



Caxtonian

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Balzac's Novels and Plays Recalled on his 200th Anniversary

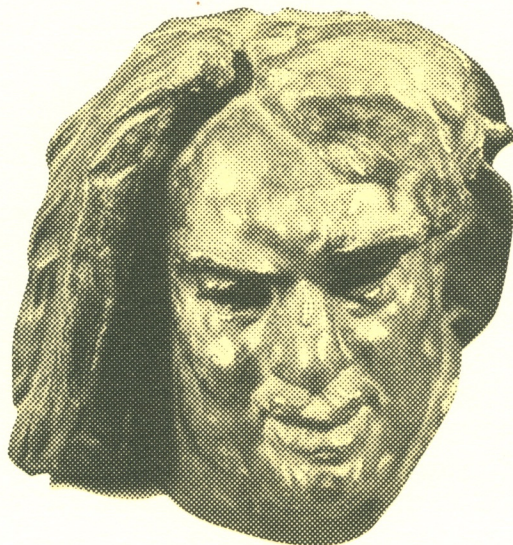
By Pierre Ferrand

I have been pricing foreign language books for the annual Newberry Library Book Fair for a number of years. Last May, it was with special pleasure that I found among the books donated a first edition in book form of Honore de Balzac's most successful play, *Mercadet Ou Le Faiseur*. It was almost exactly on the 200th anniversary of Balzac's birth, which occurred in Tours on May 20, 1799.

Most literate people have heard of Balzac's *Comedie Humaine* (Human Comedy) — over 100 novels and stories he wrote over a period of some two decades. The extant titles constitute about two-thirds of the fiction series he had planned. The chief subject of the *Comedie Humaine* is life in France in every strata of society during the first half of the 19th Century, though there are also several notable tales of the 1790s, during and after the French Revolution. Also, some stories of the 16th and 17th Centuries, and a very remarkable short novel, whose hero is none other than Dante, the author of *The Divine Comedy*.

There are some 2,000 characters in his novels and tales. Most of these have so much individuality that their lives and careers can and have been chronicled in special "Balzac dictionaries." A number of them reappear again and again in his novels and tales. They include Vautrin, the criminal who eventually becomes head of the French police (based on the actual career of Vidocq, personally known to Balzac), also, Eugene de Rastignac, the naive young man arriving from the French provinces to conquer Paris, who eventually becomes the French Minister of the Interior.

Balzac also wrote 30 "Contes Drolatiques" — slight tales in the language of Rabelais. Its illustrations by Gustave Doré, first published 1855, are considered that artist's masterpiece. Essays on many subjects, including newspaper articles and reviews, are also part



Bronze bust (6^{3/4} inches high) of Balzac by Auguste Rodin in the Special Collections of Northwestern University Library, Evanston, IL, through whose courtesy it is used. The Balzac signature above, and the Edna St. Vincent Millay signature on Page 3 are from correspondence in the Newberry Library, through whose courtesy they are used.

of his output. Some of them, such as a "Treatise on Modern Pick-Me-Ups," dealing with coffee (to which he was addicted), as well as tobacco and liquor (for which he did not care), are still republished in handsome cheap editions in France today. He was one of the first to recognize the genius of Stendhal in an enthusiastic account of *The Charterhouse of Parma*. His abundant correspondence (some 2,000 of his letters, often fascinating, are extant) has also been published in many volumes.

Before issuing novels under his own name, Balzac had, over a period of seven years, written eight complete novels under pseudonyms. These are being republished this year in France in a convenient and well-edited, two-volume Bicentennial collection (Editions

Bouquins). These novels are not without interest. I have donated my (1878) edition of one of the novels included in it to the Book Fair. It is not a first edition, nor a significant one from the bibliographical point of view, though it is relatively rare.

I have been a Balzac enthusiast since the 1930s. As a teenager in France, I had great fun walking through Paris and trying to identify the haunts of the many Balzac heroes who lived in the French capital. Many of the sites described by the novelist have disappeared, of course, but a number of them are still identifiable. I was intrigued by Balzac's approach to the French capital, which he described as a jungle. He developed this analogy on the basis of his reading of James Fenimore Cooper, whose tales of Indians had fascinated him. I also remember the time, in the 1930s, when the powerful statue of Balzac by Auguste Rodin was

finally placed as a monument to the writer on boulevard Raspail, ending nearly four decades of controversy. (A number of stages of Rodin's struggles with the theme can be studied in the Rodin Museum.)

There is also a fine Balzac Museum along a steep hill in the fashionable 16th arrondissement, which originally had separate hidden exits permitting the writer to escape his creditors. Balzac, though he earned substantial sums from his Herculean efforts as a writer, was deeply in debt for most of his life, since he spent much more than he earned. He loved collecting books, antiques and fine furniture, and he was over-optimistic about his earning capacity.

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Musings...

The name of poet Edna St. Vincent Millay is in near-perfect dactylic rhythm, the metrical unit used widely in classical verse and drama. The music of her name is fitting, for she found inspiration from the classics in form and thought for her life and writing.

Her best writing, particularly her sonnet sequences in *Fatal Interview* (1931) and *Wine from These Grapes* (1934), as well as her dramatic and operatic lyrics, place her at the forefront of American letters, past and present. In 1923 Millay became the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for *A Few Figs from Thistles* (1922). Thomas Hardy observed that America's two greatest gifts to the 1920s were innovations in architecture and Edna St. Vincent Millay. In 1959 Max Eastman said that her "Epitaph for the Race of Man" was "the only poem in the language since Milton that [could be] compared in mental boldness with Dante and Lucretius." Time will not diminish Millay's stature in our culture. Only neglect can accomplish that.

Her first great poem, "Renascence," always comes to mind when I hear of vast human catastrophes. So this poem moved from the fringes to the forefront of my mind when I heard of the recent earthquake in Turkey, an event now said to have claimed in excess of 15,000 lives. I found my collection of Millay's poems and reread "Renascence."

A poem of remarkable lyric beauty, "Renascence" remains my favorite Millay poem. It was her first success and brought her fame that lasted a lifetime. Begun when she was 17 years old, it was completed in her 18th year while a student at Vassar College. It was anthologized in *The Lyric Year* (1912). The poem holds the gentle simplicity of youth as it captures the urgent, universal experience of rebirth.

The 214-line poem begins with a minimalist's view of the world. The narrator is confined in vision to a world so small she could lie on the ground and, reaching forth her hand, touch the sky: "*The sky, I thought, is not so grand; I 'most could touch it with my hand!*" She did indeed reach out and touch the sky. She screamed in her success, and "*Infinity/ Came down and settled over me,*" With the coming of Infinity, she awakened to an ultimate knowledge of the human circumstance: "*I saw and heard and knew at last/The How and Why of all things, past/And present, and forevermore.*"

The coming of knowledge brought to her the full awareness of a suffering humanity: "*And felt fierce fire/About a thousand people crawl;/Perished with each, — then mourned for all!*" Through the suffering of humankind borne by the narrator beyond her capacity to cope, she craved death, "*but could not die.*" The weight of the world's anguish became so heavy she began sinking: "*Into the earth I sank til I/Full six feet under ground did lie,*" and she found a new home in a grave with full consciousness of her surroundings. Here she recognized the grandness of our earth's minutia — the rain, the grass, the blossoms, the changing colors of the seasons. "*O God, I cried, give me new birth,/And put me back upon the earth!*" Her prayer answered, she returned to earth, her personal renascence achieved. She knew henceforth "*The world stands out on either side/No wider than the heart is wide.*" The poem is a dramatic expression of a religious ideal that has been a part of our literature from Jonathan Edwards to Ralph Ellison and beyond.

There is a certain dialectic quality between literature and life, which culminates, to use Millay's words from another poem, in "*that unconscious faith.*" It is the role of art, or so I have found, to be a constant companion, urging a consciousness toward these truths.

Robert Cotner
Editor

Edna St. Vincent Millay: American Poet — Renaissance Woman

Chronology of Books by Edna St. Vincent Millay 1892-1950

Poetry

- Renascence and Other Poems*. Mitchell Kennerly, 1917.
- A Few Figs from Thistles*. Frank Shay, 1920. (Enlarged editions, 1921, 1922)
- Second April*. Mitchell Kennerly, 1921. (All of the above were reissued by Harper & Brothers after 1923.)
- The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems*. Harper & Brothers, 1923.
- The Buck in the Snow*. Harper & Brothers, 1928.
- Edna St. Vincent Millay's Poems Selected for Young People*. Harper & Brothers, 1929.
- Fatal Interview*. Harper & Brothers, 1931.
- Wine from These Grapes*. Harper & Brothers, 1934.
- Conversations at Midnight*. Harper & Brothers, 1937.
- Huntsman, What Quarry?* Harper & Brothers, 1939.
- Make Bright the Arrows; 1940 Notebook*. Harper & Brothers, 1940.
- Invocation to the Muses*. Harper & Brothers, 1941.
- Collected Sonnets*. Harper & Brothers, 1941.
- The Murder of Ladies*. Harper & Brothers, 1942.
- Collected Lyrics*. Harper & Brothers, 1943.
- Poem and Prayer for the Invading Army*. National Broadcasting Co., 1944.
- Mine the Harvest*, Harper & Brothers, 1954.
- Collected Poems*, Harper & Brothers, 1956.
- #### Verse Plays
- Aria da Capo*. In *Reedy's Mirror*, 1920. (Later published in *The Chapbook*, 1920, then by Mitchell Kennerly, 1921, and then in *Twenty-five Best Plays in the Modern Theatre*, 1949.)
- The Lamp and the Bell*. Frank Shay, 1921.
- Two Slatterns and a King*. Stewart Kidd, 1921.
- Three Plays*. Harper & Brothers, 1926.
- The King's Henchman*. Harper & Brothers, 1927.
- The Princess Marries the Page*. Harper & Brothers, 1932.



Edna St. Vincent Millay under the Magnolia Tree, Vassar College campus, Spring, 1914. Photo by Arnold Genthe. (Used through the courtesy of Special Collections, Vassar College Libraries, Poughkeepsie, NY.)

Translations

- "Heavenly and Earthly Love," in *All the Plays of Molnar*. Vanguard Press, 1929.
- Flowers of Evil, from the French of Charles Baudelaire*, with George Dillon. Harper & Brother, 1936.
- "The Arrival," (translation of "Llegada" by Emilio Prados) in *Spain Sings*, Vanguard Press, 1937.

Prose

- The Wall of Dominoes* (prose play). *Vassar Miscellany Monthly*, May 1917.
- Distressing Dialogues*. (pseud., Nancy Boyd). Harper & Brothers, 1924.
- "Fear," *Outlook Magazine*, November 9, 1927.
- Preface to *Flowers of Evil* (on the translation of poetry). Harper & Brother, 1936.

"What sets [Edna St. Vincent] Millay's love poems apart from almost all those written in English by women is the full pulse which, in spite of their gay impudence, beats through them. She does not speak in the name of forlorn maidens or of wives bereft, but in the name of women who dare to take love at the flood, if it offers, and who later, if it has passed, remember with exultation that they had what no coward could have had."

Carl Van Doren

"[Edna St. Vincent Millay] is like nothing at all but herself; when she and this generation are gone, the die which stamped her style will be broken."

Elinor Wylie

Sonnet XXVI

By Edna St. Vincent Millay

Women have loved before as I love now;
At least, in lively chronicles of the past —
Of Irish waters by the Cornish prow
Or Trojan waters by a Spartan mast
Much to their cost invaded — here and there,
Hunting the amorous line, skimming the rest,
I find some woman bearing as I bear
Love like a burning city in the breast.
I think however that of all alive
I only in such utter, ancient way
Do suffer love; in me alone survive
The unregenerate passions of a day
When treacherous queens, with death upon
the tread,
Heedless and wilful, took their knights to bed.

Editor's note: This sonnet was first published in *Poetry*, October, 1930. It is one of the 52 remarkable sonnets composing *Fatal Interview* (1931), a "love epic," as biographer Jean Gould describes it in *The Poet and Her Book* (1969).

Edna St. Vincent Millay

Balzac

(Continued from Page One)

Balzac was on excellent terms with many of his fellow writers, including Victor Hugo, who was his last visitor before Balzac's death. Hugo's account of this visit, as well as the oration he pronounced when Balzac was buried, are insightful and moving.

Balzac was popular with women and once traveled to Italy with a girl friend disguised as a page. He received many letters from female admirers, including those from Mme. Hanska, a Polish aristocrat who originally signed herself "*L'Etrangere*," (the Stranger), and who became his mistress and eventually, shortly before his death, his wife.

Balzac's rotound and jovial figure was a favorite target for cartoonists. He also became something of a myth during his own lifetime. His good friend Delphine de Girardin wrote a delightful short novel, *La Canne de M. De Balzac*, (M. de Balzac's Cane), published in 1836, and featuring his jewel-encrusted walking stick, which had become something of his trademark and which is exhibited in the Balzac Museum to this day. She claimed that it was like a club, and that it had magical properties. If twisted a certain way, it permitted him to become invisible and thus watch all the secrets of Parisian families, which he was describing with so much insight. The cane gets lost and is found by a young man new to Paris, and the early "invisible man" tale goes on from there, with a number of interesting episodes.

Though Balzac's first work had been a verse play about Oliver Cromwell (not published until 1925), his contributions to the theatre are relatively little known. He was anxious, chiefly during the 1840s, to succeed on the stage, since he was convinced that this was a way to wealth. However, the half a dozen plays he completed during this period, though not without merit, were all unsuccessful during his lifetime. Indeed, his first stage success was *Mercadet*, first performed a year after his death, in August, 1851, in a version revised and amended for the stage by a theatre hack. The original text by Balzac is still effective, and I saw it performed in the Comedie Française a couple of years ago.

It was the 1851 stage version, which I found last May and suggested that it could be of value to the Newberry Library. The staff agreed to include it in the library's collection. Obviously, because it will be of interest to specialized students of Balzac and Balzac's theatre, it belongs in a research library — though readers or fans of Balzac may prefer, as I do, to look at the original text of Balzac in a modern critical edition.

Bibliographical Note: The most convenient modern critical edition of Balzac's *Comedie Humaine* is in the Editions de la Pleiade (12 volumes, over 21,000 pages, edited by Pierre Citron), which is being completed by "miscellaneous writings" in three volumes of over 5,000 pages.

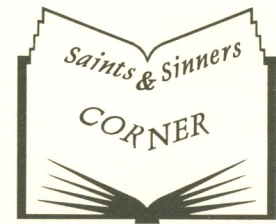
The critical three-volume edition of Balzac's theatre, dramatic projects, and fragments in three volumes, edited by Rene Guise for the "Bibliophiles de l'Originale," Paris, 1969, can also be recommended.

Roger Pierrot has edited Balzac's correspondence (including letters addressed to him) in ten volumes, published by Garnier Freres, 1960.

It is difficult to make a selection among Balzac's many novels and stories, and their publication history is apt to be complex. However, the following are some of his major works (I list the first publication in book form. Many of his novels and most of his tales were first published in newspapers and magazines, not necessarily in any complete or final version):

La Peau de Chagrin, August, 1831.
Eugenie Grandet, December, 1833.
Le Pere Goriot, March, 1835.
Le Lys dans la Vallee, June, 1836.
Grandeur et Decadence de Cesar Birotteau, December 1837.
Illusions Perdues, (three sections, 1837-43. in installments; completed in book form, 1844).

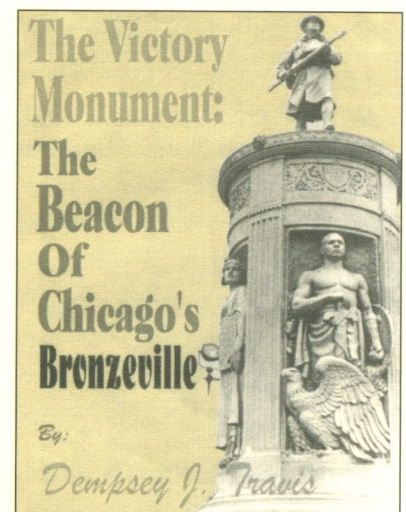
There was a collective edition of his fiction (not including the *Contes Drolatiques* and his early pseudonymous novels) under the title *La Comedie Humaine*, in 1845-46. However, this edition did not include some of his major works, including *Splendeurs et Miseres des Courtisanes* (sections published, 1838-47, complete edition in 1855) and *La Cousine Bette* and *Cousin Pons*, two novels published in book form in 1847-8.



Caxtonian Elmer Gertz will be the kick-off lecturer for the new season of *Friends of Literature*. His topic will be "My Still-Born Books." The opening meeting of the new year will be October 9, at the Wedgewood Room of Marshall Fields, 111 N. State St. For information, phone Robert Adelsperger at 773/770-6096.

Caxtonian Neal Harris has written a new book entitled *Building Lives: Constructing Rites and Passages* (Yale University Press). The book was nicely reviewed by Michele H. Bogart in the *Chicago Tribune* (September 19, 1999), Section 14, page 5. "The book's ingeniousness lies in Harris' imaginative exploitation of a wide range of source materials to awaken us to the aspects of building culture so universal, or seemingly trendy and trivia, as to be ignored."

Caxtonian Dempsey J. Travis has published his 16th book, *The Victory Monument: The Beacon of Chicago's Bronzeville* (Urban Research Press, Inc.). The book is a pleasant story of African Americans' involvement in many deeds of war and the importance of Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood in deeds of war.



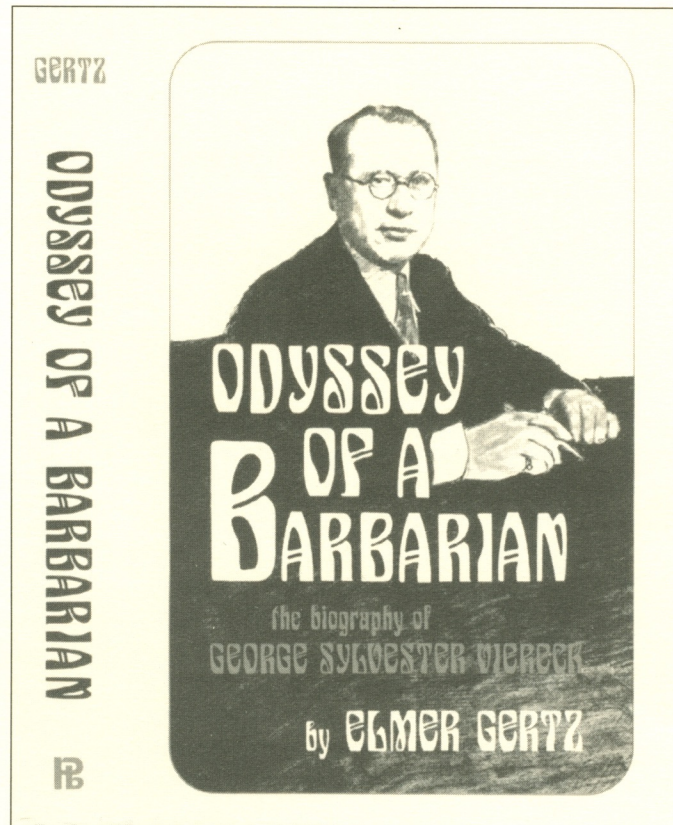
'A Bizarre Fellowship' Recounted by Elmer Gertz, Friend of the 'Flawed'

By Elmer Gertz

Perhaps perversely, I have always been intrigued by flawed human beings endowed with literary genius. I have written articles, pamphlets, and three books about three of them. My first book was *Frank Harris - A Study in Black and White*, written in collaboration with a Brooklyn dentist, Dr. A.I. Tobin, and published as far back as 1931. My second was *Odyssey of a Barbarian — The Biography of George Sylvester Viereck*, published in 1978 but written much earlier. And the third was *Years of Trial and Triumph, 1962-64, the Correspondence of Henry Miller and Elmer Gertz*.

Little known today and, when known, excoriated like no other writer of this century — this is Viereck's fate. I got to know Viereck through our mutual interest in Frank Harris. I met him on many occasions in New York and Chicago and corresponded with him constantly and voluminously. I knew his wife and two sons. The older son Peter became a Pulitzer Prize winning poet; the younger, George, was killed at Anzio during World War II.

In his fascinating book, *The Kaiser on Trial*, George Viereck referred to me as "friend and foe, but more friend than foe." This is probably an accurate description of our complicated relationship. I cannot forget that I got to know some of the great persons of the day through him. These included Nikola Tesla, a supreme scientist; Colonel Edward M. House, the alter ego of President Woodrow Wilson; Alfred Adler, the father of individual psychology; William Ellery Leonard, poet, scholar, and phobic, and others of like fame and endowment. Bernard Shaw wrote frankly to me in his own handwriting in answer to my inquiries about Viereck, who used to visit him every year. Later when most of Viereck's friends had deserted him, Shaw remained loyal to him, just as he had been faithful to Frank Harris.



Dust jacket of Elmer Gertz's biography of George Sylvester Viereck.

At the beginning of this century many, including President Theodore Roosevelt, regarded the youthful Viereck as the foremost American poet. He produced several volumes, filled with lust and power, culminating in an intriguing mixture of Freudian autobiography and verse, called, in his typical manner, *My Flesh and Blood*, as in the holiest of Catholic rites.

He wrote books about national leaders, including a work on the symbiotic relationship of President Wilson and Colonel House. He also collaborated on her memoirs with the wife of Kaiser Wilhelm, the last monarch of Germany. Wilhelm spent his last years in exile in Holland, and Viereck was his only acknowledged representative. Curiously enough, the emperor gave Viereck a piece of ceramic, to be presented to me.

In some respects, his best works, on the "Wandering Jew" theme, were written in collaboration with Paul Eldridge. The first volume of the series, called *My First Two Thousand Years*, was a best seller.

But let me begin at the beginning. Viereck was born on December 31, 1884, in Munich, Germany, near what became the infamous Brown House of the Nazis. His father, Louis Viereck, was the illegitimate offspring of a Hohenzollern prince — some said it was the emperor himself — and the foremost German actress of the day, the beautiful Edwina Viereck. Almost in protest against his bastard birth, Louis Viereck became a socialist and, later in life, shared a prison cell with Bebel, the socialist leader. When he was married to Laura Viereck, herself born in America, Frederick Engles, the co-founder of so-called scientific socialism, was present. Viereck left Germany with his wife and their sons to settle in New York City. In truth, Louis never really left his native land. He returned to it frequently and ultimately resided there until his

death. George Sylvester Viereck visited his parents as often as he could.

At first he was annoyed by what he regarded as his father's excessive interest in matters German. He was tired of the many meetings, the editing of magazines, everything that reminded him of the country that they had left.

He was fortunate that Ludwig Lewisohn and William Ellery Leonard, who both became important writers, lived in that parental home. They influenced him greatly. I wrote a study of the three, which I called aptly *A Bizarre Fellowship*. Viereck's son Peter told me that my essay gave him insight into his father.

George switched from writing poetry in the German language to composing in English, which became, not a second language, but his only language. He was looked upon as a "Wonder Child," destined, according to some, to become an American Goethe.

Viereck

(Continued from Page Five)

Then, when World War I came, Viereck outdid his father in championing the German cause when it was highly unpopular to do so. He founded and edited the *Fatherland*, a weekly journal, in order to defend the German cause against its many detractors. He was lucky to escape imprisonment. Later the *Fatherland* became the *American Monthly*. As the infamous Senator Joseph McCarthy learned, excessive Americanism is the last refuge of scoundrels and troubled souls.

When the war ended, Viereck became an advocate of the Weimar Republic. Then, when Hitler and his brutal Nazis came to power, Viereck was their advocate in this country, although he disowned their anti-Semitism. His friends were often Jewish. It seemed as if he would defend any German regime, except, perhaps, a Communist one. He was almost violently anti-Communist.

When World War II came, he was not as fortunate as he had been in the earlier war. He was imprisoned for almost five years because of what may have been technical violations of the Alien Agent Registration law.

In prison he regained his poetic gifts and wrote simpler and more humane verse than he had done previously with poetry that was exotic and sometimes supercharged. He declared that the right to republish his poems belonged to me. I never availed myself of this right, for a variety of reasons. By the time Viereck left prison, he was disowned by most of his old friends. His once great friend whom he had helped popularize, Sigmund Freud, wrote to me: "I have broken diplomatic relations with Sylvester Viereck." His literary gifts seemed to vanish, and he was ill. He died on March 18, 1962, the beneficiary of the kindness of his gifted son Peter, so different from him in his views of Germany and in the style and content of his poetry. Peter was an exponent of modern poetry, while his father embraced the lush qualities of the 19th Century.

I closed my book on Viereck by reprinting Peter's poem about his father, called "Benediction." The poem tells of his earlier

A Letter from Evanston ...

Caxtonians Share European Literary Adventure

The five presenters at the Caxton luncheon on June 11 reflected the wide network of interesting bibliophiles in The Caxton Club. I was reminded particularly of the interconnections of our members when Leonard Freedman spoke of his old friend and classmate from Touhy High School, Sam Wanamaker, the inspiration behind the restoration of the Globe Theater in London.

This connection was particularly meaningful for me, because of Carolyn's and my recent vacation in France and England. The visit was a sentimental journey that made me proud of being from Chicago, and of being a friend of a friend of Sam Wanamaker's. The story of Sam Wanamaker's mission to restore the Globe Theater, in my opinion, is one of the great heroic triumphs of an antiquarian in our lifetime. In touring the reconstructed theater, our urbane English guide enthusiastically narrated the saga of how Sam Wanamaker, after seeing a replica of the Globe Theater at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933, set off on a mission to restore Shakespeare's workplace authentically at its original site on the bank of the Thames River.

The beautifully and historically restored Globe brought into focus the many blurred pictures in my mind's eye of Shakespeare's theater. It was especially gratifying to see and read about the inspiration of Wanamaker who brought the project of restoring the theater to

hostility to his father and his later love for him. I thought that it set the tone for my book. I had opened the book by quoting lines from an earlier robust poem of Viereck's: *Three gifts only Life, the strumpet, holds for coward and for brave, / Only three, no more — the belly and the phallus and the grave.*

Viereck deserves to be remembered, I believe, for his many high literary qualities, but, alas, he consumed himself. He became what some regard as a buried footnote to his son's life and work.



The Globe (forward, right), from a 1638 View of London by Merian in the Folger Shakespeare Library.

fruition, though he died before it was completed. I remembered a Shakespeare conference at Northwestern University several years ago, when he came to promote his idea of reconstructing the Globe. At that time the project was facing seemingly insurmountable problems with the London city bureaucracy and a paucity of funds. It seemed to me a wonderful but improbable utopian fantasy. Standing in the ground-ling's pit of the refashioned theater, I bowed my head in homage to that idealistic Jewish actor, who had the vision and chutzpah to fashion a reality out of a dream.

As a bibliophile I was particularly gratified that the entryway to the theater had an encased display of several antiquarian texts on sale by the Quaritch Book Seller of London. On prominent display was the Third Folio edition of Shakespeare's *Works*, published in 1665. It brought back a memory when fellow Caxtonian Abel Berland invited us to see his four Shakespeare folios among his other trove of rare books.

The short stay in London for the weekend, attending the theater, visiting the National Gallery, eating lunch and drinking in English pubs, and imbibing the wit and

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Letter

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wisdom of several London cab drivers, whetted our appetite to travel by Chunnell to France to enjoy the very different pleasures of that seductive country. We stopped in Paris, where we had begun our vacation the weekend before, to pick up a rental car for a drive to Beaune, the capital of the wine country in Bourgogne. Beaune is also an antiquarian's delight. It offers the tourist the perfect combination of cultivated sensual and cultural charms.

In addition to the vineyards and the numerous gourmet restaurants, Beaune has several tourist attractions, such as the Hospices de Beaune, and the Collegiale Notre-Dame, jewels of medieval architecture. Another attraction is the wine museum in the old castle of the Duke of Burgundy.

It depicts how the bodies and souls of the Burgundians and the French have been nourished by the fruit of the vine over the centuries.

One sculpture on the landing of the exiting staircase said it all. It was a typical representation of the Virgin and Christ Child with one exception that I had never seen before. The Christ Child, a joyous expression on his cherubic face, was holding up with obvious delight a bunch of grapes on a vine in the manner of Bacchus.

This seamless melding of Christian doctrine with French gastronomic tradition came home to me again when we returned to Paris at the end of the week. Among the several marvelously wrought wood carvings we saw at the Cluny Museum of the Middle Ages, one of the Last Supper especially caught my eye for its incredible verisimilitude. It seemed almost an imitation of Giotto's painting, again with one exception. Giotto's painting, as I remembered it, depicts the Apostles sitting in a circle, like monks in a refectory with Christ at the head of the table. But I could not remember seeing anything to eat on the table in Giotto's famous work.

And I never paid attention to the kind of food spread on the long table in Leonardo DaVinci's famous painting of the Last Supper, partially because the painting is so

damaged. I read recently in an account of the restoration that some nutrients can be discerned, but Leonardo focuses his composition appropriately on the figure of Christ at the center of the table, not on the food.

But the woodcarver/sculptor in the Cluny Museum gives a prominent place to the food on the table. He depicts the Apostles, sitting in a circle like Giotto's rendition, but they are focused on a platter in the center of the table on which a succulent roasted lamb looks appetizingly ready to eat. I had never given much thought before to what Jesus and his Apostles ate on that fateful night. I had always assumed their fare was only bread and wine, but surely that is because I never considered the question seriously, even though we used to have a Seder meal every year on Holy Thursday when our children were young. It would seem more reasonable to assume that the Apostles ate fish, but the French woodcarver apparently was thinking of Christ's role as the Good Shepherd.

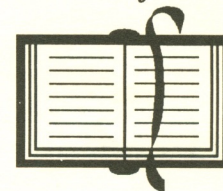
Pursuing the question a bit further on our return, I came upon a book, *How to Look at Sculpture* by David Stein with beautiful photographs and a description of works of the 16th Century German, Heinrich Brabender. The sculptures by Brabender, in a church called Marien Kirche in Lubeck, were miraculously saved when the church was bombed during World War II. They include a Last Supper with loaves of bread so realistic that they look as if they could be eaten. On the central platter is neither a fish nor a lamb, but an animal that resembles a piglet, certainly an unlikely morsel at a Jewish Seder dinner.

Because of the wondrous art of the anonymous French woodcarver/sculptor in the Cluny Museum, I will never be able to look at a picture or sculpture of the Last Supper again without paying close attention to the menu.

Ed

Ed Quattricchi

Calendar of Events



- ✓ **Letterpress, a class with Mary Kennedy**, October 6 - December 1, at Chicago Center for Book and Paper, 1104 S. Wabash St., 2nd Floor.
- ✓ **Pochoir, a technique, which involves using mylar stencils** to apply watercolor and gouche to prints, will be presented as a lecture by Jean Buescher, October 1, 6:30 p.m., at the Chicago Center for Book and Paper.
- ✓ **A Calligraphic Model Book, a course by Caxtonian Robert Williams and Tom Greensfelder**, October 2 - 23, at the Chicago Center for Book and Paper.
- ✓ **Papermaking I, a course by Mary Florence Forsythe**, October 18 - December 6, at the Chicago Center for Book and Paper.
- ✓ **Ebru (Turkish) Marbling, a course by Alberto Valesse**, who has a small shop in Venice, Italy, October 16 - 17, at Chicago Center for Book and Paper.
- ✓ **Papermaking Almost Free Day, day-long seminar underwritten in part by the Illinois Arts Council and taught by Jill Jarem**, October 9, at the Chicago Center for Book and Paper.
- ✓ **Open Paper Studio, a time for local papermakers to use the studio** on Thursdays, 6-9 p.m. on October 14, November 11, and December 9, offered by the Staff of Chicago Center for Book and Paper.

Compiled by Barbara Lazarus Metz

Editors's Note: Any book-related event relevant to Chicago area book lovers may be listed in "The Calendar of Events." Please send prospective listings to Barbara Lazarus Metz by phone at 312/431-8612, mail at 1420 W. Irving Park Rd., Chicago, IL 60613, or e-mail at b-lazarus@nwu.edu

Book Marks

Luncheon Programs

Your Special Luncheon Invitation. . .

Date: November 12, 1999

Place: Mid-Day Club

Speaker: Jay Niefelt

Caxtonian Jay Niefelt is a collector of just about everything. He's what we call an "eclectic" collector — a term that bugs the dickens out of spouses, who continually ask, "Are you collecting *that* author now?"

And we weakly respond, "Oh, just this one book — I got it for a good price that I just couldn't turn down."

We all know the situation.

Actually Jay is a writer himself. He writes books on management and marketing. His specialty is marketing with a Chinese accent. He has been a major force in developing the Chinese silk market in the United States.

The basis of his books in marketing, of course, is communications. You might say that Jay is a specialist in this field, and he promises that that's just what he'll do at the November Caxton luncheon: he'll communicate his eclecticism in books and book collecting. He's promised to give us some new slants in communicating with spouses regarding those odd volumes that we occasionally bring home at the bottom of our book bags or under our raincoats to be slipped quietly on the shelf when you-know-who isn't looking.

Friday luncheons are always a time of relaxed, pleasant conversations around books, authors, and tales of collecting that don't get shared any other time. You're invited to come the second Friday in November, joining colleagues and friends to hear one of our newest Caxtonians, Jay Niefelt.

*Edward Quattrocchi
Leonard Freedman
Co-Chairs*

All luncheon and dinner meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Mid-Day Club, 56th floor of the First National Bank of Chicago, Madison & Clark, Chicago. Luncheon and discussion, 12:30 p.m. Dinner meetings begin with spirits at 5 p.m., dinner at 6 p.m., lecture at 7 p.m. The First National Bank of Chicago's parking garage, 40 S. Clark Street, offers a special parking rate after 5 p.m. to guests of the Mid-Day Club. When you leave, please tell the parking attendant you were at the Mid-Day Club, and your parking fee will be \$6. Members planning to attend luncheons or dinners must make advance reservations by phoning the Caxton number, 312/255-3710. Luncheon for members and guests, \$20. Dinner, for members and guests, \$35.

Dinner Programs

Your Special Dinner Invitation. . .

Date: October 20, 1999

Place: Mid-Day Club

Speaker: Anthony James West

By now I have forgiven my high school teacher back in Scotland for teaching the works of William Shakespeare as a dull, ponderous subject that ranked in our enthusiasm along with the strenuous leaps and bone-jarring jumps of physical education classes. Years later, in London, Foyles bookstore helped rescue me from this gross misconception of the Bard, and I have enjoyed him ever since. Today William Shakespeare's works are entertainment of the highest order, mysteries of the greatest profundity, and as reflects part of our age, rare commodities of astounding financial value.

Our speaker for October, Dr. Anthony James West, will speak to these many facets of Shakespeare with scholarship and spirit. Born in England, the son of a letter press printer, he has an A. B. from Harvard, an M.B.A. from the University of Washington, and a Ph.D. from the University of London. In addition, he studied bibliography with William Jackson at the Houghton Library and at University College, London. He now lives in Kent in Tentenden, where William Caxton is said to have been born.

Dr. West's business years were spent in consulting, beginning in the USA in Boston. In the 1960s he launched a consulting practice in Europe, which grew to have offices in London, Frankfurt, and Paris. In the late 1970s he was a partner with Booz, Allen, and Hamilton. He has worked and lived in Latin American, the Middle East, France, and Germany.

He has done extensive study of Shakespeare's *First Folio*, covering its history since it left the press, a model for describing copies, the description of selected copies, a world-wide search for copies, and a census of extant copies. He is extensively published, with articles on the First Folio in *The Book Collector*, *The Library*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, *Analytical and Descriptive Bibliography*, and *The Papers of the American Bibliographical Society*.

You are cordially invited to join fellow Caxtonians and friends in welcoming Dr. West to our first fall dinner meeting. The evening promises to be exciting, both in words and images of the master of world literature and his *First Folio* in all its many dimensions.

*Kenneth H. Paterson
Vice President and
Program Chair*