

ing that a regulatory regime may be imposed on them, they prefer to make reductions now by their own choice and according to their own timetables.

In some cases, greenhouse-gas emissions can be cut in ways that also enhance efficiency and trim the costs of energy use or transportation. Thus, Cinergy, one of the nation's largest coal-fired electric utilities, aims to cut its carbon dioxide emissions by five percent by 2012; two-thirds of the \$21 million it plans to spend to accomplish that will go toward upgrading the efficiency of its plants.

Under the Kyoto treaty, an industrialized country that emits less than its quota of greenhouse gases can sell its unused allotment to an-

other industrialized country. This market-oriented approach is meant to reward top pollution reducers while allowing goals to be met with maximum economic efficiency. Some American-based companies with operations around the globe, such as Alcoa, the world's largest producer of aluminum, have instituted their own internal trading systems.

For companies, says Hoffman, reducing greenhouse-gas emissions can also be a way of minimizing financial risk, not only from damage caused by droughts, floods, and hurricanes resulting from climate change, but from the difficult-to-anticipate costs of complying with future mandatory regulations on greenhouse-gas emissions.

## ARTS & LETTERS

### *Permanent Aliens*

"Leaving the Center: The Modern Writer as Exile" by Morris Dickstein, in *The Common Review* (Summer 2005), 35 E. Wacker Dr., Chicago, Ill. 60601-2298.

There's a long tradition of writers living and working in exile. Usually they've been expelled for political offense, as Ovid was 2,000 years ago and Dante 1,300 years later. But the great modernist exiles—such as Henry James, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Samuel Beckett, and Vladimir Nabokov—embraced a different sort of separation, and they did so willingly. According to Dickstein, distinguished professor of English at the City University of New York Graduate Center, they were "exiles of the spirit rather than of the body politic," seeking a new contemporary idiom in which to express their alienation: "Exile is crucial to modern writing not simply because so many of its leading figures happened to leave home; they left home because they saw modern life itself as broken, dislocated, discontinuous with the past."

Dickstein calls Henry James the first spiritual expatriate, "at home everywhere and nowhere," and in his wake came Eliot and Pound and Henry Miller, all of whom left America to escape "a philistine hatred, fear, or incomprehension of art." Eliot and Pound shared James's absolute dedication to art and used the European past to create new traditions that were characteristically their own.

Joyce left Ireland behind—in life, though not in his work—and Kafka, a German-speaking Jew from Prague (in that identification there's already a wealth of displacement) made exile and homelessness even more central to his work than these themes had been for Joyce. Kafka "felt exiled from no place he could begin to imagine as his real home; the ultimate modernist, he felt exiled from life itself."

Kafka was an immense influence on the Dublin-born Beckett, another writer who believed he had no place to lose because he had none to begin with. Beckett eventually gave up his native English to free himself from its "dense network of literary associations" and from the towering figure of Joyce, whose secretary he had been in Paris in 1928, when he first left Ireland. The original language of the works for which he is perhaps best known, the plays *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, was French. Its abstractness "lent a piercing clarity to his sense of isolation and hopelessness"; his characters speak in largely unfurnished worlds, where their spare words do little more than mark time against death.

But gloom is not the only mood of modernism. Kafka thought his work comic, as Miller, exhilarated by the Paris of the 1930s, thought his. There's rueful comedy in Beckett

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too. And Nabokov, who was a political as well as a spiritual fugitive, and who, like Beckett, gave up his native language to write in another, found America a source of great interest and amusement. He made the abundance of his English a compensation for the loss of his beloved Russian. “In the splendid artificiality of his language, in its surface virtuosity,” Dickstein observes, “Nabokov shows us the shock of alienation as effectively as his

more downhearted predecessors.”

No matter how fully these writers embraced new countries and new languages, or settled into “that other homeland, the kingdom of art,” they were displaced persons, homeless in their native lands, strangers abroad. We remember them for having used the dislocation to their advantage by “turning exile and alienation into a unique vantage point, an angle of vision for interpreting the world.”

## *The Sound of Salinger’s Silence*

“Reading Salinger’s Silence” by Myles Weber, in *New England Review*, (Vol. 26, No. 2), Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vt. 05753.

Often when people say they write only for themselves, everyone else silently thanks them. In the case of J. D. Salinger, who has published not a word in 40 years, critics, scholars, and journalists have done little but badger and condemn him, writes Weber, a literary critic and the author of *Consuming Silences: How We Read Authors Who Don’t Publish* (2005).

Salinger became an American icon with the publication of his first book, *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951). He went on to publish *Nine Stories* (1953), *Franny and Zooey* (1961), and *Raise High the Roof-Beam, Carpenters; and Seymour: An Introduction* (1963). In 1965 a final short story, “Hapworth 16, 1924,” appeared in *The New Yorker*. And then began a silence all the more tantalizing because Salinger, 86, is alive and well and—by his own admission—still

writing. He refuses to talk to the press and lives in seclusion in Cornish, New Hampshire.

“The critical establishment, denied access for decades to whatever pages Salinger is actually accumulating in his desk drawer, simply will not permit Salinger to depart the active literary scene,” writes Weber. “Rather than disappear, he is reconfigured as a prolific, nearly conventional author inundating the marketplace with silence.”

And so Salinger has left himself—and, on occasion, his pet and his mailbox—open to interpretation. In 1975, C. David Heymann chronicled in *The Village Voice* his trip to Salinger’s home; he left with little to describe but a dog’s bark answering his knock: “It was a miserable whine, empty-sounding and hollow.” In 1977, *Esquire* ran an unsigned Salin-

### EXCERPT

## *Crazy Fame*

“Every time I think I am famous,” Virgil Thomson said, “I have only to go out into the world.” So it is, and so ought it probably to remain for writers, musicians, and visual artists who prefer to consider themselves, to put it as pretentiously as possible, sérieux. The comedian Richard Pryor once said that he would consider himself famous when people recognized him, as they recognized Bob Hope and Muhammed Ali, by his captionless caricature. That is certainly one clear criterion for celebrity. But the best criterion I’ve yet come across holds that you are celebrated, indeed famous, only when a crazy person imagines he is you. I especially like the fact that the penetrating and prolific author of this remark happens to go by the name of Anonymous.

—Joseph Epstein, former editor of *The American Scholar*, in *The Hedgehog Review* (Spring 2005)