World War II Homefront: The Sisterhood

**Director’s Notes**

We apologize for the delay in getting out this issue of *Belles Lettres*. Doubtless, the grind of putting out the *Figure in the Carpet* makes getting around to *Belles Lettres* all the harder. The last thing any of us at the Center wants to do is tackle *Belles Lettres* after we have just finished an issue of *The Figure*, and by the time we are in throes of doing another issue of *The Figure*, *BL* has to be put off yet again until we are free of *The Figure*. It is something of a self-perpetuating cycle of procrastination that is hidden behind the fact that, after all, we are working very hard putting out something.

Yet we think the wait is worth it, as this is one of the strongest issues we have ever done and all of us in the office are especially proud of it. The first section consists of pieces dealing, at least in part, with the theme of race including WUSTL historian Linda Nicholson’s thoughtful review of Wini Breines’s new book on the relationship between black and white feminists; Westminster College’s David Collins’s informative interview with expatriate black novelist Jake Lamar; Ellen Harris’s tribute to the late Theodore McMillian; and two pieces on sports: Joe Pollack’s insightful review of a new biography of St. Louis Cardinal outfielder Curt Flood and my review of three recent books on boxing, a sport that I simply cannot give up no matter how hard I try. Something always draws me back to this unforgiving and bloody theater of folly.

The second section features essays on jazz in celebration of the Center’s upcoming NEH Jazz Summer Institute: a piece by Wayne Zade on the formation and dissolution of a jazz band, the New York Jazz Quartet; WUSTL graduate student in music and saxophonist Jerome Camal weighs in on a new book about the history of the saxophone and why it seems to be all about orgasm that makes the sax the instrument of our age.

Finally, we have three pieces on children’s literature reflecting the Center’s longstanding interest in the subject: Ida McCall gives her account of the last novel in Lemony Snicket’s *Series of Unfortunate Events*; WU lecturer Amy Pawl assesses the new Norton Anthology of Children’s Literature; and children’s literature scholar and writer Betsy Hearne concludes the issue with her 2005 address about turning children’s literature into film. As good as Hearne’s piece is, much is lost by not actually having heard her deliver it, with her interpolations of songs and stories. It was a remarkable performance.

At last we come to you again: good writing at a great price (free). What more could you ask for? More frequency, you say. Well, as Cub fans are accustomed to saying, “Wait Til Next Year” and see our new commitment to organizational efficiency and sloth decay. In the meanwhile, please send us letters (Center for the Humanities, Campus Box 1071, Washington University, St. Louis, MO 63130) or e-mails (cenhum@artsci.wustl.edu) with your comments about our publications. We want very much to hear from you about how you feel about what we are doing or what we aren’t doing that you want to see us do. Until the fall, as Tigger likes to say, TTFN or Ta-Ta for now.

Gerald Early

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Why Can’t We Be Friends?


Writing the history of anything is no easy matter; often contributing to the difficulty is conflict between two different impulses. On the one hand, we want simple stories. We want stories with good actors and bad actors, that is, stories with a clear moral message. We want to wrap up our historical past with story lines that are easy to remember and easy to pass on to others. We want to feel that we have understood our past, and simple stories give us that reassurance. But, on the other hand, we also want to get the story right, and getting it right means acknowledging that social reality is rarely simple. Most interesting historical events involve many actors, with different and often conflicting understandings of what they and others are doing.

Feminists, for a long time, created a simple story about the relationship between white and black women in the early days of second wave feminism. That simple story described white women as racist and black women as uninterested in feminism, in part because of the racism of the white women. That story allowed everyone to assume that early second wave feminism was basically a white movement, while also providing understandable reasons for why that might be the case.

The problem, however, with that simple story is that it couldn’t quite accommodate some facts that kept popping up in people’s memories and in the historical record. For one, there was too much evidence of the commitment of many black women toward thinking about and struggling against sexism. And second, there was also too much evidence of attempts by white women not to be racist, of trying to take into account race in their theory and practice.

And so today, black and white women scholars are writing books that complicate that simple story. Winifred Breines’s *The Trouble Between Us* is one of these books. Like others, it faces a difficult task: How does one complicate that simple story without going too far in the other direction? In other words, how does one get away from that simple story without minimizing the racism that was there on the part of white women and without overestimating the degree of involvement of black women in early second wave organizing? What other story lines can we create that not only achieve a better balance about these issues than did the earlier story but also provide us with some good explanations for why things were as they were?

One of this book’s greatest strengths is that Breines recognizes that the story of race and feminism is complicated by perspective. At different moments in time, black and white female activists had very different perspectives about the meaning of sexism and its relationship to other political struggles. Breines claims that in the mid and late 1960s, when some white female civil rights workers were beginning to focus on sexism, black female civil rights workers had other issues on their minds. Some black female activists saw sexism on the part of their black brothers; however, many also recognized the greater priority of racial oppression. Thus, when they heard Stokely Carmichael’s now infamous line about the position of women in SNCC, they saw it not as a policy statement but as a poorly formed joke. They saw themselves as strong and equal leaders in the movement and the complaints of the white women as emanating from their own lack of strength.

Breines emphasizes that the attitude of many black women toward feminism was not one of simple support or rejection. More important factors were those of priority and timing. In the late 1960s, when many white female former civil rights activists were beginning to create “women’s liberation,” many black female former civil rights activists were dealing with the transformation of civil rights into Black Power. While aspects of Black Power led some black women to become feminists, it also caused many to feel strongly the need to be loyal to black men and to bolster their strength. It caused many to fear divisions within the black community, particularly when such divisions were based upon alliances with whites.

Breines recognizes that there were black feminists from early on. The writers who contributed to Toni Cade’s 1970 collection *The Black Woman* are evidence of that. And, as early as 1968, Frances Beale created the SNCC Black Women’s Liberation Committee, which evolved into the Black Women’s Alliance and then the Third World Women’s Alliance. By 1973, the National Black Feminist Organization was formed. But Breines argues that these kinds of writings and organizations did not generate the kind of large-scale following that was more true of the white writings and organizations of the early and mid 1970s. As she argues, the social climate for the reception of feminism was different in black and white communities at this point in time. She points to the sense of isolation that many black feminists felt in the 1970s.

But again, the difference is not simply one of rejection versus support. Breines takes note of polls taken in the early 1970s that showed that black women were highly supportive of many
feminist goals. So it is not that the wider black community stood simply against feminism. Black men and women were very supportive of policies that recognized and encouraged women’s strength. It was rather that association with feminist organizations seemed also to entail acceptance of other positions that were problematic for many black people.

To understand some of these problems we need to recognize complexity also in the understandings and attitudes of white feminists. Many white feminists in the late 1960s and early 1970s were very committed to fighting racism. Many had been actively engaged in the civil rights movement. Most white feminists very much wanted black women to join with them in fighting sexism. The problem, however, was that in the late 1960s and 1970s, few white feminists possessed the conceptual tools that would have made this alliance easier to negotiate. As Breines insightfully points out, white feminists brought the same universalistic perspective to feminism that they had endorsed in the civil rights movement. Their perspective was that all women should join together under one big umbrella movement. But, as Breines notes, this kind of universalistic perspective was too romantic and abstract. It didn’t allow for recognition of concrete differences between black and white women. The consequence was that many white feminists recognized differences among women in theory while ignoring them in fact.

The differences surfaced in many places. Both black and white working-class women were not as comfortable as young, white, middle-class women with the “bearing of one’s soul” kind of practices that formed the core of consciousness-raising groups. And young, white, middle-class feminists had ideas about the family that often separated them from black women. The kind of feminism that these young, white, middle-class feminists created in the late 1960s—women’s liberation—differentiated itself from an earlier, women’s rights feminism in a variety of ways: in its critique of capitalism, in its challenge of existing sex roles, and in its desire to get to the “root” of sexism. But this more radical stance caused many young, white feminists to focus on the family as a central source of women’s oppression. Women’s liberationists created the extremely powerful slogan “The Personal is Political” and focused on the family as central to “personal” life. Radical feminism saw a particular family structure—patriarchy—as present in most human societies and the root cause of women’s oppression. According to such radical feminists, patriarchy described most all family forms and needed to be abolished if women were to attain true equality with men.

But this focus on the family seemed either irrelevant or misguided from the vantage point of many black women. The family was an important source of strength for many black women; it was where many gathered support for their struggles against racism in the outside world. Moreover, the concept of “patriarchy” seemed irrelevant to many. While white men often treated them badly, it was outside of the family that this treatment occurred. And while black men also often behaved badly, this bad behavior did not seem to be based in the kind of institutional power that the term “patriarchy” suggested. The sexism that black women experienced seemed to demand different types of explanations than were emerging out of the discourse of women’s liberation.

In short, in the early 1970s, white women were not simply “racist,” nor were black women uninterested in establishing equal relationships with men. It is much more the case that the priorities, specific concerns, and languages that each group brought to the question were different, and these differences impeded fruitful collaboration. But even to acknowledge these elements of complexity is only to get at part of the story. In the preceding paragraphs, I have been making broad generalizations about black women as a group and about white women as a group. But as Breines recognizes, there were important differences within each group that also need to be acknowledged as part of the story. Breines notes the important role of black lesbians in organizations such as the Combahee River Collective and among the major theoreticians of black feminism. She also points to the prominent role of white socialist feminists in arguing for the centrality of race and class issues within white feminist organizations. And,
in acknowledging the existence of black feminist organizing and writing even in a period when such organizing and writing faced pressures from the wider community that white feminist organizing and writing did not, she reminds us that there was never a single “black” position on feminism, as there never has been a single “white” position either.

As I have been emphasizing, the great strength of this book is that it tries to avoid simple explanations. It achieves this goal in part by sticking close to the evidence. There is much referencing of existing documentation and many personal interviews with those who were centrally involved in this story. While this approach allows Breines to attain complexity in her story and also to provide strong documentation for her claims, it does have one cost. The story that Breines tells is that of those who produced the documents and who were most available to Breines for interviews. Bostonians figure prominently in this story, as three of the five chapters are centered on Boston feminist history. While organizations such as Bread and Roses and the Combahee River Collective were extremely important to U.S. feminism in the late 1960s and 1970s, I would have liked more discussion of this history from other parts of the country. Moreover, I would have liked to hear more of the voices of those whose opinions have been less well documented in existing accounts. Breines draws heavily from those who occupied prominent positions in leading organizations or who produced books and articles about their experiences. The consequence is that the relationship between the experiences of those leaders and those who were less actively involved is less developed. Including more of a range of historical documentation might have produced an account that provided more insight into those whose role in this history has been less frequently consulted.

But one can never have everything one wants in a single book. This is a very worthwhile contribution to expanding our knowledge of this important part of feminism’s history. Breines has constructed a book that tells a complex story. She has done so by listening closely and sympathetically to the voices of many who participated and by familiarizing herself with a wealth of written evidence. She has brought to this endeavor intelligence, insight, and a clear and eloquent style. This is a book that I will use in my own research and teaching and one therefore that I highly recommend for similar use by others.

Linda Nicholson is Stiritz Distinguished Professor of Women's Studies and Professor of History at Washington University in St. Louis.

1 Editor’s note: In 1964, Stokely Carmichael, leader and eventual chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, reportedly responded to a paper drafted by white women members Casey Hayden and Mary King but attributed mistakenly to black staffer Ruby Doris Smith Robinson about the position of women in SNCC by saying, “The only position for women in SNCC is prone.” Clearly, Carmichael must have meant supine and not prone, unless he was trying to be both sexist and kinky in his stab at humor. There have been several accounts of this incident. The standard one can be found in Clayborne Carson, In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 147–48.

March to protest the murders of black women, Boston, 1979. Carrying the banner are Maria Elena Gonzalez, Margo Okazawa-Rey, Barbara Smith, and Demita Frazier. Okazawa-Rey, Smith, and Frazier were all members of the Combahee River Collective.

By permission of Tia Cross. p.161
Race, Fiction, and Absurdity
Interview with novelist Jake Lamar, Paris, June 14, 2006

By David Collins

Jake Lamar, born in the Bronx, New York, in 1961, was educated at Fieldston and Harvard. In 1983 he settled in Greenwich Village and went to work as a staff writer and associate editor at Time magazine, producing more than three hundred articles, including six cover stories in six years. His first book, a memoir titled Bourgeois Blues (1991), brought both favorable notice and ultimately the Lyndhurst Prize—a distinction he shares with Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Wendell Berry, Cormac McCarthy, and other luminaries. In 1993 he moved to Paris, thinking to stay for a year while he finished his first novel, The Last Integrationist (1996). Thirteen years later, he has settled permanently in the City of Light and completed four additional novels: Close to the Bone (1999), If 6 Were 9 (2001), Rendezvous Eighteenth (2003), and Ghosts of St. Michel (2006)—the last two of which are set in his adopted city. Two of the novels, The Last Integrationist and If 6 Were 9, have been translated into French and a third, Rendezvous Eighteenth, will appear in the fall of 2007. In the spring of 2006 he was awarded the Grand Prix du Roman Noir Etranger at the Festival de Cognac for Nous avions un rêve, the French translation of The Last Integrationist.

David Collins: Let me begin by congratulating you on the good news, your being awarded the Grand Prix du Roman Noir Etranger at the Festival de Cognac for Nous avions un rêve, the French translation of your first novel, The Last Integrationist.

Jake Lamar: Thank you, the response has been very gratifying. It’s led to lots of television and radio appearances. I’ve been on the French equivalent of the Charlie Rose Show twice now, and I’m spending a lot of time traveling to literary festivals and speaking engagements all over France. The same questions keep coming up. What’s going on in our society? French people want to hear from me, and often it’s comparing or contrasting French society with American society.

For me the award foregrounds the whole question of genre as understood in France and America. It’s very interesting. In America we talk about film noir, but we really don’t talk about littérature noir. Here they do. It’s not looked down upon. There isn’t the same sort of wall between what’s considered serious and what’s considered popular. Littérature noir here covers everything from detective novels to some novels by Joyce Carol Oates. I’ve even heard William Faulkner described as a noir writer. To the French littérature noir is simply literature that deals with the dark side of human nature, novels that have a strong plot and usually involve murder. But it’s a very broad term. I love that because, except for If 6 Were 9, I don’t think my other books get so deeply into the category of thriller—they just have those elements in them.

David Collins: Classifying If 6 Were 9 as a thriller prompts me to ask about your growth as a writer. It’s easy to divide your books in terms of settings: American, American and Europe, Paris. But on the St. Martin’s Press web page you point to a deeper change: “In my fourth book,” you claim, “I learned how to use the form of the thriller to explore all the questions about race, identity, and American politics that had always concerned me.” Can you be more explicit about what it is that you’ve learned and how you came to learn it?

Jake Lamar: A lot of people think I turned to the thriller to make money. That wasn’t the case. Looking back, after finishing Close to the Bone, I had begun to feel that my writing process was too chaotic. When I began Close to the Bone I was still single and living in a studio apartment on the rue du Mont Cenis, just behind Sacré Coeur in Montmartre. I would wake up and say “Okay, what character is talking today?” And I would sit down and start a scene of, say, Walker in Amsterdam and write through that day. The next day I’d say, “Okay, it’s Sadie today.” And I’d write a scene of Sadie back in college in Delaware—start writing, but not finish the scene. The next day I’d say, “Okay, today it’s going to be Hal in New York in 1994.” I’d start but not finish yet another scene. A week later I’d go back to finish the scene of Walker in Amsterdam. I have scenes in that book that were started in 1995 and finished in 1997. It was a crazy way to work. The book started to cohere toward the end of the first draft, but in revision—I did three drafts of that book—I was flinging chapters all over the place. I really needed to write a book where narrative discipline was forced on me. And I thought, “Well, the whodunit is perfect: you start with the dead body in chapter 1 and you resolve the crime in the last chapter.” The demands of the genre would, I thought, impose a rigorous discipline on my storytelling. When I began Rendezvous Eighteenth I turned to the thriller for another reason. Wanting to write about Paris, having in hand a certain set of characters, I thought, “This is a good way to approach it so it doesn’t become a travelogue, just another book about a guy discovering Paris.” I wanted to write a book that had a crime at its center but was really about the search for the truth.


Jake Lamar: Joseph Heller had a great line: “Writing a novel,” he said, “is like having a controlled day dream.” I don’t know how much control is in there on my part, but for me the process is very much about just allowing myself to daydream. I think that my novels—before I start writing—they’re gestating “in there” for a long time. I know that I’m ready to start, and it’s been this way since The Last Integrationist, when I draw a diagram, a sort of character tree that’s a bit like a family tree. When I sit down and write that out, that’s the beginning. For me it’s characters; my books always start with characters.
I remember one day in Ann Arbor—it was April ’91 and I had just finished Bourgeois Blues, hadn’t even finished all the revisions—when the characters of The Last Integrationist, my first novel, just came to me. I didn’t have names at that point, so I just wrote “black politician,” “photographer,” “boyfriend in the media,” and wound up with quite a diagram. That book—four years to write the first draft—involved a good deal of groping in the dark. I started outlining more as the process went along.

The most straightforward process I’ve had was on Rendezvous Eighteenth. Though it hadn’t been published yet, I had finished If 6 Were 9 and was casting about for the next novel. I had wanted to write a novel about Paris for a while, but it wasn’t enough for me simply to say “I’m going to write about Paris.” I needed characters, and I needed to know what the lives of those characters were like before I could start. Then one night, I think it was the nineteenth of May in 2000, sitting in my studio, looking for an idea, I sat down and wrote the names of four characters—Ricky, Fatima, Cash, and Serena. I knew then that I was going to write about this expatriate piano player, his Muslim girlfriend, and his successful cousin, who appears in Paris looking for his runaway wife.

I started with those four characters and literally tacked them to the wall in front of my computer where I put my outlines. A few days later I put up a second, expanded chart—more people, more detail. And then I wrote by hand on a big sketch pad, outlining the first four chapters. After that, I sat down at the keyboard and followed the outline. I think on that book, by the time I got to the end of chapter 2, the beginning of chapter 3, I could see farther down the road. So I outlined chapters 5, 6, and 7; the outlines are always a bit ahead of the story. Of course, things change every day. There are surprises. Every day something I did not anticipate or did not outline happens when I’m tapping those keys. With Rendezvous Eighteenth I held to that process, finished the first draft in a little under two years, and then went into revision. That’s my model for how a book comes together.

David Collins: In Bourgeois Blues, the memoir that launched your career as a writer, you mention that you once thought of becoming a lawyer. Hal Hardaway in Close to the Bone finishes law school and works briefly at a law firm. To what extent do you draw on yourself or on people you know for your characters?

Jake Lamar: I think the biographical touch is there with several of my characters. Often in the novels I end up writing—not a character based on me, but a character who represents an alternative possibility, the story of where my life could have gone. That’s true of both Hal Hardaway, the would-be lawyer, and of Walker DuPree, the troubled artist in Close to the Bone. It’s true as well of Clay Robinette, the disgraced reporter turned college professor in If 6 Were 9. I’m very much like Clay in that I read Eldridge Cleaver’s Soul on Ice as a boy—my parents had hidden it on the top shelf and I read it in secret—and was fascinated by it, baffled by Cleaver’s trajectory, the Black Panther who disappeared and came back reborn as a right-winger. I always wondered, “What’s the deal with Eldridge Cleaver?” Explaining him to myself, I reinvented him as Reggie Brogus, the bogus brother who was in fact a government operative and posed as a revolutionary. Hal, Walker, Clay—there’s lives I might have had, and it’s in imagining those lives that my characters come together.

David Collins: Readers approaching an author new to them like to have a bit of context. “This new writer,” one might say, “is like one with whom I’m already familiar, but they differ in that . . . .” In your case the name that falls from everyone’s lips is Chester Himes. Are you comfortable with such comparisons?

Jake Lamar: Oddly enough, I didn’t really discover Chester Himes until I came to Paris. I read Cotton Comes to Harlem as a kid and knew about the Coffin Ed Johnson/Gravedigger Jones detective novels. But only when I came to France did I hear people say, “Oh, there are these other novels that Himes wrote and they are great.” Finally, I read If He Hollers Let Him Go—and I think it’s a masterpiece. I also love The End of a Primitive, first published in 1955 and still shocking today. The End of a Primitive is a bit like an interracial Leaving Las Vegas, but set in New York in the 1950s. It’s about a black writer, obviously a stand-in for Himes, and a white woman based on Vandi Haygood, with whom he had a long and turbulent affair. The two just start this awful, lost weekend that’s like a descent into hell. I think the book is brilliantly written and just brutal, so painfully honest and powerful. I still can’t believe the way Himes plunges into the psychoses of his characters.

Himes’s life was so much tougher than mine. He was in prison for years. All through the early books he had to take on awful jobs he hated just to make ends meet. Yet he never stopped writing. It’s really admirable. He said that wherever he traveled, he carried around this trunk full of his works to remind himself that he was a writer, even if he was working as a caretaker or a janitor. He had this sense of himself as an author. I’m flattered by the comparison because I think he’s a terrific writer, but I’ve had a much easier time of it than he did.

David Collins: True enough, but the parallels are striking nonetheless. Early on, both you and Himes received support from various foundations; both of you deal extensively with race; both of you have moved from other forms of the novel to the mystery or thriller. But the most striking similarity lies, I think, in a shared view of the world. Himes argued in My Life of Absurdity, the second volume of his autobiography, that in a racist country, “whether one is a racist or a victim, one comes to feel the absurdity of life.” Would you agree that your world view tends toward absurdity?

Jake Lamar: Yes, absolutely. Part of the problem I’ve had with critics in America is that the way I deal with racial questions is not the traditional way. If you’re dealing with painful questions of race, you’re supposed to do it in this very serious, solemn way. I think the humor in my books, the poking fun at blacks and
whites alike—that gets under some people’s skin, gets up their noses as the Brits say. For most of American history, racism was an oppressive force that dominated people’s lives. Since the civil rights movement, I don’t think that that oppressive machine of racism is the force it once was. Racial attitudes in our day are more absurd than truly dangerous. For me the more insidious form of contemporary racism is what goes on in people’s minds, their attitudes toward others. That’s what I find absurd, and the hope of changing that is why I enjoy writing about the absurdity of race. 

One way my world view comes out is through my ongoing concern with interracial relationships. It first appears with my mother’s comments about black men marrying white women in *Bourgeois Blues*; it becomes a major issue in *The Last Integrationist* and *Close to the Bone*. Interracial marriage is, I think, the final frontier of integration. It’s where so many Americans draw the line. Integration in our universities is accepted as a good thing. Businesses? That’s fine. Blacks and whites living in the same neighborhood—even that’s okay. But once you start talking about love, marriage, and children the walls really go up. That’s really the source of my inspiration for writing repeatedly about interracial marriage. In *The Last Integrationist* I wanted to deal with all the questions raised by that old-fashioned word “miscegenation,” about how it lingers in people’s psyches as a taboo. Our situation in this regard is so full of ironies. Through the whole history of slavery there were black slaves who were half white because they were the children of masters. There’s not an African American with roots going back to slavery who does not have some white blood, some white DNA in him. And yet after the Civil War whites began lynching black men for looking at white women the wrong way. I’m a big fan of William Faulkner. I love *Absalom, Absalom*, one of the best books ever written about our obsession with miscegenation. Thomas Sutpen, the powerful plantation owner, the satanic figure in the book, has children who are half-white, half-black, but of course he can’t acknowledge them. He has to have his pure white blood succeeding him. When Charles Bon, his son by an octooon woman turns up—a young man who is one-sixteenth black and by far the most sophisticated, cultivated, humane figure in the novel—he has to be killed because his proposed marriage to Surpen’s daughter would taint the bloodline. At one point Faulkner has Charles’s half-brother, Henry Surpen, run through the whole tortured question of where the greatest sin lies. In the end he decides that miscegenation is worse than incest. I think these old notions live on in people’s minds. People deny it all the time, but I think these things endure in awful ways.

Now that I’ve begun to write books set outside of America, I’ve realized that the absurdities surrounding America’s racial obsessions are being replicated, though in somewhat different ways, in the larger world. In the two books set in Paris,
While cities across America burned that spring of Martin Luther King’s assassination, civil rights leaders in St. Louis met ‘round the clock to defuse the violence here. Their strategy called for one man to go to the white power brokers and negotiate for more jobs and services for African Americans. That man was Judge Theodore McMillian.

That a judge would involve himself was most rare, but McMillian was unique. “McMillian was a civil rights activist in robe behind the scenes,” says former U.S. representative William L. Clay Sr. “The Judge was one of the leaders who took an active role so St. Louis didn’t riot. He was our diplomat because he had the respect of all sides.”

McMillian was an ideal emissary, for he transcended racial barriers. He changed the old order. He worked as a bridge between opposing groups. And he accomplished it all with a nimble grace and a mischievous humor.

He was called “the Judge” because he was the first black on the bench in the old slave state of Missouri. He was the first African American to walk through many closed doors, starting with law school, the state circuit court, the state court of appeals, and ending on the U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit, which includes seven states from Arkansas to Minnesota. He presided over important trials and appeals for half a century.

But McMillian was much more than a first, for wherever he went, he transformed the system. He pursued a sense of justice that extended beyond the courtroom. As a prosecutor, he insisted that black-on-black crime be fully prosecuted. As a judge, he went undercover and lived as a prison inmate to demonstrate the need for penal reform. He overhauled the Missouri Juvenile Code and began the then revolutionary practice of separating juveniles from adults in prison. He was one of the first judges in America to allow single people and the blind to adopt children.

Once inside the establishment, the Judge held the door open for minorities and women to follow. He boosted an entire generation of baby boomer women onto the bench and law school faculties and into law firms at a time when women were less than 8 percent of law school students. “He was a women’s rights activist in robe,” Clay says. McMillian mentored African-American judges and worked behind the scenes to promote black police officers. Politicians sought him out, too. “I’d call him for advice,” Clay says.

McMillian was one of *Ebony’s* Top 100 African Americans and was listed in *Who’s Who*. The American Bar Association gave him its prestigious Spirit of Excellence Award. Five walls in his chambers were covered ceiling to floor with his awards, most of which he hung to honor those who had honored him. Yet most Americans don’t know who Theodore McMillian was.

“That’s because Ted never was a self-promoter. He was never one to seek credit or needed to take it,” says Leland Ware, the Louis L. Redding Professor for the Study of Law and Public Policy at the University of Delaware.

Ted got more done on and off the bench because he never needed to be the cheese behind any project,” says former St. Louis Circuit judge and circuit attorney J. Brendan Ryan.

“You know how we got the new Juvenile Justice Center? It was all Ted’s doing, but he let other people take credit for it.”

McMillian’s humility belied a powerful intellect. “He left behind groundbreaking legal opinions” in civil rights, free speech, desegregation, and employment law, Ware says. The U.S. Supreme Court and Congress later adopted the reasoning behind some of his rulings and dissents, according to Washington University Law Professor Karen L. Tokarz.

“He was the intellectual equal of Judges Leon Higgenbotham and William Hastie, Charles Hamilton Houston [dean of Howard University Law School and mentor to Marshall], and Thurgood Marshall,” says Ware, a civil rights expert.

“Higgenbotham had tremendous respect for McMillian,” says Missouri Supreme Court Judge Richard B. Teitelman, who knew both men.

There is one reason why Judge McMillian is less known: geography. He was out of the East Coast–NAACP loop. The others were legal scholars who wrote; McMillian was a man of action. “If he heard a rumor around the courthouse that there was a move to sabotage the Voting Rights Act or violate police search-and-seizure rulings, he’d alert somebody to get the word out,” Clay says.

What is remarkable is how McMillian accomplished what he did in St. Louis. Don’t let the Midwestern geography and climate...
The Living Bridge

Although he was pro-choice and anti—death penalty, and, in Professor Ware’s words, “a consistent and persistent defender of civil rights,” the Judge was beloved among his arch-conservative colleagues on the Eighth Circuit. “When I went on the Missouri Court of Appeals, I deliberately reached out to the Republican appointees,” the Judge told me. “I wanted to build a bridge to them so we’d have consensus for our rulings,” he said. A number of them still say they “loved Ted.”

The Judge also worked tirelessly as a bridge between the have-mores and have-nots. He founded Legal Services of Eastern Missouri and Herbert Hoover Boys and Girls Clubs, where he was also president. During President Johnson’s War against Poverty, the Judge founded and later chaired one of the first chapters of the Human Development Corporation.

“Mac never looked down on you if you had no alphabet behind your name,” says his best friend for seventy-seven years, Hershel Parks. “He would go to the park in his scruffy shoes and clothes and sit on the curb and talk to winos. He’d listen to them and give them money for food.”

He listened to everyone with the same respect and patience. His manners were “one size fits all.” He greeted the busboy at lunch with the same enthusiasm as he did Bill Danforth, then the chancellor of Washington University, who stopped by his table to say hello.

His irreverent humor was legendary. Whenever the Judge swore in a new judge or lawyer, he would say, “Repeat after me. I swear...” and the newbie would repeat him verbatim. The Judge would continue, “to protect the widows and orphans” and the Republican appointee would recite, “to protect the widows and orphans,” which made even the nervous laugh out loud.

He loved his bawdy stories. “We were so poor that as a boy I used to hide under the bed in a brothel and catch the change that fell out of the john’s pockets,” the Judge told me and tilted his head back and laughed.

McMillian’s grandparents came up from Mississippi to St. Louis, a destination point for African Americans during the Mississippi Migration. Divided during the Civil War and thereafter, St. Louis was a mixed blessing. Despite being segregated, St. Louis was a safe haven compared with the Deep South and outstate Missouri. The city offered better jobs and two black high schools, where there were few or none under Jim Crow back home. Black men could vote in St. Louis without a poll tax or a literacy test. The courts in St. Louis offered redress of wrongs; there was a history of successful civil rights cases going back to before Dred Scott.

Theodore McMillian was born in a tenement at South 14th and Papin Streets, January 28, 1919, to pretty and very bright Joycie McDuffy McMillian, fourteen, who was one-quarter Cherokee, and Theodore “Tanzie” McMillian, sixteen, later a Golden Gloves boxer and a Baptist minister in Chicago.

McMillian grew up seeing the world as “us,” not “us versus them.” When he was nine, his parents divorced, and later both remarried. “We were raised as sisters and brothers, not as step- or half- anything,” says his half-sister, Delores Reynolds. “We were not allowed to use ‘half-sister,’ ‘stepbrother.’” The Judge and his younger sister were Baptist, while their five half-siblings from Joycie and her second husband were Roman Catholic. Tanzie had two more children by his second wife, and that family made weekly visits to the Parker household.

“Mac was full of mischief,” says his partner in crime, Hershel Parks. The two boys would filch bottles of milk from the horse-drawn dairy wagons and steal bread from the outdoor storage bins next to a grocery store. “We didn’t have radios or telephones so, for entertainment, we exchanged tall tales. We’d make up stories, none of them true, like Mac in the brothel. Mac would do it for laughs,” Parks says. “A good trial lawyer tells stories like being under the bed in a brothel.” Mac, his childhood nickname, followed his own logic over rules. When a tornado in 1927 struck near his school, his teacher ordered his class to put their heads down on their desks. Thinking that silly, Mac ran home to the rooftop to check on his dog and her new puppies. All had survived.

“My grandmother said we had to go to school and keep going,” McMillian told me. “She said we needed our education.” He was always first in his class, class president at Vashon High School and member of the National Honor Society. School segregation was a fact of life that stung. “I had to walk past nice schools for white kids with playgrounds to come to my school, which lacked the same facilities,” he told me as he worked on the decades-long St. Louis desegregation case, Liddell v. St. Louis Board of Education. He shook his head and said, “I think about that when [then Missouri attorney general] Ashcroft wants to deny a good education for little black kids.”

When Lloyd Gaines came through his neighborhood collecting money for his landmark Supreme Court case to integrate the University of Missouri’s law school, McMillian contributed to the cause. He worked his way through segregated Missouri’s only black college, Lincoln University, as a Pullman porter on the St. Louis—San Francisco Railway. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1941, majoring in mathematics, physics, and chemistry, and was headed to the University of Chicago for a doctorate in physics. “One of my teachers at Lincoln
encouraged me to go there. I would have worked on the atomic bomb,” McMillian told a relative.

Pearl Harbor changed his plans. Lt. McMillian served with the 24th Infantry Regiment, an African-American unit dating back to the end of the Civil War.

When Lt. McMillian came home, it was to the same racial segregation. “I was good enough to fight and perhaps die for this country, but when I came back I was not accepted as a first-class citizen. It was a bitter pill to swallow,” he later told William J. Shaw, a colleague and lifelong friend.3

Thinking he might be too old to become a physicist, he decided on being a physician. But Washington University told him that with its racial quotas he would have to wait five years to enter medical school. “I couldn’t have my wife support me forever,” he liked to say, “so I went to law school.”

St. Louis University

The Jesuits led the way toward integration in St. Louis eight years before Brown v. Board of Education, and in 1946 St. Louis University Law School admitted McMillian as its first African American student. He sat in the front row taking copious notes in green ink, the color he used later to sign judicial orders. “It’s the color of money,” he told his law clerks. Publicly, he said, “it’s the color of hope.” “Because the Church was so accepting of blacks, I converted to Catholicism,” although he later quipped, “I did it because a High Mass is shorter than a full Sunday at a Baptist church.”

McMillian made the newspapers for graduating first in his class, being the first African American inducted into the Jesuit honor society, Alpha Sigma Nu, and serving as associate editor of its law review. But the downtown law firms refused to hire him. He and a black classmate opened their own firm beyond downtown, where landlords would rent office space to blacks. So few clients walked through their door, “I used my free time to watch the greats in trial and study how they did it,” he told me. “I’d watch them in trial in the Civil Courts building, read the transcript, and when the case went up on appeal, I’d listen to the oral arguments. I learned a lot that way.” Indeed. He won a major case against Webster Groves, forcing the city to integrate its public swimming pool.

A law school classmate recommended McMillian to his brother, the new circuit attorney of St. Louis, Edward L. Dowd Sr., who hired McMillian in 1953 as the third African-American prosecutor in Missouri. He and George W. Draper Sr., later also a judge, were the first African-American prosecutors to step into a courtroom in Missouri.4

At the time, prosecutors allowed black murder defendants to plead guilty and spend a year in the city workhouse. “Negro life is worth more than that,” McMillian and Draper told the circuit attorney. “We want to try black homicide cases instead of giving them away.”5 McMillian won more trials than other prosecutors and more death penalty cases, black-on-black and white-on-white. “People would come hear his closing arguments. They’d say, ‘McMillian would cry his own mother to prison,’” Delores Reynolds says.

While some prosecutors will do anything to win, McMillian, ahead of his time, was known for respecting the civil rights of the defendants. “What I admired most about Ted was that he was a...
human being before he was a trial lawyer or a judge. He had empathy for the background of the defendants,” says former St. Louis County Public Defender Shaw, then an assistant circuit attorney. His reputation led to his appointment to the St. Louis Circuit Court in 1956.

As new judge, McMillian asked for an assignment his colleagues shunned: to sit in St. Louis Juvenile Court. McMillian rankled his brethren, arguing that court personnel deserved raises and better treatment. Despite his successes with juveniles, his fellow judges removed him from that position when a well-connected judge coveted that job. But the following year, Governor Warren E. Hearnes put McMillian on the appellate bench to rule over these judges.

In his chambers, the Judge hung his favorite portrait and his favorite maxim on the wall facing his desk. The picture was of Sir Thomas More, patron saint of lawyers, whom Henry VIII beheaded when More, then lord chancellor of England, refused to compromise his legal principles and allow the king to divorce Catherine of Aragon and marry Anne Boleyn.

“You couldn’t find a greater example as to what a lawyer should be, and you couldn’t find a better judge,” Shaw told the Post-Dispatch.

For his eightieth birthday, the law firms who had scorned him half a century earlier paid tens of thousands of dollars to honor him. He was elated with his law clerks’ gift of a black robe with four gold bars on each sleeve; it outdid Chief Justice Rehnquist’s robe with one striped sleeve. As the one thousand guests were leaving, the Judge quipped to me, “This many white folks would never come to see a black man unless they were gonna hang him” and laughed.

Senior Status

“After I heard President Bush’s State of the Union Speech, I took sick,” he joked about being hospitalized in 2002. He thought it unfair for his colleagues to carry his caseload and he very reluctantly took senior status. But he continued working, and you could reach him in his chambers at night or on a holiday. “They appointed me for life, and life is what they are going to get,” he liked to say.

His heart and memory were such that he began every conversation with his hundreds of friends and relatives asking by name after your spouse, siblings, children, parents, even your new puppy. Life never wearied him. Illness never diminished him. He still had that bounce to his step and enthusiasm in his voice so that he appeared to be a generation younger. When we last spoke, last Martin Luther King Day, the Judge was bubbling with plans for a vacation in the spring, to see Capote, to borrow my copies of Doctorow’s The March and Memoirs of a Geisha, to go to the upcoming art museum exhibit, and to try out a recipe he saw on Rachel Ray’s TV show. He had already gone through Emeril.

He was gone two days later, January 18, 2006, just before his eighty-seventh birthday. One friend recalled the Judge’s words at his funeral: “I’d like to be remembered for looking over my shoulder to help someone behind me so that we all can participate in the American Dream.”

Ellen F. Harris is the author of Guarding the Secrets: Palestinian Terrorism and a Father’s Murder of His Too-American Daughter (Scribner, 1995) and Dying to Get Married: The Courtship and Murder of Julia Miller Bulloch.

2 Jim Kircherer, Sr. Producer, KETC-TV.
4 Many sources say McMillian was the first African American assistant circuit attorney, but he was not. See St. Louis Globe Democrat, December 13, 1942; Shaw, “Why Judge McMillian Worries.”
5 Shaw, “Why Judge McMillian Worries.” However, another then assistant circuit attorney, Ray Bruntrager, Sr., disagrees, but he left the office shortly after McMillian arrived.
Curt Flood’s Rebellion

Review of
Brad Snyder, A Well-Paid Slave: Curt Flood’s Fight for Free Agency in Professional Sports, Viking Adult, 2006, 370 pages with photographs, notes, bibliography, and index ($25.95, hardcover)

There is great irony in the fact that the major league baseball stadium in St. Louis is only a long home run from the pre–Civil War federal court house, now a museum. Two African-American men, Dred Scott and Curt Flood, used St. Louis federal courts to gain their freedom. They lost the court cases, but eventually triumphed. Scott remained a slave, but his action was part of the kindling for the fire that brought about the abolition of the evil condition. Flood’s challenge to baseball’s reserve clause began the era of free agency, when athletes in all professional sports could make their best deals with any team.

Brad Snyder, who tells the story of Flood’s revolt in A Well-Paid Slave, is a lawyer, an alumnus of Duke University, and a working newspaper reporter who left the ink-stained life for Yale Law School and the type of bar his former colleagues rarely patronize. He has done a great deal of research, to the point where the book is stuffed like a Thanksgiving turkey, and his reverence for the U.S. Supreme Court shows in the minutiae and the breathless recounting of what happens at the Court.

The “reserve clause,” by the way, was a clause in the standard baseball player contract that bound him for life. He played for the team that first signed him, or he didn’t play at all. And the team could trade him to another team, or release him. It was ownership, total and complete, and had twice been approved in decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court. No other professional sport had the same language or the same legal sanction.

Flood grew up in Oakland, California, but he really grew up in 1956 when, as an eighteen-year-old boy, he signed with Cincinnati and spent two summers playing baseball in High Point, North Carolina, riding buses from one southern town to another and learning firsthand about Jim Crow. Like his few black teammates, he ate sandwiches on the bus, used the highway shoulder to relieve himself, and stayed in boarding houses or the homes of black residents because the hotels where his teammates stayed were closed to members of his race.

When he was ready for the majors and showed promise as a fine hitter and a superior fielder, Flood was traded. Some suggest that the Reds already had two starting black outfielders in Frank Robinson and Vada Pinson and did not want a third. Joining the Cardinals was no picnic, however. The team had threatened to not play against the Brooklyn Dodgers when Jackie Robinson was a rookie in 1947, backing off only when Ford C. Frick, president of the National League, threatened harsh penalties. Harry Walker, Enos Slaughter, even Joe Garagiola excoriated Robinson and didn’t care for Flood; Garagiola testified against him in his suit for free agency but later apologized and said he had been wrong to support the major league establishment.

Flood joined the Cardinals in 1958, played stellar center field for twelve seasons, batted .293, earned seven Gold Gloves and three All-Star Game appearances. Not necessarily Hall of Fame numbers, but better than some who have plaques in Cooperstown. Flood had a rebellious streak, however, inspired by the civil rights movement; he was better suited to the 1960s than many of his teammates, who kept their mouths shut, collected their checks, and hoped for front-office or broadcast-booth jobs when their careers ended. Cardinal stars like Bob Gibson and Bill White, along with great players like Willie Mays, Frank Robinson, and Hank Aaron, were among those who admired Flood, but only in private.

Situations like segregated housing during spring training—and sometimes on the road during the regular season—were grudgingly accepted by pioneers like Jackie Robinson and Larry Doby, whose eyes were on larger targets, but the next generation of baseball players, some of whom were also civil rights
activists, like Flood, wanted something better. Through the efforts of August A. Busch Jr., owner of the Cardinals, the team arranged for players, staff, writers, and others to live in a new St. Petersburg motel; even top stars like Stan Musial and Ken Boyer moved out of luxury apartments to be with their teammates and to make a statement.

Everything came to a head after the 1969 season. Flood, a talented artist and craftsman, had begun a business of creating and selling portraits, but while his signature was on the paintings, the work was not necessarily his. In addition, he had developed a reputation as a womanizer and a heavy drinker. The behavior did not sit well with St. Louisans and with the Cardinal ownership, though their own private lives did not always reflect their public conservatism. And, in the 1968 World Series, which the Cardinals lost to the Detroit Tigers, Flood had made a serious gaffe in the outfield, and another running the bases. Busch lost patience.

Flood was the best center fielder on the 1969 Cardinals roster, but he was no longer in favor. According to Snyder, Flood was certain he would be traded at the end of the season, and he was, in a package where the Cardinals received Philadelphia slugger Richie “Dick” Allen (a troubled African American star who had difficulties in the City of Brotherly Love), infielder Cookie Rojas and pitcher Jerry Johnson, and gave up Flood, catcher Tim McCarver, pitcher Joe Hoerner, and outfielder Byron Browne. Flood refused to report to the Phillies, despite being offered a contract for $90,000 to play in 1970, and said he would retire. He also wrote Bowie Kuhn, then the commissioner of baseball, and protested that the reserve clause was illegal, as well as immoral. The court battles had begun.

The traditional sports media (Dick Young, Bob Broeg, Jim Murray) excoriated Flood, calling him ungrateful and worse. Some of the rebels (Red Smith, Jim Brosnan, Howard Cosell) praised him. Cosell interviewed him, tossed up a softball question about Flood’s $90,000 salary. Flood responded, “A well-paid slave is nonetheless a slave.”

More than six years later, in a 5–3 decision, the Supreme Court declined to overturn its previous decisions in favor of organized baseball and the reserve clause. Justice Harry Blackmun wrote the majority opinion, a paean to baseball and a laundry list of names of famous players. He was joined by Lewis Powell, William Rehnquist, Potter Stewart, and Byron “Whizzer” White, himself a former professional football player. William O. Douglas, William J. Brennan, and Thurgood Marshall dissented.

Public pressure, however, and the work of Marvin Miller, president of the baseball players union, soon bypassed the Court, approved binding arbitration for player salaries and, not many years afterward, effectively ended baseball’s privileged legal status over football.

Flood was a poor representative for the landmark case, and Snyder admits it, though he points out there was plenty of blame to share among a number of people, especially former Supreme Court justice Arthur Goldberg, whose work in front of the Court was apparently abysmal. But Flood’s financially wastrel ways, his alcohol problems, and his sexual adventures did not help him in terms of public opinion. In addition, he was living in Europe much of the time as the case wound through the courts. He did play some baseball in 1971, signing with the Washington Senators, but his abilities had shrunk badly. Rather than face up to the situation, Flood ran from Washington to Europe, disappearing for several months. He also had difficulties with the Internal Revenue Service and with people from whom he had borrowed money. He became estranged from his children, his wives and significant others, and even the women who had bailed him out of financial difficulties time and again.

For example, a woman named Karen Brecher helped him find work in Oakland when Flood was down and out. She supported him, financially and emotionally, for six years, and then, as Snyder writes, “As soon as he turned 45 in January, 1983, Flood took his $2,500-a-month pension and left Karen.” The former outfielder moved to Los Angeles and reconnected with a longtime girl friend, actress Judy Pace. He stopped drinking and renewed and repaved relationships with many former players—even with August A. Busch, who invited him to a Cardinal reunion and again referred to him as the team’s best center fielder ever.

The saddest part of Snyder’s tale is the fact that baseball players, who owe so much to Curt Flood, ignored him in his final years, and even during the lawsuit. The initial suit was heard in New York district court in May 1970, before Judge Irving Ben Cooper. The Cardinals were in the city to play the Mets, but no players showed up to testify, or even to attend and show support. Jackie Robinson and Hank Greenberg testified, but not a single active player was in the courtroom. Baseball players, regardless of their race, turned their backs on the man who made most of them millionaires.

Snyder’s attempts to make rather dull activities exciting caused me to wonder about the book’s accuracy, though not about its tendency to turn tedious. For example, in the very first paragraph, when Flood is phoned and told about the trade by the Cardinals’ PR man, Jim Toomey, Snyder writes, “The voice on the other end of the phone was so emotionless that it sounded almost like a pre-recorded message.” It did? Who told Snyder? There is no evidence that he ever talked to either man. And later, Snyder quotes Flood as telling an interviewer that a recent X-ray of his head “showed nothing.” Well, that statement was credited to Dizzy Dean, via a St. Louis headline writer, in the mid-1930s.

Flood’s story deserves to be told. This is a sympathetic and patient reconstruction of the period, a fine addition to the history of baseball and the period, and a backstage view of the Supreme Court, but without much impact as literature.

Joe Pollack is on the Advisory Board of the Center for the Humanities, Washington University in St Louis.
In April 1981, the great heavyweight boxer Joe Louis died from heart failure at the age of sixty-six, run-down, infirm, and demented. Six months earlier, in October 1980, Muhammad Ali, at the age of thirty-eight and long over the hill, suffered his most humiliating defeat when he was beaten around the ring and was virtually defenseless against his former sparring partner and then heavyweight champion, Larry Holmes. Ali was finally and mercifully stopped by a technical knockout at the end of the tenth round. It was exactly the same type of loss that Joe Louis had suffered thirty years earlier in 1951 when he was knocked out by young Rocky Marciano in the eighth round. Louis was thirty-seven years old at the time. Both Ali and Louis were trying to make comebacks after retiring as champions. Both were too old to fight anymore, as a fighter who is still competing in his late thirties, if he is that lucky or that persistent, is a used-up athlete who is fighting on the fumes of memory. The irony is that Ali—who saw himself as a militant, antiestablishment revision of the great Louis, as a new kind of black hero when he emerged in the 1960s—bragged in his early days that he would not end up like Louis: broke, broken down, trying to make a comeback, a fallen champion. In his last years, Louis suffered from cocaine addiction, a bad heart, dementia, and paranoia as a result of the punishment he endured in the ring. He was hounded by the IRS for back taxes and this, too, fueled his paranoia. At the very end of his life, he had to rely on the charity of rich fans, like Frank Sinatra, as he appeared ringside at fights in a wheelchair and with a respirator. Ali, too, at the age of sixty-five, has been recently seen in public in a wheelchair. His health is bad. He is unable to speak and suffers tremors from his Parkinson's-like disease that was brought on by boxing. The entourage he collected (which at one point included Louis as a hanger-on) and the money he made are all gone. He was wrong. He wound up just like Joe Louis.

Many of the fighters of my youth have ended up this way, punch-drunk, and usually broke at the end: Jerry Quarry, Floyd Patterson, Sugar Ray Robinson, and Jimmy Young, to name a few. Many are the walking wounded, like Joe Frazier, slurred of speech and living in his gym; Ken Norton, in a wheelchair; Greg Page, the heavyweight who fought in the style of Ali, now heavily brain damaged and in very bad health; and Wilfred Benitez, the great Puerto Rican fighter who once beat Roberto Duran and is now living with his mother on a $200-a-month pension, a victim of degenerative brain disease.

There was once a great young fighter in Philadelphia named Meldrick Taylor, a junior welterweight and welterweight champion. He fought one of the most memorable fights in boxing history when he and Julio Cesar Chavez, both undefeated at the time,
completely punch-drunk, unable to hold a coherent conversation, and with speech slurred beyond any recognition. He is only forty-two years old. It is said in boxing that the great ones are never convinced they can't fight anymore until someone beats all notions of competence and competition out of them.

If the sport of prizefighting so severely damages many of the men who perform it—to the point of disabling them almost completely when they reach their forties and fifties—and if the fan base for prizefighting is eroding (and it is), why does it continue to exist in the United States? (Another, even more telling question is why are there more than a few women who want to do this?) I am asked this frequently by people who know of my interest in the sport. There are several reasons, some more persuasive than others, why it is not banned. First, in a democratic society, people ought to be able to pursue certain risky occupations for whatever pleasure or honor they find in them. Otherwise, what does individual freedom mean? It is a mark of bourgeois societies that they generally overvalue safety and security and generally find martial prestige and warrior eminence to be bizarre; although, on the other hand, it is the mark of capitalistic societies to understand risk as essential in giving life meaning and in the thrill of achievement. This is why the bourgeoisie value education (where there is no risk), and capitalists the high risk of an adventurous investment. Should we, in the name of safeguarding those who know not what they do, ban cigarette smoking, auto racing, professional football, and all forms of gambling? The answer is no. Second, banning boxing would not safeguard boxers. The sport would simply go underground in the United States and be taken abroad, where it will remain legal. Despite diminishing audiences here, there is a still a good market for boxing and other martial sports in other countries. (And it still has a decent following here.) Third, professional boxing, among many of the poor and working class men who practice it, serves a social good by teaching them a skill and a useful set of social values. It gives them the hope of greatness and a sense of discipline through the endurance of rigorous regimen. Why should that be denied them because of the risk of injury?

Whatever the future of boxing, its past is a rich story about masculinity and culture, about the social and economic function of sport in a democratic society, about the darkly beautiful aesthetics of an absolutely, unrelenting violent expression that requires equal measures of cruelty, courage, and stoicism from its practitioners. Here are three episodes from boxing’s long historical narrative.

**Parvenu**

On April 23, 1928, heavyweight champion Gene Tunney achieved the respectability he craved when he gave a guest lecture in William Lyon Phelps’s undergraduate class on Shakespeare at Yale University. Surely, he remains the only fighter ever to give such a lecture, where he spoke, and quite competently by all accounts, on *Troilus and Cressida*, “quoting flawlessly not only from Shakespeare but also from Thomas Carlyle, the British historian and novelist, and British philosopher and writer Herbert Spencer,” according to biographer Jack Cavanaugh. Tunney spoke without notes and “held his overflow audience spellbound.” Two hundred and fifty students were enrolled in the class; more than five hundred showed up, including newspaper reporters. Tunney knew that he had been invited to Yale only because he was a famous champion athlete and “surely not because I have anything important to say about Shakespeare.” Yet Tunney made a point of displaying his literary bent in public, always appearing anywhere with a book and speaking often in a stilted, ornate way like the autodidact he was. If the literary world was attracted to him because he was a boxer, he always knew that being literary made him different from most other boxers and, more important, from the common image most of the public had about boxers: uneducated bruisers with cauliflower ears who hung out with whores. Tunney gave the impression of being a boxer who looked down his nose at boxing, and this impression, though for the most part false, made him unpopular with sportswriters, who thought him pretentious (which he frequently was) and a social climber (which he definitely was). Tunney gave the impression to sportswriters of a man who was slumming and so, by contrast, Tunney made Jack Dempsey, the most prominent boxer of the 1920s, something of a hero because Dempsey was a regular guy, a common joe, who
didn’t seem to box with the vain detachment of a man looking at his work with cool and studied admiration. When Tunney was in the ring, he beat men for the sport. Dempsey beat men because, at that moment, he hated them. The public liked the latter better.

Tunney brought to prizefighting something it had never had before: a champion with the attitude of a gentleman amateur, a believer in fair play, good character, shrewdness, and careful, methodical study of the craft itself. For Tunney, boxing was not intuitive; it was learned. No make no mistake, Tunney actually loved boxing (after all, he proved to be very skilled at it) while he was a boxer, but he saw it more as a contest of wits than a contest of brute strength. The smartest and best conditioned fighter won by outthinking his opponent, and this credo is, in fact, experientially true. Tunney’s attitude helped to elevate boxing, despite the fact that he was never as popular as some other champions, while boxing helped to elevate him.

Since its inception in Regency England, prizefighting was always a notoriously unsavory sport, followed fanatically by the criminal and lower classes from where it drew its talent and largely the creation of professional gamblers and wealthy men who liked the excitement of wagering on such contests. It suffered from having rowdy, drunken, nearly lawless audiences; was gruesome to watch (especially in its bare-knuckle days of the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth centuries, with its gouging, biting, and general roughhousing); was frequently dishonest in order to satisfy the elite gamblers and to soak the suckers; and was, as a result of being thoroughly distasteful to the bourgeoisie for nearly all of its first 120-odd years of existence in England and later the United States, illegal. Prizefighting was the hard-core pornography of sport. But it must be remembered that amateur boxing existed alongside prizefighting, and it was a far more reputable activity, being offered at many of the best colleges and universities and practiced by the some of the leading captains of industry of the era. (Tunney’s entrée into the world of the wealthy was that he was a boxer who was admired by upper-class men who had been active in the sport in college.) In the twentieth century, it was not poverty but the extensive network of amateur boxing clubs and sites for young working class urban boys—from the Knights of Columbus to police athletic leagues, from neighborhood athletic clubs to various benevolent societies and newspapers—that made professional boxing possible.

By the early 1920s, prizefighting, particularly heavyweight boxing, had become a mainstream sport and quite profitable. This was the grand age of sports in the United States, with names like Babe Ruth, Red Grange, Bill Tilden, and Bobby Jones being written about regularly in the newspapers by sportswriters like Damon Runyon, Grantland Rice, and Ring Lardner, who transformed sport into myth and athletes into heroes and gods. Thanks to the hard-punching, scowling Jack Dempsey, who caught on with the public because of his dark looks and menacing demeanor, heavyweight boxing became a sport for the upper classes. Women, celebrities, and politicians began to attend prizefights. One went to a championship match to see and be seen; it was an event. Also, after World War I, the public perhaps craved an escape from politics and grand ideology through sport. Dempsey was the first fighter to attract million-dollar gates. His two fights with Tunney, in 1926 and 1927, were the two richest sporting events of their time.

Tunney—the New Yorker who served in the Marine Corps at the end of the First World War, who knew Bernard Shaw, went to art museums, and was engaged to marry Polly Lauder, a Carnegie heiress—was something like a real-life Horatio Alger. Dempsey—who was from Colorado and who restless wandered from place to place, fought men in bars for money, won the championship in 1919 by breaking Jess Willard’s jaw and will in three rounds, had skipped out of World War I by claiming family hardship (which stigmatized him as a slacker for many years), married a prostitute (from whom he divorced to great public scandal) and then an aspiring starlet who hated boxing—was popular with the Hollywood crowd and the hoi polloi when he was champion. The contrast was a dream matchup. In these two matches, held in Philadelphia and Chicago, Dempsey won only one round out of twenty (both fights went the distance of ten rounds). Tunney beat him from pillar to post, completely outboxing him. The one round Dempsey won was the seventh round of the second fight, where he knocked Tunney down. Dempsey refused to go to a neutral corner, as he should have according to the rules, and the referee would not start the count until Dempsey did so. Tunney gained valuable seconds to clear his head as Dempsey reluctantly went to a neutral corner. (Dempsey was used to fighting under rules that permitted a fighter to stand right over a fallen opponent in order to knock him down again as soon as he rose.) This is the story of the famous “long count.” Tunney was on the canvas for perhaps eighteen or more seconds. He regained his feet on the count of nine and proceed to beat up Dempsey some more. After Tunney fought his two fights with Dempsey, he fought once more and retired, becoming a successful businessman. One of his sons became a U.S. senator from California in 1970.

Cavanaugh’s book is not really a biography of Tunney as much as it is a dual biography of Dempsey and Tunney, or nearly so. Perhaps the author thought that the two men’s professional lives were so intertwined—one is almost never mentioned without the other—that it would be impossible to tell the story of one without telling the story of the other. It is somewhat disconcerting that the book was not titled and marketed as such. At any rate, it is a solid effort, competently written, well-researched, and affords Tunney his proper place in the history of American sport. Indeed, Tunney is such an unusual figure—a champion boxer who wound up well-off and mentally alert for his entire life—that it is surprising that more books about him have not been written.

Tony the Tiger

In 2005, three books were published about African American heavyweight champion Joe Louis’s June 1938 title defense against German fighter Max Schmeling: David Margolick’s Beyond Glory: Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling and a World on the Brink; Patrick Myler’s Ring of Hate: Joe Louis vs. Max Schmeling: The Fight of the Century; and Lewis A. Erenberg’s The Greatest Fight of Our Generation: Louis vs. Schmeling. This bit of overkill was not
entirely unjustified, as Louis’s fight against the Nazi challenger (who later became Louis’s friend and financial supporter) was one of the major cultural events of the 1930s, a defining moment where sport, race, and international politics collided in the United States. Louis, who became one of the great patriotic American heroes of his era and is certainly considered one of the best boxers of all time, emerged as champion in 1937, twenty-two years after Jack Johnson, the first black heavyweight champion, was defeated by Jess Willard in Havana, Cuba. Johnson had been on the lam for more than two years after having been convicted of violating the Mann Act, taking a woman across state lines for the purpose of sexual relations. He was prosecuted under this extraordinary bit of bad legislation largely because he had sex with white women and even married them. Johnson didn’t seem to know his place as a black man, but his bragging and obvious satisfaction he took in beating his white opponents hardly made him different from them. Champion boxers are an egotistical breed. His sex life was about the same as well, bedding women of dubious virtue. Louis presented a very different public demeanor: respectful, unassuming, not inclined toward miscegenation (where anyone could see him), and grateful for the chance. He also came along at a time when international pressure, particularly fascism, communist propaganda and anti-colonialism, was beginning to make state-sanctioned and culturally endorsed racism a bit of a political burden and something of a national black eye (pun intended). But Louis was actually in many ways little different from Johnson: he slept with many white women, was supremely confident in his ability to beat mediocre white fighters, and was intensely ambitious in his profession. He wanted to be a great fighter, just like Jack Johnson.

Books on Louis’s second fight with Schmeling are understandable and even laudable. A book on his fight in 1935 with Italian Primo Carnera, at the time of Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia, could be useful. Maybe a book on Louis’s fight against Rocky Marciano might have some interest. But it is hard to imagine why someone would write a book about Louis’s June 1939 fight with Two Ton Tony Galento, a minor fight with a minor fighter. Galento was a colorful (which can carry a person a long way in the absence of talent), foul-mouthed, fun-loving, cigar-chomping, dirty fighter (although not nearly as dirty as Harry Greb, Gene Tunney’s nemesis) who never took himself too seriously. He once ate fifty hot dogs in an afternoon and fought successfully that night. 

So, this is something like the “Rocky” story, a long-shot white ethnic fighter has a moment where he comes close to beating a black champion. In this case, Galento (called Two Ton because of his days hauling ice, although it was also a fit description of his physique; against Louis, he stood at 5 feet, 8 inches and weighed a paunchy 240 pounds, a body that hardly ever saw the inside of a gym), a tavern owner in Orange, New Jersey, hurt Louis (who, in contrast to Galento, stood 6 feet even and weighed a fit 200 pounds for the fight) with a right hand in the first round and knocked him down briefly with a right hand (Galento’s best weapon) in the third. Louis so savagely beat Galento in the fourth round—administering such a thorough and complete boxing lesson because he was angered and embarrassed by the knockdown—that Galento could not finish the round and the fight was stopped. So much for an inept underdog’s glory or an inept underdog’s chances in anything other than a movie. Galento’s face looked as if it had been through a meat grinder. There is little doubt that Louis would have severely injured Galento had the fight continued. Louis and his entourage drove off to Harlem after the fight and did not give Galento another thought.

Yet this book is not without its charm; engagingly written, it captures the historical moment of the fight, an America on the brink of war, and a democracy challenged by the struggle against racial inequality. It informatively and fairly portrays both men, as contrast, are in some ways as important culturally and politically as the contrast between Tunney and Dempsey. Louis and Galento were a striking racial and ethnic contrast, Tunney and Dempsey a contrast in class aspirations.

Cholo

On October 3, 2001, Roberto Duran was seriously injured in an automobile accident in Argentina, sustaining several broken ribs and a collapsed lung. Had he not had this accident, he might...
He had virtually no education, as he had been a restless boy (he managers and promoters with quick minds and a nimble grasp. tough boys with quick hands entrusting their earnings to wily restaurant. Some was stolen, as is always the case with immature ing for everything from people's electric bills to the entire tab at a expected this of him; sometimes he gave thousands in a day, pay- some away because the poor people with whom he had grown up expected this of him; sometimes he gave thousands in a day, pay- ing for everything from people's electric bills to the entire tab at a restaurant. Some was stolen, as is always the case with immature tough boys with quick hands entrusting their earnings to wily managers and promoters with quick minds and a nimble grasp. Since he didn't know how to do anything else, he fought. He had virtually no education, as he had been a restless boy (he would probably be diagnosed today with Attention Deficit Disorder) and hardly attended school after the third grade. From the time he was eight years old and first stepped into a gym with his older brother in the tough “El Chorrillo” section of Panama City, he knew no other work but fighting. It was his only trade. Even in the terrible last years of his career, he had enough of a name that he could always make more fighting than teaching someone younger how to do it. Unlike many other boys, the trade served him well for a number of years and made him one of the most famous boxers of the twentieth century.

It is remarkable that Duran became as famous as he did in the United States among the non-Hispanic population. First, he refused to learn English. Second, he fought in the lower weight classifications, starting his career as a lightweight and enjoying his best days in that division and as a welterweight. His weight increased so much that he wound up fighting as a middleweight, even a super middleweight. (From his boyhood, Duran was an enormous eater. He was always hungry. During his career, his weight fluctuated wildly, and between fights he could easily go from 145 to 200 pounds.) No fighters are as popular as heavyweights. But he had several things in his favor: First, when he was young, he was quite handsome. Second, he was an intense, take-no-prisoner fighter, who frequently and openly disdained his opponents’ ability and manhood. In short, he had, both in the ring and out, the demeanor of a barbarian. Third, he was a knockout artist, thus, the nickname the Panamanians gave him: los manos de piedra, or “hands of stone.” He had lots of charisma as a Hispanic fighter and stood out from the other great Hispanic fighters of his day, of which there were a great many, because his competitive intensity bordered on a form of genius. Indeed, most of his fights were against Hispanic fighters. His macho antics, his display of crude will, also rather neatly fit the gringo stereotypes of the breed. He was as well a convenient cultural foil for the great black fighters who fought in his weight classes, such as Sugar Ray Leonard, Marvelous Marvin Hagler, and Thomas Hearns, against whom his results were decidedly mixed. But contrasts, as they say, make fights; spicks and spades make a lovely contrast. Duran was not like the black fighters from Panama, who were slick. He was Cholo, and couldn’t fight that way. “No black man can beat me,” he once boasted.

According to Duran’s biographer Christian Giudice, “[Duran’s] father did leave his son at least one thing: his Mexican complexion, the light skin tone contrasting with the jet-black hair of a mixed-breed cholo. Indeed “Cholo” or “Cholito” would become young Roberto’s nickname.” Cholo is a term with many meanings but among the most common is someone of mixed Spanish and Native American blood. It can also refer to a mixed-race gangster with slicked-back hair, just the way Duran wore his. Or it can refer to a country hick. Duran, from his poor, isolated neighborhood of street toughs and violent crime, was something like an urban hick.

Duran quit in the middle of the eighth round in his title rematch against Sugar Ray Leonard in November 1980, suppos- edly uttering, “No mas. No mas.” (Actually, what Duran said was: “No quiero pelear con el pagaso” “I do not want to fight this clown.”) No one really understood why: he was clearly not in shape for the fight, mentally or physically, and he was plainly going to lose. Leonard was also humiliating him in the ring. Perhaps he feared being knocked out, although he was knocked out by other fighters after the second Leonard fight. It was a fight that Duran spent his entire career trying to live down, as it shattered his reputation as a man-killer, a ferocious fighting machine that would rather die than quit. He did not think at the time that this fight would have such a devastating effect on his career. He simply shrugged it off as a bad night. (It is generally looked down upon in the profession for a boxer to quit, especially if he has not been seriously hurt, and Duran was not hurt when he quit against Leonard.) What is amazing is that Duran redeemed himself twice—against Davey Moore and Iran Barkley—in title fights, discovering the sort of salvation that athletes usually find only in movies.

Giudice’s biography is a compelling book; at times it’s a pro- foundly detailed reconstruction of Duran’s world, about a man who exceeded all expectations in his profession only to end up exactly where he started because, perhaps, he never really wanted to escape. Duran’s success made him a hero in two countries: the United States and Panama, the big, rich nation of hegemonic pre- tensions in the hemisphere and its poor, corrupt southern cousin living in its rich, powerful cousin’s shadow. The fact that he had such success in the United States while always reminding the Americans that he was from Panama meant something to him. It is tragic, this life, as the lives of most boxers are, but yet there is something deeply heroic in the absurdity that is Roberto Duran’s career and fate: the fact that he was driven by a comp- pelling and touching sort of honor to continue to fight for as long as he did in the strange belief that he owed it to himself to show his countrymen the fury of his greatness, even when the fury died. “The Panamanian public loves me now, now that I’m old. They’ve recognized now that the greatest thing that Panama ever had was Roberto Duran. They have to accept that.”

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Reviewing a concert by the New York Jazz Quartet (NYJQ) in 1977, Holly I. West commented on the chutzpah it took for a group to name itself after the Big Apple. “After all,” she wrote, the city is “full of jazz musicians, many of whom could lay claim to such a title.” The seventh edition of *The Penguin Guide to Jazz on CD* includes reviews of recordings by the New York All Stars, the New York Hard Bop Quintet, and the New York Voices—but no New York Jazz Quartet. The fifth edition of the same tome lists none of the above but instead lists the New York Art Quartet, the New York Composers Orchestra, and the New York Jazz Collective—and no New York Jazz Quartet. And, as if the chronicle above is not lengthy or complicated enough, the New York Jazz Quartet under examination in this essay is not the New York Jazz Quartet of 1956–57, which included, among others, flutist Herbie Mann.

Go to a hip music store, look through the miscellaneous N bins, and you might find a CD, or more likely LP, by NYJQ. Look on the Internet and you’ll have better luck. The group made seven recordings on at least five labels over several years, best guess 1975–82, and each recording was no less than a model essay of acoustic wit and wisdom. The term “acoustic” can’t be taken lightly here. In an era when many jazz musicians felt they had to play electric rock-funk to survive, NYJQ favored the crystalline realms of chamber jazz. To describe the group as a shorter-lived, less famous Modern Jazz Quartet (MJQ) might be as apt an introduction to its achievement as any. Despite its relative obscurity, NYJQ’s achievement now seems indisputable. Before jazz winds very far into its second century—in ways that promise to yield new, likely international, fusions—it might be a good time to look into the fusions that made this band worthy of more attention. The story of NYJQ might well be the story of numerous other jazz groups of the second half of the twentieth century. Grady Tate, the second drummer in the group, has commented, “There are special things that happen with every group. Oh, lots of bands have been out there who had extraordinary players and weren’t given the right amount of recognition.”

Before there was the New York Jazz Quartet there was the New York Jazz Sextet, which we can call the parent organization of the Quartet. However, we might go back even further and note what seems to have been the grandparent organization, the Jazztet, formed in 1959 and led jointly by trumpeter Art Farmer and tenor saxophonist Benny Golson. While the Jazztet performed more or less semiregularly throughout the late ’80s, only Farmer and Golson were constant presences. Many jazz groups seem to exist for the sake of launching their members into their own new groups. Among Jazztet alumni we find eventual leaders such as pianists McCoy Tyner, Cedar Walton, and Harold Mabern; trombonists Curtis Fuller, Grachan Moncur III, and Tom McIntosh; and drummers Albert “Tootie” Heath and Roy McCurdy. Of special importance here is McIntosh, who rather modestly “founded” the New York Jazz Sextet in 1964.

Tom McIntosh deserves an essay of his own. Except for a profile of him in *Down Beat* in 1967, he has almost vanished from the jazz press. However, in the spring of 2005, IPO Recordings released what is arguably his “first” CD, *With Malice toward None*, although he does not play trombone on it. Rather this is “The Music of Tom McIntosh,” with compositions and arrangements by McIntosh, and it is as a composer and arranger that he has become distinctive over the past forty years, having scored numerous motion pictures in Hollywood, films such as *The Bus Is Coming* (1971), *Slither* (1973), and *A Hero Ain’t Nuttin’ but a Sandwich* (1977), to name but a few. McIntosh opted out of the New York jazz scene of the ’60s, which was steadily losing ground to rock ‘n’ roll, and to the Beatles most dra-
matically. Yet ironically, the success of pop music in the ’50s and ’60s gave McIntosh his first jazz success. Florence Greenberg, owner of Sceptor Records and the producer of hit records by the Shirelles, Dionne Warwick, and Burt Bacharach, had made a fortune with these artists. But what she felt the label lacked was serious critical acclaim, and she felt she could get that through jazz. Greenberg hired McIntosh to produce four albums—“Not a penny more,” she told him, “four albums. And I’m telling you up front that I don’t care if they don’t sell one copy. What I want is critical acclaim.”

For the first three albums McIntosh hired the best jazz players he knew in New York, people like Art Farmer, Tommy Flanagan, Ron Carter, James Moody, Thad Jones. On the fourth, he inspired the incarnation of the New York Jazz Sextet. McIntosh explains, “The idea was that it was a co-op group. There was no leader. We would all receive the same pay, but we would all share in responsibilities. And I got that idea from John Lewis, who had told the members of the Modern Jazz Quartet, ‘Here is the group name. Anyone who does not want to work under the group name is free to leave—now.’ So I used that concept too.” The New York Jazz Sextet’s only recording was remastered and re-released on CD under Art Farmer’s name in 2004 by Lonzhill Jazz, a European label, and jazz fans should be grateful that it is available again.

Flutist and saxophonist Hubert Laws, a member of the New York Jazz Sextet, recognized early on that McIntosh was a composer to be reckoned with, one who would naturally gravitate toward the large soundscapes of film scores. Laws referred to McIntosh’s extended jazz suite Whose Child Are You? (A Riddle for Everybody’s Children), which, according to The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz, “reflects his interest in jazz and gospel music as well as his classical training” (at Juilliard). Laws described McIntosh’s music as “challenging, hard to define, like program music.” According to Laws, McIntosh wrote carefully, almost by his own “formula,” and his music was “reminiscent of classical form.” Perhaps here too McIntosh was following in the footsteps of John Lewis, who wrote much of the music MJQ played and, perhaps not coincidentally, the scores for three ’50s films: No Sun in Venice, a film short for the United Nations dealing with the worldwide refugee problem, and Odds against Tomorrow. The classical influence of McIntosh’s writing left a major imprint on the Sextet, as well as the Quartet, that was to continue after the Sextet disbanded.

During the three years of the Sextet’s existence under Tom McIntosh, 1964–67, the group was under the management of Ann Summers, whose experience had been (and continues to be) in classical music. McIntosh had been introduced to Summers by alto saxophonist Paul Winter, who was popular enough in the ’60s to have been invited to play with his sextet at the White House. McIntosh recalls, “When I met her, she saw that I longed to get jazz out of the dives and onto the concert stage and told me I’d come to the right place. It turned out that I was soon to have the best job in jazz because we were playing the best colleges, top money, best circumstances.” Although the Sextet was hardly the first to play colleges—think of Dave Brubeck’s “College” albums on Columbia in the ’50s—it advanced a trend that, for better or worse, may have begun the academicism of jazz so prevalent in the ’80s, ’90s, and in our own time. Jazz degree programs abound now, and jazz magazines such as Down Beat and Jazz Times devote special issues to jazz education, on both the high school and college levels.

The arrival of Sir Roland Hanna as the pianist in the New York Jazz Sextet in 1967 was hastened by the departure of Tommy Flanagan, who left the group to become Ella Fitzgerald’s pianist and music director. Hanna and McIntosh were no strangers to each other. McIntosh recalls how he and flutist-saxophonist Frank Perowsky, as students at Juilliard, were starved for jazz companionship. When Hanna was new at the school, he came in one day in 1956 in search of a practice studio. McIntosh decided to hang around while Hanna practiced and was most impressed with what he heard. “Man, the first time he put his hands on the keyboard, I just ran out and screamed, ‘Frank! We found our pianist! This is the guy!’ So when I needed a pianist in the Sextet, it was very natural for me to say, ‘Roland, you’re it.’”

Tom McIntosh’s own departure from the Sextet, and New York, may have been hastened by a meeting with Duke Ellington. After the death of his arranger and musical assistant Billy Strayhorn, Ellington was looking for a replacement and approached McIntosh to fill this role. But he turned Duke down. “I’d just gotten a call from Hollywood to score my first motion picture. Duke broke out into a big smile and said, ‘Yeah, Tommy, I can’t match that.’” And yet, many years later, McIntosh had some regrets. “This is the greatest mistake I made in my life, because I was being offered more money than I’d ever made in my whole life, and it was a dream, man—I kind of forgot the whole thing, everything I’d done in New York. I said, okay, I’m in Hollywood now, and I geared to that.”

Upon McIntosh’s departure, Hanna took over the organization of the Sextet and made the group a quartet; however, this group’s time was brief. Members at that time were flutist-saxo-
phonist Hubert Laws; bassist Ron Carter, who had recently left the Miles Davis Quintet; and drummer Billy Cobham. However, Hanna had also assumed the piano chair in the Thad Jones–Mel Lewis Orchestra in 1966 and was to stay with the band for eight years.

In 1974, Hanna revived the New York Jazz Quartet, and for the next eight years the identity of the group was settled as a co-op dedicated to performing the compositions of its members, who at the outset included bassist Carter, flutist-saxophonist Frank Wess, and drummer Ben Riley. Early on in the life of this band, Hanna discussed its concepts in a story in *Down Beat*. Asked if the members were fulfilling their compositional expectations, Hanna exclaimed, “Always! Constantly! Incessantly! For every concert, either Frank or Ron or I will bring in something new. The program is hardly ever the same. Except we maintain a kind of musical standard. Nothing is out. Everything is for music, rather than for musical politics. It’s music! There’s nothing commercial.” At times, the pressure of creating new music in close quarters could become too close for comfort. Hanna added, “Ron writes strangely. It’s very curious. I wrote a piece called ‘Soap Suds’ several years ago when I was with Richard Davis at the old Five Spot. Though it was never recorded, the melody line is just like something Ron wrote and recorded last year. So when he brought it in [for the Quartet] to play, I said, ‘Wait a minute, Ron, I wrote this already.’ I asked him somewhat facetiously if he hadn’t perhaps come down and heard me do the tune at the Five Spot.”

For his part, Ron Carter, along with Hanna, was a key transitional figure in the group if not its cornerstone. Carter, who even in the ’70s had played on hundreds of recording sessions, was asked in *Down Beat* to describe his feelings about jam sessions. His response is significant because it led him to an account of his sense of what the New York Jazz Quartet was about. Jam sessions to him were “like being in a Roman Coliseum, like gladiators. These promoters throw people together. I’m opposed to that kind of concept. A jam session is like blowing your brains out, with the rhythm section just trying to keep pace.” By contrast, the output of Hanna, Wess, Riley, and Carter was “highly enjoyable, organized, well thought-out, warm music. I don’t consider it a jam session. We work together enough to understand the direction a tune may offer us.”

According to Frank Wess’s recollection, Carter worked to set up a key tour for the Quartet in Japan in 1975. The two recordings of the group most easily available on CD now were produced by Carter on the tour, *The New York Jazz Quartet in Concert in Japan* (Salvation Records) and *The New York Jazz Quartet in Concert in Japan Volume One* (CBS/Sony Records). Both were recorded for Japanese companies first and then licensed for American release on CTI and Columbia, respectively.

Of the five albums NYJQ released over the next eight years, after Carter left the group, three were recorded in 1977, an intensely fertile period. As with the first two recordings, three of the five were produced by a foreign company, the German-based Enja (*Surge and Oasis* are available now on CD); the remaining two were produced by very obscure American labels and remain vinyl treasures, although they can be found. Most likely it was Sir Roland Hanna who had to scramble to get these recordings done. George Mraz, who replaced Carter as the group’s bassist, recalls, “Probably Roland, yeah, mostly, I think so. Because we never had any contract with anybody, you know.” Ben Riley also reflected, “Roland was always the one, he was the all-out hustler. I would say that he probably did most of the hustling for all those things. Roland was a real go-getter.”

The most significant of the later albums of the New York Jazz Quartet arguably is *Song of the Black Knight*, recorded in October 1977 for Sonet Records. The ambitious title tune was especially important to its composer, Sir Roland Hanna: “It’s not just a tune. It’s a culmination of ideas I’ve had musically about myself. I feel there are so many young black people who tend to lose their identity over a period of years through their daily communication with everything in American life. They’re constantly being put down one way or the other, primarily because they are black. As a result, they lose their impetus, their young drive, because they find a stone wall everywhere they turn. *The Black Knight* is an undertone, or an undertow, an inside motion that forces them to go on, and this is what the anger and the bitterness in the music is all about.”

“Song of the Black Night” is also titled “Prelude in E minor,” and it is one of a group of preludes that Hanna had been writing for some time in response to a Japanese commission. The preludes, recorded by Hanna and George Mraz as a duo, were collected on an album, *Romanesque*, and released in the United States on the Blackhawk label. The two recorded and worked often as a duo in New York, apart from their roles in the Quartet. The producer of *Romanesque* in Japan, Kenny Inaoka, remembers how fond Hanna and Mraz were of each other, and of Japanese beer: “The strongest memory about them is that they loved Japanese beer so much that they played piano and bass with one

New York Jazz Quartet, *Oasis*  
Courtesy of Enja Records, 1981
hand and a beer glass in the other hand. They were so close with each other and their personalities together were beautiful." Mraz seemed to bring out Hanna's devotion to classical music, an impulse that could be felt throughout all of the work by NYJQ.

After about eight years together, with only minor changes in personnel, NYJQ members drifted apart, just as the Sextet had earlier, and as countless jazz groups have done. The natural idiosyncrasies of jazz performance do not necessarily help to sustain a group. Ben Riley explains the Quartet's conclusion this way: "I guess everybody wanted to try something, and the best way it could happen was if they ventured off into different directions. We weren't like the MJQ, but we were close. They were co-op, and we originally were like that, we started off like that. And even though we stayed like that, more and more Roland wanted to be the man in charge, because that was his kind of thing, he wanted to be in charge. So everybody, rather than have big arguments, would say, 'Go ahead, we'll see how that works.' And I guess eventually everybody just said, 'Okay, I'm going to go out and try something different.' I imagine that's why it broke down." Another view of Hanna's ultimate role in NYJQ comes from old friend Frank Perowsky: "I have a feeling that having that group was probably the place where he had the most control of everything. And nobody's telling him what he should be playing there." Finally, NYJQ drummer Richard Pratt reflected, "Roland, Frank, and George had their thing down. Master musicians. My dream of playing quality music with quality musicians came to fruition in NYJQ. From the first note we played together, I felt at home. But due to manager problems, pay became an adventure. Consequently, I left the group for a more stable situation."

The only recording of the New York Jazz Quartet to be reviewed in Down Beat, the state-of-the-art jazz journal or bible of jazz for more than seventy years, was the first one. None of the others received much, if any, critical attention. Hubert Laws, the original flutist-saxophonist of the group, did not even know the band had gone on to record any albums, and bassist George Mraz currently owns only one of the group's albums. Frank Perowsky, Sir Roland Hanna's friend of almost fifty years, was not aware of the existence of any albums made by this group. Yet in his Down Beat review of that first album, Chuck Berg predicted the artistic achievement of the New York Jazz Quartet that was to ensue when he said, "These four mature, musical masters have combined their considerable talents in a rich interplay that seems best characterized by such qualities as taste, finesse, balance, and restraint." Berg's words now seem apt as a memorial to the group.

Sir Roland Hanna went on to a successful solo career, and he became a distinguished professor in the Jazz Performance Program in the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College in New York City. The New York Jazz Quartet dissolved about the time the so-called young lions, or new conservative movement, in jazz was evolving. In contrast to the electric jazz of Weather Report, Herbie Hancock and the Headhunters, Chick Corea and Return to Forever—groups that unintentionally kept the New York Jazz Quartet out of the limelight—young jazz musicians such as Wynton and Branford Marsalis were turning back to "taste, finesse, balance, and restraint." The New York Jazz Quartet all along was what tenor saxophonist Jimmy Heath once wryly called MJQ: "a fusion band, a fusion between Western classical music and American jazz." A band for all seasons, the New York Jazz Quartet seems now to consistently have been in the right place at the wrong time.

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1 http://www.richiepratt.com/page1.htm
2 Grady Tate, telephone interview by the author, 7 July 2005.
4 Tom McIntosh, telephone interview by the author, 19 and 21 July 2005.
6 Hubert Laws, telephone interview by the author, 13 July 2005.
7 Modern Jazz Quartet, liner notes for Odds against Tomorrow. CD. Blue Note, 1990.
10 George Mraz, telephone interview by the author, 8 August 2005.
11 Ben Riley, telephone interview by the author, 12 August 2005.
12 Kenny Inaoka, e-mail to the author, 16 August 2005.
14 Richard Pratt, e-mail to the author, 8 July 2005.
16 Bert Primack, "Bebop Above and Beyond the Fads,"
Sometimes a Saxophone Is Just a Saxophone

Review of
Michael Segell, The Devil’s Horn: The Story of the Saxophone from Noisy Novelty to King of Cool,
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005, 324 pages with index and photos ($25, hardcover)

It is hard to believe that—up to this point—no one has written a single, comprehensive history of the saxophone. Even the famous Grove Dictionary dedicates two separate articles to the instrument. Its primary edition presents a general history of the saxophone’s development and of its usage in Western classical music. The companion Grove Dictionary of Jazz offers a completely different article, focusing on its history in jazz. I am sure that Michael Segell would not be surprised by such a division. Indeed, he is the first author to explore the saxophone’s multiple personalities as well as our contradictory and conflicted responses to them. Segell’s book relishes in this kind of dichotomy: the separation between legit and popular musicians, between genders, and above all, the separation between good and evil. Segell embraces the mystique of his chosen instrument. His history of the saxophone and its impact on modern society leaves no stone unturned. The problem is, once the stone is turned, Segell takes little time to analyze what’s underneath.

In his introduction, Segell strives to establish his credentials. He tells us that he has interviewed hundreds of saxophonists and got his first lesson from Branford Marsalis. Most importantly, Segell is a convert, a member of what he sees as a fraternal order grouping all saxophone players. After all, he has been playing the horn for a full two years. According to the musicians interviewed, playing the saxophone can feel like a religious experience, sexual ecstasy, or devil worshiping. Segell uses these tropes throughout his book. So that we don’t forget his position as an insider, he intersperses his historical narrative with short accounts of his own musical development, his own path toward “saxophonistic” enlightenment...or eternal damnation.

Segell starts his story in 1814 in the small Belgium town of Dinan, where Adolphe Sax was born. From the incipit, Segell charms us with his knack for bringing historical figures to life. His description of Sax’s early misadventures and brush with death paint a vibrant portrait of the inventor while offering a point of origin for the instrument’s magical powers. Segell does not give us much about Sax’s training or the period of experimentation that led to the creation of the first prototypes of saxophones between 1841 and 1842. Instead, Sax’s inventions are presented as a string of inspired creations, the work of an innate Romantic genius. From Belgium, Segell tracks Sax and his invention as they travel to Paris, take over the French military bands, and advance on their path to conquer the rest of the world. Every step of the way, Sax finds powerful allies and equally determined detractors engaged in a Manichean battle around which Segell organizes The Devil’s Horn.

Segell sees the storm of controversies surrounding the reception of the saxophone as intrinsic to the instrument. As French virtuoso Jean-Marie Londeix explains, Part of the job is to reconcile the saxophone’s many inherent contradictions. Why does this instrument, music’s gifted bastard child, arouse such intense feeling among both fans and detractors? How can it be considered profane by some, and sacred by others? By what acoustical legerdemain is this imperfect cone of brass, impaled at one hand by a sliver of cane, able to speak, like a child possessed by a thousand demons, with so many voices, evoking vixen seductiveness, ethereal calm, wrenching sorrow—all within a single musical passage?

It seems that sexuality plays a central part in answering these questions, at least according to Londeix and Segell. The French saxophonist sums it up this way: “It’s the sound of sex.... For me, the saxophone, where it comes from, is close to sex—not the act, but the energy and power” (35). Although Londeix sees the shape of the saxophone as ambivalent—evoking both the curves of a female body and a male erection—Segell’s analysis seems less nuanced. For him, this is clearly a masculine instrument whose primary purpose is to “arouse the female customers” (40). I will return to Segell’s problematic gender views later. Fortunately, the book also offers more engaging insights.

Although Segell makes a special effort to talk about the impact of the saxophone in other countries, The Devil’s Horn primarily focuses on the United States. Segell traces the development of the saxophone in North America from its introduction in nineteenth-century marching bands to its growing popularity as a novelty instrument on the vaudeville circuits, and its gradual conquest of dance bands in the 1920s and early ’30s. Throughout this story, Segell never forgets to contextualize the music, even if only superficially. Once he reaches the ’30s, Segell abandons his diachronic narrative and instead organizes the subsequent chapters around various musical genres. The chapter on jazz is a tour de force and sets the tone for later discussions of R&B and Western classical music. This chapter, entitled “It’s All about Relationships,” zooms through roughly a hundred years of jazz history in just over thirty pages by letting contemporary musicians talk about the masters who influenced them. For example,
Charles McPherson discusses the music of Charlie Parker, and Michael Brecker introduces that of John Coltrane. By the end of the chapter, Segell has managed to hit on every single important historical figure and included a few slightly lesser known players as well. The chapter on R&B follows the same model but also lets a few legends tell their own stories. Segell tells us of his interviews with Illinois Jacquet, whose solo on “Flyin’ Home” literally defined R&B sax playing for generations to come; as well as Plas Johnson, who recorded the Pink Panther theme; David “Farhead” Newman, whose solos graced many Ray Charles recordings; and Tim Ries, who has toured extensively with the Rolling Stones. The opposition and conflicts between the two main schools of Western classical saxophone playing—the French school spearheaded by Marcel Mule and the German school of Sigurd Rascher—are likewise presented through their contemporary representatives, Claude Delangle and John-Edward Kelly, respectively. By organizing these three chapters in this way, Segell not only complicates simple models of historical evolution, he also shows that he understands the importance of lineage and influences for musicians who often learn and establish their credentials by emulating their elders. Furthermore, these chapters help us resist the temptation of drawing simple linear stylistic genealogies. Coleman Hawkins influenced Sonny Rollins, who influenced Joe Lovano; but Joe Lovano also learned directly from Hawkins’s recordings, and Rollins’s innovations had an impact on the older Hawkins. Networks of influences are complex and often reflexive.

The rest of the book randomly hits on other issues relating to Sax’s invention. There is a chapter on the instrument’s acoustic properties approached both from a scientific and a performance point of view. Another chapter introduces François Louis’s aulochrome, a contemporary invention joining two soprano saxes together. There is also a pointless and poorly researched chapter on the physical and mental ailments afflicting sax players, which is balanced by a more successful one presenting the saxophone as a symbol of political resistance, lust, sophistication, or freedom in real life, movies, and advertising.

To this reader, one of the book’s most informative sections dealt with the growth of instrument manufacturing in Elkhart, Indiana, and its impact on music education in the United States. Around the turn of the twentieth century, Charles Gerard Conn—founder of the Conn Instrument Company—and his successor, Carl Greenleaf, understood the importance of developing future musicians and future customers. To this end, they were instrumental in pushing for the creation of public school band programs by negotiating with local school boards, advertising directly to parents, and sponsoring band competitions. Conn also became a major financial supporter of the now renowned Interlochen Summer Music Camp. These efforts paid off and, as Segell points out, American music curriculum became a model for the rest of the world.

Segell concludes with a chapter on the transcendental and prophetic qualities that some players attribute to the saxophone. He quotes Benny Carter, John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, and others who have testified about the instrument’s spiritual powers. As a final demonstration, Segell follows Pentecostal preacher and Gospel musician Vernard Johnson as he visits and performs for the inmates of a Texas penitentiary. Johnson preaches and plays, building up to an ecstatic climax until the prisoners start collapsing one by one around him, “slain in the spirit” (293). The saxophone’s redemptive journey is complete: the devil’s horn has become Gabriel’s horn.

As I stated earlier in this review, this book’s greatest asset is its comprehensiveness. I am hard-pressed to find an issue or an important player that Segell does not mention. The book’s greatest limitations result from its author’s background. Michael Segell is a journalist who has written for the New York Times, Rolling Stone, and Sports Illustrated. He was the author of the column “The Male Mind” for Esquire and is now an editor for the New York Daily News. It is therefore not surprising that his research for this book seems to rely primarily on personal interviews and very little on primary or secondary written sources. The bibliography is a scant three and a half pages, there are no endnotes, and sources are never precisely referenced. Interviews are problematic, especially when the subjects are a group of media-savvy performers who are too often more than happy to tell a journalist what he wants to hear. Without critical acumen or thorough research, one is bound to pass on half-truths and inaccuracies. For example, when altoist John Handy identifies “the vibratory action of an instrument’s metal” as the source of all kinds of medical problems and advocates for musicians to find an instrument that is in tune with both their playing and their bodies, Segell puts it all on the page without offering any reservation (270–73). This sort of metaphysical explanation fits his overall argument better than the fact that repetitive motions and frequent exposure to loud noise often lead musicians to develop tendonitis or hearing loss. In investigating the effect of saxophone playing on the body, Segell apparently never talked to a physical therapist.

Then, there is sex. Segell quotes a 1958 Freudian analysis of saxophone playing that concludes that playing the instrument “can be an unconscious symbol of masturbatory movements and is closely associated with auto-erotic stimulation” (273) or that smearing and bending notes “unconsciously refers to ‘anal and sphincter control’” (274). Segell seems to thrive on this kind of overly sexualized reading. The book is laden with testosterone-filled metaphors such as “McNelly, his big phallic horn dangling between his legs as he walked the bar” or problematic statements.
such as “My own unscientific, completely anecdotal research reveals that the sound of the saxophone touches many women in a very special way” (202). Psychologists have largely rejected Freudian theories, and it may be time for the rest of us to follow their lead. At any rate, Segell’s sexist displays are both uncalled for and inexcusable.

_The Devil’s Horn_ is a vivid exploration of the saxophone’s rich and fascinating history. Unfortunately, the author embraces the instrument’s mystique wholeheartedly and uncritically. If Michael Segell is going to wallow in such a fantasy, he should also remember this paraphrase of Freud’s warning: Sometimes, a saxophone is just a saxophone.

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**The saxophone section of the Purdue University All-American Marching Band, shown here at the 2003 Indy 500 parade in downtown Indianapolis, occasionally invites middle-aged novices, such as the author, second from the left, to march with them.**

Tom Strattman Photo.

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**Inventor of the saxophone, Adolphe Sax was a Romantic visionary who had big plans for the saxophone. Its success, achieved long after he died, exceeded even his most grandiose dreams.**

Mansell/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images.

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**Charlie Parker’s blinding technique and invention aroused intense feelings among his listeners. Some found his playing totally mystifying, others heavenly. Although stalked and eventually overcome by personal demons, Parker was considered a sweetheart of a man. He was always looking after younger players—his “brood,” says Phil Woods. “He wanted to know if you’d eaten that day.”**

AP/Wide World Photos.

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**Lester Young’s sweet sound on the tenor has been revered and emulated by generations of saxophonists. When playing and recording together, “Prez” and Billie Holiday often finished each other’s musical sentences.**

Charles Peterson/Getty Images.
The Canonization of Children’s Literature

Review of

We are no longer surprised that the children’s book section in a typical Barnes and Noble or Borders is filled with toys. Almost all of these are direct product tie-ins: a white cloth mouse wearing a purple tutu accompanies Angelina Ballerina, a locket is shrink-wrapped onto the cover of Disney’s Beauty and the Beast, and a harmonica bulks up How to Make Music. But who would have thought that this marketing strategy began as early as 1744, with the publisher who gave his name to the prestigious American Library Association annual award for best children’s book? John Newbery’s A Little Pretty Pocket-Book, Intended for the Instruction and Amusement of Little Master Tommy and Pretty Miss Polly was sold with a red-and-black pin-cushion for girls and a red-and-black ball for boys. These gender-specific toys, combined with the book’s gilt cover, decorative woodcuts, and moral lessons, sent the message that amusement and instruction could and should be successfully united, and for this, Newbery’s publishing list is seen as a landmark in the history of children’s literature.

Significant cultural-historical context like this is just one of the strengths of The Norton Anthology of Children’s Literature, a most welcome addition to the authoritative Norton series of literary anthologies, and a sign that children’s literature has definitively arrived as an academic subject. For those of us who have followed the resurgence of interest in the field over the past decade, a book like this is an exciting development.

This most recent Norton anthology does not disappoint. It has a clear and inviting organization and a strong apparatus (including informative section introductions and author headnotes). While the earliest work in the anthology dates from 1659 (Comenius’s Orbis Pictus, a sort of illustrated children’s alphabet and encyclopedia), general editor Jack Zipes has chosen, appropriately, to concentrate on the writing produced for children from the late eighteenth century forward, following the widely accepted notion that this period (which includes the work of Newbery, Barbauld, and Edgeworth, and introduces the famous “Little Goody Two-Shoes”) represents the beginning of the mass publication of literature specifically written for and marketed to children. From this general starting point, the text is arranged by form and genre, with selections unfolding chronologically within each section. Categories include fairy tales, animal fables, classical myths, religion, fantasy, science fiction, verse, instructional writing, and picture books. The advantage of this arrangement for the teacher, student, or general reader quickly becomes evident. Comparing generically similar readings as the form and its conventions shift over time becomes nearly irresistible. A reader who starts with Perrault’s “Little Red Riding Hood” (1697), in which both the girl and the grandmother are eaten, is drawn naturally forward to the nineteenth-century version, “The True History of Little Golden-hood,” in which the clever grandmother succeeds as the girl’s protector, and then on to Roald Dahl’s versification of the tale (1982), in which a girl toting a pistol in her knickers ends up wearing a wolfskin coat. Other comparisons are equally compelling: brisk advice on manliness, bodily health, and sexual continence offered by original boy scout Robert Baden-Powell (“Instead of aimless loafing and smutty talks you will find lots to do in the way of hiking and enjoyment of the out-of-door manly activities” [1464]) is just a page-turn away from It’s Perfectly Normal: A Book about Changing Bodies… (1994), whose Bird and Bee cartoon characters guide younger readers through what they might want to know about those bodies: “Sex is about a lot of things—bodies, growing up, families, babies, love, caring, curiosity, feelings, respect, responsibility, biology, and health” (1483). I applaud the Norton editors’ decision to reproduce as many complete longer texts as possible within their nineteen major categories, including a full novel by Edith Nesbit, the “grandmother” of children’s fantasy writing; all of “A Child’s Garden of Verse”; and the twentieth-century Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. Of course, many works resist easy categorization. Is Winnie-the-Pooh really best represented under “Adventure Stories,” alongside Robinson Crusoe, instead of under “Fantasy” with other “stories about animated toys” (556) and animal fantasies such as Wind in the Willows? Given this volume’s arrangement, such questions of genre as applied to children’s works are brought to the fore (and could be profitably discussed in class).

An ambitious, comprehensive project like this one immediately raises questions of the canon, questions of inclusion. (For a
previous discussion of the canon in children’s literature in *Belles Lettres*, see May/June 2003.) The Norton volume addresses this in several ways. The editors announce in their subtitle that they are limiting the scope of this anthology to “The Traditions in English.” (A “world literature” anthology of children’s texts, exclusive of English, would make an excellent companion volume.) At the same time, the editors have made sensible exceptions throughout in order to include translations of selected authors from non-English speaking countries, “especially when certain works have played a pivotal role in the development of a genre” (xxiii). The carefully plural “Traditions” of the subtitle is supported by the editors’ inclusion of authors from Canada (L. M. Montgomery), the Caribbean (Grace Nichols), and New Zealand (Ruth Park). As for creating a canon of individual texts within these traditions, Norton finesses the problem, as is often the case with their anthologies, by the sheer size of the volume. With 2,471 pages, the Norton text can offer the reader the reassurance of the solidly canonical—Beatrice Potter, Lewis Carroll, Maurice Sendak—along with the pleasure of discovery that comes with encountering less familiar authors. The Norton editors are well aware that the canon of children’s literature has become culturally broader since its emergence in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when it was almost exclusively white, Christian, middle-to-upper class, and conservative in its gender ideology, and they note that the “critical perspectives” that shaped their selections have “like those of scholars in other literary fields...been greatly influenced by the research and criticism rooted in the feminist and multicultural movements” (xxxiv). Readers will see the results in the twentieth-century selections, which include authors and illustrators like Alma Flor Ada, Nikki Grimes, Lindsay Namioka, Jerry Pinkney, and Laurence Yep. In the end, however, despite the editors’ care and their efforts at broad inclusion, any individual reader will note and lament the omission of more than one personal favorite. My own is twentieth-century author Elizabeth Enright, whose warm characterization of siblings (Randy, Rush, Oliver, and Mona) made her World War II-era *The Four-Story Mistake* a novel I read and re-read as a child, and whose skill as a prose stylist I came to appreciate only as an adult. More significant is the absence of any writing by C. S. Lewis—but this may, perhaps, be attributable to the difficulty of obtaining the necessary permission, always a consideration when an anthology is being assembled. While the editors mention such difficulties in their preface, no claims are made with regard to any specific text; thus a reader is left in doubt when considering every omission: was it the result of an editorial decision about the work’s significance (or lack thereof) or does it reflect the exigencies of pricing and permissions? The uncertainty is disappointing in one sense: academic readers always know to look the direction of a snub, if there is one—did the editors overlook the author, or did the author (or the author’s heirs) turn down the editors? In the case of J. K. Rowling and the Harry Potter books, the absence of both text and any extended account of the phenomenon certainly fits with the general editor’s well-known lack of enthusiasm for the boy wizard, evident in *Stick and Stones: The Troublesome Success of Children’s Literature from Slovenly Peter to Harry Potter* (Zipes, 2001).

Framing the individual selections, the critical and editorial apparatus of this volume will be of great value to instructors, students, and general readers wanting an overview of children’s literature. In the section introductions and author headnotes, the Norton editors do what Norton anthologies have done so well for decades: they offer sound generalizations; highlight recurring themes, key figures, and landmark moments in the history of the genre under study; and place individual texts and authors into their historical periods. In discussing this text’s central subject matter, the Norton editors are at pains to emphasize that much of what they include, especially from the earlier periods, was not originally written for children (*Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver’s Travels*, and many fairy tales fall into this category). They also consistently relate developments in children’s literature to developments in the adult culture, attempting to break down the notion of a highly separate “children’s sphere.” One such development is, very simply, the spread of literacy and the increasing importance of literacy in the adult world. Appropriately, then, the volume begins with three sections devoted to general literacy (“Alphabets,” “Chapbooks,” and “Primers and Readers”), reminding us that in order for literature for children to arise, children must become readers and be seen as an audience (and subsequently as a market). The texts in these sections, together with the introductions, provide an excellent concise history of children’s literature to developments in the genre.

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*Hiernich Hoffman (1809-1894)*

*From Struwwelpeter* (Germany, 1845)

*Struwwelpeter* is the classic parody of the cautionary tale that dominated children’s books in the first half of the nineteenth century; it has appeared in many hundreds of editions and has had many imitators. Although intended to amuse by exaggerating and ridiculing the extreme punishments threatened by the religious writers of the day, it demonstrates the power of the picture book to frighten, and many of the retributive figures, such as the scissor-man who cuts off sucked thumbs, became features of nightmare. Together with Edward Lear’s *A Book of Nonsense* (1846), *Struwwelpeter* set a fashion for crude, humorous drawings. Hoffmann’s illustrations were often redrawn; this English version is typical of many.
writing instruction, moving from the early readers that emphasized religious instruction (“In Adams fall/We sinned all” The Childers Guide, 1667) to the fully secular Dick and Jane of the 1950s and giving plenty of interesting resource material for those interested in the phonics/whole language debate. Other topics covered include the role of dissenting academies, the factory model of education (familiar to many of us from Dickens’s Hard Times), and the emergence of the notion of the mother as primary pedagogue. The other section introductions are equally strong, although once again there are omissions, such as the absence of any substantial discussion of the Stratemeyer Syndicate, a company founded by Edward Stratemeyer that dominated early twentieth-century children's publishing, producing long-lived popular favorites such as Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys. While he and his books are mentioned in passing (in a sentence or two at most), I did not find any account of his syndicate’s influence on popular perceptions of children's literature, a puzzling oversight given the ways in which Stratemeyer might seem to be a twentieth-century analogue to John Newbery, whose innovations and marketing savvy are (rightly) given full treatment in this volume.

Because it is dedicated to texts produced for children, this Norton anthology has something that the others don’t: thirty-two full-color pages in the middle of the book. It also offers eight pages of black-and-white illustrations, a complete picture-book (Macaulay’s apocalyptic BAAA, a striking reconceptualization of the animal fable), and selections from comic strips. This emphasis on the image is entirely appropriate, given the central importance of pictures of all kinds within the history of children's literature. Most adults have a well-stocked repository of these images, whose power is evidenced by the seemingly disproportionate thrill felt by the viewer when illustrations familiar from childhood are unexpectedly reencountered. The pictures included in the Norton text range from the iconic Strewelpeter, whose untidy habits have left him with grotesquely overgrown fingernails and hair (Slovenly Peter, 1845) to the idyllic pastorals of Kate Greenaway (1879) and Janet Ahlberg (1979). Three of the illustrations focus on depictions of race; readers will appreciate the juxtaposition of the original Little Black Sambo (1899) with Jerry Pinkney’s late twentieth-century revision. The illustrations as a whole seem guaranteed to inspire supplementation by both teacher and student in a classroom setting. Students are sure to have illustrations that they are eager to bring in for comparison, and the Norton’s introduction to the “Picture Book” section should help to keep the discussion grounded and productive.

In the end, who will want to own this volume? Like its counterparts, of course, the Norton Anthology of Children’s Literature is primarily for college students and their instructors. This audience is reflected in the supplementary material available online, which offers instructors a dozen sample syllabi for courses that could be taught using the volume: Diversity and Difference, From the Garden to the Street, Constructing Childhood and Home, and others. Even instructors who wouldn’t consider basing an entire course on a Norton template (which would include most instructors I know) may well find the proposed syllabi useful in suggesting units that might be adopted and adapted within a broader course. The student support online is notable mostly for a series of web links that align with the anthology’s nineteen major genre headings. Strikingly uneven in quality, the links consist largely of author biographies and electronic texts. While a student who follows the link to L. Frank Baum’s biography will have to put up with the minor annoyance of banner ads framing the relevant information, some sites are entirely commercial: the Milne link takes the student to the Pooh Corner gift shop, where Christopher Robin and his friends appear on cross-stitch patterns and mugs, and as Disney ornaments or Spode collectibles. Still, a number of the sites are undoubtedly useful. Students who read Nesbit’s Phoenix and the Carpet, for example, may be assigned to read an online chapter of the same author’s The Treasure Seekers in order to compare the first-person child narrator of the latter with the omniscient adult narrator of the former. Serious academic sites, like the E-text Center of the University of Virginia, offer the advantages of a searchable text (Robinson Crusoe is one) with a minimum of distractions. As someone teaching a children’s literature course next semester, I plan to order the Norton Anthology of Children’s Literature, and I look forward to taking advantage of the rich resources it offers.

But the audience for the anthology should be broader than this: instructors who teach children’s studies courses in various disciplines will want a copy of this volume for themselves, as a reference or as a source of occasional supplementary material. Anyone interested in the history of children’s literature will find the volume valuable, including those who write or hope to write works for children. While the Norton Anthology of Children’s Literature won’t replace a shelf full of children’s books, it will help any reader better understand the ones already on the shelf at home (and perhaps even those tie-in toys at the bookstore).

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The End of Misfortune as We Knew It

Given that *The End* is the final book in *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, the wildly successful middle-grade stories by Lemony Snicket (a.k.a., Daniel Handler), readers might reasonably expect that the series’ many mysteries will be resolved in it. I’m sorry to say they will be disappointed. While some questions are answered and some answers hinted at, most are not. What is given, however, more than makes up for what is not, and I found the book to be a truly satisfying read.

For the adults out there unfamiliar with it, *A Series of Unfortunate Events* features the three plucky Baudelaire siblings: Violet (age fourteen when the series begins), Klaus (age twelve), and Sunny, their baby sister. After being orphaned at the beginning of *The Bad Beginning*, things go from bad to worse for the Baudelaires: they are sent to live with the evil Count Olaf, a violent and petulant man who is after the orphans’ inheritance and plans to kill them as soon as he gets it (and who is either a third cousin four times removed or a fourth cousin three times removed). Things stay worse for thirteen books.

As a parody of Victorian novels, the series has a dark humor that combines evil villains with ridiculous situations and a love of language and wordplay. Throughout the books, Lemony Snicket, the knowing author/narrator, offers asides and definitions, literary allusions, and repeated injunctions for the reader to put the book down and do something more pleasant. He dwells so much in the text that he acts as another character (a character with a specific relationship to the Baudelaires, actually).

Beyond mere parodies though, the books feature main characters who are likeable and who develop over time. As the orphans go from one guardian to another, always pursued by Count Olaf, they use their wits and specific skills to find safety—Violet invents things, Klaus researches, and Sunny, who likes to bite, becomes a chef as she matures. They also find allies in the fight against evil and injustice. In each book the siblings search for answers to their questions about their parents’ death. The plots create more questions than answers, though, as the orphans discover a web of strange connections among the characters and find out that their parents’ lives were more complicated than they had imagined.

As *The End* begins, we find the Baudelaires literally in the same boat (or, as Sunny says, “equivalent flotilla”) with Count Olaf. The group is stranded at sea and, because of his powerlessness, Count Olaf comes across as more of a nuisance than a real threat. He is almost endearing in his demand that the siblings row to the nearest luxury car dealership.

When a storm washes the boat up onto a coastal shelf, the group meets Friday, a young girl who lives on the shelf’s nearby island. The island’s colony of peaceful castaways is kind to those who are also kind and has no use for those who are not. Friday quickly sizes up Count Olaf and decides not to take him in.

For the first time, the orphans have found a place where Olaf cannot hurt them. The colony’s inhabitants live a simple life, apparently free from strife, and the orphans begin to think they are finally in “a safe place, far from the treachery of the world.”

As they learn of the colony’s strict customs, however, the Baudelaires wonder if there might not be such a thing as too much safety. Friday explains that the islanders wear white robes, live in tents, and drink only coconut cordial. Other than fishing and making ceviche, their only occupation is to collect everything...
that washes up on the coastal shelf. Instead of keeping and using what they find, the people of the island show them to their facilitator Ishmael who calmly but forcefully “suggests” that the junk be taken away to the far side of the island where it won’t harm anyone.

Before the Baudelaires can make their minds up about the island, the plot thickens (to use a phrase Snicket would define as “hackneyed”) and the siblings learn that the island is not nearly as safe as it had first appeared and Ishmael not nearly as harmless.

Throughout the series, the author combines outrageous events not bound by strict reality with very real peril and imperfection. Adults in these books, and I’m talking about the good guys, really do fail to keep their wards safe; they really do misunderstand and disappoint. They are confused and, well, human. One after another, they fail to recognize Count Olaf, while the children immediately see through his pathetic disguises.

The combination is jarring and I found myself feeling uncomfortable at times while reading. In an imagined world where almost anything can happen (from a hotel organized according to the Dewey Decimal system to a self-sustaining hot air mobile home), it’s especially disconcerting to have reality in the form of adults who can’t protect children. It’s the genius of these books. This bit of stark reality, along with the growing moral ambiguity the orphans’ experience, makes the series more complicated and interesting than it might be otherwise.

Over the course of the series, as the orphans encounter more and more adults up to no good, they must devise drastic measures to escape from harm, and the line between right and wrong becomes blurrier for them. If, as in *The Penultimate Peril*, burning down a building will prevent everyone in it from becoming infected with a deadly fungus, is it better to burn down the building? What if you are holding the harpoon gun that accidentally goes off and kills a friend? What if your arch nemesis turns out to also be an orphan who has experienced hardship?

In *The End*, the children grapple with questions like whether true safety is ever achievable and at what price. Is it better to escape from the world, or to face it in all its imperfections? Count Olaf appears as a slightly more sympathetic character, becoming the voice of reality when he tells the siblings, “Nowhere in the world is safe.”

The moral ambiguity the orphans experience points them toward adulthood. And the book comes down on the side of living in the world, embracing it with all its disappointments and even, yes, evil. *The End* is also a beginning—complete with a snake and an apple, a death and a birth. Even if the knots are not all unraveled and young readers throw down the book in disappointment, keep it around the house. These books bear re-reading.

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1 Among the many over-the-top allusions for adults are the names Sunny and Klaus, referring to Claus Von Bulow and his wife, Martha, whose nickname was Sunny. Von Bulow was tried and acquitted of attempting to murder his wife in 1980. *Reversal of Fortune*, a film made about the case and based on Alan Dershowitz’s book, was released to considerable acclaim in 1990.
The year is 1947. The film is eight years old. The child is five years old. The theater is dark. Out of the darkness loom two masks, comic and tragic. The child hides her face. These masks have raided her dreams, but they are manageable, for she has now seen them periodically since her mother brought her along on the family supply trips to Birmingham from the Alabama pine woods where they live. After news and cartoons, the movie begins. There is a tornado in Kansas. Fine. The child knows about tornados. Go to the basement. Then a little dog is seized by a malevolent woman and wheeled away on her bicycle. The child runs sobbing to the lobby. For her, the Lion, the Scarecrow, and the Tin Man never appear. For her, the movie is over. Raised with the reality of nature, she does not need a movie to show her what happens to vulnerable little animals.

You see before you that child grown old, an artifact of World War II, born into an oral world of rural southern storytelling, radio narrative, hours of reading alone or aloud with family, and home schooling on an old wooden desk in the kitchen because the local schools—which had no indoor bathrooms—let out half the year for picking cotton. Imagine such a childhood. No television, PlayStation, Nintendo, Xbox, video games; no 99 channels on cable, video-taped movies, no surround sound, cell phones, personal computers, Internet, or Internet chat. Given this background, and the fact that I am not a film critic, what can I offer to a conference on children’s films? The answer is a consideration of silence and space, two elements that I believe are important in all stories that relate specifically to the adaptation of children’s books into film, and that have crucial implications for our creative lives. Let me explain.

I have spent a lifetime engaged with stories—adults’, children’s, formal, informal, oral, print, and electronic—from fireplace to cyberspace. In particular, since 1964, I have studied children’s books, storytelling, and folktales; have written books for children and adults; have taught children and adults; and have raised a family. My observations are based on these experiences. [1]

My first scholarly concern with adaptation was based on studies of the ways stories move between the oral and print traditions, especially fairy tales such as “Hansel and Gretel” [2], “Cinderella” [3], and “Beauty and the Beast” [4]. My interest in the adaptation of stories into films for children began in the early 1980s when I was invited by the Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation to consult on some animated films based on folktales. “Hansel and Gretel” was the pilot project, and when I objected to the script’s conflation of the fairy-tale parents’ two attempts to abandon the children, I was told that there wasn’t enough time for both ventures into the forest. However, when I watched the film later, there did seem to be time for an extended chase scene of Gretel pursued by the witch around and around and around and around and around and around the oven. After several more disagreements, I withdrew my name from the acknowledgments, but this experience led to a later insight, which I quote from my article entitled “Disney Revisited, or, Jiminy Cricket, It’s Musty Down Here!”

Without getting bogged down in a textual analysis based on a score of quotations from books and filmscripts, we see over and over that Disney and company have given society not only what it will pay for, but also what it wants. The 1950 hit Cinderella spends as much time on Lucifer the cat chasing Gus and the other mice as it does on the main characters. Even Cinderella’s return from the ball turns into a chase scene, not just the prince following her down a flight of stairs, but a wild pursuit of the king’s horsemen thundering after her carriage. This device for escalating suspense is common to most of the animated features. Disney films have turned the folkloric journey into a chase. What’s added? Speed and competition, both key characteristics of our society. All you have to do is look at stories mythologized on television and you’ll know how much our culture reverberates to chase scenes. Journeys of westward expansion turn into cowboy and Indian chase scenes; stories of crime and punishment turn into cops and robbers chase scenes. Beauty and the Beast, a television series that started with some tonal adherence to the main characters’ slow-paced journeys of development, ended as a chase between Beast and the villain who stole his son—Beauty is murdered after giving birth. Disney’s Beauty and the Beast [5] is full of chase scenes instead of the journeys between castle and home that characterized Beauty’s earlier journey of maturation. (“Disney Revisited,” 144)

What’s lost in all this frenetic activity is a sense of structure, a loss that can lead children, I believe, to a case of arrested development in the narrative stage that Arthur Applebee in A Child’s
Concept of Story called “heaps,” or stories containing no obvious means of organization. In “heaps,” one sentence seems to be freely associated with the next, with nothing tying them together. We’ve all heard children tell “heaps.” We aim for a child to move on to sequences, chains, and coherent narrative with central characters, complementary relations, and sustained action leading to logical consequences. We model coherent narration with the simplest of nursery rhymes from Mother Goose [6]. For example:

- **Tom, Tom, the Piper’s Son**
- **Stole a Pig and away he run**
- **The pig was eat and Tom was beat**
- **And Tom went crying down the street.**

- **It’s Crime and Punishment** in four lines. Or think of the cause-and-effect patterns modeled by a lullaby such as “Hush Little Baby” [7].

- **Hush Little Baby don’t say a word**
- **Daddy’s going to buy you a mockingbird.**
- **If that mockingbird don’t sing**
- **Mama’s going to buy you a diamond ring.**
- **If that diamond ring is brass**
- **Daddy’s going to buy you a looking glass.**
- **If that looking glass gets broke**
- **Mama’s going to buy you a billy goat.**
- **If that billy goat won’t pull**
- **Daddy’s going to buy you a cart and bull.**
- **If that cart and bull fall over**
- **Mama’s going to buy you a doggie named Rover.**
- **If that doggie named Rover don’t bark**
- **Daddy’s going to buy you a horse and cart.**
- **If that horse and cart fall down**
- **You’ll still be the prettiest little baby in town.**

Folk and fairy tales are characterized by a pattern of spare action with plenty of space for listeners, readers, and viewers to fill in their own specific details. These elemental patterns are identified as motifs or tale types in the structural study of folklore; they are what I call in my courses on storytelling “the bones of story.” This term originated when I was lecturing in a speech and hearing class—ing in other times, places, and formats. The real question is, What happens to the bones of the story, that they insert themselves into the textual spaces that comprise context, including the individual teller’s style, the audience’s response, the cultural milieu, the specific occasion, and so on. Of course, this assumes a knowledge of and respect for both the basic elements and the sources of the story.

Every story has bones—a plot subject to interpretive reimagining in other times, places, and formats. The real question is, What happens to the spaces between the bones? Michael Radford’s 2005 film Merchant of Venice adheres faithfully to Shakespeare’s plot, but one of the most moving moments involves two final, wordless images: of Antonio staring out the window into a life without love, and of Jessica watching fishermen spear their catch as her father has been figuratively speared. It is this silent scene that projects her loss and loneliness most eloquently. And it is this kind of space that is rare in films for children. Films based on books and targeted at young people generally allow less silence and space than those targeted at adults. One of the changes that most affects the textual rhythm and pace of film transformations of fantasies such as Lord of the Rings is the elimination of the books’ modulated spaces of rest and retreat [8] between climactic battle scenes, so that the hero’s journey becomes almost a prolonged war [9]. This is partly due to a compression of epic length. Reading requires many more hours than would be viable for viewing and allows time between sessions for absorption and contemplation of narrative. The issue of reduction in the case of long novels—or extension in the case of picture books—is always a challenge for film adaptations. Apparently, however, it is also assumed that young people will not want to sit around while no exciting action happens on screen. Unfortunately, this becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. We have created a juvenile audience with hyperactive expectations, often involving a range of violence from slapstick to sensational.

And if boys want fighting, girls obviously want love! In films such as Tuck Everlasting, based on Natalie Babbitt’s classic [10, 11], or the Hallmark’s Hall of Fame television production of Patricia MacLachlan’s fifty-eight-page story Sarah Plain and Tall [12, 13], romance escalates to heighten interest, as if matters of life, death, and abandonment were not enough to hold anyone’s attention through the lyrical spaces that grace both books. The occasional scene where the films do reflect the books’ quiet spaces deepen the stories significantly—when Tuck, for instance, rows Winnie across the quiet pond for their crucial conversation about the dangerous water of everlasting life. (The television analogy of pace issues might be the difference between Sesame Street and Mr. Rogers’ Neighborhood, both good programs but we very much needed the second to pace down the first.)

Drama in good juvenile novels often slips into cinematic melodrama. In adapting Ella Enchanted [14], a lively fictionalization of Cinderella that does in fact already feature action and romance, the film [15] introduces a villainous uncle who has murdered his brother the king and who, with the help of a predictably evil but stupid snake, plots to assassinate the prince. Exaggeration, too, frequently replaces nuance and subtlety in film adaptations of children’s books. Must the dog in the movie Because of Winn Dixie actually flash a computer-generated smile? Can we not imagine the feature that is suggested in Kate DiCamillo’s realistic text [16]? This is not, after all, a story in which animals talk, like the film version of Dick King-Smith’s fantasy Babe the Gallant Pig [17], a film [18] that manages to combine real animals and computerized features without becoming cutesy. Credibility walks a fine line.

Even more than novels, children’s picture books that are extended to full-length films can suffer acutely from the transfer of genres, because picture books, like poetry and folktales, depend on implication, suggestion, and highly selective detail in both text and art. In an earlier study of the twentieth-century canon of classic children’s picture books, I found that old favorites such as The Tale of Peter Rabbit, Millions of Cats, The Story of Ferdinand, Make Way for Ducklings, Harold and the Purple Crayon, The Snowy Day, Swimmy, Where the Wild Things Are, Brown Bear, Brown Bear, Frog and Toad Are Friends, Nana Upstairs & Nana Downstairs, George and Martha, Freight Train, Where’s Spot?, Ten, Nine, Eight, Max’s Breakfast, and many others depend on silence and space as much as on word and object. Most recently, the 2005 Caldecott Medal
book, *Kitten’s First Full Moon* by Kevin Henkes [19, 20], reflects folkloric rhythms of sound and space. Reader and listener will fill in those spaces with projection, discussion, questions, answers, explanations, adjustment of tone and pace, etc. The interactivity of the experience in print format is displaced by frenetic activity without pause in picture-book films such as *Jumanji* [21, 22], *Cat in the Hat*, and even (though less so) in *Shrek*.

Are there certain children’s books that translate better than others? That’s a question worth investigating with a focus on which literary elements best lend themselves to film translation, and on the quality of films that recreate a book into a new art form; that tell a story with respect for the bones and the space between the bones; that balance retention and invention in the best tradition of dynamic art forms. *Holes* [23, 24], based on Louis Sachar’s award-winning novel, is a film that does not betray the book’s subtle balance of action and reflection. Nor does it become strictly duplicative, in the vein of literal facsimile that is characteristic of the *Harry Potter* movies [25, 26]. Rather, *Holes* transforms one work of art into another. The flashbacks indicated by spaces in the book are, in the film, skillfully rendered through fadeouts that clarify transitions between present and past events but at the same time add a striking visual dimension. The movie *Whale Rider* [27] achieves an even better balance than the book, which does not meet the standards of literary credibility set by the best fantasy literature for children. The filmic spaces devoted to underwater pans of the ancient whale are much more powerful than the rather affected descriptions in the book.

Of course it is not fair to compare “good” books with “bad” movies, or vice versa. There’s certainly a tension between high-quality and mass-market potboilers in both books and films for children, which is a subject too large for this discussion. Moreover, some of the problems with film adaptation are a matter of historical development. Literature for children is older, has a longer tradition of critical evaluation, and differs vastly in aspects of production, distribution, and financial risk and gain. Crossover audience is another factor, and though many children’s books identify themselves for all ages, and many films advertise themselves for the entire family, genuine and enduring multilevel appeal is usually confined to only the finest of both art forms.

In relation to all this complexity, my emphasis here is limited to the specific importance of considering broadly defined space as a valuable element in assessing both books and film for children. There are many ways to translate space from book to film. Instead of adding superfluous plot elements to what is essentially an extended literary portrait, the film version of *Harriet the Spy* [28, 29] uses rhythmic music to vary pace, modify tone, and effect passage of time. In another example, the film version of the Newbery Medal book *Shiloh* reflects author Phyllis Naylor’s development of setting [30] through its focus on landscapes [31]. Neither *Harriet the Spy* nor *Shiloh* relies on frenetic clutter, and neither loses its appeal for allowing narrative space.

Why bother with this question of space? I believe that a quest for space and even silence in all our lives—children’s and adults’—is critical. We need to find creative space in our information-besieged lives, which teem with relentless sounds of phones, television, radio, voice mail, and other forms of demanding audio com-
munication, along with a crowded vista of constant email and web work, the effects of which generate many research questions. What, for instance, constitutes a pause online? How do we delineate in a virtual environment the all-important silences that convey suspense, emphasis, and humorous pacing? Somehow we must reappropriate those silences. Whether we’re battered by Saturday morning cartoons or caught in the crossfire of two airline travelers’ loud but uninteresting cell-phone conversations, we—of all ages—need space to think and be. One place we can begin to consider the need for space is in the relationship between print and film formats for children—in our critical evaluation and consumption of those films in the company of children.

I’ll close with several stories related to the process of creating my own children’s books—every story has a story, and the research for much writing takes place in inner space. The first two short stories I wrote for The Canine Connection [32] were “The Drive” and “Nameless Creek,” both products of long, lonely car trips where thinking and imagining had room to flourish; the other stories grew in the space created by the first two and generated a whole collection. I wrote Seven Brave Women [33] after a lifetime of listening to my mother tell stories about the heroic women in our family. The first step in preserving family stories, by the way, is making time for telling and listening, both of which require a certain amount of silence and creative space in our lives. When my mother fell, broke her hip, and began a downward spiral of thinking and imagining had room to flourish; the other stories I wrote for it. I wrote that scene down, and then wrote every day afterward just to see what would happen next. A blank computer screen or piece of paper offers creative space. Soon, a young girl had accidentally turned her brother into a pig and was finding it necessary but not easy to make him human again.

Would I like to see Wishes, Kisses, and Pigs made into a film? You bet! But I’d want that film to reflect the real magic of the story, not besiege and ultimately shorten children’s attention spans through artificial overstimulation. As one of the characters says at the end of the book, “nature’s magical and magic’s natural.” We can count on the power of a good story when we give it space to unfold and resonate.

Images Shown
1. Choosing Books for Children cover (Rosemary Wells) for Hearn book
2. Hansel and Gretel book cover (Anthony Browne)
3. Cinderella book cover (Nanny Hogrogian)
4. Beauty and the Beast cover (Mercer Mayer) for Hearn book
5. Beauty and the Beast video cover (Disney)
6. Mother Goose book cover (Wells)
7. “Hush Little Baby” page (Aliki)
8. Lord of the Rings (J. R. R. Tolkien) book cover
9. Lord of the Rings DVD cover
10. Tuck Everlasting (Natalie Babbitt) book cover
11. Tuck Everlasting DVD cover
12. Sarah Plain and Tall (Patricia MacLaughlan) book cover
13. Sarah Plain and Tall videotape cover
14. Ella Enchanted (Gail Carson Levine) book cover
15. Ella Enchanted DVD cover
16. Winn Dixie (Kate DiCamillo) book cover
17. Babe the Gallant Pig (Dick King-Smith) book cover
18. Babe videotape cover
19. Kitten’s First Full Moon cover (Kevin Henkes)
20. Kitten’s First Full Moon inside page
22. Jumanji DVD cover
23. Holes (Louis Sachar) book cover
24. Holes DVD cover
25. Harry Potter (J.K. Rowling) book cover
26. Harry Potter DVD cover
27. Whale Rider (Witi Ihimaera) DVD cover
28. Harriet the Spy (Louise Fitzhugh) book cover
29. Harriet the Spy DVD cover
30. Shiloh (Phyllis Reynolds Naylor) book cover
31. Shiloh DVD cover
32. Canine Connection (Betsy Hearne) book cover
33. Seven Brave Women (Betsy Hearne) book cover
34. Wishes, Kisses, and Pigs (Betsy Hearne) book cover

References
The ideas in this paper were developed though a long period of time and many publications, the most relevant of which are listed below.


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