

# DC's

Monday, February 24, 2014

## Rerun: Spotlight on ... Max Frisch *Man in the Holocene* (1979) (orig. 06/03/08)



*Man in the Holocene* is a favorite novel of mine. Even though it was highly acclaimed in its time -- both *The New Yorker* and the *New York Times* named it the most important novel of 1980, for instance -- it, like much of Max Frisch's work, has slid off the radar of most contemporary readers. So, guessing that many readers of this place haven't yet come across the novel, I thought I'd give it the blog today. --

### The Story

*The aged Mr. Geiser is bored in his Tessin house during torrential rains. He is so bored that he tries to make a pagoda out of crispbread and categorizes thunders (into rolling thunders, banging thunders, etc.). Rumors report a landslide, and that the valley is cut off. Fearing a total mountain slide that would bury the village and man's knowledge, Geiser reads his encyclopedia, the Bible, history books, and cuts out/transcribes important information for posterity. He attaches the notes to the walls of the house. Despite the weather, he wanders around. But, while wandering, he feels his physical limits, and the limited importance of man's knowledge too. Geiser slowly loses his memory. The question arises: is memory needed or not -- "the rocks do not need my memory". Towards the end, Geiser suffers a cerebral apoplexy that attacks his memory. Now it turns out that the fear of a mountain slide was the fear of cerebral apoplexy; fearing the loss of man's knowledge was fearing loss of his own memory. That is the parabolic aspect.* -- [Wikipedia](#)

### The Book



Between February 25th and March 11th, I will either be in Antarctica or on a ship traveling between there and Ushuaia, Argentina. During that time, I'll have little to no internet access, as far as I can tell. So, to mark that mysterious occasion, this blog will go dead still for the duration, beginning on the 26th. New posts and full-length p.s.es will start appearing here again on March 12th.

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**December 2013:** Dennis Cooper *The Weaklings (XI)* (Sententia Books)