

[HARDCOVER: UK]

A hot book about Cool Hand Luke

BY SCOTT EYMAN

NY TIMES NEWS SERVICE, WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA

There was an intriguing duality about Paul Newman. He was always quick to make fun of his blue eyes, and the fuss that was made about his good looks. He knew that those things had nothing to do with his acting, but a great deal to do with his stardom. Usually, he'd make a crack on the order of, "If I had brown eyes, I'd still be in Cleveland."

But each interview in which he voiced these sentiments was always accompanied by a new, full-face close-up that enabled the reader to get lost in those blue eyes that Newman spent so much time pretending to resent.

Part of this was just a movie star tending to the franchise, but it also captured an essential conflict within the man, one that he papered over quite well.

For Paul Newman was one of those men who managed to have it both ways: shy away from the narcissism of the acting profession from which he was not exempt, while taking advantage of the fact that he was greatly blessed by nature. At bottom, Newman always seemed slightly uneasy about being an actor. Not in any writhing, embarrassed way, but rather because it seemed insufficient.

Which is why he became such an expert driver of racing cars, why he threw himself into philanthropy after Newman's Own franchise, begun as a local lark in his home in Westport, Connecticut, inexplicably took off. Well, maybe not so inexplicably; the products were and are good. But let's face it: People — millions of them — loved Paul Newman.

Shawn Levy's new biography of the late actor won't change that. It gives us more information about his upbringing as the son of the owner of Newman-Stern, a very successful sporting goods store in Cleveland, more details about his two marriages, and his various careers.

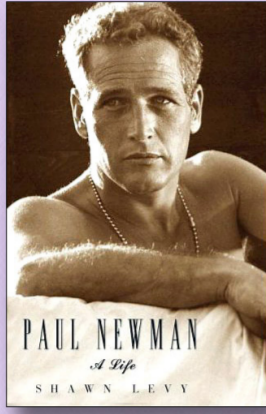
But at the end of the day, and the book, he's the same guy you thought you knew — not just a good actor, but good company.

The truly interesting thing about Newman is that, for all of his renown and acclaim, he was far from the best actor of his generation. He couldn't get close to either Marlon Brando or Montgomery Clift, and I'll bet he would have been the first to say so. But Clift was a sprinter, not a long-distance runner, and Brando was grievously damaged psychologically, i.e. borderline crazy.

Newman, on the other hand, was one of those rare men whose talent was unaccompanied by the gene for self-destruction. He worked hard to develop his skills, then worked equally hard to get the most out of the gift he had.

When he hit a fallow period in his acting career, he took up directing, and did well with performance-based pieces such as *Rachel, Rachel* and *The Glass Menagerie*. In this, he was similar to Burt Lancaster, another very handsome man untouched by

Publication Notes



PAUL NEWMAN: A LIFE

BY SHAWN LEVY

496 PAGES

HARMONY

genius, but who worked and worked and worked some more until he became the very best actor he could be.

Newman had his weak points. He wasn't terribly good at romantic leads, and for a guy who was obviously a lot of fun to be around, he never made a really good comedy. Newman's great gift was for solitary rogues. Sometimes they were redeemable (*The Verdict*) sometimes not (*Hud*, *Cool Hand Luke*), and sometimes their fate would be ambiguous (*The Hustler*), but he refused to stop there.

He played an uptight Midwesterner beautifully in *Mr. and Mrs. Bridge*, he played beautiful losers beautifully (*Slap Shot*, *Nobody's Fool*). And every once in a while, just to keep the franchise current, he'd do a big, gaudy commercial movie that had money written all over it (*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *The Sting*, *The Towering Inferno*) and was bound to contain plenty of close-ups of that close-cropped curly hair, those arctic eyes.

Levy has written books about subjects as varied as Jerry Lewis and the Rat Pack, and he's written as good a book as can be written about a man who didn't cooperate and who told his friends and family not to cooperate. Beyond that, Newman's life lacks primary conflict.

Levy has some valuable insights about the actor's place in his time: "Newman's body of work nicely encapsulated the history of an in-between generation of American men who helped their fathers and uncles conquer the world in war and commerce, but who could only watch — likely with some jealousy — as their younger siblings and their own children acted out on the native rebellious impulses to overturn everything."

Newman's life and talent encompassed both solid fathers and rebellious sons — the former in his life, the ragged, dangerous latter in his art.



Muhammad Yunus, founder and managing director of Grameen Bank.

PHOTO: BLOOMBERG



Social business, no matter what you say or do, must be a matter of joy. That's the fantastic thing about it. You can't beat this, even by making tonnes of money.

— Muhammad Yunus, banker

Muhammad Yunus: a man you can bank on

As a bank created for poor women in Bangladesh prepares to open its doors in Britain, its Nobel peace prize-winning founder says the recession can help people out of poverty

BY ALISON BENJAMIN
THE GUARDIAN, LONDON

There is a banker who is still feted across the world, collecting accolades and honors wherever he goes. The institution he founded more than 20 years ago is unscathed by the current financial crisis, and his opinion is more sought after than ever before as politicians and economists desperately try to fix our bankrupt system.

Muhammad Yunus is to economic development what Nelson Mandela is to world peace — a revered figure whose Grameen Bank has helped millions of Bangladeshis out of rural poverty by lending them small amounts of money, or microfinance, to set up their own businesses. It has 8 million borrowers, 97 percent of whom are women, and since 1982 has issued more than US\$6 billion, lending around US\$100 million a month, with the average loan just US\$220, and repayments of near 100 percent. Its model has now been rolled out worldwide, from China and Zimbabwe to New York, and plans are underway to open the first British Grameen in Glasgow.

Yunus attributes its success to "trust-based banking." Money is lent to women — who he identified as using money more effectively than men for the wellbeing of their children — in groups of five. If one defaults, they all suffer, so they support each other to pay it back. And the borrowers own the bank, receiving dividends in lieu of profits.

In 1976, when he approached conventional banks asking them to lend to villagers deep in debt to loan sharks, the young economics student was told it couldn't be done because the poor are not creditworthy. He has proved them wrong, as has the collapse of the global banking system.

"2009 is a good year to ask again: 'Who is creditworthy?' Is it the large banks with large clients? They cannot obtain their money back ... whereas the poor taking tiny loans, without collateral, are paying every penny of it and changing lives," he told a packed audience last week at a British Council lecture in London. His lecture, entitled *A Framework for a Better Future*, outlined how the recession provides opportunities not just for banks, but for businesses and governments to create a more equitable world.

"When things work, you do not want to touch it, because it is working. When things do not work, then you think about it. If it still does not work, then you kick it! This is the time to kick," he argued.

The biggest hurdle to setting up Grameen America last year, he explained, was finding a mainstream bank that would open a savings account for its borrowers. Under Grameen rules, borrowers are required to save a small weekly amount, but in the US, Grameen is a program, not a bank. Even with Yunus's clout, it took time to persuade the branches of Citibank to open accounts for customers who wanted to deposit only US\$2 a week.

"These are the lessons that we need to now bring together to ask ourselves what kind of financial system we should be creating when we move out of this crisis," Yunus said.

There are now 660 Grameen borrowers in New York City, with an average loan of US\$2,200. More projects are planned in cities across the US, where, Yunus has said, he wants Grameen to become as "ubiquitous as fast food."

After the lecture, I ask him how the Grameen model will translate to inner-city Glasgow, where three generations of unemployment is not uncommon in some families. He readily admits it will be difficult to wean people off welfare and make them more self-reliant. "We don't know what all the problems will be," he replies.

Despite his calm, thoughtful demeanor, this champion of the poor is openly critical of welfare systems for deterring people from working. "Today, neither the welfare officer nor the welfare recipient has any incentive to move people out of welfare," he says. "If you earn a dollar it is deducted from your welfare check. Wrong things have been built into the system."

Yunus believes a better system would reward people for finding work by matching every dollar earned, rather than deducting it. In the US, Grameen has negotiated a welfare holiday that allows borrowers to claim welfare for three years while they build up their small business. Similar waivers may have to be looked at for the Scottish model, which is being developed with Glasgow Caledonian University and is in the process of raising US\$2.5 million.

He is testing out a series of social businesses, in

Resume

Age: 68

Family: Married, two daughters

Home: Dhaka

Education: Collegiate school, Chittagong; Dhaka University, MA in economics; Vanderbilt University, US, PhD, economics

Career: 1983-present: managing director, Grameen Bank;

April 1996-June 1996: adviser in caretaker government of Bangladesh;

1976-1983: project director, Grameen Bank Project;

1975-1989: professor of economics, Chittagong University, and director, rural economics program;

1972-1975: associate professor of economics and head of economics department, Chittagong University;

1972: deputy chief, general economics division, planning commission, Bangladesh government;

1969-1972: assistant economics professor, MTSU Tennessee, US;

1962-1965: economics lecturer, Chittagong college

Awards: Close on 100 awards, including the 2006 Nobel peace prize

[SOFTCOVER: UK]

In praise of an extraordinary ordinariness

This inspired celebration of James Joyce's great novel 'Ulysses' succeeds in reclaiming the widely unread classic for the general reader

BY SEAN O'HAGAN
THE OBSERVER, LONDON

In August 1924, the long-suffering Stanislaus Joyce sent a letter of complaint to his brother, James, in which he mentioned his difficulties with *Ulysses*. "The greater part of it I like," he wrote, before adding with characteristic bluntness: "I have no humor with episodes which are deliberately farcical ... and as episodes grow longer and longer and you try to tell every damn thing you know about anybody that appears or anything that crops up, my patience oozes out."

In his exasperation, Stanislaus anticipated the fate that awaited *Ulysses*, a novel that, almost 90 years after its publication, seems to have utterly exhausted the patience of the ordinary reader to the point where it is now perhaps the most unread literary masterpiece of all time. Declan Kiberd begins *Ulysses and Us*, his inspired reclamation of Joyce's great epic of the everyday, by

acknowledging the great irony that "a book which set out to celebrate the common man and woman" has "endured the sad fate of never being read by many of them".

Kiberd's previous books include the brilliant *Inventing Ireland: the Literature of the Modern Nation* and *Ulysses: Annotated Students' Edition*. The preoccupations of both books come together in *Ulysses and Us*. The first — and more interesting — part of the book is a polemic, which tackles what Kiberd sees as the enduring misrepresentation of Joyce's dauntingly ambitious novel: "How can a book like *Ulysses* have been so misread and misunderstood?" he asks early on. "How was it taken as a product of a specialist bohemia against which it was in fact in open revolt? Why has it been called unreadable by the ordinary people for which it was intended?" In the second part of *Ulysses and Us*, Kiberd goes on to give a chapter

by chapter breakdown of the novel, best read alongside the original text, to help, it would seem, those "ordinary people" reclaim the book.

If Kiberd tends to downplay the novel's difficulty, he is a tireless and refreshingly clear-headed champion of its myriad rewards. Even if you do not have the patience to read *Ulysses* with Kiberd's chapter-by-chapter guide nearby, you should try and read his two opening chapters, entitled *How Ulysses Didn't Change the World* and *How it Might Still Do So*. Together, they make up a rigorous, politically combative and heartfelt argument for the continuing relevance of a novel "that has much to teach us about the world — advice on how to cope with grief; how to be frank about death in the age of its denial; how women have their own sexual desires and so also do men; how to walk and think at the same time ... how to tell a joke and how not to tell a joke ..."

Publication Notes



ULYSSES AND US: THE ART OF EVERYDAY LIVING

BY DECLAN KIBERD

399 PAGES

FABER

It is his contention that *Ulysses* has suffered most at the hands of its so-called champions, the seemingly endless stream of academics that constitutes the Joyce industry in all its self-sustaining, self-defeating specialization. Their cardinal sin, he insists, is not their willful obfuscation or often surreal jargon — "parallax, indeterminacy, consciousness-time" — but their determination to wrest the book from its actual — and symbolic — setting.

"Many of them reject the notion of a national culture, assuming that to be cultured nowadays is to be international, even global, in consciousness," writes Kiberd. "In doing this, they have removed Joyce from the Irish context which gave his work so much of its meaning and value."

As Kiberd points out, *Ulysses* is a novel so rooted in a sense of place that, as its author once memorably put it, if Dublin was to "suddenly disappear from the

Earth it could be reconstructed out of my book."

Ulysses is a novel that, long before the term was invented, attempted to map out the psychogeography of Joyce's native city. It is also, though, as Kiberd reminds us, a novel "written to celebrate ordinary people's daily rounds."

It is a book about the passing on of wisdom from one generation to another, from one remarkably content older Dubliner, Bloom, to the younger, altogether more troubled Stephen Dedalus. Kiberd's subtitle is *The Art of Everyday Living* and that is what he emphasizes throughout.

For all that, though, *Ulysses* does remain a difficult read and, I suspect, seldom finds its way on to book club reading lists. More worryingly, as Kiberd points out, it has also fallen off the syllabuses of many university degree courses in English literature.

What has also been lost is the notion of the novel as a medium for self-improvement, a notion

Joyce believed in wholeheartedly. He insisted, as Kiberd succinctly puts it, "on the use-value of art" and saw *Ulysses* as a book that could engage both scholars and ordinary readers alike. This now seems like wishful thinking, but, as Kiberd states: "Ulysses took shape in a world which had known for the first time the possibilities of mass literacy and the emergence of working men's reading libraries." That utopian ideal now seems distant.

The last word, though, should not, for once, go to Joyce but to the common reader, in this instance Declan Kiberd's father, a Dubliner through and through. "My father loved *Ulysses* as the fullest account ever given of the city in which he lived," writes Kiberd. "There were parts that baffled or bored him, and these he skipped, much as today we fast-forward over the duller tracks on beloved music albums. But there were entire passages he knew almost by heart."