



The Key Reporter

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FROM SURVIVAL TO PROSPERITY: THE ARTISTIC GREENING OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA

by Thad W. Tate

Two years ago, we observed the bicentennial of Phi Beta Kappa. The coincidence of this celebration with the Nation's was quite naturally the subject of speculation and discussion. From study of the early minutes and the memoirs of the first members, we have gained an increased awareness of how much the founding of Phi Beta Kappa was an expression of the remarkable era of the Revolution. For example, the moment of Virginia's strong nationalist impulse is well reflected in William Short's recollection of how Samuel Hardy "... communicated to me his plan for extending branches of our Society to the different States. He expatiated on the great advantages that would attend it in binding together the separate States." And Gerald Holton, in his 1976 Phi Beta Kappa-American Association for the Advancement of Science lecture, used the example of the careers of the fifty Founders — more than half of whom entered public life — to illustrate his thesis on the coming together of person and historic moment which sparks the creative imagination. In the paper which follows, Thad W. Tate takes as his theme the cultural transformation of the eighteenth century and adds another dimension to our understanding of the world of the Founders.

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Early in the eighteenth century the American colonies passed a critical watershed in their economic circumstances. Some minimum degree of prosperity was achieved, some wealth accumulated from other pursuits, which made possible a significant level of support, public and private, for the arts. The social and cultural implications of this transformation extended well beyond the direct cost of the arts and art objects themselves. Their effect is seen in the development of patronage, for instance, which only begins with possession of the necessary means to support the arts. With patronage comes the teasing question: Why do some persons prefer the accumulation of lavish homes and personal possessions; others, the endowment of great public collections; and others, the purchase of National Football League franchises — although all of them may have comparable wealth? That is in many respects a social and ideological, not an economic, question; yet it is indicative of the way in which economic circumstances exert subtle as well as more obvious influences upon the culture of an age.

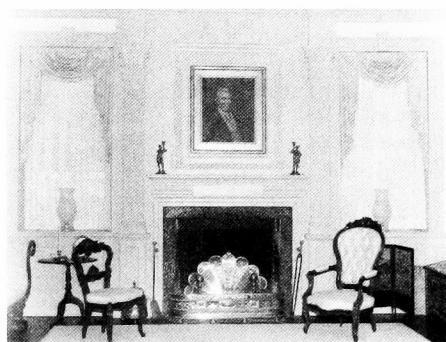
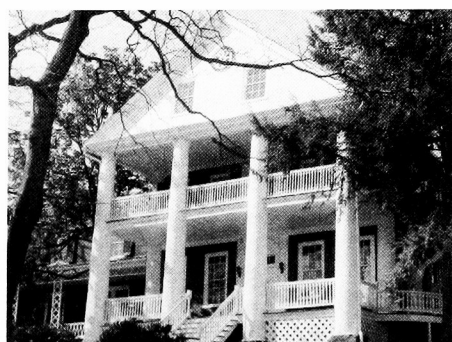
The century and a half from roughly 1600 to 1750 was a time of economic decline for southern Europe, where Spain and Portugal had led the early stages of discovery and colonization and Italy had dominated the trade of the Mediterranean. It was one of long-

range growth for northern and western Europe, first for the Dutch and then for the English. Most of us are aware of how closely linked these two peoples were, whether through trade and economic rivalry, through politics in the accession of the Dutch William III to the throne of England, or through cultural interconnections as evidenced by the popularity of Dutch styles in the decorative arts of England.

While population actually declined in much of the Continent, it grew with the economy in northwestern Europe, especially in the first half of the seventeenth century. Nowhere was growth more spectacular than in London, to which people migrated from all over England. From an economic standpoint, the flow of people to other parts of the realm resulted in increased markets, an expanded labor supply, and colonists for America. After 1650, when the English population began to level off, particularly among the upper classes, that process tended by the eighteenth century to concentrate wealth and contribute to the stability of English society in the Augustan age.

The economic change represented more than a larger population and a consequent increase in buying power. It was the kind of development that could have been achieved only by a major restructuring of society, by the withdrawing of resources and capital

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Pictured are two eighteenth-century homes of Phi Beta Kappa Founders. At left and center are views of Stuart House, built by Archibald Stuart in Staunton, Virginia. Here the original seal of the Society was hidden after the British threatened Williamsburg during the Revolution. At right is Woodstock, home of Thomas and Armstead Smith in southern Virginia. Both brothers were in the founding group.



from what had been a local economy and diverting them to one that was regional and even international. Agricultural land in England became more concentrated in ownership; the traditional rights of smaller holders were eroded, and the land was used far more intensively. The resulting efficiency, rise in profits, and savings in labor had much to do with the later boom in the building of country houses and the refinement of taste among the English upper classes.

There was industrial change, too, as a portion of the surplus agricultural labor was drawn to industry, sometimes in the countryside itself, sometimes in the cities. Industry was in turn revolutionized in organization through larger-scale investment, a bigger work force, and production for what had become a world market. But this was not yet, by any means, the age of modern technology. The innumerable prints of manufacturing processes in various trades and crafts, most notably those in Diderot's famous encyclopedia, provide good illustrations of the nature of the technology involved. There is no longer a single craftsman laboring with an apprentice or two, but one still sees a small work force employing a good deal of hand work or using only simple machinery.

This expanded output, however simply it was produced, drew its raw materials from all over the world, created ever new consumer demands, and made commerce and the development of an enlarged merchant class a key to much of the change that occurred. As time went on, England stood out in its ability to integrate the expansion of trade, whether to Europe, the East, or America; in the growth of its industry; in the accumulation of capital; and in the alteration of its social structure to accommodate all the other changes. The benefits fell unequally, especially favoring the landed aristocracy and the merchant and manufacturing class, but the total wealth of the realm was greater by far; and all levels of society were able to upgrade their standard of living to some extent. Consumption of a widening range of available goods rose to unprecedented levels.

Economic historians disagree as to how much these developments owed to England's colonial empire and overseas trade with America. They tend to stress the greater importance of the European market and of domestic growth. Whatever the extent of the more distant commerce, that with the East was initially the more lucrative and was always the more influential on taste and style. The capacity of the Orient to supply decorative and artistic

goods to the European market and to provide models for European craftsmen to copy was in sharp contrast to America's export of raw agricultural products.

If the American colonies must be regarded at first as imitators of English artistic styles and as relatively minor contributors to the Atlantic economy, those same colonies had by the last quarter of the eighteenth century become vital to England's well-being, furnishing something more than a third of all British imports and buying a similar share of British exports. It must be remembered, moreover, that to reach such a point the colonies had to undergo a transformation more fundamental than that experienced by England itself. While the English began to feel the full cultural effects of economic change toward the end of the seventeenth century, the colonies still remained at that time struggling outposts, isolated on the very edge of the Atlantic world.

Historians are more and more struck with the simplicity, the impermanence, the incredible hardship of life in seventeenth-century America. The images we tend to have of the first century in the colonies are of commodious New England saltbox houses, ample brick houses in Tidewater Virginia, and rather squarish, heavy furnishings that suggest a certain level of comfort and grace. They imply that the colonies had a degree of stability and permanence even in their earliest years. But a harder look at the evidence reveals that life had a far ruder and more tenuous quality.

One might think that New England would have been something of an exception, since the initial wave of colonists who arrived in the 1620s and 1630s settled in, built strong family and community ties, and multiplied many times over. Yet we know now that extremely modest houses typified the earliest building in New England far more than the larger houses, often with substantial eighteenth- and even nineteenth-century accretions, traditionally depicted. One is more struck by a comment of Thomas Dudley, who would only a few years later serve as governor of Massachusetts Bay. Writing in 1631 to the Countess of Lincoln, he apologized for his crabbed style of writing, because he had "no table nor other room to write in, than by the fire upon my knee, in this sharpe winter."

In the Chesapeake area, in seventeenth-century Maryland and Virginia, we have come to understand how much both colonies remained an immigrant society, marked by fragile family

life, a shortage of women, and a high death rate. It was a world in which men and women hardly seemed to think it worthwhile to dwell on tomorrow, unless to provide by will for children who had little expectation of seeing either parent survive until they were grown.

Even as some settlers began to make a profit from the early boom in tobacco, the very uncertainty of that speculative wealth, and of life itself, seemed to discourage attention to comfort in living conditions. If one made money, the inclination apparently was to spend it on items of personal luxury or on the servant labor with which to make more money. Housing, apart from a few early attempts at grandeur by leaders of the first wave of settlement, remained primitive and temporary, even for people who could afford better. Typical construction was a wooden house of no more than four rooms — two up and two down — built not on a permanent foundation but on wooden posts driven at intervals into the ground so that the structures usually rotted away in twenty or thirty years.

Furnishings were scarcely better; the estate inventories of even well-to-do persons are notably lacking in eating utensils, fine dishes, or much in the way of furniture beyond beds, tables, and benches. The wealthy had more, but not a great deal that showed concern for style or comfort. What strikes us is not only the low level of comfort and the absence of luxury, apart from that of dress and personal ornamentation, but also the fact that it is a bareness that exceeds what at least some could have afforded. We are looking at a phenomenon that goes beyond economic hardship. We see, rather, a set of values and attitudes that set little store by style and decoration in houses or their furnishings.

Conditions improved toward the end of the seventeenth century, and examples of more permanent structures became more frequent, although the original dimensions of surviving Chesapeake houses of the period suggest that they were still modest. The occasional larger building must have been exceptional indeed, though an indicator of things to come.

Virginia grew more prosperous because its expanding export of tobacco, which, if no longer so spectacularly profitable as it had been in the first boom years, remained profitable enough for the large planter who controlled extensive lands and possessed the labor — now slave rather than indentured servant — to work them.



It is no accident that the cartouches of eighteenth-century Virginia and Chesapeake maps almost invariably show a busy tobacco wharf scene. And like tobacco in Virginia, so sugar, rice, indigo, naval stores, timber, or grain elsewhere. The commerce that transported them across the Atlantic and brought European goods in return became the base for far greater affluence in America.

Such prosperity made a higher standard of living and a taste for luxury possible for some colonists. It also created a revolution in values and attitudes that dictated such a style of life and brought a colony like Virginia much closer to the culture of England itself. To see this change, one can begin with Williamsburg. Chosen at the opening of the century to be the new seat of government for the colony, *the town was laid out on a plan for streets and buildings that in itself suggests concern for formal order, conscious design, and aesthetics.* We can find a new elegance, and also not a little pretense, in the designation of a chief public building in America as the Capitol — a classical term — rather than the more customary “state house,” and in the equally grandiose usage of “palace” for the governor’s residence. Neither term would have been conceivable in the seventeenth century for the miniscule and constantly rebuilding Jamestown.

We think, too, of the great houses of the Virginia countryside. An architectural historian would point to significant changes in style from the early to the late eighteenth century, generally in the direction of greater elaboration and richness and toward more classical forms. All these buildings — whether the familiar “great” houses such as Westover or Carter’s Grove or the less familiar homes of Phi Beta Kappa Founders, such as Stuart House and Woodstock — stand in marked contrast to the dwellings of the seventeenth century. All required a degree of affluence on the part of their builders and owners, but all demanded as well an inclination toward consumption of material goods and a sense of security that prosperity would endure. In reality, Chesapeake wealth remained tenuous; tobacco-raising was increasingly unprofitable; and a great deal of this material acquisition was secured on credit as huge debts were run up by the planters. Yet the very ease with which such credit could be commanded suggests how highly the English regarded Virginia.

In other parts of North America more solidly based wealth was derived in large part from commerce carried on

by a native merchant class in American-built vessels, whereas Virginia’s trade continued to be the near monopoly of English and Scottish merchants. Much of this new wealth was concentrated in the growing colonial towns and assumed the form of liquid capital that could be freely invested and multiplied — and just as easily converted to a richer style of living. The large town houses, the substantial commercial buildings, and the comfortable dwellings of prosperous artisans in such colonial cities as Philadelphia, Boston, New York, and Charleston presented an even more striking contrast to the rudeness of seventeenth-century life than did the great plantation seats.

These developments must be considered not only in terms of a new affluence alone but also of a new set of values and attitudes as to how that affluence should be expressed. Those who possessed colonial wealth also demonstrated in still other ways than fine houses their sense of status and position. Nothing is more revealing than the character of much eighteenth-century portraiture — both the frequency with which portraits were commissioned and the essentially formal, aristocratic poses that many of them struck. The many portraits that we have of the first fifty members, the Founders of Phi Beta Kappa, few of whom stemmed from the small governing elite, reveal how widespread was this fashion.

Owners of new houses, on plantations and in the towns alike, sought as well to fill them with furnishings and objects of the latest style. A quotation from the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin, that eighteenth-century American par excellence, reveals the changed values and taste graphically:

We have an English proverb that says, “*He that would thrive, must ask his wife.*” It was lucky for me that I had one as much dispos’d to industry and frugality as myself. She assisted me cheerfully in my business, folding and stitching pamphlets, tending shop, purchasing old linen rags for the paper-makers, etc., etc. We kept no idle servants, our table was plain and simple, our furniture of the cheapest. For instance, my breakfast was a long time bread and milk (no tea), and I ate it out of a twopenny earthen porringer, with a pewter spoon. But mark how luxury will enter families, and make a progress, in spite of principle: being call’d one morning to breakfast, I found it in a China bowl, with a spoon of silver! They had been bought for me without my knowledge by my wife, and had cost her the enormous sum of three-and-twenty shillings, for which she had no other excuse or apology to

make, but that she thought *her* husband deserv’d a silver spoon and China bowl as well as any of his neighbors.

Franklin’s comments, too, make another point — the extension of this affluence and its cultural expressions beyond the wealthiest members of society to the more prosperous artisans, even if Franklin may be putting us on a bit about his own rank and position. This shift in class structure is most apparent in the rise of the colonial merchants who largely succeeded in identifying themselves with the upper ranks of society. In their portraits, they exhibit a bearing hardly different from that of the Virginia planter aristocrat, even though they are not ashamed to have depicted, in the background, the ships and storehouses that were the source of their wealth and position.

Much the same thing was occurring on a grander scale in England, but here in America it was happening for the first time, and it took the form of a conscious attempt to achieve an idealized image of English society and culture. The evidence is complex and at times elusive, some of it psychological in character, but “the assiduousness with which those who ‘aspired to gentility in a provincial setting’ emulated the life of the English gentry by acquiring estates, founding a family dynasty, building a country house in neo-classical style complete with the latest English furniture and a formal garden,” was, as historian Jack P. Greene remarks, a key facet of the effort by Americans to find their identity.

There were those, of course, who shared neither the wealth nor the Anglicized social values that it brought; they deplored it, attacked it, wished for the good old days and perhaps even fought a Revolution to try to recover them — but in truth it could not be done. Americans had entered a new age, and the change was irreversible.

From the perspective of history, there are important qualifications that must be made in so favorable a judgment of the quality of eighteenth-century American life. However prosperous Americans were, however much they sought to emulate English culture, they lived in a provincial society that had not yet reached high achievement in the fine arts; it was in the material arts that Americans excelled. Moreover, though one may argue that prosperity was relatively widely distributed, slavery excluded the overwhelming number of Blacks from both the material and psychological benefits of the improved standards of living. Sig-

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A DIRECTORY OF ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS

Phi Beta Kappa graduate associations are groups formed by members of the Society on a geographic basis. They are relatively informal in organization and program with memberships that number from 900 to twenty or thirty. Their regular activities usually include an annual dinner meeting with a speaker and a project of honoring outstanding high school or college students.

Phi Beta Kappa members who would like to participate in the activities of any of these groups may get in touch directly with the secretary listed below.

*Chartered associations are indicated by an asterisk.

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ROBERT B. HEILMAN

Love Song of the Dark Lord: Jayadeva's "Gitagovinta." Ed. & Trans. Barbara S. Miller. Columbia. \$17.50; p. \$3.95.

A very readable version of a long-popular 12th century poem erotic in material (the love of Krishna and Radha), aesthetic in tone, and religious in symbolism. Editorial materials serve both scholarly and lay audiences.

A Life in a Wooden O: Memoirs of the Theatre. Ben Iden Payne. Yale. \$12.50. The lively and humorous reminiscences of an English actor who became a director in America and England (eight years as head at Stratford-on-Avon), taught at various American universities, helped create the now flourishing repertory system, and Elizabethanized the staging of Shakespeare.

Here's to Your Health, Comrade Shifrin! Ilya Suslov. Trans. Maxine Bronstein. Indiana. \$8.95.

Suslov succeeds remarkably in making a comic fiction out of the drabness, rigidities, oppressions (including anti-Semitism), and racketeering of Soviet life. Shifrin's early naiveté, his deadpan approaches, his sly ironies, and his growing skill in both risks and tricks are neat instruments of a social criticism that remains art.

I Too Am Here: Selections from the Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle. Eds. Alan & Mary McQueen Simpson. Cambridge. \$13.95.

About 180 letters culled from thousands, arranged according to a dozen themes (courtship, illness, etc.), portray vividly an extraordinary woman — a witty observer, a picturesque narrator, a firm defender of views, a devoted wife and friend, and a survivor of household exasperations, a husband's fascination with a titled lady, and long physical suffering.

The Rediscovery of Meaning and Other Essays. Owen Barfield. Wesleyan. \$12.50. Persuasive and penetrating essays on the weaknesses of an exclusive positivism in language and thought.

The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s. Samuel Hynes. Viking. \$12.50.

This year-by-year history of political-literary interplay, starring Auden, shows how art "creates as well as records consciousness," distinguishes parable and propaganda, and gives excellent critical accounts of many works. Hynes's style, never unsuited, is admirably straightforward.

Dylan Thomas. Paul Ferris. Dial. \$9.95. An excellent biography. It works through

massive evidence, some of it new, to present a complete non-partisan portrait of the troubled poet and a perceptive analysis of his poetic growth and achievement. Ferris steadily distinguishes gossip, probability, and the documented.

A Confidential Matter: The Letters of Richard Strauss and Stefan Zweig, 1931-1935. Trans. Max Knight. California. \$8.95. German composer and Jewish librettist, mutually devoted, reveal contrasting personalities and engage in lively discussions of aesthetic and practical problems of current and planned collaboration. The exchange becomes drama as the Nazi shadow grows.

Henrik Ibsen: The Complete Major Prose Plays. Trans. Rolf Fjelde. Farrar, Straus, & Giroux. \$20.

Fjelde translates twelve plays in a modern idiom that is plain and dignified rather than pressing and faddish. He provides brief sensible introductions, a selected bibliography of recent works, and a 40-page record of major American productions.

William Blake: A New Kind of Man. Michael Davis. California. \$12.95; p. \$6.95. This compact biography provides all the essential information about Blake's personal and professional life — his beliefs, his poetry, his artistic themes and techniques, his friends. Good illustrations — 58 in black and white, 11 in color.

ANDREW GYORGY

Joseph Stalin, Man and Legend. Ronald Hingley. McGraw-Hill. \$15.

In the rapidly mushrooming literature on Joseph Stalin, this lucidly written and well-planned book has the unique advantage of covering *all* of Stalin's life, not just a small and narrow installment of it. This reviewer particularly enjoyed the lengthy discussion of "Stalin in his Seventies," cast in the self-defined role of "Peace-monger." (Chapter 14 *et seq.*)

Humanitarian Politics: The International Committee of the Red Cross. David P. Forsythe. Johns Hopkins. \$17.95. This comprehensive book skillfully combines a technical history of the International Red Cross Committee with global attempts of the "civilized world" to organize itself along humanitarian lines.

Imperialism at Bay: The U.S. and the De-colonization of the British Empire, 1941-1945. William R. Louis. Oxford. \$19.95.

This valuable study is the reverse of some of the most recent "Cold War" books which take up the story of the Great-Power relationships after the end of World War II. Louis deals with

"introductory and parallel themes" that precede rather than succeed the five years of total war. The Atlantic Charter, the Cairo Declaration, and the Yalta Conference are ably and painstakingly reviewed. "From Cairo to Yalta" presents a particularly important chapter in the various Anglo-American attempts to design the postwar world order.

View from the U.N. U Thant. Doubleday. \$10.

This comprehensive study was published after U Thant's death and obviously was edited by his staff. It presents a valuable but uneven record of the many years of U Thant's stewardship of the fledgling U.N. This reviewer liked the first two parts of the work in which the late Secretary General outlines "the search" for a new U.N. incumbent, and then goes into some detail on the role of the Secretary-General as "Mediator," including the successes and failures of his own career.

Israel: The Embattled Ally. Nadav Safran. Belknap/Harvard. \$18.50.

The author, a distinguished professor of government at Harvard University, has produced a chronicle remarkable in its comprehensiveness and objectivity. The most relevant (and even exciting) sections of the book deal with the turbulent years, 1967-1970, under the heading of "New Options, Alignments, Tribulations," and help to bring the story of Arab-Israeli relations up-to-date.

The United States and Cuba: Hegemony and Dependent Development, 1880-1934. Jules Robert Benjamin. Pittsburgh. \$14.95. In order to understand the current massive involvement of Cuba in, for example, African regional politics, it is of the greatest significance both to American policy-makers and to the U.S. public to understand the historic and ideological background of the Cuban island. The author achieves his goals of setting the stage for present-day forms of Castroism and of describing the details of Cuban historical instability. The long chapter, "Hegemony and Nationalism," marks the beginnings of some of the present-day divergencies and historical conflicts between the United States and Cuba.

LEONARD W. DOOB

The Last Caravan. Thurston Clarke. Putnam. \$10.95.

A gripping account of the six-year drought that brought disaster to the Tuareg people of the Central African country of Niger in 1969. That preventable tragedy is portrayed by means of a skillful pot-pourri: the drought's impact on specific individuals; the ecology of the desert region; the anthropology of the ethnic group; a political analysis of French colonialism and the present independent Niger regime; and an indignant recording of the corruption and inefficiency of the inadequate, bungling assistance offered those suffering from starvation and from the loss of their traditional way of life. Deep lessons should be but probably will not be learned from these events.

The Quest for Therapy in Lower Zaire.

John M. Janzen. California. \$19.50.
A provocative, detailed analysis of medical beliefs and practices among the Bakongo in modern Zaire. These people utilize Western medicine for illnesses ascribed to nature or to gods, and their own traditional healers for sickness attributed to other human beings. Emerging from such a rather consistent etiology are therapies, some of which may be efficacious because they involve not only the affected individual but also one of his significant social groups. Insights into some shortcomings of our own medical system emerge as a dividend.

The Culture of Inequality. Michael Lewis. Massachusetts. \$12.50.

A tour de force in behalf of the thesis that the American value of "individual-as-central-sensibility" requires those on top to keep the submerged in a state of humiliating poverty so that they themselves will experience no guilt and instead will enjoy comfortable satisfaction and moral superiority. The unsuccessful then ascribe their plight to circumstances beyond their control; they lower their aspirations, or they inflate the importance of their own lesser accomplishments. These somewhat iconoclastic twists are illustrated by copious case histories all taken from a small mid-Western city. Right or wrong?

Hosts and Guests. Ed. Valene L. Smith. Pennsylvania. \$14.

A series of cases assessing the effects of the junketing jet set and serious travellers upon the host communities, splendidly unified via the themes of acculturation and social change. In most instances the fabric of the indigenous cultures has been seriously and permanently impaired by the camera-snapping, comfort-seeking, thrill-seeking tourists. In a few others their presence has beneficially stimulated pride in the hosts' traditional ways. Elsewhere the outcome for the moment is uncertain. For the planet as a whole, however, the negative consequences outweigh the positive ones. The motivations of the tourists themselves are also neatly dissected.

War on the Mind. Peter Watson. Basic Books. \$20.

A disturbing, a very disturbing account of the diverse ways since World War II in which psychological techniques have been utilized to improve, actually or potentially, the efficiency of killing or crippling an enemy. The author has digested the published literature and apparently has had access to classified documents (mostly American and British) so that he competently summarizes how the fighting forces can now be more effectively selected, trained, and led, whether they are to drop bombs from the air or to demoralize guerrilla troops through psychological warfare. He does not avoid the ethical and political issues involved in these scientific "programs," nor can any of us.

RICHARD BEALE DAVIS

Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe:

Tales and Sketches. Ed. Thomas Ollive Mabbott. 2 vols. Belknap/Harvard. \$45.

Beverley Tucker: Heart over Head in the Old South. Robert J. Brugger. Johns Hopkins. \$15.

A Century Hence: Or, a Romance of 1941. George Tucker. Ed. Donald R. Noble. Virginia. \$9.75.

Three works directly or indirectly related to Poe and his Virginia include Mabbott's posthumous edition of the *Tales*, really a modified variorum edition invaluable for the literary scholar. For the first time this novel by a professor at Poe's University of Virginia, George Tucker, appears in print, perhaps most interesting as prophetic (in 1841) of America's economic and social future. Tucker's kinsman and Poe correspondent Nathaniel Beverley Tucker, who also wrote a prophetic novel but is best known as a southern antebellum fire-eater, is in Brugger's book studied in some depth psychologically and in terms of his cultural context. The three titles are well worth considering together.

Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890. Howard N. Rabinowitz. Oxford. \$17.95.

The Correspondence of W. E. B. DuBois: Vol. III. Selections, 1944-1963. Ed. Herbert Aptheker. Massachusetts. \$22.50.

The Booker T. Washington Papers. Vols. 6 & 7, 1901-1904. Eds. Louis R. Harlan and Raymond W. Smock. Illinois. \$17.50 each. Significant titles on Black progress include Rabinowitz's analysis through samplings of records of five southern states. Struggle, achievement, temporary setbacks in enfranchisement and other rights are well handled. The third volume of selected DuBois writings reveals the incisive left-wing attitudes of a powerful mind and spirit. The well-known contrast between DuBois's and Washington's "strategy" is nowhere better evident than in a comparison of the letters and other documents of the two leaders of their race, though here the reader must keep in mind the difference in time of these writings of both.

The Virginia Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, 1795-1798. Vols. 1 and 2. Ed. Edward C. Carter, II. Yale. Set \$60.
Charles Bridges and William Dering: Two Virginia Painters, 1735-1750. Graham Hood. Virginia. \$15.

Hood's is a long-needed beautifully illustrated study of two interesting eighteenth-century journeyman painters. The attributions and rejections are on the whole quite convincing. The first two volumes of the ambitious projected series on and of Latrobe, major architect-painter-engineer of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, are valuable in many ways, not the least being that they present the Chesapeake Bay country verbally and graphically as perhaps nothing before has done.

Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775. A Handbook. John J. McCusker. North Carolina for Institute of Early American History and Culture. \$25.95.

An absolute must for the social and economic historian. Tables and discussions are most impressive.

The Diary of Robert Rose: A View of Virginia by a Scottish Colonial Parson, 1746-1751. Ed. Ralph E. Fall. McClure Press, Verona, Va. \$15.

The Papers of Henry Laurens. Vol. VI, 1768-1769. Eds. George C. Rogers, Jr. and David R. Chesnutt. South Carolina. \$27.50. Parson Rose's diary has been known for many years but heretofore has never been printed in its entirety. Though it lacks the fullness or relative subjectivity of the journals of William Byrd II and Landon Carter of the same century, it is enlightening. This latest volume of the Laurens Papers, as meticulously edited as others have been, contains extremely significant items documenting the South Carolinian's development from a conservative loyalist to active opponent of the British ministry.

FREDERICK J. CROSSON

The Fire and the Sun. Iris Murdoch. Oxford. \$5.95.

Although based on her Romanes Lecture, this sensitive and informed discussion of Plato's views on art and artists has the tone of a reflective conversation. The reasons for his opposition to artists (most, anyway) and his wariness of the power of poetry go deep into his understanding of being and truth, and Murdoch follows him across the dialogues with the keenness of Socrates tracking the nature of justice. Kant and Freud, notably, contribute to seeing how for Plato pleasure and the imaginal in art effect a displaced encounter with the spiritual.

The Rule of Metaphor. Paul Ricoeur. Toronto. \$22.50.

This dense but fascinating work is a comprehensive theory of metaphor on both lexical and predicative levels. It incorporates an extensive survey and critique of ancient rhetorical theories and contemporary treatments by linguists and philosophers from de Saussure to Max Black and Jakobson. Cogently and clearly argued at each level, the analysis passes from rhetoric to semantics to hermeneutics, elaborates a theory of reference for poetry, and culminates in an effort to ground the autonomy of philosophical discourse and yet to justify its use of metaphor. An important book for philosophers, linguists and literary critics.

Philosophy After Darwin. John Herman Randall, Jr. Columbia. \$17.50.

A truncated version of what would have been Volume III of Randall's history of modern philosophy. Partly unpublished chapters written for the original plan, partly monographs on various post-Darwinian figures such as Bradley, Royce and Tillich, it displays a penetrating appreciation which never loses critical distance and the awareness of historical context.

Interfaces of the Word. Walter J. Ong, S.J. Cornell. \$17.50.

Continuing the lines of investigation developed in his earlier books on the massive and complex cultural shifts occasioned by the transition from oral to written and printed words, Fr. Ong

here explores anthropological and literary materials with elegance and insight. These are core samplings which tend to confirm at least some of the central tenets of a theory which is no less far-reaching in its implications than natural selection. Whatever one decides about that, it makes engrossing reading.

Forgotten Truths. Huston Smith. Harper & Row. \$8.95. The well-known author of *The Religions of Man* here traces and espouses a "primordial tradition" which, he argues, runs through the history of all mankind except for the contemporary West. The "great chain of being" with its hierarchies that yet converge toward participation and identity remain the ambience natural to man, from which we have alienated ourselves. It is not left behind by our "progress" but forgotten, turned away from. Whether right in all its claims or not, this is a sensible book about what our cultural filters render as strange and *passé*.

Confucianism and Christianity. Julia Ching. Kodansha International/Harper & Row. \$12.50. Living in the age of the last encounters of the higher religions, we are alternately interested in and puzzled (if not mystified) by the teachings of Eastern religions, in particular. Translators and interpreters who are not also *traditori* are hard to come by, and Confucianism is a prime example. It appears to have functioned as a religion for millions, yet its teachings often seem a philosophically-based social code, an ethical way of life. Ching does a fine job of exploring Confucian doctrine and comparing it with Christianity without minimizing differences.

RUSSELL B. STEVENS

The Yellowstone Story. Aubrey L. Haines. 2 vols. Colorado Associated University Press. \$10; p. \$3.95 each. This detailed account is subtitled accurately "a history of our first national park." The author has dubbed his work a story and has remained faithful to that mode. The writing is pleasantly informal; the account flows well, and the illustrations are helpful.

The Peopling of Hawaii. Eleanor C. Nordyke. Hawaii. \$4.95. The specialist may find this concise story of the development of present-day Hawaii rather too brief and generalized. But for the uninitiated who wish to get a balanced, jargon-free account of what has happened and what that portends for the future, Nordyke's analysis seems well-fitted. The peculiar problems of this island state may in fact be peculiar only in their timing and intensity; the nation as a whole would be well-advised to take seriously the lessons learned there.

Fungi: Delight of Curiosity. Harold J. Brodie. Toronto. \$10. This little book essays a most laudable aim — to bring to the nonspecialist the complexities and fascination of a particular branch of science. Dr. Brodie has, from his wealth of first-hand knowledge,

shown in a series of brief accounts a number of the more spectacular aspects of the biology of certain fungi. The writing is, regrettably, a bit forced toward the chatty side and would better have been cast in a more straightforward mode. But the information will be new to all but mycologists.

Neptune's Gift: A History of Common Salt. Robert P. Multauf. Johns Hopkins. \$22.50. The dust cover speaks of salt as "a substance seemingly too ordinary to think about." And so I would have considered it, little imagining that so much of interest could be discovered in a careful compilation of the history and technology of this material. Multauf has provided a convincing story of how man has obtained salt, used it, introduced it into commerce and industry, based taxation systems upon it, and erected upon it a substantial chemical enterprise. It is a job well done.

Ethics at the Edges of Life: Medical and Legal Intersections. Paul Ramsey. Yale. \$15. As the title implies, Ramsey examines two controversial areas — the abortion issue on the one hand and the matter of euthanasia on the other. The book is essentially an examination of medical and legal issues from an ethical standpoint by a well-informed and persuasive author. It is not essential to agree with his position to profit from his analysis of the key court cases that bear on how we as a society are dealing with the issues at stake.

Sensual Drugs. Hardin B. and Helen C. Jones. Cambridge. \$15.95; p. \$3.95. This volume strikes me, an admitted nonspecialist, as a calm, lucid account of a difficult and complex issue. Whether it can have an effect on those who have already adopted a substantial participation in drug usage, or can deter those who are under peer pressure to start down that road, is of course debatable. But to those of us who recall the near panic reaction among soldiers in the South Pacific to the rumor that Atabrine (an antimalarial drug given regularly to all troops) would reduce sexual potency, it seems at least possible that the warnings set forth by the Joneses will be heeded. At the very least, the authors seem to know what they are talking about.

A Century of DNA: A History of the Discovery of the Structure and Function of the Genetic Substance. Franklin H. Portugal & Jack S. Cohen. MIT. \$17.50. This book, which covers an enormous amount of information in creditably readable style, tells of a uniquely important cumulative event in the life sciences. I find it a welcome relief from the plethora of books, articles, and newspaper accounts of the hassle over genetic engineering, so-called, and the political-scientific debate about guidelines, local options, safety standards, "cloning," and the like. There is more, much more, to the picture than the furore generated by the catch-words "recombinant DNA."

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EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA

(continued from page three)

nificant pockets of poverty and a growing disparity of wealth were also beginning to appear in the free population of many colonial towns.

Yet one must conclude that the outpouring of new buildings, the furnishings for their rooms, the portraits hung in them, and the books acquired for their libraries constituted an impressive achievement for a dependent, colonial society, thought to be on the fringes of European culture. We must remember, too, that in its own day this accomplishment did not reflect the idea of "collecting." A conscious sense of connoisseurship, of judging the arts in America critically, can be all but specifically dated to the appearance in 1834 of the first edition of William Dunlap's *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the U. S.* Somehow, without deliberate effort, the eighteenth century created objects that were to become eminently "collectible," that would meet the highest standards of the connoisseur.

What gave the eighteenth century that special character, if indeed it did have it? Certainly it was not the achievement of wealth alone. Other ages have known similar prosperity, and have shown the same desire to express it in houses and furnishings. The Gilded Age mansions of the late nineteenth-century industrial magnates come to mind as one example. Although they are not without interest or uniformly displeasing, what is good about them, what expresses creativity and taste, has to be winnowed out of

a great deal that is less good. We tend to be overpowered by a Victorian room "in full bloom" as we would not be by an eighteenth-century interior.

Nor is the quality of eighteenth-century arts a matter of deliberately selecting only major, well-known, or particularly skilled craftsmen. The American colonists, as already noted, were not collectors but purchasers of things that were stylish and in the taste of the day, buyers sometimes, if you will, of "mail-order furniture." At other times they bought, in greater quantity than we once realized, the work of comparatively unknown but nonetheless skilled colonial craftsmen. They were probably far less self-conscious about what they acquired than were the new Victorian millionaires.

For all the raw outpouring of new affluence that eighteenth-century America experienced and for all of the rush to new levels of consumption that far too often debases style, quality and taste remained unusually pervasive in the eighteenth century. The small matter of the Phi Beta Kappa key demonstrates this point. During the nineteenth century the original design of the Founders' medal was all but buried under Victorian accretions. When keys were standardized in 1910, the early simple design was chosen as the model.

We can at best only speculate about those characteristics of the eighteenth century that contributed to its cultural achievement. For one thing, that era seemed to come equipped not only with the means of indulging its material desires and a set of values to justify that indulgence, but with still

other values and ideas as classical in spirit as the architectural and artistic tastes of the day. The emphasis that such a system of thought placed on ordered beauty, balance, restraint, and reason were fully understood by only a small number of educated Americans. But the commitment to such principles may well have been infused in the attitudes of a larger number of people in the same way that abstract theories of natural law broadened the commitment in the colonies to more humane and responsive government—even if neither reached so far into the populace as one might have wished. And, one might add, there could be a more than incidental connection between the philosophy upon which Phi Beta Kappa was founded and the physical setting in the graceful Apollo Room of the Raleigh Tavern in which that act of creation was celebrated.

Perhaps there were more practical considerations as well that gave the eighteenth century its artistic energy. It possessed the strength and force that comes from being at the threshold of a vital turning point. Economic change had brought a growth in wealth, the advent of new classes, and demand and consumption on an unprecedented scale. With these came a real opportunity for productivity in the arts; but further and seemingly inevitable consequences of that economic growth—genuinely new technology, mass production, and the like—still lay ahead. In a word, it was an age in which the older high standards of craftsmanship were linked to new levels of demand and consumption. As historical coincidence would have it, this was an unusual and vital combination.



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