

which first took hold in the WPA projects of the New Deal, and burgeoned in the photographic commentaries of Erskine Caldwell and Margaret Bourke-White, Dorothea Lange and Paul S. Taylor, and James Agee and Walker Evans. In the hands of such people the camera became the legitimate inquisitor of the American experience. A succession of photographs within a book or magazine was arranged to speak for the country and for itself as pictorial literature. This literature said, in effect, that there was no aesthetic or cultural unity to the nation, that various particles of reality — faces, houses, street scenes — which were caught and fixed forever by the camera were in perpetual tension, just as the parts of the nation itself were in perpetual tension. Photography was fragmentation without words, a form of imagism. Even today, Diane Arbus says in her introduction to *Aperture*, "the more specific you are, the more general it'll be."

Out of the explosion of fragmented and pictorial literature emerged a new hero in popular American culture, the reporter, or newsman. He too was born in the thirties, and has continued to grow in heroic stature since then, only recently to have that stature challenged, though not seriously shaken, by public criticism. Like the modern poet or novelist, he dealt in fragments. Like the camera, he functioned as the passive eye to external action. There was excitement to the very idea of him. With his collar up, his press card stuck in his porkpie hat, his ability to gain entrance to forbidden places, his contempt for authority, his carelessness, swagger, brashness, and disguises, he became the ideal of the detached man, a kind of existential hero. He could rove about the country taking it all in, permitting his facts to speak for America and investing these facts with high moral quality simply because they were facts, therefore pure, therefore to be associated with truth and right. His own morality was considered unimpeachable because the passive eye was considered to be uncorruptible. He became, in short, the artist of our times, not because he emitted any personal inspiration, but because he used or embodied what were judged to be the only valid instruments of art, the notebook and the lens.

As a popular hero the newsman became a permanent part of the national folklore almost immediately. He was hoisted to Hollywood by Clark Gable in *Remember the Night*, by Joel McCrea in *Foreign Correspondent*, by James Stewart in *Call Northside 777*, and by a hundred other stars in a hundred other movies. He was the center of the action, honest, trust-busting, straight-talking, cocksure, relentless, and free. He pranced about our imaginations as Rosalind Russell (*His Girl Friday*), Alistair Sim (*This Man is News*), Spencer Tracy (*Keeper of the Flame*), James Cagney (*Come Fill the Cup*), Jean Arthur (*Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*), and Orson Welles (*Citizen Kane*). On Broadway, *Front Page*. In the comics, Brenda Starr and Steve Roper. On the radio there was "Steve Wilson of the Illustrated Press" and "Casey, Crime Photographer" Cap-

tain Marvel, Jr., was a newsboy. Superman was a reporter in costume. Crusaders all, these fictional characters were based on a glittering chivalric image in the public mind, an image, one suspects, with which some journalists continue to decorate themselves. When John Chancellor won his reputation by clinging to his microphone while being ousted from the Republican National Convention of 1964, the guards were dragons.

It is the combination, then, of the reporter-as-Romantic-hero image and the reality-as-fragment method that we receive as our news. We receive it most clearly on radio and television where the voice and / or face of the reporter becomes part of the news presentation itself, but we also recognize it in the papers, particularly because of the prominent role of reporters in so many news events, and because of the dominant location of editorial pages. What we receive, that is, is not simply the communication of information, but a form of popular art. The news sings America, but because it holds such a high position in our culture, it also sings and celebrates itself.

As a result, or at least as one of the results, we are more often aware of the news as news than we are of any of the items it purports to bring us. Not only does the news have all the self-consciousness of popular art, which is considerable; it has all the long-lasting influence of popular art, which is none whatsoever. It is not at all surprising that the *Times* should continue to be referred to as the most influential paper in America, after having insisted that the nation go McGovern. When we use "influential" in reference to the *Times*, it has all the thrust of calling the Rockettes the most beautiful girls in the world. Despite the fact that reporters may model themselves on a heroic ideal, the truth is that

they make very uninteresting heroes because they have no discernible character. The other truth is that the news, despite its imitation of a literary form, is not literature, fragmented or otherwise, because all it gives us is awareness, whereas literature must also give understanding.



All this is not to say that I think things could or should be very much better. A newspaper or news program that presented studious interpretations of world events written by complex and tortured characters would be wonderfully ludicrous, and would undoubtedly transmogrify into yet another form of pop culture itself. The news, simpleminded and transitory as it is, is probably as good as it can be. It thinks a little too well of itself as a profession, but even that helps to ward off censorship which, though less infuriating than arrogance, is worse for the spirit, and makes no heroes. One simply wishes that the news had more substance, more range, less artificial balance, and that it did not pretend so often to express the Great American Statement. There is only one true Great American statement in our culture these days, and we all know what that is. □

E.T. Veal.

## Booze and Pot: The Metaphysical Distinction

Suppose you enjoyed breaking the legs of small dogs. You live in a society notorious for cynophilia, so your neighbors might object. Indeed, they might haul you before a municipal court on some such unlibertarian charge as "cruelty to animals," threatening to separate you for a time from both canine and human society. How would you defend your freedom?

There are (barring a plea that mutilation of animals is symbolic speech protected by the First Amendment) two available courses. One is to explain straightforwardly to the jury why you like to break dog's legs. You might appeal to the musical sound of slowly cracking bones or to the sense of personal fulfillment to be found in mastering another being's fate or to the need for rebellion against an Establishment that employs dogs in its military operations.

Such arguments might save you from prison —by convincing your neighbors that you belonged in an asylum.

However, you might argue differently, and, I suspect, with greater prospect of success. Instead of explaining, *reclassify*. Announce that you are engaged in "scientific research," not, admittedly, of the customary, hide-bound sort, but research nevertheless. Point out that acknowledged scientists infect small dogs with painful diseases, subject them to dubious surgeries, and even, sometimes, break their legs. If society does not punish *those* researchers, why should it punish *you*? Your case may not carry the day, because the common men on juries often possess a *quantum sufficit* of common sense, but you will surely impress the judge or the Court of Appeals (for judges are educated men after the twentieth century fashion, and therefore more impressed by Classes than by Things). Thus, you may eventually win in the higher tribunals and be able to return to your individual pursuit of happiness. Maybe you will end up as an "historic case in the struggle for civil

liberties," and be invited to address a banquet of the ACLU.

Putting Things into Classes is the beginning of reason. Imagining that this process alters the Things is the beginning of silliness. And silliness is not a rare affliction. It is not limited to madmen who establish a common ground between torture and medical research. Everyday politicians and publicists seize on the farthest-fetched analogies between A and Z to prove that placing these letters at the opposite ends of the alphabet is an illiberal prejudice that society can no longer tolerate.

This is the error that permeates most present discussion of marijuana. Both marijuana and alcohol, used in sufficient quantity, cause marked changes in behavior, most strikingly a decline in what our sober selves would call "rationality." From this point of resemblance, it has become an assumption of most debate that marijuana is simply the counter-culture's version of the martini. A favorite juxtaposition of movie and television scriptwriters is the booze-squiffing parent and the pot-smoking child. The implication is that between alcohol and marijuana, there is merely a distinction without a difference, and that Daddy is a fascist hypocrite for supporting laws that jail Sonny's friends and suppliers. The title of a recent pro-legalization-of-pot book, *Marijuana: The New Prohibition*, states the argument concisely.

In various forms, this argument has been stated so often that everyone seems to have overlooked a point that at once springs to mind as soon as one steps back and looks at the implications of the equation: it tells as heavily against pot as for it. The Old Prohibitionists, after all, were not wrong when they claimed that liquor has many effects that society would be better off without. Broken homes, bar-room brawls, DT's, and hangovers were not spawned by Carrie Nation's fancies. What defeated Prohibition was not a paucity of solid arguments against alcohol's use, nor a considered decision that the use was worth the abuse, but the fact that strong drink is too firmly rooted in the affections of western man to be abolished by legislative fiat. Where Bacchus is not so much at home, as in the Moslem lands, governments have been able to restrict his worship and hew down his altars. American oil company employees in Saudi Arabia have discovered that they must erect clandestine stills; the *gendarmarie* has dried up the bootleg traffic in spirits.

Despite the blossoming of the counter-culture, its favored intoxicant is still no stronger here than liquor in Saudi Arabia. Confining its use to the fringes of society presents no insuperable difficulties. Ninety-five percent of Americans have no strong affection for pot. They will submit to regulation, leaving the dissenters as fish in a desert.

With no reason to fear a massive backlash of civil disobedience such as Prohibition inspired, one can make a pretty good case for depriving Sonny of his quasi-martini. Only a mad sense of fair play would say that the existence of one evil justifies the existence of all others. Because some murderers will never be

caught, we don't free the ones who are (at least we didn't used to). If the rescue party arrives after half the passengers on the sinking ship are already drowned, it doesn't abandon the rest out of a sense of equity. A man who can stop an arsonist is not persuaded to refrain on the ground that the building next door has been destroyed by lightning. Similarly, on the basis of the argument we are considering, marijuana has no claim to legality just because no one has figured out an effective way to ban alcohol.

Some readers have probably already come up with an answer to my inversion of their standard debating point. They are muttering to themselves, "This fellow writes so glibly about logic, yet he's no master of the art. Look at the silly error that he's just now committed." And what, pray, is my mistake? "You assume that alcohol and marijuana have the same effects. But they don't, so your sophisticated little inversion is irrelevant."

Yes, that is the proper reply. My inverted argument proceeds from a false premiss. *But I have taken that premiss from the argument that I am inverting.* If alcohol and marijuana have substanti-

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## Great American Series

Some of the Presidents were great and some of them weren't. I can say that, because I wasn't one of the great Presidents, but I had a good time trying to be one, I can tell you that.

Harry S Truman

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ally different effects, then they are different Things belonging in different Classes. There is no more reason to accord them the same treatment than there is to give medical research grants to animal torturers. Marijuana must stand on its own, not lean on the legal privileges of liquor.

Outside the debating room, the friends of marijuana are well enough aware that its resemblance to alcohol is remote. They never apply to the use of pot the restraints that drinkers apply to liquor as a matter of course. I fancy that the most ardent friend of bourbon would have felt it somewhat inappropriate for me to imbibe a flask of that beverage at my Yale graduation ceremony. But some of my classmates were "turning on" at the same ceremony, with no visible reprobation from their pro-marijuana comrades. As a consumer of alcohol, I should not be gleeful to learn that junior high school students were sneaking to the lavatories for shots of brandy between classes. Have you ever heard an advocate of marijuana deplore its use by teens and sub-teens?

As the final proof, why, except because they believe that the two substances are fundamentally different, should those who favor cannabis be so outrightly hostile toward liquor? Their writings seethe with sneer at the besotted older generation, unfavorably contrasted with their

own upstanding selves. Sometimes they go further than literary attack, as when the *Yale Daily News* tried, two years back, to interest the New Haven Police in closing down Mory's. Men do not draw distinctions so bitterly unless they imagine that some real distinctions exist to be drawn.

The first obvious distinction—it may seem superficial, but it springs from something deeper—is a difference in number. Alcohol has many uses. Some men do drink to escape the world. But others drink to join it more firmly. A proper drinking party with old jokes and songs and old friends (whom you may have met only an hour ago) is, as the Greeks knew, a lifeline pulling us back to the world of things and men from the realm of introspective solitude into which it is so easy to slip (into which the solitary drunk, with his eternal, egoistic reveries, has slipped). This sort of drinking is not confined to festive occasions. The quiet beer after work, the quarter-hour that dissipates our narrow, fiendish concentration and prepares our spirits to receive what the world has next to offer us, is also a "social drink," though no one may be nearby. Nor should I forget that beer and wine and brandy and whiskey can be drunk from a mere liking for their aromas and tastes. If they were suddenly to lose all their physiological effects, wine would still be taken with meals and beer with snacks. Brandy would still be just the thing to round off a banquet, and whiskey would remain a noble accompaniment to the evening.

Now, marijuana may be excellent for its own peculiar use, but it has only one. It affects the mental processes. It gives rise to what its users call "new perceptions." It permits men to fly from the mundaneness of their everyday senses into a realm "sensitivity." But this is all. No one goes to a pot party simply for a sociable evening with the boys. No one puffs a non-intoxicating quantity of grass for relaxation. Never do you hear of pot-and-pretzels or of a hostess searching for the right variety of cannabis to enhance her dinner nor of anyone eulogizing the flavor of vintage reefers. Consciousness-changing is marijuana's only trade.

Its users find this trade well worth the imposts. Given encouragement, they will devote many unstoned hours to praising, the pleasure, enlightenment, and insight that they find in their "new state of consciousness." They express pity for the rest of us. How much happier and wiser the world would be if everyone turned on!

Alcohol has never promised so much. Bacchus too will rescue you from the "light of common day" if you let him. He, however, says frankly that his method is to blot out the dull light, not to provide a superior illumination. If you ask him for a less drastic remedy, he points back at the world, at the very tiresomeness that you wanted to get away from. He turns your face towards the human being next to you, toward the bench you are sitting on, toward the taste and feel of the glass in your hand. *In vino veritas*—which means, truth is found in Things, not away from them. *In vino, in rebus, non in te ipso!*

No one should be surprised that western

philosophy began in *symposia*, drinking parties, nor that the philosophy with such roots has always had as its central assumption the existence of an objective universe to which individual speculations must conform. The whole West, divided on everything else, unites to shout the great axiom, that thinking does not make it so.

This is not an axiom congenial to marijuana. The pot-smoker receives his "insights" by peering into himself, not by fixing his attention on the world, and he regards his inspirations as private truths. He rejects any notion of objective verification. Generously, he will allow other persons to have other truths, all these private revelations being not so much contradictory as incommensurable.

No wonder there is such hot warfare between the followers of Bacchus and the worshippers of the hempen gods from the East. The subject of their quarrel is only the universe.

The quarrel is not such as we of the West are accustomed to. It is not like the division between Plato or Aristotle or between Descartes and Kant or between any other schools of western thinkers. For these disputants could dispute. They all agreed that propositions about the universe are either true or false (or badly stated, but that is a different problem). No one suggested that contradictory ideas were both entirely correct, or that there

George Carey

## A Quiet Moment with Averell Harriman

*This interview was conducted by Mike Wallace of the Columbia Broadcasting Network in March 1973. The interviewee, Averell Harriman, is noted for his long and distinguished service to the American Republic. He was a former governor of the great state of New York and has served as a special diplomatic adviser to many of our past presidents. (Reprinted without the permission of the Columbia Broadcasting Network.)*

**Mr. Wallace:** Mr. Harriman, you have for some time been considered one of our true elder statesmen. You have been through it all — the good and the bad. I would like to ask what your lasting impressions are as one of our senior diplomats over the last century or so.

**Mr. Harriman:** Thank you so much. You flatter me. I have never really considered myself as an elder statesman. Statesman is the proper word — but as for elder, I demur. You know that you are as young as your thoughts. I prefer to think that I have many, many, productive years ahead of me in the field of diplomacy. You see, diplomacy is an art that can only be fully developed after several years of intensive practice. I am sure that the State Department will

was no way for their proponents to debate.

The metaphysics fostered by marijuana cannot dispute. Debate among the holders of private visions is not even conceivable. What would they argue about? If truth is an individual affair, how can anyone argue, except in the manner of people "arguing" about their favorite colors?

The chasm is complete. Every time one side begins an argument by pointing to the universe, the other will reply by pointing to himself, and each will be firmly convinced that his antagonist is fatuous.

This is why marijuana has such deadly import for the survival of society. It is the missionary of falsehood. It provides an irrational tug toward the abandonment of the western axiom of a real universe. Where reason is speechless, moods and emotions are powerful orators. We have good reason to fear these orators. Long before Freud, the West knew that the pit of man's soul is not a garden of delights; it rots with delusions and devils. We do not want the truths dredged from that mire.

In the deepest folds of Bacchus, men see pink elephants. They are, to the eye, funny creatures, more likely to raise a smile than a whiff of terror. But today marijuana is encouraging men to release those elephants from their cages and ride them pell-mell through the world. It may prove that what looks pink at a distance is really not so lovely. □

find some niche for me in the not too distant future. I love to travel and mingle with peoples of a different culture. The fact is, you know, that we learn so much from peoples with a different culture. To some degree, they learn from us. That has been my motto: Learn all you can about different cultures.

**W:** How wonderful. But what is it that

### Great American Series

My father was not a failure. After all, he was the father of a President of the United States.

Harry S. Truman

you have learned over these many years in diplomatic service?

**H:** To love people. Genuinely love people. I think Eleanor Roosevelt understood this. I don't think we can make any progress until we recognize this. You see over there my pear tree?

**W:** Oh yes. I see it. How beautiful. You must eat a lot of pear pudding.

**H:** One would think so, but actually the doves eat the pears. We have very little to eat in the way of pears. Surely the doves would upset most people. But not me. My extensive experience tells me that the doves deserve their due and what a small sacrifice it is for me to have such a wonderful pear tree.

**W:** I can see that you are a true humanitarian. But what is it that lead you to this philosophy? What...

**H:** A keen knowledge of history. The English as you well know tried to attack Spain and the French, in turn, launched an Armada against England, thinking that the Spanish would come to their defense. But this was way back when, before I was born.

**W:** You mean to say the Spanish launched an Armada, don't you?

**H:** No, definitely not. The French did it. I think history will prove me right. How silly it would have been for Spain to have launched the Armada. Leonard would never have permitted this.

But you can perceive how our history is distorted. The fact is that it was Queen Isabel of France who ordered the Armada. Leonard had nothing to do with it.

Well, enough... I am taking you into the depths of history...

**W:** Well, let us leave aside the intricate historical points which you raise. What do you feel have been your major accomplishments during your career?

**H:** I can think of many. You know that I was one of the chief advisers to President Roosevelt and I will never forget our negotiations at Yalta. We were absolutely superb in our efforts to contain the Soviet Union. I briefed the President before his departure to Yalta. If only he had lived, I think we could have come to some accommodation with the Soviet Union. The President, Franklin Roosevelt, that is, really knew how to handle the Russian Bear.

It was a shame he was cut down so early in his career. I can see him now — do you see? Under the pear tree, playing with the doves. I can see him so clearly... every once in a while I have these visions of the Great Man strolling through my yard. How great he was! Giant among men. Uncle Joe, as much as we loved him, each in our own way, was no match for Franklin. Yes... that's what I called him, Franklin — one day he put his arm around me and said "I will call you Abe and you call me Franklin." What a touching moment that was. I knew I was next to greatness...

**W:** Mr. Harriman, please don't cry. We all know what a great man FDR was and, if he lived he could have won a fifth, sixth, or seventh term. We all loved him very much.

**H:** Yes, yes... but you will never know... his true greatness...

**W:** If you can collect yourself, sir, I would like to ask a few more questions.

**H:** By all means. My butler has brought me my towels. Please note they were all made by union labor. You can clearly see the label here — you see this little tab? I'm keen about this. I don't buy any product produced by non-union labor. Woe is me!! Why did you have to bring up this point? My father,