 1921 Max Beerbohm urged Bohun Lynch, an early biographer, not to overanalyze his work, saying of himself that "My gifts are small. I've used them very well and discreetly, never straining them; and the result is that I've made a charming little reputation." The blend of self-mockery and selfassertion, as well as the offhand and understated accuracy of the observation, are essential elements of Beerbohm's style and approach to the essay. Beerbohm was never an especially prolific or an especially innovative writer, but within the limits he set for himself he at times achieved near-perfection in the familiar style of the **personal essay**.

Beerbohm's most interesting essays came at the beginning and the end of his literary career. In his earlier work he was, as he mockingly said of himself, "of the Beardsley period," and his essays of the 1890s reflect certain aspects of the current Aesthetic Movement. Beerbohm's first published essay, "The Pervasion of Rouge," appeared, appropriately, in the first issue of John Lane's *Yellow Book* in 1894. This essay, written while Beerbohm was still an Oxford undergraduate and with tongue very firmly in cheek, extols the arrival of the "era of rouge" and concludes that the increased use of cosmetics will be a good thing for women, because with the emphasis on cosmetics "surface will finally be severed from soul" and people will now look on women's faces as things of beauty rather than as indexes of character. "The Pervasion of Rouge" met with the incomprehension often accorded satire, and in the second issue of the *Yellow Book* Beerbohm had to explain that he was joking.

The first readers of "The Pervasion of Rouge" should not be judged too harshly, for Beerbohm was at this point far from the master satirist and parodist he would soon become, and, while the essay was intended as a parody of preciosity, the style and substance of it and several other essays are themselves somewhat precious. The subjects, style, and narrative voice of the early work were later refined but not transformed. The appreciation of artifice and display, the respect for Beau Brummell and any artist devoted completely to his art ("Dandies and Dandies," 1896), the new and sympathetic perspectives on unpopular or unknown historical figures ("King George the Fourth," 1894; Romeo Coates in "Poor Romeo," 1896) remained constant, as did the characteristic blend of historical background, iconoclastic point of view, use of mild fantasy, and the perception of the extraordinary in the seemingly commonplace, all presented with mild irony in a style of considerable polish and sophistication.

The most lasting and important achievement of Beerbohm's early essays, however, was their development of the Beerbohm persona, that of an elderly man looking wistfully back to the past. In "1880" (1895), Beerbohm's description of the birth of the Aesthetic Movement, he treats his recent youth as ancient history, noting with the truth of paradox that 1880, a mere 14 years earlier, is "now so remote from us that much in it is nearly impossible to understand." In "Diminuendo" (1896), Beerbohm perpetuates this voice of

an elderly aesthete when, at the ripe old age of 24, he concludes that "Surely I could have no part in modern life" and bids farewell to literature, finding that as a writer he is already "a trifle outmoded." The self-characterization and the sense of play pervade Beerbohm's first book of essays, a slim volume published, with complete bibliography, as *The Works of Max Beerbohm* (1896).

With his characteristic blend of self-deflation and self-praise Beerbohm remarked of the Aesthetic period when he began writing that "To give an accurate and exhausting account of that period would need a far less brilliant pen than mine" and moved on to new subject matter. The narrative voice, however—so successfully employed that **Oscar Wilde** remarked that the gods had bestowed on Max the gift of perpetual old age—remained, as did the purity of style. Beerbohm's powers of observation were soon sharpened by his work as a caricaturist, his style by his experiences as a parodist and the 14 years he spent as a working journalist, primarily as the theater critic of the *Saturday Review*. Beerbohm was a diligent journalist, and his theater criticism can still be read with pleasure, but the essay remained his preferred form. Beerbohm felt that "what distinguishes literature from journalism is not vigour and sharpness of expression; it is beauty of expression." Beauty of expression marks all of Beerbohm's later essays, particularly those in his last and best collection, *And Even Now*.

By the time *And Even Now* was published in 1920 Beerbohm had become what he had always pretended to be, "an interesting link with the past" ("A Small Boy Seeing Giants"). While several of the essays in *And Even Now* treat such recurring Beerbohm themes as the difficulties of current social practices ("Hosts and Guests," "Servants") and the preference for imaginary rather than actual works of art (books by fictional characters in "Books Within Books," the "museum of incomplete masterpieces" in "Quia Imperfectum," his hilarious deflation of **Goethe**), the best of the later essays are informed by the real or imagined past. The imagined past is the background for Beerbohm's remarkable re-creation of an 18th-century conversation in "A Clergyman" (1918), a figure who, Beerbohm informs us, "forever haunts my memory and solicits my weak imagination" by becoming the unwitting victim of **Samuel Johnson's** wrath and disdain.

Two other "reminiscial" essays of a more personal nature provide excellent examples of Beerbohm's differing approaches to the actual past of his youth. "No. 2 The Pines" (1920) is a distillation of several of Beerbohm's continual themes and techniques. The description of Swinburne's life in suburbia is a literal example of the fantastic residing in the commonplace. The past intrudes upon the present as Beerbohm enters the house inhabited by Swinburne and Theodore Watts-Dunton and has the "instant sense of having slipped away from the harsh light of the ordinary and contemporary into the dimness of an odd, august past. Here, in this dark hall, the past was the present." A young writer's awe and pleasure at meeting one of his idols is beautifully conveyed, but the solemnity of the occasion is leavened by such characteristic touches of humor as the young and old writer nearly colliding as they respectfully bow to each other and by such evocative neologisms as the "tupperrossettine" drawing room. Beerbohm's use of fantasy appears in his final vision of Swinburne, restored to youth, still being watched over and cared for by WattsDunton, even though the two of them are now in Elysium.

"William and Mary" (1920), Beerbohm's most personal and perhaps best essay, also plays with memory. Reflecting that as one ages "The World has ceased to be remarkable,

and one tends to think more and more often of the days when it was so very remarkable indeed," Beerbohm uses a common sight, in this case a railway station, as a springboard to his past in which he was friends with William and Mary, two figures whose personalities and happy marriage are given permanence by Beerbohm's superb description of their lasting effect on him. Acting on impulse, Beerbohm returns to their deserted cottage and hesitantly rings the doorbell, producing "a whole quick sequence of notes, faint but clear, playful, yet poignantly sad, like a trill of laughter echoing out of the past," and concludes, "I must have rung again and again, tenaciously, vehemently, in my folly"—the folly of the attempt to resurrect the ghosts of his departed friends and so recapture his own past. "Playful, yet poignantly sad, like a trill of laughter echoing out of the past" aptly describes the usual tone of a Beerbohm essay, and the employment of two little-known characters both to demonstrate his belief that "the truth about anyone, however commonplace, must always be interesting" ("A Memory of a Midnight Express," 1909) and to provide a way of objectifying personal emotion, is characteristic of Beerbohm's detached approach.

Beerbohm's "charming little reputation" has never really changed. From the beginning of his career his essays have elicited a strong response from a relatively small but intensely devoted group of readers who relish their wit, their offbeat but fascinating subjects and themes, and above all their exquisite craftsmanship. In a review of *The Prisoner of Zenda* Beerbohm stated that he was "quite happy to sacrifice a story for style. I rate the essayist far higher than the romancer," the credo of a man and essayist who, as Beerbohm said of Aubrey Beardsley, "enjoyed life but…was never wholly of it."

JOHN H.ROGERS

S*ee also* Humorous Essay

Biography

Henry Maximilian Beerbohm. Born 24 August 1872 in London. Studied at Charterhouse, Godalming, Surrey, 1885–90; Merton College, Oxford, 1890–94. Journalist and caricaturist, contributing to various periodicals, including the *Yellow Book,* the *Strand* magazine, and the *Saturday Review,* for which he was drama critic, 1898–1910. Married Florence Kahn, 1910 (died, 1951). Lived in Rapallo, Italy, 1911–14, 1919–37, and 1948–56. Broadcaster, BBC, from 1935. Knighted, 1939. Rede Lecturer, Cambridge University, 1943. Honorary Fellow, Merton College, 1945. Married Elisabeth Jungmann, 1956. Awards: honorary degrees from three universities. Died in Rapallo, 20 May 1956.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose
The Works of Max Beerbohm, with a Bibliography by John Lane, 1896
More, 1899
Yet Again, 1909
And Even Now, 1920
Around Theatres (theater reviews), 2 vols., 1924

A Variety of Things, 1928
Mainly on the Air (radio broadcasts), 1946; enlarged edition, 1957
Selected Essays, edited by N.L.Clay, 1958
The Incomparable Max: A Selection, edited by S.C.Roberts, 1962
More Theatres, 1898–1903 (theater reviews), 1969
Last Theatres, 1904–1910 (theater reviews), 1970
The Bodley Head Max Beerbohm, edited by David Cecil, 1970; as *Selected Prose,* 1971
A Peep into the Past and Other Prose Pieces, edited by Rupert Hart-Davis, 1972

Other writings: fiction (including the novel *Zuleika Dobson,* 1911), three plays, several volumes of cartoons and caricatures, a study of **Lytton Strachey** (1943), and correspondence (collected in *Letters of Max Beerbohm, 1892–1956,* edited by Rupert Hart-Davis, 1988).

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Further Reading

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Cecil, David, *Max: A Biography,* London: Constable, 1964; Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965
Danson, Lawrence, *Max Beerbohm and the Act of Writing,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989; New York: Oxford University Press, 1991
Grushaw, Ira, *The Imaginary Reminiscences of Sir Max Beerbohm,* Athens: Ohio University Press, 1984
Lynch, John Gilbert Bohun, *Max in Perspective,* London: Heinemann, 1921
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Moers, Ellen, *The Dandy: Brummell to Beerbohm,* London: Secker and Warburg, 1960
Riewald, J.G., *Sir Max Beerbohm, Man and Writer: A Critical Analysis with a Brief Life and a Biography,* The Hague: Nijhoff, 1953
Riewald, J.G., editor, *The Surprise of Excellence: Modern Essays on Max Beerbohm,* Hamden, Connecticut: Archon, 1974
Viscusi, Robert, *Max Beerbohm; or, The Dandy Dante: Rereading with* Mirrors, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986

Belinskii, Vissarion

Russian, 1811–1848

"Vissarion the furious" was the founding father of Russian literary criticism. During

his short life he wrote with "mercurial speed and fanatical enthusiasm." "Somehow I always run to extremes," he was to say of himself. Belinskii came from a modest background but soon symbolized the appearance of a new vocal class in Russia, the intelligentsia, those concerned about the state of Russian society and who saw in art and literature a means of improvement. He was also a *raznochinets* (someone not of the gentry), who had to survive upon his own capabilities as a writer and literary critic.

After studying for three years at Moscow University, Belinskii was expelled for writing a play entitled *Dmitrii Kalinin* which criticized serfdom (although the official reason was because of poor health). He then went on to become the chief literary critic of the most important journals of the day: *Teleskop* (The telescope), *Moskovskii Nabliudatel'* (The Moscow observer), *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (Fatherland notes), and ***Sovremennik*** (The contemporary). However, the pressures of journalism left him little time for polishing or refining his thoughts and style. In the same way, he paid almost no attention to the style or use of language of the writers he was criticizing. For him, content was the most important issue: language was meant to communicate, not be an end in itself. Belinskii's own style was erratic, ponderous, and diffuse, marked by repetition, digression, too many quotations, incessant polemic, rhetorical overemphasis aiming at immediate and startling effects, and elementary explanations for a public whose level of critical discrimination was still very low.

After an early infatuation with German idealism and his famous essay "Ideia iskysstva" (1841; "The Idea of Art"), which is saturated with Hegelianism, Belinskii came to see art and literature as primarily utilitarian. It had to go beyond the aesthetic, the romantic, the fantastic, and the grotesque; it had to transform society. He urged literature to be "natural, original and national." In this sense he accomplished much in encouraging the birth of a national Russian literature after Russian writers of the 18th century had spent most of their time imitating the French classical writers. He was in good part responsible for the fame that Nikolai Gogol', Mikhail Lermontov, **Fedor Dostoevskii,** and **Ivan Turgenev** enjoyed. However, he always rejected naturalism and would not have appreciated a writer such as Émile Zola. In his essay "Gore ot uma" (1840; Woe from wit) he wrote: "A man drinks, eats, and dresses—this is a world of phantoms…but as man feels, thinks and recognizes himself as an organ, a vessel of the spirit, a finite particle of the general and the infinite—this is the world of reality."

As a critic, Belinskii did not use the methodology of French or English critics, who worked close to the text. He never wrote systematic treatises. However, he made up for this lack of method by his complete belief in the power of literature. If he liked a literary work, he put his heart and soul into it, fulfilling Victor Hugo's belief that "true criticism begins with enthusiasm." As an essayist he was a powerful and passionate writer; many of his sayings were adopted by the Soviet regime. For example, after his conversion to socialism (c. 1841–42), Belinskii wrote "my God is negation" and "men are so witless that they must be led to happiness by force." In a letter toV. P.Botkin he wrote: "Socialism, socialism—or death! That is my motto. What care I for the existence of the universal when individuality is suffering? What care I if genius on earth live in heaven when the crowd is wallowing in the dirt?… My heart bleeds and shudders when I view the crowd and its representatives… And that is life: to sit in the street in rags with an idiotic expression of face collecting farthings in the daytime to be spent on booze in the

evening—and men see it and no one cares about it!"

Belinskii greatly influenced Russian national tastes. His dislike of Slavic folklore and Old Russian literature affected the Russian population for an entire century. But he also refined the Russian language by introducing into it a large body of abstract, philosophical, and literary terminology. All in all, the tone and methods he used set the standard for all Russian 19th-century literary criticism. After the Revolution he became enshrined in the official Marxist-Leninist social realist school of literary criticism.

In his last piece, "Pis'mo k Gogoliu" (1847; "Letter to Gogol'"), Belinskii criticized Russian society and the role of religion in society. In it he wrote: "The basis of religion is pietism, reverence, fear of God. Whereas the Russian man utters the name of the Lord while scratching himself somewhere." Belinskii addressed Gogol', who in *Izbrannye mesta iz perepiski s druz'iami* (1847; *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends*) had given an odd defense of the status quo. Belinskii wrote: "One could endure an outraged sense of self-esteem, and I should have sense enough to let the matter pass in silence were that the whole gist of the matter; but one cannot endure an outraged sense of truth and human dignity; one cannot keep silent when lies and immorality are preached as truth and virtue under the guise of religion and the protection of the knout [flogging whip]." It was during a reading of this letter by the Petrashevskii circle that Dostoevskii was arrested. The article went on to become the manifesto of Russian liberals for decades to come.

ANDRIUS VALEVIČIUS

Biography

Vissarion Grigorievich Belinskii. Born 12 July 1811 in Sveaborg, Finland. Studied at a gymnasium in Penza, from 1825; Moscow University, 1829–32: expelled for writing a play seen to oppose serfdom. Wrote for *Teleskop,* 1834–36; editor, *Moskovskii Nabliudatel',* 1838–39; moved to St. Petersburg, 1839; critic, *Otechestvennye Zapiski,* 1839. Married Mariia Vasil'evna Orlova, 1843: one son (died, 1847) and one daughter. Suffered from tuberculosis and went abroad briefly, May-November 1847. Wrote briefly for *Sovremennik,* 1847. Died (of consumption) in St. Petersburg, May 1848.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose

Selected Philosophical Works, 1956

Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, and Dobrolyubov: Selected Criticism, edited by Ralph E.Matlaw, 1962

Other writings: many articles for journals (not collected during his life) and the play *Dmitrii Kalinin* (c. 1832).

Collected works edition: *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii,* 13 vols., 1953–59

Further Reading

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Proctor, Thelwall, *Dostoevskij and the Belinskij School of Literary Criticism,* The Hague: Mouton, 1969
Stacy, R.H., *Russian Literary Criticism: A Short History,* Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1974: Chapter 3
Terras, Victor, *Belinskij and Russian Literary Criticism: The Heritage of Organic Aesthetics,* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1954
Turgenev, Ivan, *Literary Reminiscences,* New York: Farrar Straus Cudahy, 1958; London: Faber, 1959 (original Russian edition, 1874)
Wellek, René, *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750–1950,* 3. *The Age of Transition,* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982: Chapter 7 (original edition, 1965)

Belleau, André

French Canadian, 1930–1986

In a seminal essay entitled "Petite essayistique" (1983; Little essayistic piece), André Belleau claims that "At 18, one can be Rimbaud, but not an essayist"—since an essayist needs time to learn and master the languages of culture. This remark aptly describes Belleau's own career, for he came late to essay writing. During his many years as a civil servant he often wrote short stories and book or film reviews for various literary journals, most notably for the influential ***Liberté*** (Liberty), which he cofounded in 1959. Despite these publications, he did not begin to consider himself as a writer until the end of the 1960s. He then completely changed his professional activities: he left the government, went back to school, and subsequently (in 1969) became a literature professor at the newly born University of Quebec in Montreal. This Renaissance scholar was influenced by different theoreticians, but some of Belleau's more technical readings also changed his relationship to his own writing. Mikhail Bakhtin, for example, not only helped him grasp more firmly the nature of the Québécois novel, he also provided him with the means of creating a personal style.

What distinguishes Belleau's writing before and after the end of the 1960s is the fact that he finally came to terms with a problem he had faced for almost 15 years: how a writer is to incorporate in his work the many "voices" that inhabit him and, more importantly, that make him what he is. The title of Belleau's second collection of essays, *Surprendre les voix* (To catch the voices), shows the reader what the writer had discovered about both the nature of literature and the essayist's work. Belleau asserts that

a writer is someone who listens to the words and phrases traded around him before turning them into something personal, and is thus engaged in what Belleau would later call the polemics of language ("polémique des langages"). From this point on, Belleau paid a tremendous amount of attention to his society's discourses, whether in literature, journalism, mass media, or everyday life. Some of his best-known essays deal with a French television broadcaster's English pronunciation ("L'Effet Derome, ou, Comment Radio-Canada colonise et aliène son public" [1980; The Derome effect; or, how Radio-Canada colonizes and alienates its public]), Montreal streets and their idioms, and his political opponents' use of language (Belleau was a fervent supporter of Quebec's independence while maintaining a skeptical distance from any form of nationalist thought). Belleau's interests went far beyond the confines of Quebec, however. He was fond of German philosophy, literature, and music; he wrote essays about Morocco and Guadeloupe; he loved French culture both high and low (Fauré as well as popular singers from his youth); he was well read in cybernetics and linguistics; he was an avid reader of European and North American mystery and gothic novels (as revealed in his reviews and his unpublished *Cahiers de lecture* [Reader's notebooks]). Belleau's openness and curiosity were also evident when in 1972 he cofounded the Rencontre Québécoise Internationale des Écrivains (International Québécois meeting of writers): this annual gathering continues to bring together writers from all over the world.

Belleau published only four books, but they are milestones in Quebec's literary culture, especially for those interested in sociocriticism. In *Le Romancier fictif* (1980; The fictional novelist) the critic uses the Quebec novel from 1940 to 1980 as a basis for contrasting the narrative techniques of novelists of the *parole* (for whom literature is perceived as pure interiority) with those of the *code* (here, the literary institution takes precedence). *Notre Rabelais* (1990; Our Rabelais), edited by Belleau's colleagues after his untimely death, contains radio interviews and scholarly essays on an author to whom Belleau had devoted many years of work, and who fascinated him because of the relationship between his oeuvre and contemporary popular or *carnavalesque* culture.

While these two books are more critical studies than essays *per se,* such is not the case with *Y a-t-il un intellectuel dans la salle?* (1984; Is there an intellectual in the house?) and *Surprendre les voix* (1986). These are collections of short pieces originally published between 1959 and 1985, although over half of the 51 pieces date from 1976. (Many texts appear in both the collections, for Belleau was dissatisfied with the 1984 publication, and reorganized it two years later.) Here, the voice of Belleau the essayist is heard loud and clear—in his theory of the essay as a "récit idéel" (narrative of ideas), his defense of the intellectual's role, his conception of language and politics, his ground-breaking reflections on the nature of Quebec's literary institutions, his love for his city and its culture. Particularly remarkable is Belleau's personal style of writing, which blends Quebec slang and so-called universal French, his attention to detail, and his fiery comments mixed with self-restraint (in matters of faith and spirituality, for example). Belleau's use of irony and paradox as well as his need to reach his reader are among the elements that structure his essays. At the same time, the essays are self-reflexive and consistently question the writer's own identity.

Belleau's lessons are still heard in Quebec's culture. To measure his importance, one needs only look at the magazine issues published in his honor by friends and colleagues

(*Liberté,* 1987), and by younger scholars who wished to follow in his footsteps (*Études Françaises* [1988; French studies]). His passion—for knowledge, literature, and the essay as a genre—did not go unnoticed.

BENOÎT MELANÇON

Biography

Born 18 April 1930 in Montreal. Studied literature at the Collège Marie-Médiatrice; philosophy at Collège Sainte-Marie, B.A., 1952; psychology and literature at the University of Montreal, from 1953, licence, 1968, M.A., 1970, Ph.D., 1979. Federal civil servant, 1954–67, working for the Ministry of Public Health, the Public Service Commission, and the National Film Board. Cofounder, *Liberté,* 1959. Professor, University of Quebec, Montreal, 1969–86. Cofounder, Rencontre Québécoise Internationale des Écrivains, 1972. Married Jacqueline Belleau: two children. Awards: Prize of Excellence in Canadian Studies, 1984. Died in Montreal, 13 September 1986.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose

Le Romancier fictif: Essai sur la représentation de l'écrivain dans le roman québécois, 1980

Y a-t-il un intellectuel dans la salle?, 1984

Surprendre les voix, 1986

Notre Rabelais, 1990

Other writings: short stories and numerous texts for radio programs (some were published in *Notre Rabelais*).

Further Reading

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Bello, Andrés

Venezuelan, 1781–1865

One of the pillars of Latin America's 19th-century intellectual thought, Andrés Bello is heir to the ideas of the Enlightenment in his rationalist struggle to reconcile national interests with universal good.

His essays on the conception of Latin America as a model society for all nations leading the way toward progress planted seeds among Latin American thinkers of the new generation. Bello was one of the first Latin American writers to articulate the ideology of a Latin American destiny, which would later find a resounding echo in the essayist **Pedro Henríquez Ureña's** "La utopía americana" (1926; The American utopia). Yet Bello's dreams for Latin America were not mere utopian fabrications, as Adalbert Dessau explains in "Revista de crítica literaria latinoamericana" (1982): he proposed clear and specific goals to the emerging Latin American nations to achieve that objective. This shared aspiration for a common good, Bello adds, calls for an alliance or "society of nations" that will insure a strong and united Latin America.

In many of his writings, but particularly in his *Principios de derecho de gentes* (1832; Principles of the rights of people), Bello argues for the need for a progressive development of the emerging nation-states toward the formation of civilized bourgeois societies. Keenly aware of the lack of solid economic foundations in Latin American societies to propel economic development, Bello designs a model structure that would function as a catalyst for economic growth in Latin America. Both his essays on theories of culture and literature as well as his treatises on education and international law delineate Bello's proposed model for socioeconomic development that would bring Latin America to the forefront of Western civilization.

Bello's philosophical ideas lean toward what his critics have called an "objective idealism," tempered by his scientific vision of the world. In his *Filosofía del entendimiento* (posthumously pub. 1881; *Philosophy of the Understanding*), Bello develops his theory of society based on knowledge of the laws of nature. The need to use common sense in our understanding of reality is another important premise in Bello's philosophy. His contribution to Latin America's intellectual history is his synthesis of the legacies of modern European philosophy combined with his own philosophical theories. His views emerge from his desire to elaborate an ideology that addresses the needs and specific conditions of the newly independent Latin American countries, while at the same

time keeping in mind universal values and principles.

In his essays on historiography, Bello discusses the need to distinguish between principles that are universally viable and those that can be applied only to particular situations. Bello's essential methodology proposes the use of experience and reason in the application, in Latin America, of laws developed in other countries. If Latin Americans were directly to copy the lessons learned by European nations, he cautions his readers, they would be unfaithful to the very spirit of those lessons, which advocate free discussion, observation, and thorough convictions. This creative application of universal ideas calls for a clear understanding of the particular needs and goals of the Latin American people.

Bello's familiarity with English philosophy—from **Francis Bacon** to **David Hume**—as well as his knowledge of Scottish thinkers such as Thomas Reid and Dugald Stewart, informs his vision of humankind and constitutes a substantive presence in his theory of knowledge, as Fernando Murillo Rubiera discusses in *Andrés Bello: Historia de una vida y de una obra* (1986). Bello also translated some of Locke's essays, and most critics indicate that Bello had knowledge of the works of Jeremy Bentham and **John Stuart Mill**. On the other hand, Bello's ties with the Latin American Enlightenment provide a clear basis for his Americanist thought, as seen in his defense of reason and virtue as essential components of the new Latin American societies.

Bello is considered the precursor of a Latin American school of thought which proposes the construction of a society that would benefit from the material progress achieved by European nations, while also avoiding the pitfalls already evident in the capitalist world.

Bello's search for "human happiness" goes hand in hand with his notion of "progressive improvement." His belief in the social need to promote progress for all is at the root of his Americanist thought. As a jurist he worked to build a society that would ensure all civil liberties and the enjoyment of progress and culture for its citizens, within a system based in the rightful administration of justice.

Bello was one of the most prolific and versatile writers of his time, and his intellectual curiosity was unbounded; his books and essays encompass such diverse topics as cosmography, philosophy, literature, education, science, politics, international law, and Spanish grammar. He is widely known as the poet who sang the beauty of the Americas and traced a social document for peace and creativity in the New World in his *Silvas americanas* (1823; Odes to America), and as the original author of *Gramática de la lengua castellana* (1847; A Spanish grammar), a pioneer work in the study of the structure of the Spanish language in Spanish America. His *Philosophy of the Understanding* has been acclaimed as the most mature expression of his philosophical ideas, and his *Principios de derecho de gentes* is considered the first work of its kind in the Americas.

LOURDES ROJAS

Biography

Andrés Bartolomé Bello. Born 29 November 1781 in Caracas. Studied at the Royal and

Pontifical University, Caracas, 1797–1800, B.A., 1800. Second official of the Captaincy General of Venezuela, 1802–10. Editor of the first Caracas newspaper, *Gaceta de Caracas* (Caracas gazette), 1808. Traveled to England on diplomatic service, as aide to Simón Bolívar and Luis López Méndez, 1810, but funding withdrawn because of civil strife in Venezuela, 1812. Lived in London, 1810–30. Married Ann Boyland, 1814 (died, 1821). Secretary, Chilean legation, 1822–24, and legation of Great Colombia, 1824–29, both London. Founding editor, *Biblioteca Americana* (American library), 1823, and *El Repertorio Americano* (The American repertoire), 1826–27, both London. Married Isabel Antonia Dunn, 1824. Elected to the Venezuelan National Academy, 1826. Moved to Santiago at the invitation of the Chilean government, 1829; named senior official, Chilean Ministry of Finance, and held post in the Foreign Ministry, from 1830. Editor, *El Araucano,* 1830–53. Senator of the Chilean Republic, 1837–55. Rector, University of Chile, Santiago, from 1843. Elected honorary member, Royal Spanish Academy, 1851. Died in Santiago, 15 October 1865.

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Belloc, Hilaire

British, 1870–1953

Hilaire Belloc was a writer of great vigor and variety, whose work included poetry, history, biographies, and travel accounts, as well as essays. He is regarded by some as the

best prose stylist of his generation. He chose early to write in English rather than French, using simple, unadorned language, only occasionally employing metaphor or other rhetorical embellishment. His plain style is sometimes likened to the "piety of speech" of the 17th century, or described simply as grave and majestic, yet unmistakably Belloc.

Belloc's interests ranged widely, as did his knowledge and experience. His French and English ancestry insured him an unusual combination of insular and continental interests and sympathies as well as an acute way of analyzing everything he encountered. The essay form was particularly well chosen for his highly personal observations, which are consistently informed by his Roman Catholic sense of order as it existed in the Middle Ages, whose fragmenting with the Reformation Belloc saw as the West's greatest scandal. But an antipathy to contemporary life does not inhibit Belloc's enjoyment of the modern fools he saw everywhere. In "Fun for Clio" (1940) he noted: "The times in which we live have one great compensating advantage for their beastliness. They are vulgar and they are chaotic, they are murderous, they are dirty, they are atheist, they are intolerably wearisome, they have every vice, but they are a magnificent aid to the understanding of history." Such sentiments explain why the essays are not presently in favor; they are dismissed as too conservative because few understand the radical attitudes of Catholic faith when it decries the failings of the world yet celebrates material creation.

Some of Belloc's essays were published in the *Sunday Times,* the *Weekly Review,* and the *Tablet*. He was a close associate of **G.K.Chesterton,** with whom he published a weekly political newspaper the *Witness.* Belloc served as a Liberal Member of Parliament from 1906 to 1910, and many of his attitudes are Edwardian: a belief in arguing issues, social concern and delight in such pleasures of life as wine, but also a sense of foreboding and melancholy. The titles of volumes of essays suggest the quality of his mind: *On Nothing and Kindred Subjects* (1908), *On Everything* (1909), *On Anything* (1910), *On Something* (1910), *First and Last* (1911), *This and That and the Other* (1912), *On* (1923), *Places* (1941). Two others, *The Silence of the Sea and Other Essays* (1940) and *Hills and the Sea* (1906), reveal Belloc's lifelong enthusiasm for the sea, ships, and sailing, which coexisted with a delight in landscape that is quintessentially English.

Whatever the subject of an essay, Belloc brings to it energy, thoughtful analysis, and deep feeling. He relishes opposing current fashion and expectation, but is never facile. "On the 'Bucolics' of Virgil, a Café in Paris, the Length of Essays, Phoebus, Bacchus, a Wanton Maid, and Other Matters" (1923) more than any other title indicates Belloc's view of the essay as a free form, but he also acknowledges that there are exact expectations of length that lead to random padding. In "The Higher Criticism" he parodies the ludicrous excesses of Germanic academic analysis, concluding, "That is how the damned fools write." In "On Footnotes" (1923) Belloc identifies the practice as a form of lying in modern history that begins with Gibbon but is enforced because professional critics accuse authors who lack footnotes of "romancing." Among British writers Belloc wrote essays on Sir Walter Scott, John Bunyan, Jane Austen, James Boswell, William Tyndale, and John Milton. In "On Milton" he identifies two common qualities of English literature—adventure and mystery—and the English hunger for landscape, which he sees as proceeding from the love of adventure. Such conceptualizing from the particular is typical of how Belloc thinks. His own delight in and ruminations about landscape appear in "About Volcanoes" (1940), "On Town Walls" (1940), and

most fully in *The Path to Rome* (1902). According to "On History in Travel" (1941), guidebooks should present the whole road as a piece of history, and specific descriptions in "On Old Towns" (1909) culminate in the statement that "The Old Towns are ourselves: they are mankind." For Belloc a place is "a sacramental thing," encountered on the journey, the pilgrimage of life: "We see some one thing in this world, and suddenly it becomes particular and sacramental…there is a resurrection, and we are refreshed and renewed."

Part of Belloc's mental quality is curiosity and skepticism, but beneath this there is a core of conviction rooted in his Catholic belief, which he identifies with European civilization. Belloc saw the decay of much European strength, culminating in World War I and repeated in World War II. He affirmed Europe's base in Christianity and attacked contemporary views of progress, capitalism, and industrial wealth. Thus in "On an Educational Reform" (1923) he urges that Fraud is the new subject needed to prepare the sons of the wealthy. In "On Truth and the Admiralty" (1923) he observes that only sea charts are trustworthy: "The war has produced propaganda. Truth took to its bed in the spring of 1915 and died unregretted, with few attendants, about a year later. Everything since then has been propaganda." An essay "On Statistics" (1940) classifies the subject as lies, since truth depends upon proportion, which can be distorted with mere figures. Writing "On Latin," from which all of the West proceeded, Belloc argues its older openness to all classes; he identifies its residual role as a liturgical language, even though "all religion has now arrived at such a stage that it may be called obsolescent." The essays become more cogent over the years, as Western society developed in ways that support Belloc, opponent of the Barbarians, as prophet of the 20th century.

The so-called progress of the 20th century that rejected Catholic experience was anathema to Belloc. He was a Liberal, but not of the classical European variety that denied life rooted in the past. His analysis of history is grounded in one tradition, and he becomes a part of its continuity. Like other Edwardians he writes of Northernness, but he avoids simple Teutonic/Nordic enthusiasm, voicing his suspicion of Prussia, made strong in the Reformation and thus not tied to European Catholic morality. Belloc warns against blond supermen. Such anticipations validate many of his essays.

VELMA BOURGEOIS RICHMOND

Biography

Joseph Hilaire Pierre Belloc. Born 27 July 1870 in La Celle, St. Cloud, near Paris. Family moved to England, 1870. Studied at the Oratory School, Edgbaston, Warwickshire; Balliol College, Oxford, 1892–95, B.A. in history, 1895. Editor, with A.H.Pollen, *Paternoster Review,* 1890–91. Served in the 8th Artillery Regiment of the French Army, 1891. Married Elodie Agnes Hogan, 1896 (died, 1914): three sons (two died) and two daughters. Became a British citizen, 1902. Freelance journalist, tutor, and prolific lecturer. Liberal Member of Parliament for South Salford, 1906–10. Editor, coeditor, or founder of the London *Morning Post,* 1906–09, *North Street Gazette,* 1910, *Eye Witness,* 1911–12, and *G.K.'s Weekly,* 1936–38; columnist of "A Wanderer's Notebook," London *Sunday Times,* 1938–53. Awards: honorary degree from the University of Glasgow;

Knight Commander with Star, Order of St. Gregory the Great, 1934. Died in Guildford, Surrey, 16 July 1953.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose
The Path to Rome (travel sketches), 1902
The Aftermath; or, Gleanings from a Busy Life (sketches), 1903
Varied Types, 1903
Avril, Being Essays on the Poetry of the French Renaissance, 1904
Hills and the Sea, 1906
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On, 1923
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A Conversation with a Cat, and Others, 1931
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Places, 1941
Selected Essays, edited by J.B.Morton, 1948
One Thing and Another: A Miscellany from His Uncollected Essays, edited by Patrick Cahill, 1955
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Other writings: light verse (including *The Bad Child's Book of Beasts,* 1896; *Cautionary Tales,* 1907), a play, fiction, and books on travel, religion, topography, and history, including biographies of Danton (1899), Robespierre (1901), Marie Antoinette (1909), Richelieu (1929), and Napoleon (1932).

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Belyi, Andrei

Russian, 1880–1934

Even disregarding short book **reviews,** Andrei Belyi's total output of articles and essays numbers close to 300. The essay is central to his oeuvre, providing a versatile form which can be used to address the reader in a wide variety of ways, and on a wide variety of topics. It is possible to classify Belyi's essays into three broad categories, but individual works frequently straddle the boundaries of different types. Some early essays are close in form to his lyrical prose fragments, while others expand to the dimensions of monographs. He wrote half his output of essays between 1902 and 1910; they are predominantly on literary and philosophical subjects. Even here the manner in which he addresses his reader varies widely between the academic and the lyrical. After 1910 he wrote many pieces about his travels; they are unified by a concern with discovering the inner impulse and identifying the spiritual essence of the cultures he observed. The death of **Aleksandr Blok** in 1921 stimulated Belyi to write memoirs and autobiography, the third category of essays which accompanied the other two, in the last decade of his life.

Belyi's first substantial essay was "Formy iskusstva" ("The Forms of Art"), published in Diaghilev's journal *Mir Iskusstva* (The world of art) in December 1902, where he outlined a theory of the hierarchy of art forms closely modeled on Schopenhauer, and reached the lyrical conclusion that all art is moving inexorably toward its highest manifestation—music. Throughout the decade he published extensively in all the major symbolist and allied journals and almanacs—*Novyi Put'* (The new path), *Zolotoe Runo* (The golden fleece), *Svobodnaia Sovest'* (The free conscience)—but above all in the flagship journal of the Moscow symbolists, *Vesy* (The scales). His essays covered every aspect of symbolist theory, ranging between neo-Kantian epistemology and brash internecine polemics. In 1910 and 1911 the most important of his essays were republished, along with a number of new works, in the three volumes *Simvolizm* (1910; Symbolism), *Lug zelenyi* (1910; The green meadow), and *Arabeski* (1911; Arabesques). *Simvolizm* contains the most important of Belyi's philosophical and literary-theoretical

essays, ten of which had not been published previously. These include “Smysl iskusstva” (The meaning of art), “Emblematika smysla” (“The Emblematics of Meaning"), “Magiia slov” (“The Magic of Words”), and a series of essays on the analysis of verse rhythm, in which Belyi was a pioneer. *Arabeski* and *Lug zelenyi* contain both literary-critical works and a range of essays that express the broader cultural hopes of the symbolists for a total transformation of humankind, culture, and society, such as “Simvolizm kak miroponimanie” (“Symbolism as a World-View”) or “Apokalipsis v russkoi poezii” (The apocalypse in Russian poetry).

Belyi continued to write on these topics throughout his life. The teleology of culture is the subject of many works written later, such as *Tragediia tvorchestva* (1911; The tragedy of creativity), *Revoliutsiia i kul’tura* (1917; Revolution and culture), and the three long essays under the general title *Na perevale* (1918–20; At the watershed). His literary-critical studies include a series of essays on contemporary writers (Aleksandr Blok, **Viacheslav Ivanov,** V.F.Khodasevich) and culminate in his monograph, *Masterstvo Gogolia* (1934; Gogol’s craftsmanship). The study of language is continued in “Zhezl Aarona” (1917; Aaron’s rod) and *Glossolaliia* (1922.; Glossolalia), in which he set out his ideas on the intrinsic meaning of the sounds of human speech in all languages. The rhythm of poetry formed the subject of a number of shorter pieces in the immediate post-revolutionary period, and found its fullest expression in *Ritm kak dialektika i “Mednyi vsadnik”* (1929; Rhythm as dialectics and “The Bronze Horseman”), in which he sought to interpret **Pushkin’**s poem on the basis of a dialectical tension between the surface semantics and the rhythm.

The genre of travel notes first makes its appearance in Belyi’s oeuvre after his visit to Italy and North Africa in 1910–11. Short newspaper pieces were published in 1911, and two longer sections on his sojourn in Egypt appeared in the journal ***Sovremennik*** (The contemporary) in 1912. Book-form publication had to wait until the appearance of *Ofeira: Putevye zametki, chast’ pervaia* (1921; Ofeira: travel notes, part one); some sections never did appear in his lifetime and were published only in 1984. The interest of his notes lies not merely in his detailed observation, but in his sense that every cultural monument he describes contains and still exudes the spirit of the culture that created it. There is no dividing line between his work on cultural history and his personal observations in these notes. The same is true of the newspaper articles he published in *Birzhevye Vedomosti* (The stock exchange gazette) in 1916 about his impressions of Europe at war, gained from his vantage point in Switzerland. Later works in this genre were *Odna iz obitelei tsarstva tenei* (1924; One of the mansions of the realm of shadows), a damning indictment of postwar Berlin, and *Veter s Kavkaza* (1928; A wind from the Caucasus) and “Armeniia” (1928; Armenia), in which he tried to adapt his vein of cultural criticism to the new Soviet reality.

Memoirs are one of the genres for which Belyi is best known, and the three volumes he published toward the end of his life (*Na rubezhe dvukh stoletii* [1930; On the border of two centuries]; *Nachalo veka* [1933; The turn of the century]; *Mezhdu dvukh revoliutsii* [1934; Between two revolutions]) are perhaps the most important single source for the study of the period. These grew out of the original *Vospominaniia ob A.A.Bloke* (1922–23; Recollections of Aleksandr Blok) and went through several revisions, not all of which have been published. Also related to the autobiographical novels Belyi was working on

before Blok's death, the memoir genre includes sketches of the Moscow of his childhood, such as "Arbat" (1923; The Arbat).

Contemporaries often speak of Belyi as a man whose mercurial temperament resisted complete expression in any of his literary works. It is in his essays that his extraordinary range and versatility, his protean ability to vary voice and stance, come fully to the fore. A reliable picture of Belyi will never be attained without his essays. And without such a picture it is doubtful whether Russian symbolism as a whole is to be understood. Belyi embodied its spirit like no one else, and his essays are an indispensable—and almost inexhaustible—source for any student of the period.

JOHN ELSWORTH

Biography

Born Boris Nikolaevich Bugaev, 26 October 1880 in Moscow. Studied at the Polivanov gymnasium, 1891–99; science, philology, and philosophy at Moscow University, 1899–1903, degree in natural sciences. Began using the pseudonym Andrei Belyi with the publication of his first prose work, 1902; reviewer and writer for many periodicals and journals, 1902–10. Close friendship with Aleksandr Blok began through correspondence in 1903, developing later into a painful triangular relationship with Blok's wife; despite personal conflict they retained a deep and sympathetic awareness of each other's spiritual quest until Blok's death in 1921. Associate editor, *Vesy,* 1907–09; associated with Musagetes publishers, 1909–10. Traveled in Italy and North Africa, 1910–11; lived mostly in Western Europe, from 1912. Married Asia Turgeneva, 1914 (separated, 1921). Became interested in the philosophy of Rudolph Steiner, from 1912: helped with the construction of the Anthroposophical Temple in Dornach, Switzerland. Returned to Russia to join the military reserve, 1916, but was never called up. Archivist and librarian during the revolutionary period; founder and lecturer, Vol'fila (Free philosophical society). Returned to Western Europe, 1921, but was not well received by his wife or Rudolph Steiner; lecturer in Berlin, 1921–23; editor, *Epopeia,* 1922–23. Returned to Russia, 1923. Married Klavdiia Vasil'eva, 1931. Died in Moscow, 8 January 1934.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose

Simvolizm, 1910

Lug zelenyi, 1910

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Glossolaliia, 1922
Sirin uchenogo varvarstva (The siren bird of scholastic barbarism), 1922
O smysle poznaniia (On the meaning of cognition), 1922
Poeziia slova (Poetry of the word), 1922
Vospominaniia ob A.A.Bloke, 1922–23
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Veter s Kavkaza, 1928
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Nachalo veka, 1933; revised edition, edited by A.V.Lavrov, 1990
Mezhdu dvukh revoliutsii, 1934; revised edition, edited by A.V. Lavrov, 1990
Masterstvo Gogolia, 1934
Selected Essays, edited and translated by Steven Cassedy, 1985

Other writings: six novels (*Serebryanyi golub' [The Silver Dove],* 1909–10; *Petersburg,* 1916; *Kotik Letaev,* 1922; *Moskva,* 1926; *Kreshchenyi kitaets [The Christened Chinaman],* 1927; *Maski,* 1932), and collections of poetry.

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Benchley, Robert

American, 1889–1945

Most of Robert Benchley's best essays were written during a 20-year period following the end of World War I, when he was writing columns and serving in various editorial positions, first with *Vanity Fair,* then with the *Life* magazine of his day, and finally, from the late 1920s on, with the ***New Yorker***. In addition to his regular columns, Benchley often wrote freelance essays for his own and other periodicals during this productive period. In the late 1930s, fearing that he was beginning to repeat himself, and often short of money, he gave up writing professionally to concentrate on his more financially rewarding alternative career as a radio and motion-picture performer. Books that appeared after 1940 are comprised mostly of pieces written earlier.

Apart from occasional parodies and skits, Benchley showed little interest in writing fiction or drama, and his books were simply compilations under catchy titles of essays published previously in magazines and newspapers. While he wrote many drama reviews and did some other more or less serious journalistic work, he was essentially a humorist and an essayist. Benchley's concentration on humor, often humor of a very playful, almost nonsensical sort, and his apparent disregard for theme, source, or time of original publication in compiling his books encourage the misconception that he took his work lightly. In fact, he wrote with a strong sense of obligation to maintain the quality and freshness of his humor and to resist relying on the stock devices and situations he attacked in his drama reviews; in addition, his diligent, almost obsessive revision made meeting deadlines a constant struggle.

Benchley's style is difficult to characterize because, within the limits of his chosen form, he was so versatile. Moreover, he frequently adopted the voices of personas, worked with parody, and employed stylistic incongruity for humorous effect. Even when writing more or less as himself, Benchley deliberately inflated his style; for the kinds of humorous effects he wanted, a degree of pomposity was essential. The seriousness with which Benchley's central persona took himself, his insecurities, and the things that annoyed him accentuated by contrast the silliness of what he had to say. In general, the further a persona was from Benchley himself, the more pronounced this incongruity between style and substance became. It should be added, however, that most of the inflation in Benchley's prose involved diction and general tone. On the whole, apart from occasional humorous interruptions, his style profited from his early work in newspapers in being syntactically straightforward and easy to read.

As well as being, in his narrow field, a creative, highly original artist, Benchley was also a craftsman, and there were few humorous devices he did not employ effectively. A few suited him particularly well, however. Benchley specialized in logical and structural confusion, usually delivered through an earnest, self-important persona who gave no indication of wanting to be funny. He particularly liked long, apologetic, or self-justifying openings, which he often followed with incongruously short, increasingly

illogical essays that set readers up for anticlimactic endings. These structural games supported another of Benchley's favorite devices—satirical reduction through misinterpretation and oversimplification. As usual, working through a persona, characteristically one self-deluded about his grasp of his subject and excessively eager to appear as an authority, Benchley would expose the pretentiousness and sham he saw in some specialized field in the course of attempting to explain it. He frequently used parody to the same end. Psychoanalysis, scientific fads, overly erudite literary criticism, the jargon of professional sports, conventions of operatic plots, stylized crime reporting, obscurity in modern art and literature—such were the typical targets of Benchley's satire. These basic techniques for deflation were hardly new in American humor, but Benchley raised the level. He wrote not for people who distrusted urban values and cultural innovations on principle, but for an audience which, while sharing his dislike of overspecialization, pseudo-sophistication, and needless obscurity, was interested in and informed about the subjects he made fun of.

But Benchley lacked the anger of a true satirist. He used his gift for discovering and revealing the ridiculous side of serious subjects more to amuse than to reform, and he was inclined by temperament to make fun of himself more than any other subject. Many of his best essays were based on humorous experiences in his own life: the challenges and aggravations of parenthood, the frustration of mastering machines and gadgets, the annoyances of traveling and dining out. Even Benchley's eccentric dislike—mutual, apparently—of birds became part of his literary act. This comic representation of himself as a bumbling, insecure, somewhat neurotic, middle-class American male challenged to comprehend and cope with the rapid social and technological changes of his time was central to his popular appeal, as both a writer and a performer. Despite his weaknesses and eccentricities, the central Benchley persona often displayed an estimable pluckiness in situations largely beyond his control. He also embodied, in exaggerated form, a skepticism about trends and fads of the period with which many readers would have identified.

Benchley played a central part in the sophistication of popular American humor that took place between the World Wars. While he maintained the vitality and adapted basic techniques of folk humor and its literary offshoots, he dramatically raised the tonal and intellectual level in order to reach a better educated, more cultured, urban audience. His craftsmanship, originality, and wit won him a following not only among readers but also among other writers, and his influence is especially noticeable in the work of such younger contemporaries as **S.J.Perelman,** James Thurber, and **E.B.White**.

WILLIAM CONNOR

S*ee also* Humorous Essay

Biography

Robert Charles Benchley. Born 15 September 1889 in Worcester, Massachusetts. Studied at Phillips Exeter Academy, Exeter, New Hampshire, 1907–08; Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1908–12, B.A., 1912; president of the editorial board, *Harvard Lampoon*. Worked for Curtis publishers, 1911–14, and in the personnel office of

a paper company, Boston, 1914–15. Married Gertrude Darling, 1914: two sons. Editor and contributor, New York *Tribune* and *Tribune* magazine, 1916–17, and the *Tribune Graphic* Sunday supplement, 1918. Secretary, Aircraft Board, Washington, DC, 1917–18. Managing editor, *Vanity Fair,* 1919–20; columnist of "Books and Other Things," New York *World,* 1910–21; dramatic editor, 1921–29, and editor, 1924–29, *Life* magazine; contributor, 1925–40, and dramatic editor, 1929–40, the *New Yorker*. Founder, with Dorothy Parker and others, Algonquin Hotel Round Table, 1920. Also actor: with the Music Box Revue, 1923–24, and in many films (mostly shorts), 1923–45; radio broadcaster, from 1938. Awards: Academy Award (Oscar), for short film, 1936. Died (of a stroke) in New York, 21 November 1945.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose
Of All Things, 1921
Love Conquers All, 1922
Pluck and Luck, 1925
The Early Worra, 1927
20,000 Leagues Under the Sea; or, David Copperfield, 1928
The Treasurer's Report and Other Aspects of Community Singing, 1930
No Poems; or, Around the World Backwards and Sideways, 1932
From Bed to Worse; or, Comforting Thoughts About the Bison, 1934
My Ten Years in a Quandary and How They Grew, 1936
After 1903—What?, 1938
Inside Benchley (selection), 1942
Benchley Beside Himself, 1943
One Minute Please, 1945
Benchley—or Else!, 1947
Chips off the Old Benchley, 1949
The "Reel" Benchley, edited by George Hornby, 1950
The Bedside Manner; or, No More Nightmares, 1952
The Benchley Roundup, edited by Nathaniel Benchley, 1954
Benchley Lost and Found: 39 Prodigal Pieces, 1970
Benchley at the Theatre: Dramatic Criticism, 1920–1940, edited by Charles Getchell, 1985
Other writings: 14 screenplays.

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Rosmond, Babette, *Robert Benchley: His Life and Good Times,* Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970
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Benda, Julien

French, 1867–1956

Despite the wide range of his interests, which cover such diverse fields as philosophy, aesthetics, history, sociology, literature, and politics, Benda was and remains known as a man of one idea. It was he more than anyone else in the 20th century who conceptualized the notion of the intellectual. In 1927 Benda published *La Trahison des clercs (The Betrayal of the Intellectuals),* in which he formulated his famous thesis of the intellectuals' betrayal of their vocation as the guardians of Truth and its absolute character. The book instantly caused a commotion, and its title, like that of **Ortega y Gasset'**s *La rebelión de las masas* (1930; *The Revolt of the Masses*), Hermann Rauschning's *Die Revolution des Nihilismus* (1938; *The Revolution of Nihilism*), or Raymond Aron's *L'Opium des intellectuels* (1955; *The Opium of the Intellectuals*), became a catch-phrase among political scientists. Benda's other works are an elaboration upon the thesis advanced in *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals,* and they can be properly understood only when read against its background.

The term *clerc,* which Benda used in the title rather than *intellectuel,* was applied in the Middle Ages to all those who devoted their lives exclusively to the pursuit of Truth and who, on account of their concerns with "unworldly causes," were not subject to civil jurisdiction. Paradigmatic examples of the *clercs* whom Benda mentions are Socrates and Jesus, and several thinkers (St. Thomas, Descartes, **Pascal,** Spinoza, Malebranche, Newton, **Kant,** Husserl) who openly declared "their kingdom not to be of this world." In contrast to the *clerc* of old, the modern *clerc* abandoned his vocation, making Truth subservient to a political program or an ideology. "What a joy for them to learn that this universal is a mere phantom, that there exist only particular truths, Lorraine truths, Provençal truths, Brittany truths…Humanity hears the same teaching about classes and learns that there is a bourgeois truth and a working-class truth; better still, that the functioning of our minds should be different according to whether we are working men or bourgeois." Again, in contrast to the *clerc* of old, for whom his homeland was a spiritual

realm, the modern *clerc* asserts that he is first of all a member of a nation, a race, a class of which he ciaims to be the spokesman. "The modern world has made the 'clerk' into a citizen…Humanity is national. The layman has won…The 'clerk' is not only conquered, he is assimilated. The man of science, the artist, the philosopher are attached to their nations as much as the day-laborer and the merchant."

Benda links the process of the "nationalization" of the *clerc* with the gradual demise of Hellenistic metaphysics. He devoted three works to describing this phenomenon: *La Fin de l'éternel* (1927; The end of the eternal), *Essai d'un discours cohérent sur les rapports de Dieu et du monde* (1931; Essay on the discourse on the relationship between God and the world), and *La Crise du rationalisme* (1949; The crisis of rationalism). Although the crisis of rationalism was, as Benda called it, a triumph of "Luther over Erasmus," it was only after the appearance of German philosophy (especially the philosophies of **Schlegel, Fichte, Nietzsche,** Lotze) that "Luther's triumph" became a palpable fact which could be observed in art and literature. In *Belphégor* (1918), Benda notices that the current public no longer knows how to derive *intellectual* pleasure from art; it demands instead that art give rise to emotions and sensations. There are essentially three culprits in this situation: the Romantics, the "intuitionists," and various critics of rationalism. The Romantics declared "artistic sensibility" as the criterion of judgment. As a result a work of art is considered "great as soon it achieves a literary and artistic success," the intellectual content being of no interest; consequently, when "all arguments are equally defensible… error is no more false than truth" *(The Betrayal of the Intellectuals)*. The authors guilty of "Romanticism" are **Mallarmé,** Proust, **Gide, Valéry, Alain,** Giraudoux, Suarès, and the Surrealists (*La France byzantine* [1945; Byzantine France]). Other culprits are philosophers of a different provenance: Blondel, Lacroix, Rouyer, Gonseth, Bachelard, Le Roy, Rougier, Cuvillier, Brunschvicg, and Lefebvre. All of them rejected "classical rationalism" either as an "inferior form of cognition" on account of its being incapable of "inventing" *(La Crise du rationalisme)* or, as in the case of the Marxist Lefebvre, as "defective."

Benda's true intellectual foe is Henri Bergson. In his three books, *Le Bergsonisme, ou, une philosophie de la mobilité* (1912; Bergsonism, or, a philosophy of mobilization), *Une philosophie pathétique* (1913; A pathetic philosophy), and *Sur le succès du Bergsonisme* (1914; On the success of Bergsonism), Benda attacked Bergson's concept of "intuition." However, what in Bergson was an intellectual error became a real threat from the American "apostle" of pragmatism, **William James:** after over 20 centuries of humankind's being taught that the morality of an action lies in its disinterestedness, James declared that the moral is that which fits the circumstances.

Benda's analysis does not stop at the theoretical level, however. The changes which the new intellectual movements brought about in the 19th century lie at the root of the political and social crises in which Europe found itself in the middle of that century. Having rejected the Hellenistic idea of the timeless Absolute, the modern *clerc* found his vocation in exalting the value of that which exists only "in time"—namely, a nation. It was not until the middle of the 19th century—called by Benda "the age of the intellectual organization of political hatred"—that nations began to see themselves as bearers of Truth in the name of which they fought wars. Benda is far from expressing a naive view of the peaceful coexistence of nations in the past. However, as he observes, in contrast to

the 19th century, wars had been for the most part motivated by a desire to annex the other's territory or to extend one's own political control over another nation; they were essentially the wars of kings. In the 19th century wars became an instrument of demonstrating the "cultural superiority" of one nation over another. "This form of patriotism was so little known to preceding ages that there are countless examples of nations adopting the cultures of other nations, even of those with whom they were at war, and in addition reverencing the culture adopted" *(The Betrayal of the Intellectuals)*.

As a result of the growing need for a "unified Europe" in response to the nationalistic tendencies that led to World War I, Benda published *Discours à la nation européenne* (1933; Discourse on the European nation). He scornfully rejected the European project, finding it to be nothing but an empty idea ("pure reason has never founded anything in the terrestrial order"). Those who had such a dream in the past (Emperor Justinian, Charlemagne, Charles V) were either actual or aspiring tyrants. The new dreamers, like the old, "completely ignore the fact that Europe's peoples have their respective histories, their ideas, their languages." Europe is a spiritual realm; if the European project is ever to come true, its proponents need first to repudiate the myth of **Marx** (who conceived of man as a product of economic relationships) on behalf of the myth of **Plato,** who believed man to be first and foremost a spiritual being.

Most of Benda's works did not survive much beyond their author's death, and only a handful are known today by their titles. What remains truly durable in Benda's output is his book-length essay on intellectuals. Benda had written it before the "Great Conversion" of intellectuals to fascism, Nazism, and communism. Most of the names (Mommsen, Treitschke, Ostwald, **Brunetière,** Barrès, Lemaître, **Péguy,** Maurras, D'Annunzio, Kipling) and historical events (e.g. the Dreyfus Affair) which served Benda as the material to formulate his thesis, do not say much to a contemporary reader. Yet, if Benda's *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals* did not share the fate of his other works, it is due to the correctness of his diagnosis of the reasons which lie at the root of the Great Betrayal.

ZBIGNIEW JANOWSKI

Biography

Born 26 (some sources say 28) Dccember 1867 in Paris. Studied at the Lycées Charlemagne, 1876–84, Condorcet, from 1884, Henri IV, 1884–87, Saint-Louis, 1887–88, and the École Centrale, 1888–91; military service, 1891–92; the Sorbonne, 1891–94, licence in history, 1894. Contributor to various periodicals, including *Revue Blanche* (White review), *Revue de Pans* (Paris review), ***Nouvelle Revue Française*** (New French review), *Mercure de France* (Mercury of France), *Divan,* and *Le Figaro*. Frequented the salon of Simone Casimir-Périer. Went bankrupt, 1913. Lectured at various American universities, 1936–38. Lived in Carcassonne during World War II. Married late in life. Commander, Legion of Honor, 1938. Died in Fontenay-aux-Roses, near Paris, 7 June 1956.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose
Dialogues à Byzance, 1900
Mon premier Testament, 1910
Le Bergsonisme, ou, une philosophie de la mobilité, 1912
Une philosophie pathétique, 1913
Sur le succès du Bergsonisme, 1914
Les Sentiments de Critias (articles), 1917
Belphégor: Essai sur l'esthétique de la présente société française, 1918; as *Belphegor,* translated by Sarah J.I.Lawson, 1929
Billets de Sirius (articles), 1915
Lettres a Mélisande, 1925
La Fin de l'éternel, 1927
La Trahison des clercs, 1927; as *The Great Betrayal,* and as *The Treason of the Intellectuals,* translated by Richard Aldington, 1928; as *The Betrayal of the Intellectuals,* 1955
Essai d'un discours cohérent sur les rapports de Dieu et du monde, 1931
Esquisse d'une histoire des Français dans leur volonté d'être une nation, 1932
Discours à la nation européenne, 1933
Précision, 1930–1937 (articles), 1937
Le Rapport d'Uriel, 1943
La Grande Épreuve des démocraties: Essai sur les principes démocratiques, leur nature, leur histoire, leur valeur philosophique, 1945
La France byzantine; ou, Le Triomphe de la littérature pure, Mallarmé, Gide, Proust, Valéry, Alain, Giraudoux, Suarès, les surréalistes: Essai d'une psychologie originelle du littérateur, 1945
Les Cahiers d'un clerc (1936–1949), 1949
La Crise du rationalisme, 1949

Other writings: three novels (*L'Ordination [The Yoke of Pity],* 1911–12; *Les Amorandes,* 1922; *Songes d'Eleuthère,* 1949), a collection of short stories, autobiography, and works on politics, philosophy, and literature. Also edited the *Œuvres completes* by **La Bruyère** and the *Dictionnaire philosophique* by **Voltaire**.

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Bengtsson, Frans G.

Swedish, 1894–1954

Frans G.Bengtsson was the pre-eminent Swedish essayist of the 20th century, successful as the first practitioner of the informal essay in Sweden. Bengtsson associated with literary circles formed at the University of Lund in the early part of the 20th century, although his indifferent performance as a student camouflaged a brilliant mind later given full rein in his essays.

Bengtsson won a large reading public with his historical novel, *Röde orm* (1941–45; *The Long Ships*), a work considered by some to have contributed to a reawakening of interest in Viking civilization. He was particularly interested in history, as many of the essays demonstrate, being in some sense historical or based on historical incidents or people. In the 1920s he began publishing historical sketches in the Swedish periodical *Ord och Bild* (Word and picture), the first of which dealt with Joseph Conrad (1924). It was with his first volume of essays, *Litteratörer och militärer* (1929; Literary and military figures), that his career as an essayist blossomed. The collection contains several historical sketches, as well as pieces of literary criticism and literary history. Subjects include Sir Walter Scott, sagas, and King Charles XII of Sweden (whose biography he also wrote). He was also interested in historic figures from the American Civil War such as Abraham Lincoln, Jeb Stuart, and Nathan Bedford Forrest. Subsequent essay collections include *Silversköldarna* (1931; The silver shields), *De Iånghåriga merovingerna* (1933; The long-haired Merovingians), *Sällskap för en eremit* (1938; Company for a hermit), *För nöjes skull* (1947; For pleasure's sake), and the posthumous *Folk som sjöng* (1955; People who sang), as well as a volumes of selected essays in Swedish and in translation (*A Walk to an Ant Hill,* 1950).

Bengtsson was an intensely personal writer, indeed reserved to the point of being secretive. Anyone looking for biographical information will find little available. Whether this reflects his pessimistic philosophy and aestheticism is a matter of conjecture. Swedish critics have pointed out parallels with both Klara Johanson and German idealism, going back to **Schopenhauer**. Others have identified Bengtsson as both an aesthete and an entertainer.

Bengtsson's use of language, his diction, his large vocabulary, and the literary quality of his formulations are clear indications of why he has not been surpassed by his countrymen as an essayist. He characteristically quotes in foreign languages, but nonetheless carries his learning lightly, managing to combine an encyclopedic knowledge with a relaxed, informal tone and style. As Alrik Gustafson describes in *A History of Swedish Literature* (1961), Bengtsson's essays are an amalgam of "the whimsicalities of Charles Lamb, the vigor and independence of spirit of William Hazlitt, and the heroic-romantic idealism of Robert Louis Stevenson." His progress through an essay can best be

described as leisurely, displaying a penchant for tangents, interjections, and personal reflections. He writes with charm and enthusiasm, particularly for historical subjects. Apart from his historical sketches, his subject matter ranges widely—from the art of lying, detective literature, and chess playing, to battles between red and black ants, ghost stories, and a childhood visit to a photographer—the more exotic and whimsical the better.

In addition to being an essayist, Bengtsson was a successful translator, translating into Swedish such works as **Henry David Thoreau**'s *Walden* and John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In both his essays and translations, Bengtsson was a storyteller and was thus not necessarily aiming for historical accuracy. His work has been "unparalleled"—deserved praise for both the translations and the essays.

P.M.MITCHELL

Biography

Frans Gunnar Bengtsson. Born 4 October 1894 in Tossjö, near Kristianstad. Studied at the University of Lund, fil.kand., 1920, fil.lic.,1930. Married Gerda Fineman, 1939. Died in Ribbingsfors, 19 December 1954.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose
Litteratörer och militärer, 1929
Silversköldarna, och andra essayer, 1931
De långhåriga merovingerna, och andra essayer, 1933
Sällskap för en eremit, 1938
För nöjes skull, 1947
A Walk to an Ant Hill and Other Essays, translated by Michael Roberts and Elspeth Schubert, 1950
Tankar i gröngräset (selected essays), 1953
Folk som sjöng, och andra essayer, 1955
Äreräddning för Campeadoren (selected articles), 1986

Other writings: novels (including *Röde orm [The Long Ships],* 1941–45), poetry, a two-volume biography of King Charles XII of Sweden (1935–36), and memoirs (1953). Also translated several works, including Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Collected works edition: *Samlade skrifter,* 1950–55.

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Benjamin, Walter

German, 1892–1940

Walter Benjamin is one of the central essayists of the GermanJewish intellectual tradition. Born and raised in Berlin in a bourgeois household representing both stability and confinement, Benjamin grew into a critic of literature, Western philosophy, and contemporary European culture. His oeuvre consists of hundreds of essays on literature, culture, history, and philosophy as well as book reviews and records of his travels throughout Europe. Benjamin was not in the strict sense a philosopher, nor entirely a creative writer, but a hybrid author who fused his philosophical as well as creative talents. These in turn were often intermingled with early German Romantic ideas on language and translation, Jewish mysticism, and Marxist materialism.

His persona as cultural critic was formed in the years of childhood and youth in Berlin, where the Wilhelmian environment provided both conservatism and confinement. Benjamin's powerful sense of cultural criticism was ignited while participating in the traditional German educational system, notable for its academic rigor and excellence, but also for its suppression of originality and creativity. Benjamin's involvement in educational reform under the auspices of the Youth Movement (1912–17) was instrumental to his future role as cultural critic as well as intellectual and social outsider. His articles of 1913 in the youth journal *Der Anfang* (The beginning) consistently address issues of repression as well as the multifaceted hypocrisies of bourgeois life.

By means of cultural criticism, the early Benjamin developed a challenging methodology of cognition which earned him mostly criticism from the contemporary German academic establishment. His friends at the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt-on-Main, including Max Horkheimer and **Theodor W.Adorno,** were often puzzled by Benjamin's opaque visions and representations. Critical and anti-systematic thinking for Benjamin was the central and almost metaphysical pillar from which he set out as essayist, and to which he returned at the end of most essays. In his well-known essays on **Charles Baudelaire,** Marcel Proust, Franz Kafka, and Karl Kraus, critical thought is directed and informed by its relation to the autonomous work of art. However, the traditional notions of this autonomy are curiously short-circuited by Benjamin's powerful reflections on the fragmentary constellation of 19th-century and contemporary European culture. For Benjamin, literary works are "irreducible as deeds"; it is to this philosophical and literary complexity that his many essays on writers from the French, German, and Russian literary tradition of Modernism speak.

1924 was a decisive year for Benjamin in his development from eclectic philosopher to more politically engaged essayist as the political force field of the Weimar Republic became more overtly established. His essays of this time were influenced by Marxist dialectical materialism—strangely wed, however, to early Romantic language theories. The collection of this period, *Einbahnstrasse* (1928; *One-Way Street*), pays homage to the surrealist avant-garde tradition of representation which would be crucial to his later

and most central, yet also most controversial project, *Das Passagenwerk* (The Arcades project). As the essays of *One-Way Street* already suggest, objects or marginalia of daily life rather than Platonic ideas would from then on provide the discursive ground from which the most pressing, yet also the most decentering and fragmentary, experiences of Modernism were to be evaluated and rewritten. Moreover, by introducing collage and montage into the essayistic structures of textual representation, Benjamin inaugurated a new way of writing history—the materialist history of modernity as seen from an essayist's perspective.

Modernism as an aesthetic, philosophical, and cultural phenomenon emerged during the 19th century. For Benjamin this historical moment, when long-cherished symbolic affinities in the material and ideistic world began to crumble, revealed layers of meaning which could then be explored and represented in more fragmentary and allegorical ways. From *One-Way Street* to the curious *Passagenwerk* Benjamin explores how meaning is primarily constructed and suspended in relation to objects of daily life which, ordained as "profane illuminations," hold their own ground as both entirely real and entirely imaginary. Thus Benjamin's essayistic work addresses in incisive prose the most challenging questions and representational concerns of the German, French, and Russian traditions of Modernism.

At the point of intersection between eclectic philosophy and cultural criticism, Benjamin creates in the almost two thousand pages of the *Passagenwerk* a materialist philosophy of history consisting of thousands of quotations, reflections, and essays on 19th-century Paris. This test ground for the emergence of Modernism on all fronts represents a collection of raw data in addition to reflective essays and aphorisms rather than a consistent and more traditional univocal narrative. Much like the essay in **Montaigne's** tradition of skepticism, understood in the etymological sense of "seeing" and "perceiving," Benjamin's essays challenge the boundaries and limits of traditional forms of thought and representation. Readers of this work are forced into a curious paradoxical position: they must both reconstruct and create elements of a former dialogue of cultural construction which in a univocal way will never again be accessible. It is against this curious representational paradox and silence that Benjamin's work begins to resonate.

Benjamin will always be remembered for his courage to remain a visionary as well as an intellectual outsider somewhere, as he himself put it, "in the folds of time."

MARION DOEBELING

Biography

Walter Benedix Schönflies Benjamin. Born 15 July 1891 in Berlin. Studied at the Universities of Freiburg, 1912, Berlin, 1913, Munich, 1915–17, Berne, Ph.D., 1919, and Frankfurt-on-Main, thesis rejected, 1925. Married Sophie Pollak, 1917 (divorced, 1930): one son. Contributor to various journals, from the early 1920s. Visited Russia, 1926–27. Forced to leave Germany when the Nazis rose to power, 1933; lived in Paris. Associated with the Institute for Social Research, Frankfurt-on-Main, 1934–37, and wrote for its journal *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (Journal for social research). Attempted to escape

Nazi regime by emigrating to the United States via Spain, but committed suicide when in danger of being betrayed to the Gestapo. Died (suicide by morphine overdose) in Port Bou, 26 September 1940.

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Benn, Gottfried

German, 1886–1956

The importance of the essay form varied with each period in Gottfried Benn's life. He particularly favored prose in situations of crisis; his use of the essay in the crucial period of the 1930s, for example, is not only a preference for the essay form, but also for its potential readership, since the essay reaches a much wider audience than poetry. Over half of all Benn's essays appeared between 1930 and 1934, when he found himself forced from the position of the outsider to that of a crucially important participant in the conflict between Left and Right.

Benn was never a typical essayist: his greatest achievement was to place current situations into historical, even anthropological frameworks and thus create surprising perspectives. He was a superb stylist, even when his vocabulary at times obscured his subject. He was a master of darkly fascinating statements, but he was a poet rather than a thinker. His essays cannot be compared in argumentative originality and lucidity with those of **Robert Musil,** Hermann Broch, or **Thomas Mann,** and many critics have in fact emphasized the stylistic proximity of these essays to poetry, while others have charged that they misuse an essentially philosophical form. Benn's method, to replace logical content with lyrical images, does give his essays a certain monotony, and occasionally betrays intellectual and stylistic sloppiness and carelessness.

A major problem in these essays is the question of public and private, of representative and subjective viewpoints. Indeed, Benn's first essay, *Das moderne Ich* (1920; The modern self), hovers between the two spheres. On the one hand it is a"public" speech to students of the natural sciences, intended to give an overview of the post-World War I mentality. On the other hand, the shift from politics to the "inner" emotional and spiritual life already betrays Benn's preferences. Benn reveals a more political side in his next major essay, "Neben dem Schriftstellerberuf" (1927; Beside the profession of writer), when he not only affirms the asocial and nihilistic nature of art, but also presents himself as an opponent of the Weimar Republic, though it is as yet difficult to place him in either a leftist or rightist camp.

Increasingly in the late 1920s Benn's interest turned to the definition of art and the artist. In "Totenrede für Klabund" (1928; Eulogy for Klabund), he stresses the sense of mission of the artist, contending that the artist lives between social levels, despised and unknown, while himself a despiser. It was precisely because of this constellation that Benn was vulnerable to the temptation to seek a recognition which lies outside the realm of art, and can only be bestowed at the terrible price of political compromise.

A first indication of the increasing polarization of the German literary scene in fact involved Max Herrmann-Neisse's review of Benn's prose in *Die neue Bücherschau* (The new book review) in 1929. Herrmann-Neisse's enthusiastic comments included a

derogatory remark against literary suppliers of political **propaganda** materials and the claim that Benn was more "revolutionary" than the propaganda writers on the Left. Two of the magazine's contributors reacted with a **letter** to the editor, in which they resigned. Benn himself was invited to respond to these letters and did so in his essay "Über die Rolle des Schriftstellers in dieser Zeit" (1929; Concerning the role of the writer in this era). In 1930 there followed "Zur Problematik des Dichterischen" (On the problem of the poetic), Benn's first full-blown poetic "theory" in which he concludes that at no time has art been able to fit into a contemporary context, nor have artists been able to influence the contemporary scene. Rather, the poet-artist is a purveyor of dreams and visions, the prophet of ecstatic existence.

Benn was able to conceive of his idea of the poet as having access to archaic visions because of his "geological" interpretation of the personality, which he presented in "Der Aufbau der Persönlichkeit" (1930; The structure of personality). Here he argues for a new image of man built on the latest developments in psychoanalysis, psychiatry, biology, and anthropology. Benn makes Jung's theory of the collective unconscious the basis for his belief that earlier stages of human development can be accessed in privileged states, such as under the influence of drugs or in a trance. Two further ideas are introduced: that of mutation and that of the phenotype and genotype. His belief in the biological and geological nature of personality allowed him to see the history of humankind in terms of "natural" history. This idea suggested to him that Germany in 1933 entered a phase of mutation, and therefore allowed him to embrace the Nazi doctrine.

Benn's next collection of essays, *Fazit der Perspektiven* (1930; The balance sheet of perspectives), met with considerable antagonism. Moreover, in 1931 there took place the incident which some critics have seen as the main reason for Benn's ultimate decision to move into the rightist camp: his speech at the banquet of the Schutzverband Deutscher Schriftsteller on the occasion of **Heinrich Mann's** 60th birthday. Benn's attempt to pass over completely Mann's political convictions, and instead to celebrate the earlier, late Romantic and "aesthetic" Mann, met with massive rejection not only in the leftist press but elsewhere as well. In response to the attacks by primarily leftist writers, Benn inevitably found himself in the conservative camp; once there, it was difficult to extract himself from it, as the essays in *Nach dem Nihilismus* (1932; After nihilism) demonstrate.

Much has been written about the events which in 1933 led to Benn's complete accommodation with the Nazi regime. Whether his reactions were purely emotional or he placed his hope for social and cultural stability on the Nazi regime, whether opportunism or political blindness, is difficult to ascertain. More than with any other essay, perhaps, critics have had difficulty with "Dorische Welt" (1934; The Doric world), the glorification of the militaristic and eugenic values of the world of Sparta. Benn does not advance our knowledge of the Doric world beyond the positions of **Nietzsche** and **Jacob Christoph Burckhardt;** the essay's force lies in the positive interpretation of Sparta and the parallels Benn provides with the contemporary scene. It is difficult to determine whether or not the piece is blatant propaganda for the Hitler state or the first obvious break with its ideology. History itself has played a role in our assessment of what Benn advances in this essay, yet many critics remain unreconciled to the idea that Benn, as he wrote affirmatively of the virtues of Sparta, anticipated the Nazi state and its death camps.

Benn's efforts to ingratiate himself with the new regime did not prevent him from falling victim to the relentless drive for uniformity of the Nazi ideology. His clinging to a special status for the artist, his defense of certain traditions of which he felt himself part, notably the expressionist movement, caused him, in 1936, to be accused of "Artistik." The publication of his *Ausgewählte Gedichte* (1936; Selected poems) then provoked the scandal which removed him definitively from the scene he had, perhaps reluctantly in the beginning, occupied in so controversial a fashion. With the collapse of his forum and his readership, Benn almost completely abandoned the genre until after 1945.

1949 saw the publication of *Ausdruckswelt* (Expressive world), a number of essays Benn had written during the period when he was forbidden to publish. They portray him in the old situation of critic of contemporary situations, as dissector and interpreter, but recent events have changed his attitude: his tone is milder, gentler, almost elegiac. The hoped-for mutation, the new race has not been realized. But if it is true that Benn now attacks the Nazis, he also criticizes the German people as a whole, using the criterion not only of nationalism, but also of archaism and barbarism.

Most of the essays take up familiar themes from the 1920s and 1930s, dealing with the dialectic between nihilism and "Artistik." Benn sees in the rejection of the immediate European past a prerequisite for new art. In "Provoziertes Leben" (1943; A provoked life), he claims that salvation lies in a return to "das Primäre" (the primeval), to the prelogical which would do away with the schizoid split in modern man. In the essay "Pallas" (1943), Benn makes the motherless goddess the symbol of the initial separation between form and formlessness. The goddess becomes not the symbol of nature, but of *Geist* (spirit or intellect). Both come together in the creative act, which, however, is no longer concerned with "natural" nature, but "thinking" nature, or "stylized" nature—in other words, art.

If Benn's autobiography *Doppelleben* (1950; Double life) generally found an ambivalent response, the same cannot be said of critical reactions to "Probleme der Lyrik" (1959; Problems of poetry), which originated as a lecture at the University of Marburg in 1951. Many critics have seen in this text a key to the understanding of Benn's poetic practice not only of the late phase, but of his whole career. Benn situates modern poetry squarely in the hallucinatory-constructive tradition, and reacts, consistently with his beliefs expressed both in the lyric poetry and in the essays of the 1930s and 1940s, to the mixing of sociological and poetological categories in poetry.

Benn's insistence in "Probleme der Lyrik" that modern poetry is monologic in essence reiterates a theme he had elaborated in the essays of the 1930s. In "Altern als Problem für Künstler" (1954; "Artists and Old Age") and "Über mich selbst" (1956; About myself), no further shifts of position can be discerned in his religious beliefs, nor in his poetic theory and practice. "Über mich selbst" in fact effortlessly returns to the definition of the "lyrisches Ich" (the lyric "I") of more than 30 years before.

AUGUSTINUS P.DIERICK

Biography

Born 2 May 1886 in Mansfeld. Studied philosophy and theology at the University of

Marburg, 1903–04; medicine at the University of Berlin, 1904–05; medicine at the Kaiser Wilhelm Academy, Berlin, 1905–12, Ph.D., 1912. Worked at a hospital, and as a ship's physician, 1912–13. Served in the army: discharged for health problems, 1912; served in the army medical corps, 1914–18, 1935–45: awarded the Iron Cross (second class), 1914. Married Edith Brosin, 1914 (died, 1922): one daughter and one stepson. Skin and venereal diseases specialist, Berlin, after 1917. Supported National Socialism, from 1932, but renounced the National Socialist Party, 1934. Briefly appointed by Nazis acting chair of literary section, Prussian Academy of Arts, 1933. Denounced at various times throughout the 1930s and 1940s by Nazis, Communists, and Democrats. Works banned, 1938–48. Married Herta von Wedemeyer, 1938 (committed suicide, 1945). Ran a private medical practice, Berlin, from 1945. Married Ilse Kaul, 1946. Awards: Büchner Prize, 1951; Order of Merit (Federal Republic of Germany), 1952. Died (of cancer) in Bad Schlangenbad, 7 July 1956.

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Gesammelte Prosa, 1928
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Bense, Max

German, 1910–1990

"Such prose clarifies and vivifies the objects of which it is talking and which it seeks to perceive and communicate, but at the same time such prose is talking about itself, communicates itself as an authentic state of mind…" wrote German philosopher and literary critic Max Bense, describing the essay ("Über den Essay und seine Prosa" [1947; On the essay and its prose]). Having produced numerous essays on topics ranging from the sciences to art and literary criticism, Bense viewed the essay as an expression of the experimental method of thinking and writing—similar to the role of the essay during the 18th-century Enlightenment. What distinguishes his theoretical approach from those of his predecessors, however, is the clear notion that any successful essay creates a certain atmosphere that builds a relationship between the subject matter discussed and the author as well as the reader, an atmosphere which allows the reader to draw further insights. The goal of an essay therefore should be to sum up all possible configurations in which the subject matter can be perceived. Moreover, while the essay is written in prose, it can also become poetry. In each essay there are certain basic sentences, seeds, which are concurrently prosaic and poetic. An essay can therefore never *be* a theory in itself, it can only be the beginnings, the birth of a theory, if the interaction between the atmosphere created by the essay and the author or reader is productive and thus leads to critical insights on the subject matter.

It is especially in his capacity as a critic that Bense's theoretical work has been so beneficial for literary theory and criticism as well as for philosophy. Even though he is one of the most quoted authors in German intellectual life, Bense's voluminous work has not yet become the subject of a comprehensive monograph. Perhaps this is due to the exceptionally wide range of subject matter with which he dealt, making a successful compilation difficult. Even his studies at the Universities of Bonn, Cologne, and Basle ranged from mathematics and physics to philosophy. After World War II, during which he worked as a laboratory physicist, he combined these three fields as a professor of mathematical logic and the philosophy of technology. Striving for justice and equality, he first took up his professorship in Jena, but soon became disillusioned with developments in the east and moved to Stuttgart in 1949.

Bense's major achievement for aesthetics and literary theory lies in the innovative connection of art and technology based on Hegel's aesthetics and Wittgenstein's speech-theories. He introduced scientific methods to traditional aesthetics resulting in a "technological," "material" aesthetics which could be applied to art works as well as scientific objects. This combination, formulated especially in the *Aesthetica* tetralogy (1954–60) and *Theorie der Texte* (1962; Textual theory), results in a fundamentally new approach to semiotics, which uses theories and sign systems that originate in

mathematiccybernetic contexts for language and texts. A "text" can thus be anything that consists of linguistic material, such as advertisements, scientific research, and artistic compositions. Harshly attacked by his opponents, who thought of his entire semiotic approach as being "objectivistic," "barbaric," and "anarchic," Bense nevertheless had a tremendous impact on Germany's socalled "experimental" literature and literary theories of the 1950s and early 1960s, especially on the movement called "Konkrete Poesie" (concrete poetry), including important authors such as Helmut Heissenbüttel, Eugen Gomringer, and Franz Mon.

Besides all his scientific accomplishments, and despite numerous attacks by critics that he was "too scientific" to be a humanist, Bense was deeply concerned with the question of humanitarian tasks for individuals in modern society. This concern seems particularly lucid in his essays on literature: "If the objective of knowledge lies not only in the objectivity of facts but, as in our society, rather in the external habitable condition of the world, a new type of thinker needs to be developed: a thinker who exhausts the rich possibilities of human intelligence not only as researcher or scholar, but at the same time as critic and as writer. Maybe that thinker could adapt to tasks in our society, a society based on a frightening density of outward communications, and an equally frightening lack of inner communications" (*Ein Geräusch in der Strasse: Descartes und die Folgen II* [1960; Sound in the street: Descartes and the consequences II]). Bense himself embodied this type of thinker by writing essays on such contemporaries as Gertrude Stein, Francis Ponge, **Walter Benjamin,** Helmut Heissenbüttel, **Alfred Andersch,** Ferdinand Lyon, Ludwig Harig, Ernst Jandl, Friederike Mayröcker, and many more, who were all concerned with artistically experimental art forms, and who therefore had the potential to add to the "inner communications" of society. These intimate portraits share one of Bense's most fundamental insights into literature, also advocated by members of the Frankfurt School (**Adorno,** Benjamin): "reality" is not a category that can be measured or described in scientific terms. It rather manifests itself in one singular act of reflection, while different literary realities coexist. The (literary) text for Bense becomes the object of different realities, one of which remains to be interpreted by the reader of that text—or by the writer of an essay.

AGNES C.MÜLLER

Biography

Born 7 February 1910 in Strasbourg. Studied mathematics, physics, and philosophy at the University of Bonn, diploma in physics, 1932, and geology, 1933, Ph.D., 1937; Universities of Cologne, 1935–36, and Basle. Industrial physicist for two years. Married Elisabeth Bauer (died, 1939), 1938: one son. Served in the German Air Force, 1939. Editor of a science series, Munich, 1940. Married Maria Bauer (died, 1979), 1944: three daughters. Professor of philosophy, mathematical logic, and the theory of science, University of Jena, 1946–49; professor of the philosophy of technology and the theory of science, Technische Hochschule, Stuttgart, from 1949. Traveled extensively in North America, from 1969. Married Elisabeth Walter, 1988: one daughter. Died in Stuttgart, 29 April 1990.

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Benson, A.C.

British, 1862–1925

For nearly 30 years, from the late 1890s to his death in the mid-1920s, A.C.Benson was one of England's most prolific, popular, and respected essayists, although the respect came more from the myriad of general readers who conferred the popularity than from

his intellectual and social peers at Eton and Cambridge. A man of letters in the fullest 19th-century sense of the term, he also wrote poetry, fiction, biographies, and personal memoirs, to a total of more than 70 books. His editorial work included a three-volume selection of the correspondence of Queen Victoria (1907). Despite this prodigious output, he is today a largely forgotten figure whose tenuous hold on posthumous reputation rests almost solely on his authorship of the words to "Land of Hope and Glory" (1902), written as an ode to welcome Edward VII to the throne and rapidly transformed, in conjunction with Edward Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1," into a surrogate national anthem.

Benson's essays were essentially lay **sermons**, musings on spiritual, aesthetic, and existential matters directed always toward salutary, and often consolatory, ends. Even when the content is biographical—as in his first essay collection, entitled simply *Essays* (1896) and containing 13 biographical sketches, all but one of which had been previously published in **periodicals**—the eulogistic judgments on worthy lives are upliftingly homiletic. His concluding comment on Edmund Gosse's poetry ("to have made some exquisite mood your own, and to have presented it with passionate accuracy, is no light achievement") implicitly glosses the modal intensities of many of his own later essays. Their recording of the fruits of moments of quasi-epiphanic insight generates moralistic conclusions that spoke comfortingly to the emotional needs, particularly in times of despair or bereavement, of his worldwide readership. Among those who found solace in Benson's work was the poet Wilfred Owen, who recorded his admiration of *Where No Fear Was: A Book About Fear* (1914), read in 1917 during Owen's treatment for shellshock at Craiglockhart War Hospital (Simon Wormleighton, 1990).

Benson's distinctive tone owed much to his 18 years as a schoolmaster at Eton, the legacy of which informs one of his most influential books, *The Schoolmaster: A Commentary upon the Aims and Methods of an Assistant-Master in a Public School* (1902). Confident in their sense of the importance of the schoolmaster's vocation, these 16 essays are forthright in their recognition of the frequency with which the ideal and the actual part company, particularly in relation to the two great shibboleths of Victorian educational theory and practice, compulsory team sports and classics. The emphasis on both helps account in Benson's eyes for the unfortunate fact "that we send out from our public schools year after year many boys who hate knowledge and think books dreary, who are perfectly self-satisfied and entirely ignorant." The stranglehold retained on school curricula by Greek and Latin was a surprising obsession for a man who had himself achieved distinction as a Cambridge classicist. Among the 18 essays included in *At Large* (1908), published five years after Benson's departure from Eton for Cambridge, is "A Speech Day," in which the former schoolmaster worries again at a familiar *bete noire:* "to persist in regarding the classics as the high-water mark of the human intellect seems to me to argue a melancholy want of faith in the progress of the race."

When Benson addresses less pragmatic concerns, the tone becomes more precious, its tenor caught in some of the titles of his most spiritually emotive books: *The Thread of Gold* (1905), *Along the Road* (1913), and *Joyous Gard* (1913). *The Thread of Gold,* which divides into 42 sections of sentimental and vaguely theological rumination on human circumstance, has as its governing metaphor the observation "that there is a certain golden thread of hope and love interwoven with all our lives, running consistently

through the coarsest and darkest fabric." Similarly, all 62 essays in *Along the Road,* varied as their notional subjects are ("Old England," "Mr. Gladstone," "Compulsory Greek," "Vulgarity," "Gossip," "On Being Interrupted") rarely move far from the Christian apologetics that inform Benson's advice to his readers: "…if the loneliest soul on earth, lying in darkness of spirit and pain of body, breathes one voiceless prayer upon the night, the world can never be the same as though that prayer had been unprayed" ("Brain Waves"). The paradoxically effete muscularity of Benson's message is caught in his explanation of the title attached to the *Joyous Gard* collection: "I have called this book…*Joyous Gard,* because it speaks of a stronghold that we can win with our own hands, where we can abide in great content, so long as we are careful not to linger there in sloth and idleness, but are ready to ride abroad at the call for help."

But this chivalric impulse assumed an intransigently sedentary and privileged form, evidenced nowhere more palpably than in Benson's most famous and popular collection, *From a College Window* (1906), comprising 18 essays—12 of them formerly published in *Cornhill Magazine*—written after his election to a fellowship at Magdalene College, Cambridge. Its appeal, like that of most of his work, can in part be explained by the recurrent rhetorical strategy explained in its opening essay, "The Point of View": "My desire is but to converse with my readers, to speak as in a comfortable *tête-á-tête,* of experience, and hope, and patience." For all the conversational manner, with its blend of the avuncular and the priestly, Benson's essays, even those charting his own recurrent dark nights of the soul, assume an oracular authority that owes more to class confidence than great intellectual insight. A period in which burgeoning literacy rates and the consequent demand for printed materials of a broadly "improving" kind were not yet matched by a correspondingly widespread enlargement of speculative sophistication may arguably have been the only context in which work like Benson's could enjoy such an appreciative reception.

The vogue for both Benson and the ruminative essay was passing by the end of World War I, whose cataclysm helped create an audience less deferentially accepting of paternalistic bromides about "how to enjoy life or how to endure it" ("Literature and Life," *Escape, and Other Essays,* 1915). Benson's many books are now little more than period pieces, redolent of the sentimentalized world of male companionship that he fostered and was himself cocooned by at Eton and Magdalene.

KEITH WILSON

Biography

Arthur Christopher Benson. Born 24 April 1862, at Wellington College, Crowthorne, Berkshire. Studied at Temple Grove School, Mortlake, south London, 1872–74; Eton College (King's scholar), Windsor, Berkshire, 1874–81; King's College, Cambridge, 1881–84, B.A. in classics, 1884. Taught at Eton College, 1885–1903; fellow, from 1904, president, 1912–15, and master, 1915–25, Magdalene College, Cambridge. Contributor to various journals, including *Macmillan's Magazine, National Review, Contemporary Review,* and *Cornhill Magazine*. Suffered from depression and breakdowns, 1907–09 and 1917–22. Commander, Royal Victorian Order. Died (of heart failure) at Magdalene

College, Cambridge, 17 June 1925.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose
Essays, 1896
The Schoolmaster: A Commentary upon the Aims and Methods of an Assistant-Master in a Public School, 1902
The Thread of Gold, 1905
From a College Window, 1906
At Large, 1908
The Leaves of the Tree: Studies in Biography, 1911
Along the Road, 1913
Joyous Gard, 1913
Escape, and Other Essays, 1915
Memories and Friends, 1924
Rambles and Reflections, edited by E.F.Benson, 1926

Other writings: poetry, short stories, two novels, a two-volume biography of his father (1899–1900), biographies of writers, works of autobiography and fictionalized meditation (including *The Upton Letters,* 1905), and a lengthy diary (selections edited by Percy Lubbock, 1926, and David Newsome, 1981). Also edited a selection of the correspondence of Queen Victoria (3 vols., 1907).

Further Reading

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Brake, Laurel, "Judas and the Widow: Thomas Wright and A.C. Benson as Biographers of Walter Pater: The Widow," *Prose Studies* 4 (1981):39–54
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Howarth, T.E.B., *Cambridge Between Two Wars,* London: Collins, 1978
James, M.R., *Eton and King's: Recollections, Mostly Trivial, 1875–1925,* London: Williams and Norgate, 1926
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Bernanos, Georges

French, 1888–1948

Georges Bernanos' essays are far more voluminous than his better-known fiction. Six volumes appeared during his lifetime: *La Grande Peur des bien-pensants* (The great fear of conformist thinkers) in 1931; *Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune* (The great cemeteries in the moonlight; translated as *Diary of My Times*) in 1938; *Scandale de la vérité* (The scandal of truth) and *Nous autres Français* (We French) in 1939; *Lettre aux Anglais (Plea for Liberty: Letters to the English, the Americans, the Europeans)* in 1942; and, finally, *La France contre les robots (Tradition of Freedom)* in 1944. A further half-dozen compilations of Bernanos' articles and occasional texts were published posthumously. The two most substantial are *Le Chemin de la Croix-des-Ames* (1948; The way of the Cross-of-Souls), which assembled Bernanos' Brazilian wartime articles in one volume with an important **preface**-essay by the dying author, and *Français, si vous saviez* (1961; Frenchmen, if you only knew), a compilation of articles written between his return to France from Brazil in 1945 and his death in Paris in 1948.

Seven additional volumes of essays were published posthumously by Albert Béguin, Bernanos' literary executor. *Les Enfants humiliés* (The humiliated children), lost during the war and brought out only in 1949, contained Bernanos' 1939–40 poetic meditations on France's plunge into war again. *La Liberté, pour quoi faire? (Last Essays)* in 1953 brought together lectures from 1946–47. In 1956 Béguin assembled Bernanos' literary criticism and interviews from 1909–39 in *Le Crépuscule des vieux* (The twilight of old men). Four more recent compilations, prepared by Jean-Loup Bernanos, indiscriminately combine published and unpublished texts. *Le Lendemain, c'est vous!* (The next day it's you!), published in 1969, was followed in 1970 by a volume deceptively entitled *La France contre les robots* (France against the robots), even though the 1944 text (translated as *Tradition of Freedom*) bearing the same title comprises barely half the compilation. Further articles appeared in *La Vocation spirituelle de la France* (The spiritual vocation of France) in 1975, and *Les Prédestinés* (1983; The predestined ones) assembled texts on St. Dominic, Joan of Arc, Martin Luther, the few pages of Bernanos' *Life of Jesus,* and, from *Last Essays,* Bernanos' famous "last lecture," "Nos Amis, les saints" ("Our Friends the Saints"), in which the author gives a synthesis of his views on

God, man, and creation as well as on freedom and human suffering.

As an essayist Bernanos moves effortlessly from the strident tone he learned from Édouard Drumont and Léon Bloy to the subtle, nostalgic irony of **Charles Péguy,** whom he profoundly admired. His most powerful quality as an essayist, however, is a rare gift he developed as a novelist and shared with **Dostoevskii:** the ability to pierce his reader's heart through a sorrowing tenderness he himself called the "lost language of childhood." Readers attesting to their admiration for this gift include Antonin Artaud, **Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir,** André Malraux, Gaston Gallimard, and Charles de Gaulle.

Bernanos' desire to convince his reader of what he called "that part of the truth" given to him was rooted in his conviction that he must answer to God for all he wrote. For Bernanos, as for Bloy, writing was a divine calling, a vocation, and all true vocations, he said, must lead to Calvary. Having opted at age 18 for a writer's vocation over that of a priest, he strove to defend both Christian civilization and France—for him the foremost Christian country of Europe—with sacerdotal fervor.

As he sought in his essays to make his ideas live, Bernanos often personified them so that they might directly challenge his reader. As for his readers, Bernanos once said he liked to think that they were simply "all those men of good will" to whom the angel of Bethlehem first promised peace. In darker moments, however, he admitted that only those not totally subject to the technological seduction of the modern world remain intact enough to hear his voice.

Bernanos' audience did evolve radically from the right-wing nationalists of the *Action Française* (French action) for whom he started writing as a student. His long evolution carried him beyond any definable political position. By the end of his life communists no less than the ultra-right claimed him as one of their own. Even in his first essay volume in 1931, *La Grande Peur des bien-pensants,* Bernanos was already far more preoccupied with the future of French Christian society than with Édouard Drumont, whose biography he was supposedly writing.

His best-known essay, *Diary of My Times,* determined Gaston Gallimard to attach Bernanos to his publishing house and caused **Simone Weil** to write that Bernanos alone expressed what she herself had experienced in the Spanish Civil War. Launching "whole squads of images," as he liked to say, Bernanos denounced the Roman Catholic hierarchy for its stance on the Ethiopian conquest as well as on the "crusade" of General Franco.

When Charles Maurras, head of the *Action Française,* was elected to the French Academy in 1938, Bernanos, from Brazil, denounced the revered master of his youth in *Scandale de la vérité* for approving the Munich Pact, accurately foreseeing the fate awaiting the French Right during the war. Then, as war loomed, the essayist glorified those Christian values he particularly associated with French history and culture in *Nous autres Français*.

France's defeat was the subject for his *Plea for Liberty: Letters to the English, the Americans, the Europeans,* a work triggered by a request in 1940 from the *Dublin Review* for an article on that subject. After May 1940, and for the duration of the war, Bernanos devoted himself exclusively to essays on the meaning of the conflict, both to France and to the world.

Bernanos' seven years in Brazil (1938–45) and the devotion of the Brazilian elite to French civilization much softened the author's strident nationalism. He now attempted to

define France's supernatural destiny to lead the whole postwar world in a spiritual revolution. His violent voice still surged up, however, in both *Tradition of Freedom* and *Last Essays* as he denounced technology's increasing threat to human freedom.

Bernanos' wartime essays won him a reputation as "bard of the French Resistance," but after his return to France in 1945 his inability to fuse his ideals with political realities in postwar France disappointed those who had relied on his voice for strength and moral courage during the occupation. To the end, however, Bernanos' articles in newspapers such as *La Bataille* (The battle), *Carrefour* (Crossroads), *Combat, Le Figaro,* and *L'Intransigeant* won him devoted readers from all social and political strata. Even half a century after his death Bernanos' passionate and thought-provoking assessment of two World Wars, the German occupation of France, and the significance of the atomic bomb remains hardly less gripping than his astonishingly fresh, pertinent, and eloquently challenging denunciation of the threats posed to the freedom of a human race increasingly enslaved by technology.

WILLIAM BUSH

Biography

Born 20 February 1888 in Paris. Studied at the Collège des Jésuits, until 1901; Collège Notre-Dame-des-Champs, Paris, 1901–03; Collège Saint-Célestin, Bourges, 1903–04; Collège Sainte-Marie, Aire-sur-la-Lys, 1904–06, baccalauréat, 1906; the Sorbonne, Paris, 1906–09, licence in law and literature, 1909. Military service, 1909–10. Editor, *L'Avant-Garde de Normandie,* 1913–14. Served in the French army, 1914–19: wounded. Married Jeanne Talbert d'Arc, 1917: three sons and three daughters. Sold insurance, 1919–27. Columnist, *Le Figaro,* 1930–32. Crippled for life in a motorcycle accident, 1933. Evicted from family home because of debts, and moved to Majorca, 1934–37, then returned to France; settled in Brazil, and involved in the resistance movement, 1938–44; returned to France, 1945. Contributor to many journals, including *Combat, Carrefour, L'Intransigeant,* and *La Bataille*. Gave lectures in Switzerland, Belgium, and North Africa. Awards: Prix Fémina, for novel, 1929; French Academy Grand Prize, for novel, 1936. Died (of liver problems) in Paris, 5 July 1948.

Selected Writings

Essays and Related Prose

La Grande Peur des bien-pensants, 1931

Jeanne, relapse et sainte, 1934; as *Sanctity Will Out: An Essay on St. Joan,* translated by Rosamond Batchelor, 1947

Les Grands Cimetières sous la lune, 1938; as *Diary of My Times,* translated by Pamela Morris, 1938

Scandale de la vérité, 1939

Nous autres Français, 1939

Lettre aux Anglais, 1942; as *Plea for Liberty: Letters to the English, the Americans, the Europeans,* translated by Harry Lorin Binsse and Ruth Bethel, 1945