

CAXTONIAN

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The Langston Hughes I can't forget

Dempsey J. Travis

It was through the open pages of Robert S. Abbott's *Chicago Defender* weekly newspaper that I was introduced to the works of Langston Hughes. He created a beloved comic character Jessie B. Semple (Simple) whom I read weekly for a period of at least 20 years. His poems and prose were filled with humor that grabbed my funny bone but at the same time screamed out boldly for a democracy that was void of white hoods and sheets that covered the faces and bodies of men who would deny it to people of color.

Up until the 60th year of the 20th Century, it was within the law below the Mason-Dixon Line to relegate Negroes to seats in the back of the bus or up front in the train's Jim Crow coach directly behind the dust-generating steam engine's coal car. Hughes brilliantly addressed the interstate transportation problem of the Black brothers and sisters in his "Merry Go Around" poem. It read as follows:

*Where is the Jim Crow section
On this merry-go-round
Mister, cause I want to ride?
Down South where I come from
White and colored
Can't sit side by side.
Down South on the train,
There's a Jim Crow car.
On the bus we're put in the back
But there ain't no back
To a merry-go-round
Where's the horse
For the kid that's black?*

I attended a number of Langston Hughes' poetry readings and lectures in Chicago prior to World War II at the George Cleveland Hall Library, located at 4801 S. Michigan and the Parkway Community Center, at 5120 S. Parkway and other venues, such as the Good Shepherd Church, at 5700 S. Prairie Avenue. It

was at Good Shepherd on April 24, 1942, where I saw his play *The Sun Do Move*, which was launched successfully by the Parkway Sky Loft Players.

I never worked up the courage to introduce myself to Langston, the master of rhyme, until Sunday October 18, 1942, when he visited a mutual friend, Dr. Vernon Stone, at the Fort Custer Army Base in Battle Creek, MI. Both Stone and I were buck privates assigned to the 1609th Service Unit there, as members of the permanent personnel. Spending several hours in 1609th Company's day room with Langston

Hughes, the brilliant, well-traveled, affable man, was certainly a personal experience I shall never forget.

My meeting with Hughes at Fort Custer was comparable to the high I got on a cloudy summer August afternoon in 1937, when I was introduced to Richard Wright by Miss Vivian Harsh, Chief Librarian at the George Cleveland Hall Library, where Wright had done some of his basic research for his classic 1940 *New York Times* best seller, *Native Son*. Prior to moving from Chicago to New York in the fall of 1937, Wright lived in a one-room kitchenette in the 3700 block of S. Indiana Ave.

The blind-sightedness of my youth resulted in my spending five decades of working in several vocations, including that of a jazz piano player,



Langston Hughes and Caxtonian Gwendolyn Brooks at the George Cleveland Hall Library in 1949. (From the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public Library.)

before stumbling into the realization that both Langston Hughes and Richard Wright had by osmosis influenced my walking down the path of literary authorship in the sixth decade of my life.

Following World War II, Langston Hughes and I crossed paths many times, particularly at jazz and blues concert scenes. I found jazz and blues to be our common ground in that I had worked as a professional musician as a teenager and beyond. Hughes and I were in attendance at the Newport Jazz Festival on July 8, 1956, when Duke Ellington's tenor sax man, Paul Gonsalves, blew 27 consecutive, spellbinding choruses of



Musings...

CAXTONIAN

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Nick Aaron Ford, distinguished professor of English at Baltimore's Morgan State University, invited me, in 1969, to read a paper at an English conference at the Statler-Hilton in Washington, DC. I had, you see, created in 1968, and then taught, the first Black literature course at Montgomery College, in Maryland, one of first such courses in the Washington, DC. area, with the exception of those taught at Howard University.

I titled the paper, "Black Literature: A Season and a Time." My thesis was that such a course as the one I had created was long overdue in American education, which had focused almost exclusively on writings of white male literary figures. Nowhere in all of my extensive literary studies, from high school through the Ph.D., had I read as a natural part of an American literature curriculum, the writings of an African American. It was as if no African American writer had existed and created a body of literature worth reading, remembering, and celebrating.

And then I discovered Alexander Crummell (1819-1898). Here was an American who had labored heroically, first in Liberia and then in America, and left a record in letters, sermons, orations, and diligent labor that was virtually unknown to his countrymen. He led me to his protégé, W. E. B. DuBois, and his important sociological and anthropological work and one of my favorite books, *Souls of Black Folk*.

The superb intellectual strivings of my fellow countrymen and -women "of color" became in those years a driving force of my intellectual life, and the Black literature course at Montgomery was an expression of my own personal vision. It was my view in 1969 that such courses in high schools and colleges were, however, only a stop-gap measure — for a "season and a time." We would, I then thought, ultimately as a people become intellectually integrated, as we became socially integrated. We would study Gwendolyn Brooks, Ralph Ellison, Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, and others in the pantheon of African American writers as we studied the great writers in America who came from English, Irish, Jewish, Native American, Norwegian, Asian, and so many other cultures.

To that point, teacher that I am, let me recommend a recent, great biography of an American literary figure. This study is Arnold Rampersad's two-volume *The Life of Langston Hughes* (vol. I, *I, Too, Sing America*,

1986, and vol. II, *I Dream a World*, 1988). It tells the rich history of an America and the extraordinary life of an American only a few knew.

My 1969 paper landed like the proverbial lead-balloon. I realized later that I was challenging turf-builders, who were intent on creating within academe private domains of learning and, of course, power. I was calling, as well, on American teachers to become fully conversant with their nation's many cultures and to put those cultures into a coherent intellectual structure, a labor that, while it would enrich their and their students' lives in immeasurable ways, placed demands on them far greater than their standard preparations had done.

Rampersad's marvelous biography of Langston Hughes recreates for us the story of a man and a nation, in which artistic equality urged us toward, if it did not fulfill at the time, social and economic equality. That remains our task, our opportunity, our pleasure, as people of books.

And such a great a joy it remains!

Robert Cotner
Editor

STREET SCENE

An American Opera
(BASED ON ELMER RICE'S PLAY)

Music by
KURT WEILL

Book by
ELMER RICE

Lyrics by
LANGSTON HUGHES

CHAPPELL & CO., INC.
RKO BUILDING · ROCKEFELLER CENTER
New York, N. Y.

Cover of *Street Scene*, produced at New York's Adelphi Theatre on January 9, 1947, by Dwight Deere Wimar. (From Newberry Library, through whose courtesy it is used.)

Hughes

Continued from page 1

Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue. That was the year that Duke Ellington was rediscovered and appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine. James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, Langston Hughes, and this writer were all present at the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival.

Music was more than a vehicle for entertainment in the life of Langston Hughes. His writings were music without chords. As early as 1926, a time before Ellington was famous, Langston experimented with integrating blues music as part of his poetry reading. In 1958 he recorded his poetry to the accompaniment of a jazz group led by the red-hot trumpeter, Henry "Red" Allen, and Charles Mingus, the great bass fiddle player. In 1961 he wrote *Ask Your*

JAZZ BOYS

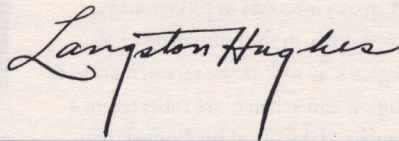
Sleek black boys in a cabaret.
Jazz-band, jazz-band,-
Play, play, play!
Tomorrow...who knows?
Dance today!

Dark girls' eyes
Call gay black boys.
Black boys' lips
Grin jungle joys.

Yellow girls
In brown men's arms.
Jazz-band, jazz-band,-
Sing Eve's charms!

Black ones, brown ones,
What do you know
About tomorrow
Where all paths go?

Jazz-boys, jazz-boys,-
Play, play, play!
Tomorrow...is darkness.
Joy today!



Typescript of Hughes' song, "Jazz Boys."

Committee at Columbia College's Center for Black Music Research in Chicago and is Professor Emeritus at the University of Connecticut.

To say that Hughes was simply a prolific writer would be an understatement because of the high quality of his work in various genres: poetry, fiction, non-fiction, music lyrics, play-writing of comedy and drama for the stage and screen. The following is an excerpt from Hughes' "Nothing But A Dog," which highlights his versatility. This work appeared in his "Week to Week" column, November, 1960, in the *Chicago Defender*:

"I had a no-good husband—
went off and left me. Didn't
leave me nothing but a dog,"
Cousin Minnie told Simple as
they sat stool by stool at the
bar. "The dog's name was Cargo,
a black dog with one white
eye. My husband was in the
Merchant Marines, sailing out
of Norfolk. He brought that
little old black mutt from
Trinidad or somewhere. He
said that little old hound
looked like a load of coal,
so he named him Cargo.

"Cargo was something! Too
affectionate for his own good.

He loved me, but he liked to
drove me crazy, running off
and stuff. He traipsed all over
town like his master, and
never got runned over. That
dog knew a red light from a
green one as well as I did.
Cargo loved people but hated
dogs. This I never did under-
stand in Cargo. If I was a dog,

FOUR NEGRO SONGS

For Medium Voice
And Piano

By

JOHN ALDEN CARPENTER

I
Shake your brown feet, honey!

II
The Cryin' Blues

III
Jazz-Boys

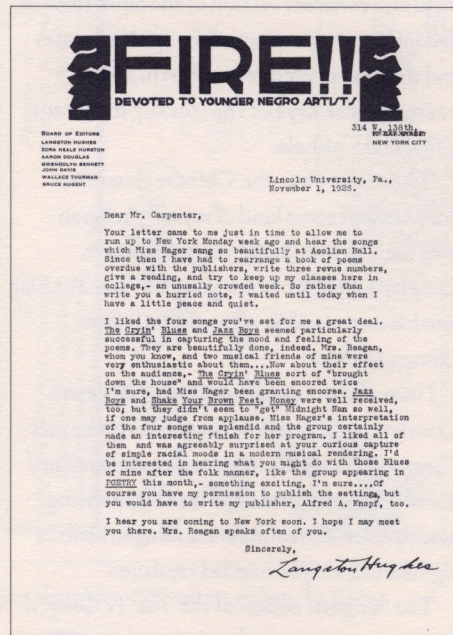
IV
That Soothin' Song

G. SCHIRMER, INC., NEW YORK

Program for the performance of Hughes' songs. (All illustrations on this page from Newberry Library, through whose courtesy they are used.)

I think I would like other
dogs. But Cargo's hair bris-
tled. He looked like a walking
brush when he saw one...."

In February 1966, I gave a party for approximately 25 mortgage bankers in the General Douglas McArthur Suite at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. Through the grapevine, my old friend Dick Gregory learned about the happening, and he, in turn, brought Langston Hughes along. Needless to say, interchangeably they both filled the suite with laughter. Hughes could not have picked a better way to say goodbye. The great man stopped breathing at 10:40 P.M. on May 22, 1967. He died on time at age 65. ♦



Letter from Hughes to John Alden Carpenter. (See illustration, column 3.)

Mama: Twelve Moods For Jazz. (*Ask Your Mamma* is really a takeoff on what is known in the Black community as "playing the dozens"). The Chicago premiere for this work took place at the DuSable Museum of African American History, 740 East 56th Place, on Friday and Saturday, March 19 and 20, 1999. The music was composed and arranged by Hal Smith, the distinguished composer and educator, who is currently a member of the Artistic Advisory

Ten times “Tao Te Ching” — collecting a Tao classic

Pierre Ferrand

The *Encyclopedia Britannica* (15th edition) affirms that Taiwan is now “the principal refuge of Taoism.” I do not know, however, where my copy of Paul Carus’s version of the *Tao Te Ching*, the classic attributed to Lao-tzu, found its refuge. I lost it, to my distress, on a recent flight to Taipei.

The book, edited by Carus, first published in 1898, is one of way over 100 extant English versions of the *Tao Te Ching* (of about 5,500 “characters” or words), the most frequently translated Chinese text of all times. I still own a dozen of the more important English versions myself — so most people, including my wife, do not feel that I am unduly deprived of Taoist lore. I am also aware of the limitations of the century-old Carus edition.

One of its uses is to illustrate the way the *Tao Te Ching* acts as a kind of a Rorschach test. People usually find in it the reflection of their own emotional and ideological baggage rather than its own objective content — and this applies to serious scholars as well as to the addicts of “new age” sentiment they despise.

Paul Carus (1852-1919) was conscientious and earnest enough, and aware of his outstanding young assistant, D.T. Suzuki, whose Chinese scholarship was sound and later would be known as the man who made “zen” part of the English vocabulary. The Carus-Suzuki version of the classic is what you would expect from a somewhat pedantic German-American of the old school who had been deeply involved in the World Parliament of Religions project of Chicago’s Columbian Exhibition and believed all his life in its ecumenical ideals. In view of his urge to educate people (he was also the managing editor of Chicago’s Open Court Publishing Company which issued many low-priced reprints of philosophical classics), the Carus text reflects the cadences of the King James Bible. Indeed, he had adopted a similar style for his *Gospel of Buddha*, a compilation of Buddhist texts, which is still reprinted today.

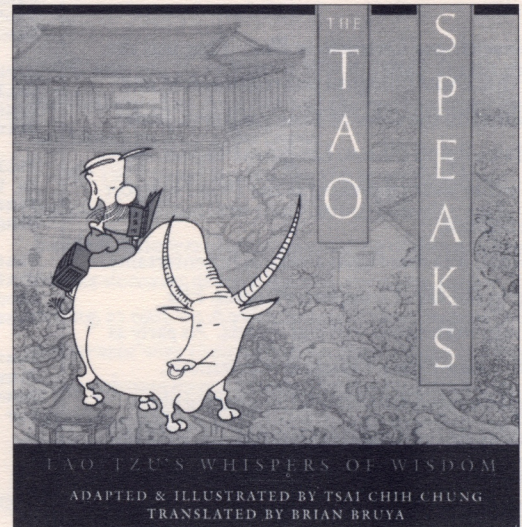
It can be wondered whether the compact, aphoristic, paradoxical, often ambiguous and ironical insights of the pre-Christian author, or authors, can be accurately rendered in the language of the Christian scriptures, early 17th Century version, despite some parallels in expressions here and there, which Carus points out.

Carus’s English text and commentary (he reproduces the Chinese original, too) is not without merit, since he attempts to be very careful and accurate. His errors are chiefly errors of judgment, and he has a typically Germanic failure, a limited sense of humor, which, to my mind, is a handicap when dealing with this outrageous and subversive text, which, after more than 2,000 years, still has the capacity to shock.

Carus’s interests in philosophy, rationalism, in the fellowship of all religions, as well as the reconciliation of religion and science, are reflected in a number of details of his English text, including the rather curious title he gave to the *Tao Te Ching* in its 1907 edition, *The Canon of Reason and Virtue*. “Canon,” in the sense of “scripture,” and “virtue” in the etymological, Renaissance sense of “strength” or “power” can be considered acceptable renderings of the Chinese, though somewhat outlandish perhaps. No previous or subsequent translator, to my knowledge, has adopted “Reason” as a translation of “Tao.” It reflects the “Pure Reason” of Kant, whom Carus diligently translated, as well as the editor’s rationalist faith. However, if one can state anything at all about the Lao-tzu concept of “Tao” with any certainty, it is that it is not an idea which can be apprehended by reason or reduced to it. My own attempt at approximating its meaning is closer to “things as they are,” incomprehensible to the human mind as they may be.

A very different “translator” of the *Tao Te Ching* was Aleister Crowley, an outrageous rogue and charlatan with particularly dubious credentials in Chinese. He was a self-proclaimed adept, magician, drug addict, hedonist and satanist who called himself “The Beast 666 of the Apocalypse” and prided himself upon being totally offensive to his contemporaries. He often succeeded in this.

Crowley asserted that his 1918 version, recently reprinted, was the result of an “astral vision” during which he was shown the “original codes” of the work. In his *Confessions* he asserted with his unusual modesty that, while all previous versions had completely failed to convey the meaning of Lao-tzu, he was able to produce a



Cover of the 1995 edition of *Tao Te Ching*, from the collection of Pierre Ferrand

lucid and coherent version of the book since he had intimate experience of the spiritual states and magical principles set forth, and possessed the keys of the (totally irrelevant) Universal Cabbala.

The claim that the Chinese classic is a document of some kind of mystery religion goes back to over 2,000 years. However, Crowley’s attempt to integrate the *Tao Te Ching* into his own occultist system owes little to Chinese tradition.

I have not yet determined to what extent Crowley used Carus’s version. He says he met Carus in Chicago during the second decade of the 20th Century, and describes him as being “widely learned, yet understanding so little...a big-hearted, simple-minded creature...”

The “original codes” of the *Tao Te Ching*, if any, have not yet resurfaced, though in 1973, Chinese archeologists discovered in a tomb in Hunan (Southern China), two manuscripts written on silk scrolls, which provide late 3rd Century B.C.E. texts which are several hundred years earlier than those previously known. There are a number of relatively minor variances in wording between these “Ma wang tui” scrolls and the Chinese standard versions.

The most significant difference is that there is no division into chapters. A number of scholars had found the 81 chapters rather arbitrary anyway, and reflecting the numerological fact that the figure is nine-times-nine rather than a

rational meaning. Still, the *Tao Te Ching* was already divided into two books, though their order (and that of a number of sections) is different.

Two notable English versions of the “Ma wang tui” scrolls are those of Robert G. Hendricks (1989) and Victor H. Mair (1990). The very careful and thorough Hendricks volume reproduces the text and translations of both scrolls. As a Professor of Religion at Dartmouth College, he is particularly interested in questioning the widespread “mystical” interpretations of this Taoist scripture, which he calls *Te-tao Ching* to reflect the actual order of the books. In his view, the phrases claimed to refer to the magic invulnerability of Taoist

Like most scholars, Mair feels that the existing texts of the classic reflect a pluralistic origin. Several different strands of oral tradition were finally recorded in writing and somewhat clumsily assembled and edited. This accounts, to his mind, for obscurities, ambiguities and non-sequiturs.

The insightful, 1963 version (and introduction) by D.C. Lau also stresses the pluralistic origin of the *Tao Te Ching*. Indeed, he divides the traditional 81 chapters into sections (a total of 196 of them), as possibly independent from each other. He also argues that the book is a kind of survival manual for people who lived during the dangerous period of the so-called “warring states.”

An attractive recent *Tao Te Ching*, dated 1997, by the highly literate poet and novelist

Ursula LeGuin, owes its inspiration to the original edition of the Carus version. She found that book, bound in yellow cloth and stamped with blue and yellow designs, in the library of her father many years ago. Her debt is also to the very free and poetic “American version” by Witter Bynner, (*The Way of Life According to Lao Tzu*, 1944), copies of which I used to donate as gifts to my dearest friends over half a century ago.

Bynner and LeGuin’s books can be classified as “literary,” addressed to the general reader rather than to scholars. Bynner spent a decade translating a famous T’ang anthology of poetry with the assistance of a great Chinese scholar, but admits to limited knowledge of

Chinese himself. Still, he often succeeds in conveying the unconventionality and sense of humor of a free, anti-establishment approach which made of Lao-Tzu the inspiration of many of China’s leading poets. This is certainly part of the essence of the original text, which, among other things, ridicules the pompousness of Confucianism, which became the state religion of Imperial China.

While she is aware of recent scholarship, McGuin presents an unpretentious and non-sectarian modern version. She intended, as she says, “to listen to a voice that speaks to the soul.” In this respect, her book is akin to the older Gia-

Fu-Feng and Jane English version (1972), illustrated with magnificent photos of nature.

Ms McGuin rightfully describes the Gia-Fu-Feng book as “the literarily most satisfying recent translation I have found, terse, clear and simple.” However, it cannot be described as the definitive English text. Indeed, there is still no such thing, and there may never be one, though people continue to try.

A number of other versions of the *Tao Te Ching* have merit. The 1948 edition by Lin Yutang, the fine popularizer of East Asian lore, (*The Wisdom of Lao-tse*), includes numerous more or less parallel texts by the other great classic of Taoism, Chuang-tzu. Arthur Waley’s *The Way and its Power; a Study of the Tao Te Ching and its Place in Chinese Thought*, presents not merely a careful version of Lao-Tzu with stimulating commentaries, but also a wide-ranging discussion of the many contending philosophical schools in China during the time of its genesis. Though he was responsible for some of the best extant translations of poetry from the Chinese, Waley’s English text of the Taoist classic is intended to be scholarly rather than readable.

I was given by my Taiwanese friends still another book related to the *Tao Te Ching*, entitled *Lao-tzu’s Whispers of Wisdom*. It is a humorous paraphrase of much of the text of the Chinese classic, written and illustrated by the most prominent contemporary Taiwanese cartoonist, Tsai Chih Chung. The English version (published in 1995), contains a useful introduction by another translator of the book, Michael LaFargue. I greatly value this cartoon book, with its delightfully whimsical illustrations. It is perhaps truer to the spirit of the *Tao Te Ching* than some of the deadly serious versions by academic and other translators who drown the text with polysyllabic phrases. At least some of those originally responsible for the Chinese classic would have appreciated the phrase, “Who is more solemn than an ass?”

I would recommend to my fellow book lovers that to collect various translations of the *Tao Te Ching* is fun, suggestive, and, on the whole, rather inexpensive. It helps that the book itself remains challenging and worthwhile after many centuries. ❖



Cartoon illustration, 1995 edition of *Tao Te Ching*.

adepts and to the achievement of immortality by them are not to be taken literally. They can be explained more simply as alluding to health and long-life-promoting techniques.

Mair makes a good case for the kinship between the *Tao Te Ching*, the Hindu *Baghavat Gita* and yoga. He agrees, however, with a number of scholars that, unlike the Hindu scripture, which is a manual of spiritual discipline, the volume attributed to Lao-Tzu is “basically a handbook for the ruler,” though with mystical overtones.

Rare print now in Caxtonian's collection

Steven J. Masello

Last Christmas, I came to be the owner of an amusing, if not uncommon, print from the celebrated *Vanity Fair* collection of political and social caricatures, published from 1869 to 1913. (It had been uncovered by my ever-alert wife during a flea market at the Charles Gates Dawes House, headquarters for the Evanston Historical Society.)

What neither of us amateur antiquarians realized at first was that this was an original, signed print by the Neapolitan artist, Carlo Pellegrini. My print is from the June 10, 1871 issue of the magazine. (The signature was verified as original by two independent Evanston art dealers, one of whom is a trained and licensed art conservator.) Behind the print, which was crudely glued to a blue paper backing, the following half-sheet of information on the artist Pellegrini was attached by the dealer, Stanley Jackson, 35 Geylen Road, Convey Island, Essex, England:

"This is an original print from the famous *Vanity Fair* collection published from 1869 to 1913. Done from the life, they reveal the subject's character as seen by the artist. "Ape" (Carlo Pellegrini) was born in Capua, Italy, in 1839. After fighting in Garibaldi's army, he came to England in 1864 and established himself with a caricature of Disraeli — the first in the series. His Neapolitan personality and broken English, ('I never make mistake in the closes [clothes],') made him a popular figure). The Prince of Wales much enjoyed his genius and his company. Pellegrini portrayed many notabilities, including members of the Royal Family and his original portrait of Oscar Wilde, done for *Vanity Fair* in 1884 is in the National Portrait Gallery.

"Pellegrini suffered acutely from various ailments. Shortly before his death, he was exonerated by the king of Italy, and when his friend and fellow artist, 'Spy' (Sir Leslie Ward) came to congratulate him, he said 'Oh! Don't! it come too late.' Carlo Pellegrini, otherwise 'Ape' died in 1889. A full figure of him by Degas can be seen in the Tate Gallery, London."

My professional curiosity aroused, I determined to learn more about both artist and, of course, subject. I hastened to my carrel at

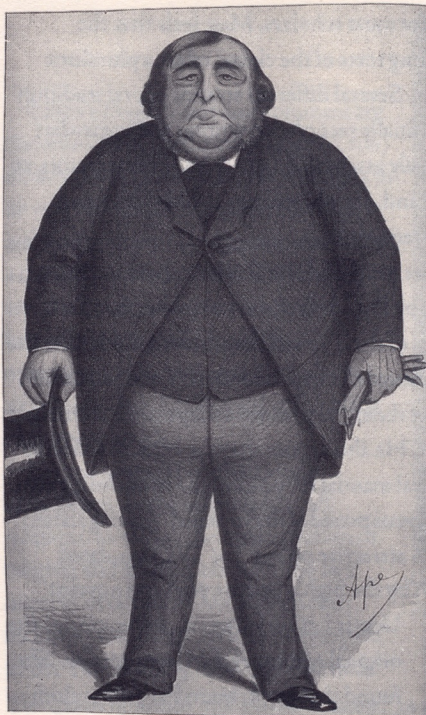


Illustration by Carlo Pellegrini, from the collection of Steven Masello.

Chicago's Newberry Library to research the history of my new acquisition.

I first called up from the stacks the original issue of the *Vanity Fair*. Trained as a Renaissance scholar specializing in the interplay between England and Italy in the 16th Century, I knew precious little about the subject of Pellegrini's pencil. I was to learn more, much more, in short order.

It so turns out that this caricature is of a man who stood at the center of arguably the most celebrated legal battle of Victorian England. A pretender of prodigious girth and audacity, Mr. Arthur Orton (1834-1898), the son of a butcher in Wapping, claimed to be Sir Roger Charles Doughty Tichborne, Bart. (born in 1829), the long lost heir to rich estates in Hampshire.

There is no paucity of material on the famous Tichborne trials. In fact, Edward Vaughan Hyde Kenealy, the claimant's legal counsel (later disbarred for his labors on behalf of Orton), published an enormous eight-volume transcript of both the lengthy civil trial (1871-1872) and even longer second trial. Nevertheless, the claimant was found guilty, declared to be Arthur Orton and sentenced to 14 years penal servitude. (See Mitchell, Sally (ed.) *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia*. New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc. 1988)

Unable to resist the sharing of a great tale, allow me to include the original story as published in the June 10, 1871 *Vanity Fair*: MEN OF THE DAY. No. XXV SIR ROGER DOUGHTY TICHBORNE, BART?

"Do you think he's the man?" is the question which now for upwards of a month has been agitating all London. The capture of Paris and the killing of thousands of human beings, the Derby, Ascot, all those most important events which in other times would move the people of England, excite their sympathies and enchain their interest, are now held to be quite of second-rate character, in comparison with the question whether a certain gentleman is Baronet or butcher. Betting has probably never run so high upon any event as it does upon the decision of the long-enduring jury which has been painfully captured to try this cause, nor has partisanship probably ever been carried to the same extent in a matter which has no personal interest for the partisans.

"It is absurd to suppose that he's the 'man'," says one section. "I'm certain he's the man," says another; "but I hope he won't get the estate". To all which a third set answer, judiciously, "Wait till you hear the other side." A stranger tale than this that is now being unfolded has never regaled the readers of newspapers. There is the making of a romance in every step of the history. Some twenty years ago there did most undoubtedly exist a sickly, weakly, feather-weight young man of an ancient family, who is declared to have been well acquainted with the French, though he certainly was not a proficient in the English language. That young man left England, and was supposed and long believed to have been lost at sea with a ship in which he certainly embarked. Yet there now comes forward from Australia a well-grown, middle-aged man who alleges that he is the original Roger, who never was drowned at sea at all. He is more than twice the weight of the Roger who quitted England eighteen years ago; he knows less French than English, and so little of the latter that he may be said to know no language at all; and he altogether fails to come up to the popular standard of what the heir to an ancient baronetcy and large estates

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Print

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should be. Nevertheless, the mother of the original Roger, his tailors, his servants, many of his fellow-officers, and some of his relatives, are convinced and declare that this is indeed he; while others as determinedly maintain that the claimant is a mere personator, and the whole claim nothing more nor less than the result of a conspiracy. Happily there is a judge to whose impartiality the claimant's own counsel has borne witness, and a special jury of especial fitness to decide upon the case, and we may, therefore, be sure that justice will be done. Whatever the result may be the claimant will be a hero of this century, who will be handed down either as a much mis-used man or as one of the most determined and clever impostors ever known.

Jehu Junior

As thoroughly fascinating as this history was, my personal excitement was naturally generated by the signature of the famous artist, and fellow Neapolitan Carlo Pellegrini, a.k.a. "Ape."

Combing through the Newberry Library holdings and dispatching the chief reference librarian to search further on-line, I was surprised to find so little information on the artist. (A longer research article may well be in order.)

Club welcomes members

The Caxton Club is pleased to announce the following new members and warmly welcomes them into our fellowship of the book:

- Christine Adamson – nominated by Alice K. Schreyer; seconded by William Drendel.
Martha Chiplis – nominated by Robert McCamant; seconded by William Drendel.
Sophia K. Jordan – nominated by Greg Prickman; seconded by Connie Gordon.
Patricia L. Newman – nominated by J. Ingrid Lesley; seconded by John Chalmers.
William Rentschler – nominated by Robert Cotner; seconded by Ed Quattrocchi.
Caryl Seidenberg – nominated by Bruce Beck; seconded by Hayward Blake.
Charlotte Slocum – nominated by John K. Notz, Jr.; seconded by Kathryn DeGraff.
Edward A. Warro – nominated by Kim Coventry; seconded by Bro. Michael Grace.
Jack Weiner – nominated by Peggy Sullivan; seconded by Ed Quattrocchi. ❖

The *Enciclopedia Italiana* (Milano: Rizzoli & C., 1935) gave no more than a short paragraph listing significant dates in the artist's life but stating, as well, that he achieved "*una larghissima notorieta*" ("an extensive notoriety") in England for his lively and expressive caricatures.

Bryon's *Dictionary of Painters and Engravers* (London: G. Bell & Son's, Ltd., 1919) gives a little more information, always tantalizing in its historical appeal: "On his father's side, Pellegrini was the scion of the ancient family long settled in the district, and known as the *Sedili Capuani*; on his mother's side a descendant of the Medici..." It then tells of his career and reputation at *Vanity Fair*. He signed his first caricature, that of Lord Beaconsfield, as "Singe," a French pseudonym that he later translated to the more familiar "Ape." And why this appellation, I do not know. He drew hundreds of famous notables from the political, artistic, and social world. Most impressive of all to me was his last drawing of none other than our own Thomas A. Edison.

In short, there is much more to learn about this fascinating Italian artist, so celebrated and beloved by the English and others. I intend to do so. ❖

1979 Caxton Revel's broadside sold

Swann Auction Galleries, New York, listed the following item in its sale of magic, October 26, 2000: "18 . (BROADSIDE.) The decollation of John Baptist. Broadside keepsake printed in red and black, reproducing a leaf from Scot's 1584 edition of *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, issued for The Caxton Club of Chicago, commemorating the performance of [Caxtonian] Jay Marshall at the Club's Christmas Revels in 1979, 22x9 inches. One of 225 numbered copies." The item sold for \$230. ❖



Saints & Sinners Corner



Author and Caxtonian Dempsey Travis has been inducted into the International Literary Hall of Fame for Writers of African Descent. The ceremony, which occurred during the 10th Annual Gwendolyn Brooks Writers' Conference, was held on October 27, 2000, in Chicago. Travis published his first book in his 60th year, and is currently working on his 18th.

Caxtonian and Councilor David Easterbrook presented a paper entitled "American Libraries American Markets African Books" at the conference immediately preceding the 2000 Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF) in Harare, Zimbabwe. ZIBF is the largest annual book event in Africa. Lasting a full week, ZIBF this year attracted 317 exhibitors from 31 countries and ran from July 29 until August 5. In addition to the presentation of this paper, Easterbrook participated in a forum sponsored by the Southern African Book Development Network, where he discussed "The North American Market for African Scholarship." In addition, Easterbrook has been named a 1999-2000 fellow in Northwestern University's Alice Berline Kaplan Center for the Humanities. During the year, he will research the history of *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941), by Melville J. Herskovits. A result of this work will be an exhibition at Northwestern University Library next spring, on the Herskovits book. Many of the items in the exhibition will come from the Melville J. Herskovits papers, which are held by the Northwestern University Archives.

Franklyn (Duff) Herbert Hicks, Canadian book collector, leader in the Ottawa Book Collectors, and a regular reader of the *Caxtonian*, died in July 2000, and his colleagues in Canada and his friends in the States will miss his energy and devotion to books. All Caxtonians send condolences to his family.

Bookmarks...

Dinner Program

December 20, 2000

Peggy Sullivan

Some seasonal stories

The Caroling Party — Songs of the Winter Solstice

Return with us to those days of yesteryear, when the Caxton Holiday Revels was the event in town, a time people asked "When?" and everyone knew they meant the Revels.

Caxtonian and master storyteller Peggy Sullivan has selected from her repertoire of more than 100 stories and tales her best for the winter season. She will entertain us with wit and delight as she spins these stories for our pleasure in the evening program for this year's Revels.

A professional librarian, Peggy has honed her storytelling craft for more than 50 years through the low-key style of traditional library storytelling. She is a regular participant in national and regional storytelling events, such as the National Storytelling Festival, Jonesborough, TN. She has taught formal courses in storytelling at the University of Chicago, Syracuse University, Rosary College, and Northern Illinois University.

She will be joined in the evening's festivities by "The Caroling Party," a professional singing group, which will provide the finest in Seasonal music during our dinner. Dressed in Dickensian

caroling outfits, they will remind us of the great fun, the great pleasure, and the great joy of the Winter season, which we will soon enter.

This is an occasion, like those of the past, which you simply won't want to miss. Join your friends and Caxton colleagues for the 2000 Holiday Revels.

Jim Tomes

Vice President and Program Chair

Luncheon Program

December 8, 2000

Gwin Kolb

A closer look at our friend,

Dr. Johnson

This event will be a celebration, of sorts. And a commemoration. On December 1, 1989, you see, Gwin Kolb inaugurated the highly-successful luncheon program of The Caxton Club. He returns, at the club's special invitation, to celebrate that good beginning and its delightful, bookish pleasures over the years.

And it's a commemoration of the greatest of all 18th Century Englishman, Dr. Samuel Johnson, who gave us our first dictionary and so much more. Gwin was drawn to Johnson by the repeated queries concerning the supposed misogyny of Dr. Johnson, who next to Shakespeare is the second-most quoted English author. Replying to the charge, Gwin will provide evidence showing that, on the whole, Johnson's opinion of women was considerably more enlightened than that of most men of the so-called Age of Enlightenment.

Then Gwin will detail Johnson's complicated relations with the three most important women in his life: his mother, his wife, and Mrs. Hester Lynch (Thrale) Piozzi, his very close friend for almost 20 years. Mrs. Thrale was the wife of a wealthy London brewer and member of Parliament. The ending of this friendship evoked, perhaps, Johnson's saddest, most moving letter.

In keeping with the close fellowship of our luncheon programs, Gwin will share some of his fine Johnson collection with guests and discuss his collecting interests as they relate to Samuel Johnson.

In short, it's another program you'll want to add to your December calendar, as you join those who love books, to break bread with them.

*Edward Quattrocchi & Leonard Freedman
Co-Chairs*

All luncheon and dinner meetings, unless otherwise noted, are held in the Mid-Day Club, 56th floor of BankOne, BankOne Plaza, Madison & Clark, Chicago. Luncheon and discussion, 12:30pm. Dinner meetings begin with spirits at 5pm, dinner at 6pm, lecture at 7pm. BankOne's parking garage, 40 S. Clark Street, offers a special parking rate after 5pm 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 \$10. 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, \$40.