A

Life in Gentilly is very peaceful. I manage a small branch office of my uncle's brokerage firm. My home is the basement apartment of a raised bungalow belonging to Mrs Schexnaydre, the widow of a fireman. I am a model tenant and a model citizen and take pleasure in doing all that is expected of me. My wallet is full of identity cards, library cards, credit cards. Last year I purchased a flat olive-drab strongbox, very smooth and heavily built with double walls for fire protection, in which I placed my birth certificate, college diploma, honorable discharge, G.I. insurance, a few stock certificates, and my inheritance: a deed to ten acres of a defunct duck club down in St Bernard Parish, the only relic of my father's many enthusiasms. It is a pleasure to carry out the duties of a citizen and to receive in return a receipt or a neat styrene card with one's name on it certifying, so to speak, one's right to exist. What satisfaction I take in appearing the first day to get my auto tag and brake sticker! I subscribe to *Consumer Reports* and as a consequence I own a first-class television set, an all but silent air conditioner and a very long lasting deodorant. My armpits never stink. I pay attention to all spot announcements on the radio about mental health, the seven signs of cancer, and safe driving – though, as I say, I usually prefer to ride the bus. Yesterday a favorite of mine, William Holden, delivered a radio announcement on litterbugs. 'Let's face it,' said Holden. 'Nobody can do anything about it – but you and me.' This is true. I have been careful ever since.

I

In the evenings I usually watch television or go to the movies. Week-ends I often spend on the Gulf Coast. Our neighborhood theater in Gentilly has permanent lettering on the front of the marquee reading: Where Happiness Costs So Little. The fact is I am quite happy in a movie, even a bad movie. Other people, so I have read, treasure memorable moments in their lives: the time one climbed the Parthenon at sunrise, the summer night one met a lonely girl in Central Park and achieved with her a sweet and natural relationship, as they say in books. I too once met a girl in Central Park, but it is not much to remember. What I remember is the time John Wayne killed three men with a carbine as he was falling to the dusty street in *Stagecoach*, and the time the kitten found Orson Welles in the doorway in *The Third Man*.

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ELE 5B

My companion on these evening outings and weekend trips is usually my secretary. I have had three secretaries, girls named Marcia, Linda, and now Sharon. Twenty years ago, practically every other girl born in Gentilly must have been named Marcia. A year or so later it was Linda. Then Sharon. In recent years I have noticed that the name Stephanie has come into fashion. Three of my acquaintances in Gentilly have daughters named Stephanie. Last night I saw a TV play about a nuclear test explosion. Keenan Wynn played a troubled physicist who had many a bad moment with his conscience. He took solitary walks in the desert. But you could tell that in his heart of hearts he was having a very good time with his soul-searching. 'What right have we to do what we are doing?' he would ask his colleagues in a bitter voice. 'It's my four-year-old daughter I'm really thinking of,' he told another colleague and took out a snapshot. 'What kind of future are we building for her?' 'What is your daughter's name?' asked the colleague, looking at the picture. 'Stephanie,' said Keenan Wynn in a gruff voice. Hearing the name produced a sharp tingling sensation on the back of my neck. Twenty years from now I shall perhaps have a rosy young Stephanie perched at my typewriter.

II

Naturally I would like to say that I had made conquests of these splendid girls, my secretaries, casting them off one after the other like old gloves, but it would not be strictly true. They could be called love affairs, I suppose. They started off as love affairs anyway, fine careless raptures in which Marcia or Linda (but not yet Sharon) and I would go spinning along the Gulf Coast, lie embracing in a deserted cove of Ship Island, and hardly believe our good fortune, hardly believe that the world could contain such happiness. Yet in the case of Marcia and Linda the affair ended just when I thought our relationship was coming into its best phase. The air in the office would begin to grow thick with silent reproaches. It would become impossible to exchange a single word or glance that was not freighted with a thousand hidden meanings. Telephone conversations would take place at all hours of the night, conversations made up mostly of long silences during which I would rack my brain for something to say while on the other end you could hear little else but breathing and sighs. When these long telephone silences come, it is a sure sign that love is over. No, they were not conquests. For in the end my Lindas and I were so sick of each other that we were delighted to say good-by.

III

Walker Percy : *The Moviegoer*, 1960, pp 11-13.

B

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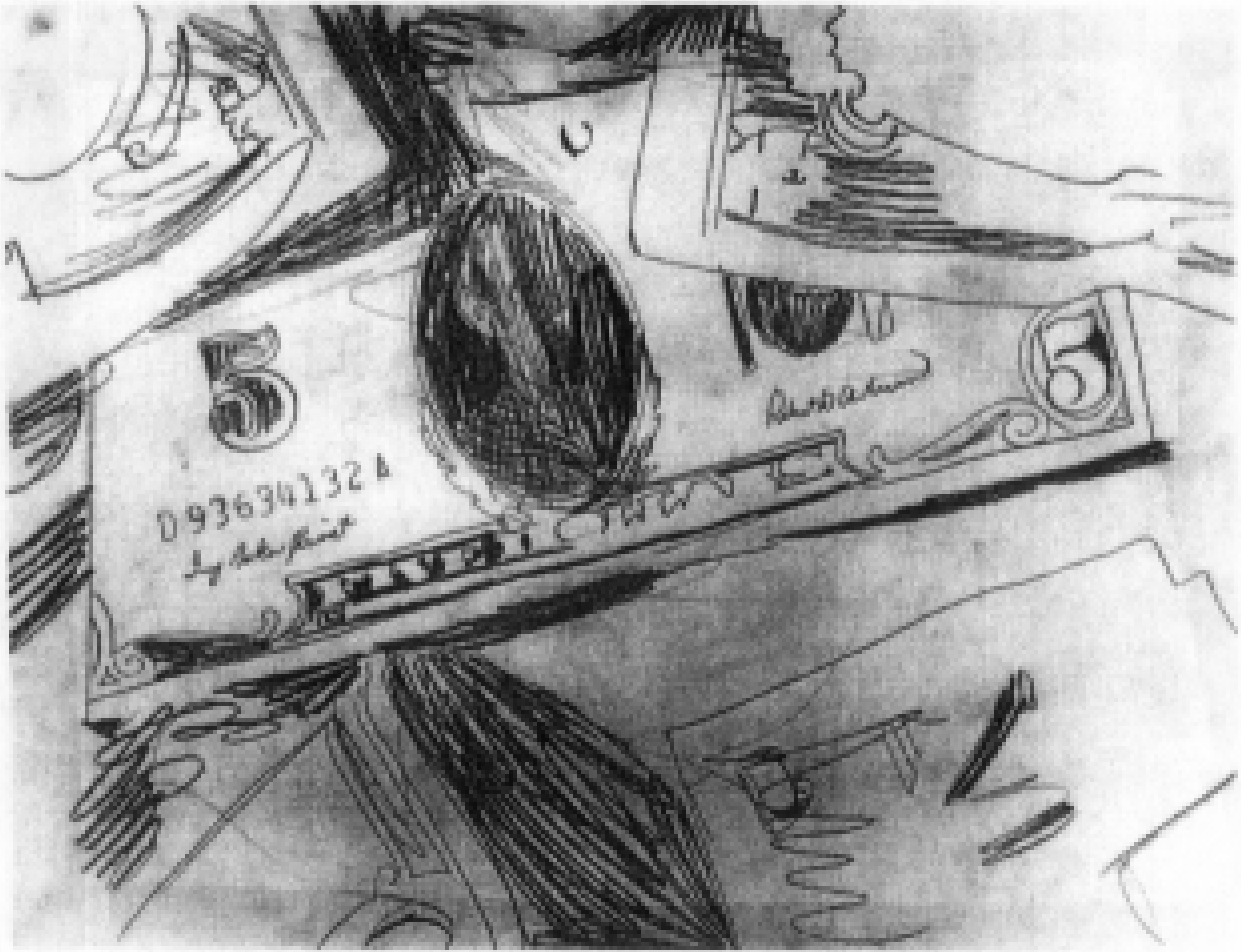

Andy Warhol : *Five-Dollar Bill, Incomplete*, 1962, pencil on paper, 45 X 60 cm.

C

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ELE5B

If there is anything anthropologists learn in studying the varied peoples and cultures of the world, it is that, so far as man is concerned, reality has no chance at all of competing with unreality. Images are what count in men's minds, and man has the most phenomenal ability to make what is into what he would like to be. Take Americans, for instance. They have the curious idea that what the rest of the world admires and wants in their culture is immaterial things of an idealistic and nebulous nature, and it distresses them to find that people of other countries approbate those parts of American culture that Americans abominate. Anthropologists who have seriously concerned themselves with human behavior know that man's works—which they call "culture"—are vastly more important in understanding his behavior than man himself. So when the culture of America is seen manifestly and inescapably to be oriented toward materialism, it is only the stubborn and impractical idealist who insists on seeing the primacy of spirituality in the nation's ethos. And when culture pays big money to an activity, it is because culture, wiser than either the individual or the aggregate of its people, values that activity. People of other countries, standing off in a more objective view of America than Americans have, agree with American culture. Folklore—especially folksong—is big money in America, and Americans don't like that reality very much; but the other nations of the world see and approve. Let me give you an example or two.

As a working anthropologist, I recently spent some time in one of the most isolated areas of the inhabited world—the far northwest corner of South Australia. This is a place of frightening solitude and barrenness; it is the center of 300,000 square miles of virtually uninhabited semi-desert, where one can travel in any direction for three hundred miles without striking a town or a village. The only human beings who make this dry wilderness their permanent home are a few hundred aborigines, the most primitive people on earth. Except for the barest superficialities, these natives of the dead heart of Australia live in the Old Stone Age. Their tools are made of wood and stone and those few bits of iron that filter in from the outside. They have no farming or other controlled food resources, no houses or shelter, and only rags of clothing given them by the dozen or so missionaries and government workers who venture into the Australian center. They are almost as far from civilization as we are from the moon.

We went into their country to study their electrolyte metabolism—to see how they cope with an atmosphere whose evaporation rate is ten times its precipitation—a subject that permitted more of their children to be present at our work than anthropologists ordinarily see. At the end of one day of sweat sampling and blood testing, I gathered a half dozen small children around my tape recorder and asked them to sing for me. I expected a childish imitation of the strange, cascading chants of their parents, for these children had never been in a town, had never seen a motion-picture theater, had never put a record on a phonograph, and had never sat goggle-eyed before a television set. In fact, they knew no English at all, yet what they sang into my microphone was "Davy Crockett, King of the Wild Frontier." There is a tragi-comic irony in this vignette: the grandchildren of my friend Tom Blackburn, the composer of "Davy Crockett," don't know the song at all, for it belonged to an age group just beyond theirs!

Stone Age children singing of a partly fictional American congressman is not an isolated or even an unusual instance of the fantastic penetrating power of American folksong, real or artificial (the folk nowhere make the niggling distinctions between "genuine" and "factitious" that folklorists do, so long as the article feels right in their culture).

John Greenway : "Folklore and the Big Money", in *American Folklore*, Washington, US : Voice of America, 1968, pp 317-319.

TWO FORCES.

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B

ELE 6B

As Secretary of State for Northern Ireland I found myself performing a dual role, as a Governor-General representing the Queen and as such the enemy of every Republican in the Province, but also as a Secretary of State acting like a referee in a boxing ring whose authority seemed to be resented equally by both sides.

I was combining two tasks kept separate until the introduction of direct rule by Westminster in 1972. At one minute I was discharging duties previously performed by the Governor-General on behalf of the Queen, the next I was, in effect, the Prime Minister of the Province. I was living at Hillsborough Castle, in the countryside of Down, the former residence of the Governors-General of Northern Ireland, which is why nationalists do not like going there for ceremonial events such as the summer garden parties. I was working at Stormont on the outskirts of Belfast, the traditional base of Government in Northern Ireland and a symbol of the Union for all unionists.

My political role was unique in itself. I was the head of Government, yet my own political base was not in the Province but across the Irish Sea in Britain. On many occasions I felt as though I was a foreigner in another land. In the space of my first few weeks I was picketed by Republicans at Derry, who shouted the same slogan – 'Brits Out' – as the Loyalists shouted at Newtownards a few weeks later. My specially protected official car was attacked and half dented at Londonderry by some of Ian Paisley's supporters, the very people who pay homage to the Queen, and whose symbol is the Union Jack.

What also made my job different from that of any other Secretary of State, apart from the Foreign Secretary, was the importance of establishing close relations with another Government, the Republic of Ireland. This was essential, because of the strength of the Irish tradition in the North, where around 40 per cent of the population identify with Dublin and because any Dublin Government is bound to be concerned with their interests.

Our two countries have so many things in common. We are part of the British Isles ; we share the same language ; for many years we were one kingdom ; we may have a different mixture of blood in our veins but for so much of our history we have shared one culture and been one people. It seemed absolutely crazy that we should not find means of coming closer to each other when we faced a common threat from terrorism.

I went to Dublin in early November for my first meeting with Dr Garret FitzGerald, the Republic's Prime Minister, or Taoiseach. We spent a friendly and happy evening at the guest house outside Dublin given to the Irish Government by Elizabeth Arden. Garret was an easy man to get on with, more of a don than a politician, who had once been Dublin correspondant for the *Financial Times*. He tells the story that after he had entered politics and became a Minister, the *FT* phoned him up and asked for a piece on Irish politics, clearly under the impression that he was still their 'stringer' and oblivious to his membership of the Government.

When I returned to Northern Ireland after my visit to Dublin, I was heavily criticised by Unionist politicians. What possible good could come from my talk with the Taoiseach ?

After the first few weeks I also had a long talk with Enoch Powell, who has sat in the Commons as a Unionist MP since October 1974. He said that I should never use the word 'reconciliation', because in Northern Ireland it means reconciliation between the two parts of the island as well as between the Irish and Unionist traditions on the island, and is therefore totally inacceptable to the Unionists. If this had been sound advice, it would have been a chilling commentary on Unionist thinking. In fact, Enoch's advice was wrong because I was to hear many people on both sides talk about the need for reconciliation, none more so than moderate Protestant churchmen who have in many cases, in very difficult circumstances and under great provocation from some of their congregations achieved moderation.

James Prior (Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, 1981-1984),
A Balance of Power, Londres : Hamish Hamilton, 1986, pp. 181-183.

C

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ELE 6B

The British troops were first in Derry, then Belfast, and then all over the north. It was strange at first to see their heavily armoured vehicles on the quiet country roads. Helicopters would land in fields near the house, their blades beating flat the grass and startling the cattle where they grazed. 'I suppose we'll get used to it,' Charlie said, to which Brian replied, 'Well, you shouldn't. They ought not to be here, and don't you forget it.'

Brian was not alone in his growing militancy. By the end of the year, the attitude of most of the people they knew towards the soldiers had soured considerably. Charlie wouldn't be drawn on this, and protested mildly that they'd done him no harm. His contact with the army was mostly confined to brief exchanges at security checkpoints, until the day the military actually came to call on them at home.

They were all at table in the kitchen one Saturday in the middle of the day, when Kate, who was facing the window, suddenly said, 'Daddy, there's a soldier in the back yard; no, more than one, look!' At that moment, someone knocked on the back door. 'You all stay here,' their father said, as he went to answer it. They sat, hushed, trying to hear what was being said, and when their father came back into the room, there were two soldiers with him.

'These men want to ask us a few questions,' he said to Emily.

'We'll go into the front room, then,' she said, seeing the soldiers glance at the remains of the meal on the table.

The room into which they all now went was dark, formal and seldom used. Emily and the children perched stiffly on the armchairs and sofa, Charlie stood with his back to the cold hearth, and the younger of the two soldiers, who was carrying a long gun, moved over towards the china cabinet. Through the small, deep windows, they could see the shadow of another soldier standing by the front door, and yet another was hunkered down beside the tree. Taking out a notebook and pen the soldier who was obviously in charge explained politely that their regiment, which he named, was new to the area, and they needed to have some information on people living locally. He said that their help and co-operation would be appreciated.

'I'll start with you, Sir, if I may. Your name?'

'Charles Quinn.'

'Can you spell that for me, please?'

The soldier went on to ask his middle names, his occupation and date of birth. 'And now you, Madam.'

'Emily Mary Quinn.'

'Maiden name?'

She looked surprised at this, but she answered.

'Date of birth?'

She flashed a glance at the children, then looked at her finger-nails and mumbled something.

'I'm sorry, Madam?' She repeated what she had said, loud enough to be audible this time, but in sullen tones.

'And now these young ladies,' he said, smiling at the sisters. They saw their parents look at each other, puzzled and slightly alarmed. Their father shrugged and coughed. 'Well, that's Helen,' he said before Helen herself could speak, 'and she was born on the tenth of January 1959.' When the soldier had full details of everyone in the house, down to and including Sally, he asked if anyone else lived with them, or stayed in the house frequently. He wanted to know how many outbuildings there were on the farm, and whether or not they had a dog.

'I suppose you want to know the dog's name too,' Sally said, and the soldier, looking up sharply from his notebook, stared hard at her. 'He — he's called Brandy,' she said, in a voice barely above a whisper.

'Is he now?' the soldier said, smiling. 'And is he a good dog?' Sally nodded.

'I have a dog at home in England,' he said, pleasantly, as he put away his notebook and pen. 'He's called Muffin. He's a Labrador.'

'I don't know what Brandy is,' Charlie said. 'I think he's a bit of everything,' and he and the soldiers pretended to laugh. Then the soldier thanked them, and Charlie showed the two men to the door.

And as soon as it was over, they could hardly believe it had happened. They watched from the window as the soldiers walked away out from the shadow of the house and into the bright sun, fanning midges from their faces. As soon as they were out of sight it was as if they had imagined this strange thing, that two soldiers, one in full battle dress and with a gun, the other with an accent they could barely understand, had come into their front room and asked them all sorts of odd, personal questions, and then gone away again.

Deirdre MADDEN, *One by One in the Darkness*, Londres : Faber & Faber, 1997, pp. 96-98.