
PAPERBOUNDS

CRIMINAL VIOLENCE, CRIMINAL JUSTICE. By Charles E. Silberman. Vintage reprint, 1980. 745 pp. \$4.95

This year, three Americans out of 100 are likely to be victims of violent crimes; one household in 10 will be burglarized. Afraid? Two of 5 people—in large cities, one out of two—fear going out alone at night. In this far-ranging and well-documented study, writer Silberman surveys America's prisons, police, courts, and juvenile justice systems. He paints a bleak picture: "No approach to rehabilitation seems to work." Yet, he argues, tougher punishment is not the answer. "When people feel that the criminal justice system is too harsh, they become reluctant to cooperate with the police and courts." Among Silberman's suggestions: Police departments should build stronger ties to their communities by, for example, reinstating foot patrols. Juvenile courts should stop handling truancy and runaway cases; they should exercise jurisdiction only when a child's actions would be considered criminal if committed by an adult. Silberman backs up his proposals with case studies of programs that have worked and, he argues, can be made to work again.

BERTOLT BRECHT: Poems, 1913–1956. Edited by John Willett and Ralph Manheim. Methuen, 1980. 627 pp. \$12.50 (cloth, \$25)

Bertolt Brecht is more renowned for his plays—*The Threepenny Opera*, *Mother Courage*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*—than for his poetry. Brecht (1898–1956) wanted it that way. Two-thirds of the 500 poems in this collection were not published in any form during his lifetime. Nevertheless, W. H. Auden (and many

later literary critics) thought him a better poet than a playwright. Brecht's poetry is expansive; he wrote lyrical poems, unrhymed political verse, ballads, love poems, sonnets, and children's verse. All share a simplicity of style and an unswerving identification with the common man (. . . *the compassion of the oppressed for the oppressed is indispensable/It is the world's one hope*). A long-time foe of the Nazis, Brecht fled war-torn Europe for California in 1941; he returned to East Germany in 1947 and embraced communism. Western officials labeled him the "communist poet laureate." Yet, Brecht never let go of his essential humanity—or his sense of humor. When East German workers rioted in 1953, he deflated outraged party officials in verse: *Would it not be easier . . . for the government/To dissolve the people/and elect another?*

IN PATAGONIA. By Bruce Chatwin. Summit reprint, 1980. 205 pp. \$4.95

In 1865, a band of Welsh coal miners "combed the earth for a stretch of open country uncontaminated by Englishmen." They settled in Patagonia, where their independent-minded descendants live today. At the southern tip of Argentina and Chile, Patagonia's Cape Horn was, before construction of the Panama Canal, a landmark for sea voyagers. Today, the region's southern desert remains wild, rugged, sparsely populated. Chatwin, a British travel writer, whose grandmother's cousin lost a ship in the Horn's Strait of Magellan, roamed this desolate landscape, interviewing the miners and herdsman, the descendants of runaway criminals, revolutionaries, and sailors lured by the place's "absolute remoteness." Charles Darwin traveled to

Patagonia in 1832 and came away four years later with an idea, "for the mere sight of the [Tierra del] Fuegians helped trigger off the theory that Man had evolved from an ape-like species." In 97 observant sketches, Chatwin depicts daily life—then and now—at the "uttermost part of the earth."

SOCIOBIOLOGY: The Abridged Edition. By Edward O. Wilson. Harvard, 1980. 366 pp. \$9.95 (cloth, \$18.50)

The debate over the biological roots of animal and human social behavior heated up in 1975 with the publication of *Sociobiology* by Harvard biologist Wilson. This abridged version for the layman eliminates the technical expositions and data summaries but retains all the basic propositions. Specific (but as yet undiscovered) genes, Wilson contends, predispose humans variously toward altruism, guilt, even homosexuality. Natural selection not only determines the color of our eyes but also, to an extent, the way we care for our children, and explains why we will sometimes give up our own lives so that others might live. The old maxim that "the chicken is only an egg's way of making another egg has been mod-

ernized: the organism is only DNAs way of making more DNA," Wilson declares. He systematically traces the social behavior of ants and bees, birds, dolphins, elephants, bears, lions, and finally man. Wilson's theories have drawn sharp criticism, notably from philosophers and political scientists who oppose any reduction of the social sciences and humanities to branches of biology. Sociobiology, they argue, ignores, or worse yet, disparages the age-old concept of free will.

MY LIFE. By George Sand. Harper reprint, 1980. 246 pp. \$3.95

George Sand, the Frenchwoman who shocked her peers by renouncing her comfortable marriage and country estate for the writer's garret, penned her autobiography to set the record straight—at a time (1854–55) when much of her career lay still before her. Sand was born Aurore Dupin in 1804, "the last year of the Republic and the first of the Empire." As a child, she witnessed the turmoil wrought by the French Revolution from her aristocratic grandmother's country home and, later, from a convent school in Paris. At 18, she married; but feeling that "my small fortune, my freedom to do nothing, my supposed right to command a certain number of human beings . . . went against my tastes, my logic, my talents," she fled. Back in Paris, at age 26, she wore men's clothes, joined the literary avant-garde, and began work on the first of some 80 Romantic novels (among them, *Lélia*, *The Haunted Pool*, *The Master Bell-Ringers*) until her death in 1876. In clean, energetic prose, Sand describes the artists' enclave of Paris—the self-satisfaction and childishness of her friend Balzac, the affectations of Stendhal, the genius and torment of her lover, Frédéric Chopin. Sand chose not to be the central figure of her autobiography, weaving instead a rich tapestry of people and events in post-Revolutionary France.



By Sarah Landrs. From *Sociobiology*. Used by permission of Harvard University Press.