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preserved Kafka's writings for posterity against the author's wishes, recalled that Kafka's last love, Dora Dymant, burned at the writer's request several manuscripts, including a story on Beiliss. Though Kafka often belittled his Jewish heritage, he lived in the Jewish ghetto, attended synagogue occasionally, and regularly read *Selbtswehr*, a weekly for Bohemian Jews that reported on Beiliss's ordeal and its violent fallout obsessively.

Selbtswehr's coverage of the hearing harped on several themes Kafka would later incorporate into *The Trial*, *The Castle*, and other works—the perversion of truth by a truth-seeking process; and the threat to society posed by an official vendetta against an individual. Missing, however, is the gradual acceptance of guilt by Kafka's protagonists.

Kafka both resented and accepted authority. Biographers have traced his "self-corrosive guilt" to a threatening, domineering father. In Beiliss's undeserved plight, Band suggests, Kafka glimpsed a vehicle for expressing his own feelings.

Not Nostalgia But Populism

"Andrew Wyeth: Popular Painting and Populism" by Andrew Brighton, in *Art Monthly* (June 1980), 37 Museum St., London, WC1A 1LP, United Kingdom.

Most viewers look at Andrew Wyeth's widely reproduced painting, *Christina's World* (1948), and see a touching picture of a young woman in contemplation, overcome by longing in a benign rustic setting. But liberal critics dismiss it as just one more example of Wyeth's exaggerated, even reactionary, nostalgia.

Brighton, a lecturer at the Oxford Polytechnic in England, reminds Wyeth's detractors that the real Christina Olsen (Wyeth's neighbor in Maine) was crippled. Wyeth, he argues, has caught her pulling herself up a hill, useless legs dragging behind her. This "harsh vision" reflects one of Wyeth's prime themes—existence after the departure of God—and shows him to be a major 20th-century painter.

Wyeth's best work evinces a Protestant New England brand of populism, argues Brighton: Art is valid only if based on "real" values, not "vacuous pleasures" or aristocratic pretension, a view instilled in Wyeth by his father, a noted illustrator. "Artists are not living hard enough," N. C. Wyeth wrote in 1921. Inspiration, he believed, must come from toil—"lifting . . . sweating . . . squinting into the sun and enjoying it."

After his father died in 1945, Wyeth's work dealt increasingly with death and loss. He retained the painter-illustrator Norman Rockwell technique taught him by his father. Yet he refined it by adding the "infinity of detail" found in photography. Wyeth uses this detail to make the familiar unfamiliar. His painstaking rendering of countless blades of grass in *Winter 1946*, or of wood grains in *Weatherside* (1965), recall a child's reaction when the "enclosed, warm, familiar world [is] suddenly seen as a mere speck in an indifferent and cold universe," writes Brighton.

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The Puritans believed that work gave each man his identity. Wyeth laments, above all, the passing of this belief. His paintings frequently show lone, self-absorbed country folk, apparently oblivious to the signs of their labor that surround them. To many critics, these canvases represent a blind yearning for America's rural past. But Brighton argues that they are a protest against dehumanizing industrialism that even Wyeth's critics on the Left should appreciate.

Robert Frost As Critic

"Robert Frost: On the Dialectics of Poetry" by Sheldon Liebman, in *American Literature* (May 1980), Duke University Press Bldg., East Campus, Duke University, Durham, N.C. 27706.

Robert Frost (1874–1963) adamantly refused to publicize his theories about poetry. He nevertheless established himself as a major critic of verse in letters to friends and in interviews, writes Liebman, professor of English at the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle.

Frost believed that the creative process begins with a descent into "chaos." In one sense, he saw chaos as reverie. "All of a sudden something becomes prominent [and] I can pick the poem off it," he said in 1960. But Frost's chaos was also an objective fact, the reality lying beneath the manmade order of everyday life. To appreciate it, the poet abandoned conventional, rational ways of perceiving and cultivated the "hearing imagination," listening for his own "tone of voice" as well as the sounds and phrases of others.

Frost denied that poets bring raw material to life through an act of will. The poem makes itself, he argued, explaining, "Like a piece of ice on a hot stove, the poem must ride on its own melting." Poetry, he stressed, "must be a revelation . . . as much for the poet as for the reader."

Yet Frost denounced modern poets who wrote as if "wildness" and "sound" were all they needed. "Emotions must be dammed back and harnessed by discipline to the wit mill, not just turned loose in exclamations," he maintained. The whole function of poetry is the "renewal of words"—the recovery of lost original meanings, and, through metaphor, the reaffirmation of a word in a new context. Ultimately, poetry was to Frost a "voyage of discovery" beginning in chaos and ending in clarity and insight.

The Beleaguered Acropolis

"Truth at a Loss" by John Appleton, in *Museum Magazine* (July–August 1980), Museum Circulation Service, P. O. Box 1200, Bergenfield, N.J. 07621.

Revered as a great monument of Western culture, Athens's Acropolis has suffered extraordinary indignities.

The site was sanctified by the ancient Greeks in the 5th century B.C.,