

it attracted little attention. Not until the 1970s, and the rise of the feminist movement, did the scientific perspective on female behavior change.

In 1972, Robert Trivers of the University of California, Santa Cruz, argued that Darwin's dichotomy between competition as a male domain and mate choice as a female province made sense, not because of a passion gap but because of a difference in reproductive strategies: Males do best, in evolutionary terms, when they gain as many mates as possible (hence, their drive to compete), while females, who gestate and usually care for the infants, do best if they choose a mate who will enhance the survival of her offspring. This view has become the consensus among scientists.

But Small's observations of Barbary ma-

caques—and of 506 copulations, over the course of the monkeys' breeding season—led her to question the consensus. "Yes, female Barbary macaques do make choices," she writes, "but they seem to choose every male in the group, one after the other."

For female choice to have any evolutionary impact, Small notes, the choices must be consistent. Yet some female primates—perhaps just desperate to conceive—seem to mate with just about every male around. Scientists "have empowered the behavior of females by acknowledging their sexual assertiveness," Small writes, "but we often stop short of accepting that sexually assertive behavior might result in less than choosy behavior." Could it be that evolutionary biology is about to enter a postfeminist era?

ARTS & LETTERS

Defeating The Master

"Revision, Rewriting, Rereading; or, 'An Error [Not] in *The Ambassadors*'" by Jerome McGann, in *American Literature* (Mar. 1992), 304E Allen Building, Duke Univ., Durham, N.C. 27706.

"A curious error which probably has no parallel in the annals of American literature appears in all [currently in print] editions of Henry James's novel, *The Ambassadors* . . . : chapters [28] and [29] are in reverse order." So wrote Robert E. Young in an influential 1950 essay, "An Error in *The Ambassadors*." Jerome McGann, a University of Virginia English professor, contends that Young's statement was not true then—but is now.

As the two chapters were arranged in the authoritative New York Edition of 1909, and in the first American edition of 1903, Young pointed out in 1950, the chronological sequence of events seemed "out of joint." For example, in Chapter 28, the reader learns from a conversation between Lambert Strether and Maria Gostrey that Sarah Pocock is leaving that evening for Switzerland; yet in Chapter 29, Strether, in a conversation around midnight "that evening," speaks of his intention of seeing Sarah again before her departure.

The Master himself had proofed, corrected, and revised the text for the New York Edition, as well as for the earlier first American edition. But Young maintained that the involutions of James's prose style in *The Ambassadors* had prevented even the author himself from catch-

ing the error. James biographer Leon Edel defended the Master's prose style but accepted Young's main point—that the order of the two chapters was wrong. Edel noted that an earlier English edition of the novel had the chapters in the reverse order favored by Young. Young's argument prevailed. Today's editions of the novel have the chapters reversed, as they were in the English edition.

But McGann insists that Young failed to recognize that the conversation between Strether and Maria Gostrey, which occupies much of the New York Edition's Chapter 28, was actually a *flash-forward*. When that edition's next chapter opens with a reference to "that evening," McGann says, it is going back to the narrative position of Chapter 28's opening sentences. This arrangement of the chapters, he argues, makes the text more meaningful.

McGann points out that soon after the first English edition came out in 1903, Henry James noted in a letter that there was "a fearful though much patched over fault or weakness in it," which he said no one had noticed and which he did not reveal. When the first American edition came out later that year, the two chapters were reversed. James chose to work from the American edition when he revised the

Confronting Transcendence

Novelist Saul Bellow contemplates Mozart in *Bostonia* (Spring 1992), and finds in his music "a dimension . . . which prohibits final comprehension."

Some of my speculations on Mozart are notably unscientific. I often puzzle over the nature of his genius. How was it that it should appear so early and develop so swiftly and be so complete? Was it because his father was an educator of corresponding genius? Nobody ever suspected genius of any sort in Leopold. Neither do the educational or genetic contributions of his mother strike his biographers as exceptional. Mozart, to borrow a figure from William Blake, was a piece of ground already spaded and seeded. It looks, in other words, as if he had brought it all with him. And then I think of other prodigies born into mathematical or musical families. The mature forms assumed by these exceptional creatures are not to be accounted for by environmental or historical theories. They resemble the flowers or the insects, they have powers which astonish and physiological refinements or resources of intelligence too curious to be explained by probability theory or the ponderous slowness of time, or by trial and error. What they suggest is the intervention of invisible purposes. "To a certain extent,"

writes Alfred Einstein, "it is true that Mozart was only a visitor upon this earth. Mozart as a man was nowhere truly at home: neither in Salzburg, where he was born, nor in Vienna, where he died."

At the heart of my confession, therefore, is the hunch that with beings such as Mozart we are forced to speculate about transcendence and this makes us very uncomfortable, since ideas of transcendence are associated with crankiness or faddism—even downright instability and mental feebleness. These are the charges and the guilts you open yourself to when you confess that you find it impossible to dismiss such speculations . . .

Music, I assume (amateurishly), is based on a tonal code containing, inevitably, expressions of the whole history of feeling, emotion, belief—of essences inseparable from what we call our "higher life." I suggest also that this is where we tend to go when we have gone as far as we can in the new modern positive orthodoxies that keep us within bounds—the assumptions which our education and the business of the world have trained us to accept as normal, practical, and indispensable: the founding postulates of our scientific and technological achievements.

From all this a Mozart gives us an orderly and also emotional exit—an endlessly rich and exalted release.

text for the New York Edition. "As *The Ambassadors* passed into what James saw as its perfected final condition, the 'fearful' error was to be silently removed simply by avoiding the

English text altogether, which alone contained the 'reversed' chapters 28–29." But the Master, it appears, did not foresee what modern scholarship can do.

Mapplethorpe And the Museums

The Robert Mapplethorpe affair—the fierce controversy over the museum exhibition of his photographs of sadomasochistic homosexual acts—did much more than poison relations between museums and government, contends *Time* art critic Robert Hughes. It revealed the utter bankruptcy of traditional American ideas about art.

Ever since the first American museums were opened in the 19th century, Hughes says, they have claimed to provide "education, benefit, spiritual uplift, and not just enjoyment or the recording of cultural history." By the 1880s, the

"Art, Morals, and Politics" by Robert Hughes, in *The New York Review of Books* (Apr. 23, 1992), 250 West 57th St., New York, N.Y. 10107.

notion of art as quasi-religious uplift had begun to evolve into the more secular idea of art as therapy, personal or social. Great art, thought the wealthy founders of American museums, would alleviate the resentments of American workers.

In the decades after 1920, the emphasis on the therapeutic function of art increased. Cultivated Americans initially resisted modernism because it did not seem "spiritual" enough. But starting with the founding of New York's Museum of Modern Art in 1929, museums emphatically insisted that it was. "America came up