

Chapter 1 : Remember That You Are Probably Not % Any Single Ethnicity | HuffPost UK

It has brought Europe to the edge of ruin. It drives the new states of Asia and Africa like crazed lemmings. By proclaiming himself a Ghanaian, a Nicaraguan, a Maltese, a man spares himself vexation. He need not ravel out what he is, where his humanity lies. He becomes one of an armed, coherent.

After months of wading through swamps in the Amazon jungle , the search party finds the year-old alive in a clearing. But getting the old man out of the jungle alive is more difficult than getting in, and their progress is further hampered by heavy thunderstorms. Debates flare up over his impending trial, where it will be held and under whose jurisdiction. Orosso is identified as the nearest airfield to the last known location of the search party, and aircraft begin arriving at the hitherto unknown town. But when the search party loses radio contact with Lieber, they must make a decision to either wait out the storms and deliver their captive to Lieber later, or try Hitler in the jungle. They choose the latter, given that they would likely lose control of the situation if they attempted to transport their prisoner. Teku, a local Indian tracker, is asked to observe the trial as an independent witness. The attention Hitler receives renews his strength, and when the trial begins, he brushes aside his "defence attorney" and begins a long speech in four parts in his own defence: First, Hitler claims he took his doctrines from the Jews and copied the notion of the master race from the Chosen people and their need to separate themselves from the "unclean". Main characters[edit] Emmanuel Lieber â€” Jewish Holocaust survivor and director of the search party to find Hitler; [10] after crawling out of a death pit in Bialka he never took the time to mend and embarked on a life-consuming obsession to bring those responsible for the genocide to justice. Bruckner that this book arose out of his lifelong work on language. An Examined Life, Steiner remarked that had he known what the response to The Portage and its stage interpretation would be, he would have made the novella "my foremost business". The Politics and Aesthetics of Memory", Robert Skloot described the play as "a rarely articulated fantasy about the causes of genocide" that "test[s] the limits of personal tolerance". Knapp wrote that the play presented theatre-goers with the dilemma: He will know the sounds of madness and loathing and make them seem music His tongue is like no other. It is the tongue of the basilisk, a hundred-forked and quick as flame. He created on the night-side of language a speech for hell. The fact that Steiner is Jewish made this speech in particular even more contentious. Rosensaft , chairman of the International Network of Children of Jewish Survivors, said that "Nothing in [The Portage] was a trivialization of the Holocaust or a whitewash". Byatt said it was a "masterpiece". Rosenfeld called The Portage a "breakthrough work" that "astonishes".

Chapter 2 : Language and silence (edition) | Open Library

Francis George Steiner (born April 23,), is an influential European-born American literary critic, essayist, philosopher, novelist, translator, and educator. He has written extensively about the relationship between language, literature and society, and the impact of the Holocaust. An article.

Additional Information In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: Knopf, , p. See chapter 6, "Responses and Responsibilities," for a fuller discussion of the issues the film raised. Terrence Des Pres, *The Survivor*: Oxford University Press, , pp. Also see "Us and Them," in *The Survivor*, pp. Des Pres, *The Survivor*, p. The System, the Victims," in *Surviving*, p. George Steiner, "Postscript," in *Language and Silence*: Atheneum, , pp. *The Holocaust in Literature* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, , p. Lawrence Langer, *Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit* Albany: State University of New York Press, , p. Lifton, *Death in Life* New York: Random House, , p. Faber and Faber, I discuss the play at length in chapter 4. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, He describes the devastating psychological condition that is produced in the surviving victim of "choiceless choice. Thus, the one who had been spared, above all during the selections, could not repress his first spontaneous reflex of joy. A moment, a week, or an eternity later, this joy weighted with fear and anxiety will turn into guilt. I am happy to have escaped death becomes equivalent to admitting: University of Wisconsin Press, , p. Ellen Schiff, *From Stereotype to Metaphor: The few in Contemporary Drama* Albany: Yale University Press, , p. Stephen Becker New York: Sarah Blacher Cohen Bloomington: Indiana University Press, , pp. Ezrahi, *By Words Alone*, p. Rumkowski has been the subject of much investigation in recent years, by artists as well as historians. Also see Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed. David Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse*: Harvard University Press, , p. *Essays on Language, Literature, and the Inhuman* New You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

Chapter 3 : The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H. - Wikipedia

"A Kind of Survivor," Language and Silence (). "There is something terribly wrong with a culture inebriated by noise and gregariousness." George Steiner (b.), French-born U.S. critic, novelist.

Byatt described him as a "late, late, late Renaissance man He has an elder sister, Ruth Lilian, who was born in Vienna in He believed that Jews were "endangered guests wherever they went"[6] and equipped his children with languages. Steiner grew up with three mother tongues: German, English, and French; his mother was multilingual and would often "begin a sentence in one language and end it in another. Instead of allowing him to become left-handed, she insisted he use his right hand as an able-bodied person would. Education After high school, Steiner went to the University of Chicago , where he studied literature as well as mathematics and physics, and obtained a BA degree in This was followed by an MA degree from Harvard University in Steiner took time off from his studies to teach English at Williams College and to work as leader writer for the London -based weekly publication The Economist between and She had also studied at Harvard, and they met in London at the suggestion of their former professors. He also held a Fulbright professorship in Innsbruck , Austria from to In , he was appointed Gauss Lecturer at Princeton, where he lectured for another two years. He then became a founding fellow of Churchill College at the University of Cambridge in Steiner was initially not well received at Cambridge by the English faculty. Many disapproved of this charismatic "firebrand with a foreign accent"[6] and questioned the relevance of the Holocaust he constantly referred to in his lectures. Bryan Cheyette, professor of 20th-century literature at the University of Southampton said that at the time, "Britain [After several years as a freelance writer and occasional lecturer, Steiner accepted the post of Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Geneva in ; he held this post for 20 years, teaching in four languages. Steiner has been called "an intelligent and intellectual critic and essayist. He has written for The New Yorker for over thirty years, contributing over two hundred reviews. He advocates generalisation over specialisation, and insists that the notion of being literate must encompass knowledge of both arts and sciences. As Steiner states, "My virginity offended Alfie his college room-mate. He found it ostentatious and vaguely corrupt in a nineteen-year-old He sniffed the fear in me with disdain. And marched me off to Cicero, Illinois , a town justly ill famed but, by virtue of its name, reassuring to me. There he organized, with casual authority, an initiation as thorough as it was gentle. It is this unlikely gentleness, the caring under circumstances so outwardly crass, that blesses me still. He is reported to have said: But ask me the same thing if a Jamaican family moved next door with six children and they play reggae and rock music all day. Or if an estate agent comes to my house and tells me that because a Jamaican family has moved next door the value of my property has fallen through the floor. He has published original essays and books that address the anomalies of contemporary Western culture , issues of language and its "debasement" in the post-Holocaust age. An Essay in Contrast , which was a study of the different ideas and ideologies of the Russian writers Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky. The Death of Tragedy originated as his doctoral thesis at the University of Oxford and examined literature from the ancient Greeks to the midth century. His best-known book, After Babel , was an early and influential contribution to the field of translation studies. It was adapted for television in as The Tongues of Men and was the inspiration behind the creation in of the English avant-rock group News from Babel. Several works of literary fiction by Steiner include four short story collections , Anno Domini:

Chapter 4 : George Steiner Quotes - Quotes of George Steiner Poem Hunter

Francis George Steiner, FBA (born April 23,) is a French-born American literary critic, essayist, philosopher, novelist, and educator. He has written extensively about the relationship between language, literature and society, and the impact of the Holocaust.

Share via Email When the Parisian-born George Steiner went to Chicago University after the second world war, he found himself sharing a room with an ex-paratrooper, who stared in disbelief at "a creature so obviously cosseted, sheltered, formally decked out, book-laden, as I was", Steiner recalled. It was as though a quaint figure from a rarefied age of central European humanism, now all but vanquished by Nazism and war, had come face to face with the ascendant era of transatlantic mass culture, embodied by the war veterans swelling American campuses under the GI bill. Yet the budding critic, who was to become famous as an impassioned proselytiser for European "high" culture, was in awe of his room-mate. Steiner has remained a paradoxical and contentious figure. A polyglot and polymath, he is often credited with recasting the role of the critic by exploring art and thought unbounded by national frontiers or academic disciplines. Though he distrusts the "self-serving jargon" of critical theory, his books, beginning with Tolstoy or Dostoevsky and *The Death of Tragedy*, have posed philosophical questions about the humanities and their relationship to 20th-century history, most centrally about language and its debasement in the post-Holocaust age. He commends the "autism" of the scholar and claims to despise the mass media, yet has had a prominent voice in journalism, as a critic for the *New Yorker*, the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *Observer*. While Steiner sits more easily in a French intellectual tradition and was last month given the French order of arts and letters, he came to Britain in the early s, where his questioning presaged new fields years before comparative literature, or studies of translation or the Holocaust were established. Lisa Jardine, professor of Renaissance studies at Queen Mary college, University of London, recalls "a rebel who made us aspire to being Europeans; he helped move British culture from utter provincialism to cosmopolitanism, and taught us to listen to language - how language carries the thread of morality and philosophy. With a characteristically broad sweep, it questions the nature of creativity in an age of atheism - a line of inquiry the author believes is "still almost a taboo". It is also certain to find detractors. AC Grayling in the *Literary Review* dismisses the book as "pretentious intellectual bombast" written in a "writhingly Latinate" style. The familiar criticisms include: While he admits making errors, critics accuse him of complacency. Steiner lives in Cambridge, where he has been extraordinary fellow at Churchill College since His wife, Zara, an authority on international relations, is a former vice-president of New Hall. Their son, David, and daughter, Deborah, are both academics in the US. While he is known as deeply serious, he reveals a deadpan humour. Once asked if he had ever read anything frivolous as a child, he replied: But throughout his career, Steiner has delivered, with a sense of urgency, a message of his own, rooted in his view of the Holocaust he prefers the term Shoah as the defining catastrophe of our age. He was born in Paris, to Viennese parents who had left the "cradle of Nazism" five years before. He describes his father, a Bohemian "within reach of the ghetto" who became a senior lawyer in the Austrian Central Bank, as "formidable in his insight: He thought Jews were endangered guests wherever they went, and wanted to equip his children - my elder sister and myself - with languages to earn a living, the ability to pack a suitcase rather than a steamer trunk, and take joy in the adventure. If he transmitted one thing to me, it was how lucky I am to be under pressure. She was a Viennese grande dame, radiant, multilingual, wonderfully ironic. For her, self-pity was nauseating. Today the rule of benevolent therapy is to buy shoes with zippers. I could have had them. It took 10 months for me to learn to tie a lace; I must have howled with rage and frustration. But one day I could tie my laces. That no one can take from you. I profoundly distrust the pedagogy of ease. He was reading Shakespeare in English and Homer in ancient Greek by the age of five. His father, who took him to museums every Saturday, taught him "worship of the classic". But deep in himself he thought teaching the finest thing a person could do," says Steiner. Working in Paris for an American investment bank, he was summoned to base in but refused to take the only liner leaving Cherbourg because it was flying the German flag. It cost him his job. *An Examined Life*, his brief and curiously reticent memoir.

So, it seems, was luck. Within a month, the Nazis had occupied Paris. As "a kind of survivor" - the title of an autobiographical essay - Steiner feels not the guilt of those who emerged from the camps, but bafflement. Why did I deserve to get away? Following a spell at the Sorbonne after the war, he preferred Chicago University to Yale, where Jews were "consigned to a ghetto of pinched politeness". It was as an undergraduate in Chicago that he found his vocation, unlocking the mysteries of learning for GIs in exchange for instruction in more earthly pleasures. His paratrooper room-mate, Alfie, took him to hear Dizzy Gillespie, taught him poker - which he later abandoned for chess - and procured a prostitute for him at But when his DPhil thesis - a draft for *The Death of Tragedy* - was initially refused, he worked for the *Economist* as a leader writer from He met Zara Shalow, a *New Yorker* of Lithuanian descent, in London at the instigation of mutual friends, who laid bets on their getting married - which they did in After two years at Princeton, Steiner became a founding fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge, in The essays of *Language and Silence* set out lifelong themes, which echo in his more recent collection, *No Passion Spent* The mapping of my identity, the inward orientations, remain those circumscribed by Leningrad, Odessa, Prague and Vienna on the one side, and by Frankfurt, Milan and Paris on the other. He told us not to be cowed by insularity or hidebound by small minds, but to look beyond the border. Now work on those figures is an industry, but he was a lone voice in the 60s. He warned that language has a "breaking point", lies and sadism settling "into the marrow". As Adorno had said, "No poetry after Auschwitz", Steiner asked if the only response was a retreat into silence. Rather than despairing of the "high" culture he sees as having failed Europe, Steiner puts urgent faith in its transmission. Many of the achievements without which I would not have wanted to be alive were by men of inhuman cruelty and indifference," says Steiner. He even suspects the humanities might have a dehumanising effect. Some members of the English faculty questioned the relevance to the discipline of the concentration camps he constantly evoked. Steiner felt his rejection keenly, comparing his treatment to that of Leavis. Steiner has always refused to play that game". Harriet Harvey-Wood, former literature director of the British Council, sees Steiner as a "magnificent lecturer - prophetic and doom-laden" who would "turn up with half a page of scribbled notes, and never refer to them. His voice shifted register the moment he began, and he always left blood on the carpet. Its importance endures, he believes, not least given that "the insularity and monolingualism of British academic life outside language departments is still startling". I was wrong; my father was a better prognosticator than me. The continent now deeply distrusts this country; it knows Anglo-American power is most important to it. The collected fiction of *The Deep of the Sea* is a page volume, with a cast of outcasts and exiles. Best known, and most controversial, is *The Portage to San Cristobal of AH*, a dialectical staging of a confrontation between Hitler, as a fugitive in the Amazon, and Nazi hunters, praised as a "masterpiece" by AS Byatt. The novella was attacked for giving Hitler the last word. According to Cheyette, Steiner has held up the diaspora as an ideal: He refuses to buy into Jewish nationalism, and believes Jewish creativity is essentially a diasporic condition. My dead centre is the conviction that no cause on this planet can justify torture. That which to most of my fellow Jews is unimaginable - giving up Israel - is not to me, if the price is torture. He believes "very few human beings can understand a proposition of Kant or Spinoza, or a fugue by Bach - or care to", and notes with resignation that "the planetary language is football". Warning of the erosion of language and literacy by mass communication and mass consumption, he questions whether there is something anti-democratic about great art: But it would be idiotic to be like King Canute. The reality today is mass marketing, mass consumption, mass media. To lament that is an arrogant impudence. As he wrote in *Errata*: But do we honestly believe in this advent? *Life at a glance*: Frances George Steiner Born: April 23, Paris, France Education:

Chapter 5 : George Steiner - The Full Wiki

We would like to show you a description here but the site won't allow us.

Paperback Verified Purchase What would you say if given the chance to confront one of the most hated men of the last century? What if your loved ones had suffered and died by his hand? Welcome to one of the most disturbing and controversial books ever written. The basic premise is simple: However, this is no mere "what if" piece of historical fiction. Rather, it is a philosophical look into the nature of evil and the power of language. Throughout the relatively short novel, dozens of characters are introduced, but very few if any are developed to an extent where readers really get to "know" them. When the story was first published in , it sparked a firestorm of controversy. Most of the controversy revolves around the final chapter, in which Hitler finally speaks in his own defense. The book ends without any rebuttal to the four points given in his self-defense. The actual final word is spoken by an Indian guide named Teku, who simply says, "Proved. I believe that readers are meant to come to their own conclusions. I did not get the sense at all that Steiner was in any way sympathetic to Hitler. We must remember that Hitler was a master communicator, who convinced millions of people to follow him and accede to the implementation of his "Final Solution". If we think something like that could never happen, we invite history to repeat itself. There are also some other very important philosophical questions raised in this novel. What does revenge actually accomplish? Can any measure of vengeance bring closure for the families of victims? Can someone become too old to stand trial? If one man, no matter how evil, has been made to be a symbol of the evil actions perpetrated by thousands of individuals, is it possible to give him a fair trial? Who gets jurisdiction to try him? The continued relevance of these questions is evident in the recent proceedings involving year-old John Demjanjuk, the last Nazi war-crimes defendant, who in was found guilty by a German court of 28, counts of accessory to murder. This is certainly not a pleasant nor easy novel to read, but it is an important one. We need to be stretched, and reminded of our own propensity for evil if we are to stand any chance of resisting or opposing it. This book is a challenge worth facing.

Chapter 6 : Project MUSE - George Steiner and the War against the Jews: A Study in Misrepresentation

Francis George Steiner (born April 23,) is a French-born American literary critic, essayist, philosopher, novelist, translator, and educator, who has written extensively about the relationship between language, literature and society, and the impact of the Holocaust.

In a way we do not quite understand, the man of genius casts light. Instinctively, we flinch from this light. We assure ourselves that genius must pay a terrible price. Often history bears us out: Quoted in The Daily Mail London, - There is something terribly wrong with a culture inebriated by noise and gregariousness. In a manner evident and yet mysterious, the poem or the drama or the novel seizes upon our imaginings. We are not the same when we put down the work as we were when we took it up. To borrow an image from another domain: Great works of art pass through us like storm-winds, flinging open the doors of perception, pressing upon the architecture of our beliefs with their transforming powers. We seek to record their impact, to put our shaken house in its new order. Through some primary instinct of communion we seek to convey to others the quality and force of our experience. We would persuade them to lay themselves open to it. In this attempt at persuasion originate the truest insights criticism can afford. Our control of the material world and our positive science have grown fantastically. But our very achievements turn against us, making politics more random and wars more bestial. It carries in it the possibilities of disorder, for all tragic poets have something of the rebelliousness of Antigone. Goethe, on the contrary, loathed disorder. He once said that he preferred injustice, signifying by that cruel assertion not his support for reactionary political ideals, but his conviction that injustice is temporary and reparable whereas disorder destroys the very possibilities of human progress. Again, this is an anti-tragic view; in tragedy it is the individual instance of injustice that infirms the general pretence of order. One Hamlet is enough to convict a state of rottenness. But the proof is in the art of Chekhov. It is no longer, as it was from Homer to Milton, the natural repository of knowledge and traditional sentiment. It no longer gives to society its main record of past grandeur or its natural setting for prophecy, as it did in Virgil and Dante. Verse has grown private. It is a special language which the individual poet insinuates, by force of personal genius, into the awareness of his contemporaries, persuading to learn and perhaps hand on his own uses of words. Poetry has become essentially lyric – that is to say, it is the poetry of private vision rather than of public or of national occasion. Where it is honest, it is passionate, private experience seeking to persuade. Essays We come after. To say that he has read them without understanding or that his ear is gross, is cant. In what way does this knowledge bear on literature and society, on the hope, grown almost axiomatic from the time of Plato to that of Matthew Arnold, that culture is a humanizing force, that the energies of spirit are transferable to those of conduct? Who would be a critic if he could be a writer? Who would hammer out the subtlest insight into Dostoevsky if he could weld an inch of the Karamazovs, or argue the poise of Lawrence if he could shape the free gust of life in *The Rainbow*? The rest, and it is presumably the much larger part, is silence. That is the joyously defeated recognition expressed in the poems of St. John of the Cross and of the mystic tradition. When the word of the poet ceases, a great light begins. The death in the novel may move us more potently than the death in the next room. They take away the words that were of the night and shout them over the roof-tops, making them hollow. Brecht gave back to German prose its Lutheran simplicity and Thomas Mann brought into his style the supple, luminous elegance of the classic and Mediterranean tradition. These years, were the anni mirabiles of the modern German spirit. It is not merely that a Hitler, a Goebbels, and a Himmler happened to speak German. Nazism found in the language precisely what it needed to give voice to its savagery. Hitler heard inside his native tongue the latent hysteria, the confusion, the quality of hypnotic trance. Sometimes parents saw them pass and did not dare call out their names. And they went, of course, not for anything they had done or said. But because their parents existed before them. Art will be the laughter of intelligence, as it is in Plato, in Mozart, in Stendhal. They are music, mathematics, and chess. It is images of the past. These are often as highly structured and selective as myths. Images and symbolic constructs of the past are imprinted, almost in the manner of genetic information, on our sensibility. No canvases came off museum walls as the butchers strolled reverently past, guide-books in hand. As even the

more rudimentary of mythological, religious or historical references, which form the grammar of Western literature, have to be elucidated, the lines of Spenser, of Pope, of Shelley or of Sweeney Among the Nightingales, blur away from immediacy. It is at once taken up and intelligently exploited, but the "motion of the spirit" has taken place elsewhere, amid the enervation of Europe, in the oppressive climate of Russia. There is, in a good deal of American intellectual, artistic production recent painting may be a challenging exception a characteristic near-greatness, a strength just below the best. Could it be that the United States is destined to be the "museum culture"? Very nearly by definition, the scientist knows that tomorrow will be in advance of today. A twentieth-century schoolboy can manipulate mathematical and experimental concepts inaccessible to a Galileo or a Gauss. For a scientist the curve of the future is positive. Inevitably, the humanist looks back. We cannot choose the dreams of unknowing. We shall, I expect, open the last door in the castle, even if it leads, perhaps because it leads, on to realities which are beyond the reach of human comprehension and control. White Knights of Rekjavik. Essay originally published in The New Yorker Chess may be the deepest, least exhaustible of pastimes, but it is nothing more. As for a chess genius, he is a human being who focuses vast, little-understood mental gifts and labors on an ultimately trivial human enterprise. A Reader But I would like to think for a moment about a man who in the morning teaches his students that a false attribution of a Watteau drawing or an inaccurate transcription of a fourteenth-century epigraph is a sin against the spirit and in the afternoon or evening transmits to the agents of Soviet intelligence classified, perhaps vital information given to him in sworn trust by his countrymen and intimate colleagues. What are the sources of such scission? How does the spirit mask itself? The literal disappearance of a Turner or a Van Gogh into some Middle Eastern or Latin-American bank vault to be kept as investment and collateral, the sardonic decision of a Greek shipping tycoon to put an incomparable El Greco on his yacht, where it hangs at persistent risk — these are phenomena that verge on vandalism. No scholars, no men and women waiting to mend their souls before a Raphael or a Matisse need wait, cap in hand at the mansion door. Archimedes does not flee from his killers, he does not even turn his head to acknowledge their rush into his garden when he is immersed in the algebra of conic sections. At the ordinary level, he will exorcize his spleen in the ad-hominem nastiness of a book review, in the arsenic of a footnote. The violence stays formal. Not, one supposes, in Professor Blunt. A Secondary City We speak still of "sunrise" and "sunset. Vacant metaphors, eroded figures of speech, inhabit our vocabulary and grammar. They are caught, tenaciously, in the scaffolding and recesses of our common parlance. There they rattle about like old rags or ghosts in the attic. So Nietzsche and many after him. This essay argues the reverse.

Chapter 7 : George Steiner - Wikipedia

As "a kind of survivor" - the title of a autobiographical essay - Steiner feels not the guilt of those who emerged from the camps, but bafflement. George was unbelievably charismatic at a.

May 14, The front flap of George Steiner at The New Yorker , published as a lovely paperback by New Directions earlier this year, claims that the book "collects fifty-three of his fascinating and wide-ranging essays from the more than one hundred and thirty he has contributed to the magazine. The essays are certainly fascinating and wide-ranging, but there are only twenty-eight of them. Perhaps Robert Boyers, the editor, has selected another twenty-five for a later volume. We can certainly hope so. The New Directions collection proved to be a delightful way to revisit his work. Aspects of Language and Translation. He is not I. There is enough poly in the math of Steiner, though, that some of his passions are ones I share -- for much of Modernism in its various forms and modes, for Shakespeare and the Russians and Kafka and Beckett and Celan and Borges, for the ethics of language and literature in an age of atrocity. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, Steiner is a marvelous writer. His sentences and paragraphs are rich not only with ideas and information, but music. There are surprises, too: Perhaps most surprising of all, there is a basically positive review of Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance. One of the critics Steiner most reminds me of is Guy Davenport -- their erudition is similar, and there is much overlap in their interests. George Steiner at the New Yorker contains an essay on Davenport where Steiner, after praising numerous sentences, writes, "There would be no harm in simply using the remainder of this review to make a mosaic and montage of quotes. Consider all that is packed and unpacked in this opening paragraph to a review of a biography of Anton Webern: There is a great book to be written. It would show that the twentieth century as we have lived it in the West is, in essential ways, an Austro-Hungarian product and export. We conduct our inward lives in or in conflict with a landscape mapped by Freud and his disciples and dissenters. Our philosophy and the central place we assign to language in the study of human thought derive from Wittgenstein and the Vienna school of logical positivism. The novel after Joyce is, in the main, divided between the two poles of introspective narration and lyric experiment defined by Musil and by Broch. Our music follows two great currents: Though the role of Paris was, of course, vital, it is now increasingly clear that certain sources of aesthetic modernism, from Art Deco to Action painting, can be found in the Viennese Jugendstil and in Austrian Expressionism. Political-social satire in London and New York, the sick joke, the conviction that the language of those who govern us is a poisonous smoke screen echo the genius of Karl Kraus. The logic and sociology of the natural sciences cannot be formulated without reference to Karl Popper. And where shall we place the manifold effects of Schumpeter, Hayek, von Neumann? One could prolong the roll call. Et cetera, et cetera. It requires no sustained analytic thought, no closeness or clarity of argument to pontificate on the "rotteness," on the "gangrene," of man, and on the terminal cancer of history. The pages on which I have drawn not only are easy to write, they flatter the writer with the tenebrous incense of the oracular. One need only turn to the work of Tocqueville, of Henry Adams, or of Schopenhauer to see the drastic difference. Their reading of history is no rosier. But the cases they put are scrupulously argued, not declaimed; they are informed, at each node and articulation of proposal, with a just sense of the complex, contradictory nature of historical evidence. The doubts expressed by those thinkers, the qualifications brought to their own persuasions honor the reader. They call not for numbed assent or complaisant echo but for reexamination and criticism. His years of teaching, about which he has often written especially in Lessons of the Masters , have made him a kind of exemplary popularizer of Western culture. It is not in his theories that he is at his strongest, but in his enthusiasms -- his ability to convey his passions. And three of the pieces I read seemed like real losses. Books do continue to be produced and published in large numbers. Handwritten illuminated manuscripts continued to be produced well after Gutenberg. Periods of transition are difficult to make out. They are also intensely stimulating. One can intuit deep-lying seismic shocks affecting our cultural perceptions of time, of individual death. These will put in question the claims of literature, of written thought, to individual glory, to survival "for all ages. The boys and girls at their computer keyboards, finding, stumbling onto insights in logic, in fractals, may neither read

nor write in any "book sense. As a boy at a computer keyboard, I will simply say here that George Steiner at the New Yorker -- even with twenty-eight essays instead of fifty-three! We must keep learning, writing, reading.

Chapter 8 : George Steiner, Author at Commentary

The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H. is a literary and philosophical novella by George Steiner. The story is about Jewish Nazi hunters who find a fictional Adolf Hitler (A.H.) alive in the Amazon jungle thirty years after the end of World War II.

Quotes[edit] The ordinary man casts a shadow. In a way we do not quite understand, the man of genius casts light. Instinctively, we flinch from this light. We assure ourselves that genius must pay a terrible price. Often history bears us out: The age of the book is almost gone. Quoted in The Daily Mail London, There is something terribly wrong with a culture inebriated by noise and gregariousness. Quoted in The Daily Telegraph London, Tolstoy or Dostoevsky [edit] Literary criticism should arise out of a debt of love. In a manner evident and yet mysterious, the poem or the drama or the novel seizes upon our imaginings. We are not the same when we put down the work as we were when we took it up. To borrow an image from another domain: Great works of art pass through us like storm-winds, flinging open the doors of perception, pressing upon the architecture of our beliefs with their transforming powers. We seek to record their impact, to put our shaken house in its new order. Through some primary instinct of communion we seek to convey to others the quality and force of our experience. We would persuade them to lay themselves open to it. In this attempt at persuasion originate the truest insights criticism can afford. Our control of the material world and our positive science have grown fantastically. But our very achievements turn against us, making politics more random and wars more bestial. Nothing in a language is less translatable than its modes of understatement. Tragedy springs from outrage; it protests at the conditions of life. It carries in it the possibilities of disorder, for all tragic poets have something of the rebelliousness of Antigone. Goethe , on the contrary, loathed disorder. He once said that he preferred injustice, signifying by that cruel assertion not his support for reactionary political ideals, but his conviction that injustice is temporary and reparable whereas disorder destroys the very possibilities of human progress. Again, this is an anti-tragic view; in tragedy it is the individual instance of injustice that infirms the general pretence of order. One Hamlet is enough to convict a state of rottenness. Increasingly unable to create for itself a relevant body of myth, the modern imagination will ransack the treasure house of the classic. Tragedy speaks not of secular dilemmas which may be resolved by rational innovation, but of the unalterable bias toward inhumanity and destruction in the drift of the world. The Socratic demonstration of the ultimate unity of tragic and comic drama is forever lost. But the proof is in the art of Chekhov. Verse no longer stands at the centre of communicative discourse. It is no longer, as it was from Homer to Milton , the natural repository of knowledge and traditional sentiment. It no longer gives to society its main record of past grandeur or its natural setting for prophecy, as it did in Virgil and Dante. Verse has grown private. It is a special language which the individual poet insinuates, by force of personal genius, into the awareness of his contemporaries, persuading to learn and perhaps hand on his own uses of words. Poetry has become essentially lyric “ that is to say, it is the poetry of private vision rather than of public or of national occasion. When the modern scholar cites from a classic text, the quotation seems to burn a hole in his own drab page. Literary criticism has about it neither rigour nor proof. Where it is honest, it is passionate, private experience seeking to persuade. Essays [edit] We come after. To say that he has read them without understanding or that his ear is gross, is cant. In what way does this knowledge bear on literature and society, on the hope, grown almost axiomatic from the time of Plato to that of Matthew Arnold , that culture is a humanizing force, that the energies of spirit are transferable to those of conduct? Who would be a critic if he could be a writer? Who would hammer out the subtlest insight into Dostoevsky if he could weld an inch of the Karamazovs , or argue the poise of Lawrence if he could shape the free gust of life in The Rainbow? The critic lives at second hand. Language can only deal meaningfully with a special, restricted segment of reality. The rest, and it is presumably the much larger part, is silence. That is the joyously defeated recognition expressed in the poems of St. John of the Cross and of the mystic tradition. When the word of the poet ceases, a great light begins. The capacity for imaginative reflex, for moral risk in any human being is not limitless; on the contrary, it can be rapidly absorbed by fictions, and thus the cry in the poem may come to sound louder, more urgent, more real than the cry in the street outside. The death in the novel may move us more potently than the death in the next

room. The new pornographers subvert this last, vital privacy; they do our imagining for us. They take away the words that were of the night and shout them over the roof-tops, making them hollow. It was a brilliant, mutinous period. Brecht gave back to German prose its Lutheran simplicity and Thomas Mann brought into his style the supple, luminous elegance of the classic and Mediterranean tradition. These years, , were the anni mirabiles of the modern German spirit. For let us keep one fact clearly in mind: It is not merely that a Hitler , a Goebbels , and a Himmler happened to speak German. Nazism found in the language precisely what it needed to give voice to its savagery. Hitler heard inside his native tongue the latent hysteria, the confusion, the quality of hypnotic trance. Words that are saturated with lies or atrocity do not easily resume life. Sometimes parents saw them pass and did not dare call out their names. And they went, of course, not for anything they had done or said. But because their parents existed before them. Men are accomplices to that which leaves them indifferent. To shoot a man because one disagrees with his interpretation of Darwin or Hegel is a sinister tribute to the supremacy of ideas in human affairs " but a tribute nevertheless. If future society assumes the contours foretold by Marxism, if the jungle of our cities turns to the polis of man and the dreams of anger are made real, the representative art will be high comedy. Art will be the laughter of intelligence, as it is in Plato , in Mozart , in Stendhal. Extraterritorial [edit] There are three intellectual pursuits, and, so far as I am aware, only three, in which human beings have performed major feats before the age of puberty. They are music, mathematics, and chess. It is images of the past. These are often as highly structured and selective as myths. Images and symbolic constructs of the past are imprinted, almost in the manner of genetic information, on our sensibility. Each new historical era mirrors itself in the picture and active mythology of its past. Monotheism at Sinai , primitive Christianity, messianic socialism: When it turned on the Jew, Christianity and European civilization turned on the incarnation " albeit an incarnation often wayward and unaware " of its own best hopes. Nothing in the next-door world of Dachau impinged on the great winter cycle of Beethoven chamber music played in Munich. No canvases came off museum walls as the butchers strolled reverently past, guide-books in hand. The immense majority of human biographies are a gray transit between domestic spasm and oblivion. As the glossaries lengthen, as the footnotes become more elementary and didactic, the poem, the epic, the drama, move out of balance on the actual page. As even the more rudimentary of mythological, religious or historical references, which form the grammar of Western literature, have to be elucidated, the lines of Spenser , of Pope , of Shelley or of Sweeney Among the Nightingales , blur away from immediacy. Creation of absolutely the first rank " in philosophy, in music, in much of literature, in mathematics " continues to occur outside the American milieu. It is at once taken up and intelligently exploited, but the "motion of the spirit" has taken place elsewhere, amid the enervation of Europe, in the oppressive climate of Russia. There is, in a good deal of American intellectual, artistic production recent pain may be a challenging exception a characteristic near-greatness, a strength just below the best. Could it be that the United States is destined to be the "museum culture"? A good deal of classical music is, today, the opium of the good citizen. The really deep divergence between the humanistic and scientific sensibilities is one of temporality. Very nearly by definition, the scientist knows that tomorrow will be in advance of today. A twentieth-century schoolboy can manipulate mathematical and experimental concepts inaccessible to a Galileo or a Gauss. For a scientist the curve of the future is positive. Inevitably, the humanist looks back. We cannot turn back. We cannot choose the dreams of unknowing. We shall, I expect, open the last door in the castle, even if it leads, perhaps because it leads, on to realities which are beyond the reach of human comprehension and control. White Knights of Rekjavik. Essay originally published in The New Yorker Chess may be the deepest, least exhaustible of pastimes, but it is nothing more. As for a chess genius, he is a human being who focuses vast, little-understood mental gifts and labors on an ultimately trivial human enterprise.

George Steiner and the War against the Jews: A Study in Misrepresentation Roger W. Smith College of William and Mary
The literary and cultural critic George Steiner has been described as the pre-

He has an elder sister, Ruth Lilian, who was born in Vienna in 1912. He believed that Jews were "endangered guests wherever they went" [6] and equipped his children with languages. Steiner grew up with three mother tongues: German, English, and French; his mother was multilingual and would often "begin a sentence in one language and end it in another. Instead of allowing him to become left-handed, she insisted he use his right hand as an able-bodied person would. Education[edit] After high school, Steiner went to the University of Chicago , where he studied literature as well as mathematics and physics, and obtained a BA degree in 1935. This was followed by an MA degree from Harvard University in 1937. Steiner took time off from his studies to teach English at Williams College and to work as leader writer for the London -based weekly publication *The Economist* between 1938 and 1940. She had also studied at Harvard, and they met in London at the suggestion of their former professors. He also held a Fulbright professorship in Innsbruck , Austria from 1941 to 1942. In 1943, he was appointed Gauss Lecturer at Princeton, where he lectured for another two years. He then became a founding fellow of Churchill College at the University of Cambridge in 1947. Steiner was initially not well received at Cambridge by the English faculty. Many disapproved of this charismatic "firebrand with a foreign accent" [6] and questioned the relevance of the Holocaust he constantly referred to in his lectures. Bryan Cheyette, professor of 20th-century literature at the University of Southampton said that at the time, "Britain [After several years as a freelance writer and occasional lecturer, Steiner accepted the post of Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Geneva in 1953; he held this post for 20 years, teaching in four languages. Steiner has been called "an intelligent and intellectual critic and essayist. He has written for *The New Yorker* for over thirty years, contributing over two hundred reviews. He advocates generalisation over specialisation, and insists that the notion of being literate must encompass knowledge of both arts and sciences. As Steiner states, "My virginity offended Alfie his college room-mate. He found it ostentatious and vaguely corrupt in a nineteen-year-old He sniffed the fear in me with disdain. And marched me off to Cicero, Illinois , a town justly ill famed but, by virtue of its name, reassuring to me. There he organized, with casual authority, an initiation as thorough as it was gentle. It is this unlikely gentleness, the caring under circumstances so outwardly crass, that blesses me still. He is reported to have said: But ask me the same thing if a Jamaican family moved next door with six children and they play reggae and rock music all day. Or if an estate agent comes to my house and tells me that because a Jamaican family has moved next door the value of my property has fallen through the floor. He has published original essays and books that address the anomalies of contemporary Western culture , issues of language and its "debasement" in the post- Holocaust age. *An Essay in Contrast* , which was a study of the different ideas and ideologies of the Russian writers Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky. *The Death of Tragedy* originated as his doctoral thesis at the University of Oxford and examined literature from the ancient Greeks to the midth century. His best-known book, *After Babel* , was an early and influential contribution to the field of translation studies. It was adapted for television in 1978 as *The Tongues of Men* and was the inspiration behind the creation in 1979 of the English avant-rock group *News from Babel*. Several works of literary fiction by Steiner include four short story collections , *Anno Domini: Awards and honors*[edit].