Los Angeles Times
VIEW
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JACK SMITH

Kicking Off to Gestalt

Now and then I feel a need to talk with some literate old friend of mine about the gods of our youth—Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Wolfe. So I went out to Fullerton the other day to have lunch with Jack Geyer.

Geyer used to be a sportswriter for The Times, a man of wit and talent, but years ago he decided to give up reporting for publicity. It was our loss and the Los Angeles Rams' gain. Since Geyer became codirector of public relations for the team they have won 85, lost 35 and tied 6, and in the 1974 season his superb handling of publicity took the Rams to a 10-4-0 season and the National Football Conference final playoff game, which they lost through no fault of his.

Geyer invited me to have lunch at the summer training camp, out at University Village across from the Cal State Fullerton football field. "There'll be a lot of the players around," he said. "That won't bother you?"

"Not at all," I said. I was hoping to get Geyer into a discussion of the different ways in which Hemingway and Fitzgerald each handled the problem of his own ego in his fiction, a problem that Philip Roth and his kind have thoroughly bungled. When I'm into something like that the shell of my concentration isn't likely to be shattered by the sight of 40 or 50 giants sitting around nibbling at turkey sandwiches and bean salad.

Geyer was looking fit. Deep tan, an abundance of wavy gray hair; the blue eyes and wit as quick as ever; the movements like those of a finely tuned squash player. I had stumbled into some kind of crisis, though, and he was continuously on the phone or in conference.

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It turned out to be not one crisis but two. One was a transcontinental flap over an order from Pete Rozelle, the football czar, sending a talented Ram running back named William Cullen Bryant to the Detroit Lions. When I arrived, the telephone lines and airwaves were humming vituperation, recrimination and meaningful no-comments; and the issue was rising on swift wings toward the U.S. Supreme Court and muscling Helsinki and the detente out of the American consciousness.

The other crisis was even more urgent. The press room refrigerator was out of beer. Waiting for a runner from the liquor store, I looked around to see what Geyer was reading to while away the idyllic hours of training camp. I found nothing but sports pages, football magazines and Ram press books. Not even a Playboy. It may be all right for the youngsters on the team, but I'm not sure that kind of asceticism is good for a man Geyer's age.

Finally we headed toward the cafeteria. We fell in behind two players in T-shirts, walking shorts and tennies.

"Who's the little fellow?" I asked Geyer. "Looks familiar."

"That's Joe Scibelli."

At 6 feet and 255 pounds, Scibelli isn't that little, but the other fellow was Merlin Olsen—6 foot 5 and 270. Everything is relative.

In the food line we bumped into tight end Bob Klein, Lance Rentzel and the embattled William Cullen Bryant. I was glad to see them all looking sound and cheerful.

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On the way back to the press room we passed an open door to a room in which players were watching an instructor drawing plays on a blackboard; a scene indistinguishable from a nuclear physics lecture at Caltech.

We saw an older man, handsome middle 40s, walking alone: a man obviously isolated by problems and responsibilities.

"Coach," Geyer called out, and Chuck Knox stopped and looked at us the way a polite girl looks when you ask her to dance and she doesn't want to. I wanted to protest. I don't like to meet important people unless I have something of value to say. But it was too late.

"I have no questions," I said, to relieve his mind, "but I do have a couple of plays for you." I'd no sooner said it than I realized it was something he'd heard 10,000 times from kidders, the way I've heard 10,000 times what an unusual name Jack Smith is. I had offered Tommy Prothro the same plays when he was Ram coach back in '71. Geyer had introduced us in the cafeteria line one day when I went out to talk to him about the influence of Dostoevsky on Ingmar Bergman. But Prothro evidently thought I was talking about bridge plays; anyway, he never used them, as I think his rather disappointing record as Ram coach testifies.

"Oh, good," Knox said with affable if mock enthusiasm, "send them in." But he was already moving away, most likely thinking about William Cullen Bryant and Pete Rozelle.

I'm not interested in football merely as a sport. On that level I find it rather shallow. But I'm into psychology now, and I'm looking forward to the season opener between the Rams and the Cowboys Saturday night in the Coliseum. That game ought to be an exercise in pure gestalt.

THE VIEWS INSIDE

AND OTHER FEATURES

Joyce Haber is on vacation. Her column will be resumed upon her return.

ARCHITECTURE

Local Journey in Time and Space

BY JOHN PASTIER
Times Architecture Critic

Toward the end of a long day's driving, the car radio was playing a Haydn symphony. As the minuet came on, full of infectious high spirits, I marveled over the composer's seemingly inexhaustible joy in his work. Somehow, that part of Haydn always reminded me of Hokusai's sketchbooks, swarming with drawings of little men.

Just then, around a curve, the Los Angeles skyline sprang up immense and jagged against a waning pink sky. Flattened into a gray silhouette, it seemed unfamiliar, even exotic. It also seemed a beautiful intrusion, for my head had been in the late 18th century, somewhere between Vienna and London.

This great leap in time and space set off thoughts of similar dislocations. I was listening to a 184-year-old piece of music, written by an Austrian for an English audience, performed in Cleveland at a concert eight years ago, and now rebroadcast on the fifth anniversary of conductor George Szell's death. Given all this, what meaning did time and place have at all?

The paradox grew as I realized that there was actually a Los Angeles in 1791, when this symphony was written. L.A., the instant city, was in fact older than this product of the age of knee stockings and powdered wigs. On the other hand, the fairy-tale skyline before my eyes was not in existence when Szell conducted the performance coming out of the radio.

Our civilization has developed an amazing ability to break down the limits of time and space, and can shift these once stable environmental dimensions as easily as a Las Vegas blackjack dealer shuffling a deck of cards.

Nowhere is the power of temporal and spatial dislocation stronger than in Southern California, for people here never really believed in the rules of time and place to start with. This region's two most characteristic industries, first movies and then aerospace, were dedicated to the altering of time and distance. Our transportation system, with less success, attempts the same feat. And the built environment was never one that gave straight answers to the questions of where or when.

The car trip was, in retrospect, a good illustration of the phenomenon. Without looking for them, I had seen many architectural time-and-place fantasies, both superb and inept, between Los Angeles and San Diego.

Interstate 5 is fertile ground for these things. In the City of Commerce, there's the former Sampson Tyre & Rubber factory that now bears the less exotic name of Uniroyal. In honor of Sampson, who had never been to Mesopotamia, it is a 1929 extravaganza in Assyrian-Babylonian style, complete with bas-reliefs of winged bulls and despots.

Farther down, there's a Sheraton motel, fairly new, in a half-timbered Ye Olde Englishe Inne style. The textures

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NO TURISTA, HE—Well known in his Mexico as a romantic hero of the screen, Tony Aguilar visits Los Angeles, his former home, with wife Flor and young son Pepito.
Times photo by Fitzgerald Whitney

LA GENTE, TONY AGUILAR

He Serenades the Sunset

BY LEE GRANT
Times Staff Writer

Antonio Aguilar is a man of Mexico—"la cultura, las canciones, la gente"—the culture, the songs, the people. He is a warm man of smiles and stories and "abrazos" (embraces) all around.

In his country Tony Aguilar is famous, as well, a romantic hero, a singing cowboy riding into the Mexican sunset in more than 100 films. His records, sentimental tales of loves past and present and "corridos" (ranchero songs), permeate the radio from Tijuana to Guadalajara. Each week on Mexico City television is the long-running Tony Aguilar Hour.

And he is almost as well known here, the face and personality familiar to people who line up around the block to see "The Death of Pancho Villa," "Peregrina" or "Emilio Zapata" at downtown movie theaters like the Million Dollar.

Tony Aguilar was in Los Angeles taking his lunch now at a downtown hotel restaurant. It was the day before his National Mexican Festival and Rodeo was to open for five performances at the Sports Arena.

He sat close to his wife, stroking her cheek, clutching her shoulder. She is Flor Silvestre, as celebrated in Mexico as her husband, a striking woman of grace and charm, an accomplished actress and singer in her own right.

They are an imposing couple, a friendly one, and moved by the "compadres" who recognize them. Luis, a waiter, Manuel, a busboy, Faviola, the cashier, stop at the table to chat, to shake hands, to speak of their country. They call him "senor"; he insists on Tony.

Tony Aguilar is not a "turista" here. He came to Los Angeles the first time 35 years ago, a handsome boy of 16 filled with dreams but nearly penniless. His father, a poor rancher working the soil on the outskirts of Mexico City, sent young Tony out to find odd jobs.

He had begun singing then, his voice untrained but full and robust. There was no money for lessons, no money to see about dreams.

"One day in Mexico City," said Aguilar, sipping on a martini, "I saw this Deanna Durbin billboard. Next to it was another picturing a Lincoln automobile. I wanted then to be as famous as she was and to drive a car like that one."

He scrimped and saved and finally his father sent him to Los Angeles by train, alone. He slept and ate where he could.

"There was this restaurant I remember on Hollywood and Highland," he said. "They advertised in the window a plate of spaghetti for 25 cents. I couldn't afford it. I was going hungry then for days." Later he would return to that restaurant and buy spaghetti for everyone in the house.

Eventually he settled in with a voice teacher in Hollywood, working as the man's valet and

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Top Designers Show Couture New Identities

BY EUGENIA SHEPPARD

PARIS—On the whole the fall collections, just finished, were like the little girl with the curl. When they were good they were very, very good but when they were bad they were horrid.

If they established any one trend, it's the increasing individualism of the top designers, which made the collections much more interesting than usual to watch. Marc Bohan came out strong for the pretty-pretty feminine look in one of the best fashion collections of his career.

SOFT AND DRAPED—Mme. Gres included this evening gown of multicolored taffeta in her Paris collection.

Givenchy, in the season's most intriguing collection, switched to younger, more casual clothes. Yves Saint Laurent stood for superelegance.

Most fall fashions have already reached the stores but, before cold weather comes, there is no doubt lots of ponchos will be added. Sydney Gittler's collection for Ohrbach's will be full of them.

The Madame Gres collection came as a kind of postscript to the Paris openings, but what a P.S. and what a pity for anyone who missed seeing it. Like the real artist she is, Mme. Gres sometimes runs wild, but this time she edited her made-to-order fashions carefully and kept the number small but very beautiful.

Always a lover of the soft, the loose and the draped, Mme. Gres has shown some version of the cape and the poncho in almost every collection. This year the rest of the Paris couture has followed her lead, but of all the capes and ponchos in town, hers are still the most individual and dramatic. She shows one or the other with almost every costume.

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BETTY LOCKETT
. . . women in health care not decision-makers.
Photo by James H. Pickerell

WOMEN IN HEALTH

Symptoms of a New Awareness

BY MARLENE CIMONS
Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—Feminism, which is responsible for the proliferation of women's self-help health groups, appears to be influencing health administrators, government officials and other medical personnel to take a new look at the role of women as both providers and recipients of health care services.

Last week in San Francisco a public meeting was held at the UC school of nursing to talk about the implications of new research into specific health problems experienced by women.

Last month in Washington, health professionals from here and abroad met for two days to discuss the utilization of women within the medical field in the United States and how it compared to other countries. A steering committee formed as a result is drawing up a list of recommendations to present to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

"For some time I've had the feeling that we have to go beyond shouting about how bad things are," said Virginia Olesen, professor of sociology at the UC school of nursing, who organized the San Francisco meeting. "About a year ago I went to a conference in New York on the impact of feminism on scholarships. It struck me then we needed a similar conference on how the women's movement has affected the whole area of health care."

The San Francisco meeting, which is being sponsored by the school of nursing with a grant from the national center for health services research of HEW's health resources administration, focused on research as it relates to the substance of women's health problems. Olesen's hope is that a better understanding of how to develop and use such material will eventually result in improved health care for women.

"If someone goes away from the conference with one new idea, or a better understanding of research problems, that in itself is an accomplishment," she said. "We're not going to come up with a specific list of recommendations regarding women's health problems. That's not what we're about."

Participants in the International Conference on Women in Health, held June 16-18 in Washington and also sponsored by HEW's health resources administration, took a different approach, however. Their intention was to discuss and define the role of women within the medical profession.

Some of their findings were not encouraging.

"Close to 80% of all health care personnel in this country are women, but they are not the decision-makers," said Betty Lockett, chief of the international program

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