that so fascinates the *artistic* imagination?" The words are critic Terry Eagleton's, but the question is Marjorie Perloff's. Professor of humanities at Stanford University and an authority on artistic modernism, Perloff finds a striking affinity between the philosophical practice of Ludwig Wittgenstein (especially late in his career) and the poetic practice of certain 20th-century avant-garde writers.

Unlike his philosophical contemporaries, Wittgenstein did not distinguish between "literary" and "ordinary" language. Nor did he lay claim to a philosophical "metalanguage" that could step outside everyday discourse and make pronouncements on how it works. In his later writings, especially the *Philosophical Investigations* (1958), Wittgenstein understood that language transcends our efforts to analyze it. "When I talk about language," he wrote, "I must speak the language of every day. Is this language somehow too coarse and material for what we want to say? *Then how is another one to be constructed*?"

This rejection of philosophical convention should have allied Wittgenstein with the artists of his time, argues Perloff. But he showed no interest in modernism. "It is a delicious irony," she writes, "that this iconoclast, who refused to listen to Mahler and Schönberg and paid little attention to the great art movements of his day, was himself the most radical of modernist writers." In such avant-garde figures as Gertrude Stein and Samuel Beckett, Perloff finds word play—puns, shifts of syntax, simultaneously proliferating and eroding meanings—similar to Wittgenstein's. It is in the move from expository to experiential narrative, whereby the reader puzzles out the text unaided, that she locates Wittgenstein's modernism.

Is Perloff justified in making Wittgenstein the "patron saint" of avant-garde literature? There is a cryptic charm in many of the philosopher's utterances, such as "Why can't my left hand give my right hand money?" And Wittgenstein did say that "philosophy ought really to be written only as a form of poetry." But does this make him kissing cousin to experimental poets such as Ingeborg Bachmann, Robert Creeley, and Ron Silliman? To Perloff, the answer is clearly yes, and she labors tirelessly at mapping every contour of resemblance. Yet her book neglects the most important difference between Wittgenstein and his literary admirers: his dense, startling style was a teacher's tool; theirs is a pupil's game.

—*Genevieve Abravanel*

Contemporary Affairs

ALL THAT WE CAN BE: Black Leadership and Racial Integration the Army Way.
By Charles C. Moskos and John Sibley Butler. Basic Books. 193 pp. $24

Part scholarly analysis, part policy prescription, part starry-eyed advocacy, this small book has a big agenda: the dismantling of "the paradigm of black failure." The authors, both veterans, sociologists, and noted observers of military affairs, advance two striking propositions.

First, they assert that the U.S. Army, beleaguered by racial problems in the aftermath of the Vietnam War, is now the nation's most successfully integrated institution. This change did not occur by chance, they argue, but rather as a result of a series of well-conceived reforms devised and forcefully implemented by the army's top uniformed and civilian leaders. Second, the authors suggest that the approach adopted by the army to close its racial divide provides a model for solving the seemingly intractable racial problems of the larger society.

Overall, the second proposition is less convincing than the first.

About the army's monumental achievement, Moskos and Butler are essentially correct. Black Americans accept the army's claim of zero tolerance of discrimination. Talented young African Americans see the army as an institution wherein effort correlates with re-

ward, and black leadership is nurtured. So they enlist and re-enlist in large numbers: in 1995, African Americans made up 27.2 percent of the army's total enlisted and officer personnel, their presence contributing greatly to the service's current health and effectiveness.

How was this accomplished? Not, as the opponents of affirmative action might wish, through the simple issuing of equal-opportunity edicts. As the authors insist, "The army is not race-blind; it is race-savvy." Given the racial climate outside the military, a level playing field alone would not suffice. So the army developed a comprehensive system of incentives and sanctions—the former generously underwritten, the latter strenuously enforced. For example, the army's "efficiency reports" (personnel evaluation reports) rate individuals on whether they support equal opportunity. Most get a positive rating; a negative one will stop a career in its tracks.

So far, so good. Yet in considering how to transfer this wisdom to the rest of society, the authors stumble. Applauding the army's blending of white and black folkways into a "multicultural uniculture," they propose a national embrace of "our common Afro-Anglo heritage." However stirring it sounds, this formulation leaves out the Navajos, recent arrivals from Mexico, and the second-generation Chinese Americans (to name but a few). Absent military-style discipline, such a narrow version of multiculturalism seems unlikely to command wide assent.

Such ruminations apart, the authors' chief concern is to promote national service. Indeed, this is their true agenda. Accepting (with reluctance) that the draft is unlikely to be reinstituted soon, Moskos and Butler propose national service as a way to mobilize young Americans in pursuit of common goals while teaching them valuable skills and easing racial tensions.

Yet there are problems with this proposed cure for racism. The army would likely oppose national service, on the grounds that it would hurt military recruiting. More important, national service would not entail the forced intimacy and shared hardship of military life—conditions that are essential to breaking down barriers and forging bonds of mutual respect. Cleaning up national parks or tutoring schoolchildren is hardly comparable to basic training, let alone combat.

—A. J. Bacevich

A GRAND ILLUSION?
An Essay on Europe.
By Tony Judt. Hill & Wang. 150 pp. $20.

Discussions of the European Union often work better than a lullaby: two minutes on exchange rates, and even the most seasoned Euro-wonk begins to nod. Less soporific, even bracing, is this short book by Judt, a professor of European studies at New York University. Judt avoids the drone by focusing on the big question: can the EU bring about an ever closer union and still accept new members on the same terms? Judt's answer, in a word (though with many qualifications), is no. The EU, he argues, was designed to accommodate the prosperous Europe of the Cold War—an entity that no longer exists.

Until recently, the European community worked well. Political leadership was shared by France and Germany. The economy expanded without a trace of the inflation and unemployment that plagued the continent before World War II. Prosperity blessed all social classes, and welfare was generous. But beginning in the 1970s, some of the old demons began to resurface. The resurgent influence of Germany magnified the relative decline of France. The 1974 oil crisis halted economic growth, giving rise to an urban underclass. And today, with the baby boom generation nearing retirement, the once robust European welfare states look sickly indeed.

Under these straitened circumstances, Judt notes, "it would be an act of charity" for the EU to accept its eastern neighbors as full members. Realizing this, Eastern Europe has been making its case in strategic terms: better for the West to give the East alms than leave it prey to a resurgent Russia. Yet Judt speculates that an eastern "buffer zone" would, by appearing to threaten Moscow, actually undermine Western security. At any rate, he says, the addition of any new members would only further paralyze decision making in Brussels.

Located in the prosperous, politically stable, culturally Franco-British Benelux countries, the EU's administration strikes Judt as seriously out of touch. Indeed, he maintains that, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, Germany has emerged as the de facto leader of Europe—a situation complicated by that nation's deep ambivalence toward its own power. With a characteristically apt turn of