

*Science & Technology***THE ORIGINS OF
KNOWLEDGE AND
IMAGINATION**

by Jacob Bronowski
Yale, 1978, 146 pp. \$7.95
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Uncertainty pervades all the efforts of men to know the external world and themselves. Such is the basic view stated by philosopher-mathematician Bronowski (1908-74), of BBC-TV *Ascent of Man* fame, in this eloquent little book of lectures. One of the least coarse instruments with which men seek to understand immensely complex and refined data, he believed, is science, which provides a dictionary for the testing and confirmation of perceptions of the real world. But, because everything in the universe is interconnected, each scientific explanation must be partial, relative, and mistaken. To Bronowski, although the delineation of a closed world system remains forever impossible, progress in knowledge takes place through the eradication of error.

**COMPUTER CAPERS:
Tales of Electronic Thievery,
Embezzlement, and Fraud**

by Thomas Whiteside
Crowell, 1978
164 pp. \$7.95
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We have no evidence of an electronic homicide (yet). But computer crimes perpetrated by ingenious or merely opportunistic humans range from those as serious as the 1973 Equity Funding case, which cost shareholders millions of dollars and was a swindle masterminded by company management, to the destruction of Girl Scout records by a disgruntled employee who ran a magnet over reeled tape at the Scouts' national headquarters. A high quotient of amusing anecdotes makes this collection of articles good reading. But Whiteside's serious purpose is to offer the public a view of the scope and magnitude of computer-assisted theft and fraud in a period when many important changes in computer use are taking place; his treatment of the vulnerability of Electronic Funds Transfer Systems (EFTS) is particularly timely. "Crime by computer is relatively new," he says. "But when it strikes it is not shy." Understand the electronic tools on which we depend, he cautions; don't bend, fold, spindle, or mutilate; and above all don't always believe neatly printed numbers.

PAPERBOUNDS

VIRGINIA WOOLF: The Inward Voyage. By Harvena Richter. Princeton reprint, 1978. 290 pp. \$4.95

In a year that has seen an unprecedented outpouring of books about Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) and her circle, is this paperback edition of a 1970 study superfluous? No. The flourishing new Bloomsbury industry is based largely on collections of letters, diaries, and the fugitive journalism of Mrs. Woolf, her husband Leonard, and their literary group. Much of it deals in gossip. Richter, an English professor at the University of New Mexico, provides something else. Her systematic analysis of character portrayal in the Woolf novels is persuasive even when applied—no easy task—to the levels of fantasy represented by the hallucinations of Rachel ill with typhoid in *The Voyage Out* (1915) and the disturbed minds of Septimus Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and Rhoda in *The Waves* (1931). Richter is always on the lookout for the novelist's "intensity of identification" with her characters, which she described as an irresistible urge "to lodge myself somewhere on the firm flesh, in the robust spine, wherever I can penetrate or find foothold," until, finally inside, "we reach the eyes." Mrs. Woolf's achievement was that she took the reader inside with her so often.

ISRAEL AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS. By Edmund Wilson. Farrar, 1978. 432 pp. \$5.95

In 1947 a Bedouin boy known as Muhammed the Wolf was tending goats on the western shore of the Dead Sea. He tossed a stone into a cave, heard something break, and ran away in fright. Later he returned to find several tall clay jars containing those now-famous leather Hebrew scrolls that Edmund Wilson described for the *New Yorker* in 1955. Fol-

lowing a second visit to Jerusalem in 1967, Wilson updated his scholarly detective story in *The Dead Sea Scrolls, 1947–69*. This book encompasses discoveries of other scrolls, the disputes over the dating of the scrolls (100 B.C., 200 B.C., earlier?), and the continuing debate over the significance of the texts. Incontestably pre-Christian, the scrolls anticipate much of the New Testament. Now, in this paperback edition, enriched by the addition of 100 pages on Israel from *Red, Blond, Black, and Olive* (1956), we learn how Wilson, while giving a seminar in criticism at Princeton in 1952, began to study Hebrew at the university's Theological Seminary. Why? Because he had found a Hebrew Bible belonging to his grandfather, a Presbyterian minister. It piqued his pride and curiosity. A noted intellectual in his late fifties who had mastered Latin and Greek (as well as French and Russian), Wilson had never seriously read the Old Testament. Soon finding himself "heavily enmeshed in 3,000 years of Jewish literature and history," he was the right man for the *New Yorker* to send as its investigator to the shores of the Dead Sea.

GUTS & GLORY: Great American War Movies. By Lawrence H. Suid. Addison-Wesley, 1978. 379 pp. \$6.95 (cloth, \$12.95)

At least two authors of recent books about Vietnam—Philip Caputo in *A Rumor of War* and Ron Kovic in *Born on the Fourth of July*—have made much of growing up with Hollywood pictures of war in their heads. This book brings those pictures into focus. Don't be put off by the title. Suid has given us not another edited coffee-table picture book but a serious, important study. He examines more than 70 war films from World War I (*The Big Parade, What Price Glory?*) to Vietnam (*The Green Berets, Apocalypse Now*). In

every case his overriding interest is the military services' relations with Hollywood film factories in the making of these movies. Readers may disagree with Suid's interpretation of some films but will find much to ponder in his overall analysis of how Hollywood has reflected changes in America's image of its soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines.

ELS QUATRE GATS: Art in Barcelona Around 1900. By Marilyn McCully. Princeton, 1978. 160 pp. \$10.50 (cloth, \$25)

Spain's Catalonia between 1890 and 1910 was a nursery for modern art. The name of a Barcelona tavern that became a headquarters for the best Catalan artists, Els Quatre Gats, is still attached to *modernismo*. During the six lively years the café was open it was always filled with popular ceramic art, and crowds were attracted to its puppet shows and exhibitions of paintings. Pablo Picasso had a show there in 1900. He also designed many of the tavern's flyers, posters, menu covers, and possibly its sign of four (really two, shadowed) cats. All are among this book's 76 spirited illustrations. Others are by painters Pere Romeu, Miguel Utrillo, Santiago Rusinol, and Ramon Casas, the moving spirits of the place and its real-life "four cats"—a colloquial Catalan expression for "only a few people." When they began to disperse, going to Paris and elsewhere, their meeting place closed, signaling the end of a brief moment of intense artistic activity in the history of modern Spain.

STALKING THE WILD TABOO. By Garrett Hardin. Kaufmann, 1978. 293 pp. \$4.95 (cloth, \$11.95)

In 1956 Garrett Hardin, professor of human ecology at the University of California, published an essay entitled "The Meaninglessness of the Word Protoplasm." It raised enough dust to set him

on the track of taboos or prohibitions that, in our society as in more primitive cultures, exclude words or subjects from "*use, approach, or mention*, because of their sacred and inviolable nature." In this book he discusses abortion (Right-to-Lifers operate within "the mainstream of Western civilization," making a Twenty-Eighth Amendment "giving the zygote all the rights to existence enjoyed by an adult" still a possibility). He also swings into religion (the meek "*have inherited the earth*. How many heroes do you number among your neighbors?"); certain aspects of technology (the high cost of predicting earthquakes makes it more sensible not to try); certain kinds of competition (the abyss within academe that separates biologists and sociologists is hidden behind "professional courtesy"—to him "a euphemism for taboo"). No breast-beater, Hardin depends on wit and verve to hold the reader.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NIGHT AND DAY. By Bin Ramke. Yale, 1978. 74 pp. \$2.95 (cloth, \$7.95)

Editor Richard Hugo's fine first selection for the Yale Younger Poets series introduces a Texas writer whose subjects seem to make up an impossible conglomeration: Corpus Christi processions in Texas Baptist towns, the science and apparatus of astronomy, infidelity and lust, the voice of Baron Corvo, the death of a dog. But with these images Bin Ramke forges a poetry of great strength, even at its most personal and arcane. Isolation is a constant theme: that of "my first major sacrilege" (taking communion without having gone to confession); the loneliness of a man driving the long miles from his lover to his wife; the separateness of a man hearing the faint cries of his wife in childbirth ("*the bones of the ear are unbelievably small and can never be mended*"). The moments of human connection are rare; only a dog "*loved me like clockwork until he died.*"