
PAPERBOUNDS

COLLECTED STORIES. By Frank O'Connor. Vintage, 1982. 702 pp. \$8.95

Before his death in 1966, the Irishman Frank O'Connor was one of the great 20th-century masters of the short story. Unfortunately, by mid-century, the market for this once-popular form was much diminished: O'Connor never won the reputation he deserved. Bad luck for the reading public too, for O'Connor was one of the great "natural storytellers." Reviving the bluff and tender characters of an Ireland in transit from rural to urban, his stories are carried forward by voices—the yarn-spinning voice of a narrator, the garrulous voices of dialogue. His themes are Irish and universal—the vice of extreme patriotism (in "Guests of the Nation," Irish insurgents are ordered to kill two British prisoners whom they have befriended) or the folly of inflexibility. Yet O'Connor delighted in his fellow countrymen, even when he thought them foolish: "The Bishop had once been Professor of Dogmatic Theology in a seminary; a subject that came quite naturally to him, for he was a man who would have dogmatized in any station of life."

THE ORIGIN OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE BREAKDOWN OF THE BICAMERAL MIND. By Julian Jaynes. Houghton, 1982. 467 pp. \$9.95

In *The Iliad*, mortals do not make decisions. Gods do. This, according to Jaynes, a Princeton psychologist, was no mere literary convention. In early human societies, claims Jaynes, "gods" truly governed human affairs. Basing his argument on hemispheric differences of the human brain and on a wealth of archaeological lore (Greek, Egyptian, Mayan, Hebrew), Jaynes speculates that human behavior was once governed by "voices"

emanating from the brain's right hemisphere. Representing the collective wisdom essential to survival, the voices were seldom doubted or disobeyed by members of early social groups. But between 3000 and 1000 B.C., the voices grew silent. Increasing social complexity, growing populations, and possibly great natural disasters demanded too much of the right hemisphere; the left hemisphere, with its capacity for self-awareness and rational decision-making, began to assert control and to tilt the "bicameral" balance. But elements of the bicameral mind survive to this day—in religion, poetry, and schizophrenia.

ENGLISH CULTURE AND THE DECLINE OF THE INDUSTRIAL SPIRIT, 1850–1980. By Martin J. Wiener. Cambridge, 1982. 217 pp. \$7.95

England at the time of London's Great Exhibition of 1851 was the center of the industrial revolution, the vanguard of material progress, and the home of a new and triumphant middle class. By the 1970s, this once-preëminent nation was caught in a spiral of declining industrial productivity. Wiener, a Rice historian, proposes a cultural explanation to complement the usual economic ones. Aristocratic, gentlemanly values, like the class that prized them, survived more vigorously in England than in France or Germany. The commercial class, even at its height, felt mocked by the aristocracy's confidence and style. For more than a century, not only in most literature but in various movements (e.g., sentimental medievalism) and institutions (e.g., the elite schools and universities), the children of the middle class were taught disdain for cities, engineers, business, and petty materialistic ambition. And England slowly lost its competitive edge.