Notable Books 1981
compiled by the
Notable Books Council
Reference and Adult Services Division
American Library Association

This list has been compiled for use by the general reader and by librarians who work with adult readers. The titles were selected for their significant contribution to the expansion of knowledge or for the pleasure they can provide to adult readers. Criteria include wide general appeal and literary merit.

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Ashbery, John. *Shadow Train*. Viking. This collection of fifty sixteen-line poems is mysteriously seductive, puzzlingly evocative.

Berke, Robert. Bounds Out of Bounds: A Compass for Recent American and British Poetry. Oxford Univ. Pr. An inviting introduction to the major schools of poetry, the poets who shaped them, and the works they created.


Carver, Raymond. What We Talk About When We Talk about Love. Knopf. Seventeen stark, haunting stories of ordinary individuals encountering horrific aspects of human nature and suffering the dislocations of an unpredictable existence.


Gordimer, Nadine. July's People. Viking. Fleeing the black revolution, a liberal South African white family becomes totally dependent on their former servant. An eloquent, prophetic novel that exposes the distortions and dislocations of the social and political environment on the scientist's theory and practice.

Gould, Stephen Jay. The Mismeasure of Man. Norton. Can human intelligence be determined without the influence of the social and political environment on the scientist's theory and practice?


Hampl, Patricia. A Romantic Education. Houghton. A young Minnesota poet and writer of the sixties generation seeks her roots in golden Prague, the dream city of her spirited grandmother.

Hughes, Robert. The Shock of the New. Knopf. A lively text, coupled with plentiful illustrations, provides a fascinating account of modern art from 1889 through the early seventies.

Johnson, Donald C., and Edey, Maitland A. Lucy: The Beginnings of Humankind. Simon & Schuster. An animated presentation of modern theory about man's ancestors, with emphasis on the early fossil skeletal remains unearthed by Johnson at Hadar, Ethiopia.

McCullough, David. Mornings on Horseback. Simon & Schuster. Theodore Roosevelt's early years, when his personality and character were molded and tempered by his devoted father, "Greatheart," and an uncommon array of canny and nurturing women.


Mooney, Ted. Easy Travel to Other Planets: A Novel. Farrar. A marvelous first novel in which the author weaves his tale effortlessly through time and space with glimpses of the many shapes of love along the way.

Neely, Richard. How Courts Govern America. Yale Univ. Pr. With humor and clarity, a Virginia Supreme Court judge discusses the structure of the judicial system in America and the role of the courts and legislative bodies in effecting change in American life.


Peters, F. E. Ours: The Making and Unmaking of a Jesuit. Marek. The author's growth during nine years as a seminarian, from entry at eighteen to his decision to leave, reveals the shaping of a person by a community.

Plante, David. The Country. Atheneum. This elegant and precisely written novel explores the anguish of seven sons as their aged parents become more withdrawn and their father dies.
Plath, Sylvia. *The Collected Poems.* Edited by Ted Hughes. Harper. This volume allows the reader to follow a major poet's development, from schoolgirl experimentation to meticulous poetic expression and anguished authority.

Pond, Elizabeth. *From the Yaroslavsky Station: Russia Perceived.* Universe. Russian history is contrasted with contemporary Soviet life and attitudes, as revealed by Pond's traveling companions on a trans-Siberian railroad.

Robinson, Marilynne. *Housekeeping.* Farrar. Images of a river haunt this novel of recollection about unbearable choices between permanence and transience.


Spencer, Elizabeth. *The Stories of Elizabeth Spencer.* Doubleday. Superb evocation of people and places characterizes these thirty-three stories written over five decades.

Stratton, Joanna L. *Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier.* Simon & Schuster. The rigorous challenges of life on the prairie are revealed in personal recollections and wonderful photographs.

Timerman, Jacobo. *Prisoner without a Name, Cell without a Number.* Knopf. An Argentine newspaper publisher's harrowing account of his imprisonment and torture as an advocate of social justice and of the inner strength that enabled him to survive.

Totman, Conrad. *Japan before Perry: A Short History.* Univ. of California Pr. How Japan, its social institutions, and increasing population developed in cycles of fragmentation and reconciliation from prehistoric through early modern times.

Tuchman, Barbara. *Practicing History: Selected Essays.* Knopf. A splendid potpourri of essays and addresses that includes the craft of historical writing as well as an effective discourse on what our nation can learn from history.

Updike, John. *Rabbit Is Rich.* Knopf. Middle-aged and middle-class Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom is beset by his troublesome son and by images of mortality in Updike's poetic, acutely observed novel of contemporary American life.


Woods, Donald. *Asking for Trouble: Autobiography of a Banned Journalist.* Atheneum. This recounting of Woods's lifelong struggle for journalistic integrity, a tenet which resulted in his exile from South Africa, culminates with an exciting escape.

Many of the books are available in braille, talking books, or large type. Consult your Regional Library for the Blind.


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