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rope, herald an iconoclastic modernism in the arts, writes Horowitz, executive director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra. But it did create a remarkable Wagner cult among respectable, middle-class women.

When Anton Seidl, Wagner's protégé and American emissary, conducted his operas at New York's Metropolitan Opera House during 1885-91, one journal reported, "middle-aged women in their enthusiasm stood up in the chairs and screamed their delight for what seemed hours." Those who listened to Wagner, maintained the influential bohemian Mabel Dodge Luhan, "were only listening to their own impatient souls, weary at last of the restraint that had held them."

More than half of Seidl's performances at the Met were Wagnerian operas, including the American premiers of *Das Rheingold*, *Siegfried*, *Götterdämmerung* (which, along with *Die Walküre*, comprise the tetralogy, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*), *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, and *Tristan und Isolde*. He also conducted during the summers at Coney Island's Brighton Beach, and on Wagner nights—sponsored by the Seidl Society of Brooklyn, an organization of women who diligently read Wagnerian literature and attended lectures explicating the meaning of the *Ring* and the Christian content of *Parsifal*—the 3,000-seat music pavilion was filled to capacity.

"The *Tannhäuser* Overture, by far the most popular Wagner extract [a century] ago, embodied Wagner's role as a timely inspirational bulwark, buttressing faith, banishing looming 20th-century doubt," Horowitz writes. However, the later Wagner, exemplified by *Tristan und Isolde*, "occupied libidinal realms more menacing." Yet the middle-class, urban women of the Gilded Age also responded enthusiastically to it.

At Brighton Beach or at the Met, the devoted Wagnerians "were transfixed and transformed," Horowitz says. "No less than the roller coasters and revival meetings that serviced the lower classes, Wagner was a necessary source of violent excitation."

The women's excitement was due to more than just "Seidl's charisma and Wagner's sensuality," Horowitz contends. Among the devoted

Wagnerians were "women of passionate sensibility for whom Wagner represented a consuming alternative to a world of marriage and men." The German composer gave musical expression to repressed sexual drives, Horowitz says, and the profound impact that *Tristan*, the *Ring*, and *Parsifal* had on middle-class women of America's Gilded Age was a measure of "the emotional repression they suffered."

### *The Mystery Of Jean Stafford*

"Green Visors and Ivory Towers: Jean Stafford and the New Journalism" by Maureen Ryan, in *The Kenyon Review* (Fall 1994), Kenyon College, Gambier, Ohio 43022.

Why did Jean Stafford (1916-1979), the acclaimed novelist and short story writer, suddenly switch from fiction to journalism in the mid-1950s? All three of her recent biographers agree that her need for cash was paramount. And they tend to dismiss her writing after the shift as a tragic diversion from art, as "hackwork written, begrudgingly, for money," observes Ryan, dean of the Honors College at the University of Southern Mississippi.

Ryan thinks that dismissal is a mistake. Stafford's nonfiction writing, she contends, must be seen as part of the New Journalism. During the 1960s and '70s, writers on both sides of the fiction-nonfiction divide, from Norman Mailer to Tom Wolfe, concluded that the techniques of journalism and fiction were straitjackets. To create a literary form adequate to the new reality they saw being born, the New Journalists melded the two techniques. Stafford's journalism emerged from similar challenges, Ryan believes. She was never able to complete her fourth novel, *The Parliament of Women*, in part because it was as much autobiography as fiction. Stafford was well aware that fashion had passed—for the moment—her fictional methods by. When her *Collected Stories* won the 1970 Pulitzer Prize, she expressed surprise that "a writer as traditional as I can be recognized." Finally, Stafford's relationship, beginning in the mid-

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1950s, with veteran *New Yorker* writer A. J. Liebling, famed for his distinctively literary journalism, increased her regard for nonfiction writing.

She certainly published her fair share of it, appearing everywhere from *McCall's* to the *New York Times*. Her New Journalism-style portrait of Lee Harvey Oswald's mother, *A Mother In History* (1966), complete with personal asides, received mixed reviews. She churned out articles such as "Love among the Rattlesnakes," on Charles Manson, "It's Not the Thought That Counts," revealing her aversion to Christmas, and "Somebody Out

There Hates Me," a response to the hisses and boos that greeted her Oswald book.

For all that, Ryan notes, Stafford was out of step with the New Journalism in one important regard. A cultural conservative, she was appalled by all the "isms" of late-20th-century America, from consumerism to feminism, and especially by what she saw as the decline of her beloved English language. Stafford wrote that she yearned for a world "predicated on the principles of construction and conservation," for a new "Age of Order"—perhaps for a culture more hospitable to "a writer as traditional as I."

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## OTHER NATIONS

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### Ukraine's Crash Landing?

*A Survey of Recent Articles*

What Ukraine needs is radical market reform—look at the political and social situation here, and you'll see that there's no alternative." So declared President Leonid Kuchma in October to the Communist-dominated Rada (parliament), which also happens to be the chief obstacle to such reform. Kuchma, who took office in July, said that he would reduce industrial subsidies, cut taxes, and begin massive privatization. He hopes thus to qualify for \$750 million in aid from the International Monetary Fund. Whether he will be able to get all of this done is an open question. Indeed, Ukraine's continued existence as a sovereign state is also an open question.

When Ukrainians voted overwhelmingly for independence from the Soviet Union in a referendum on December 1, 1991, many of them believed that democracy and the free market would automatically follow, writes Angela Stent, a Georgetown University political scientist, in *World Policy Journal* (Fall 1994). Now, they know better.

Ukraine (pop. 52 million) is still governed by its Soviet-era constitution because

the Rada has blocked efforts to have a new one drawn up. And while free elections for the parliament and the presidency have been held, Ukraine's economy is in a shambles, beset by high inflation and unemployment. Hardship is "widespread," Andrew Cowley reports in the *Economist* (May 7, 1994). The cost of food, by one estimate, rose more than 4,300 times between December 1991 and March 1993.

Under independent Ukraine's first president, Leonid Kravchuk, there was much talk about economic reform—but no reform. Misha Glenny, author of *The Fall of Yugoslavia* (1992), notes in an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (July 14, 1994) that Kravchuk "remained an unreconstructed Communist."

Kuchma, former head of the world's biggest missile factory, at Dnepropetrovsk, served as Kravchuk's prime minister from October 1992 to September 1993, when he resigned over the government's foot-dragging. He defeated Kravchuk in a run-off election for the presidency last July. That gives Ukraine "a chance to start over and take on the challenge of internal reconstruction," notes Eugene B.