

The New Criterion

Notebook

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Cats may look at kings

by [Anthony Daniels](#)

On the cult of celebrity.

Not long ago, I met the son of an American friend of mine in New York for lunch. He had been brought up in California but had come east to pursue a career in journalism. He wrote about such matters as style and fashion for a magazine with a circulation of two million that, he said, was struggling financially. I did not at this point in the conversation mention the circulation of *The New Criterion*.

I asked him about his life. He had not much money, and lived in a very small apartment with other young people who were just starting out in life; evidently it was not easy for him, for he was unaccustomed to discomfort. "But," he said, with something like a light in his eyes, "when I walk down the street, I sometimes see a celebrity, and there's nowhere else that could happen."

Though we were speaking the same language and drinking the same soup, I ...

Anthony Daniels's most recent book is *In Praise of Prejudice* (Encounter Books). Hewas born in 1949. After qualifying as a doctor, he worked in what was then Rhodesia, followed by South Africa, before returning for three years training as a psychiatrist in London's East End. Three and a half years in the Gilbert Islands were interspersed with some South American wandering, and then between 1984 and 1986 he worked in Tanzania. His first book, *Coups and Cocaine*, was followed by *Fool or Physician*, subtitled 'the memoirs of a sceptical doctor.' *Zanzibar to Timbuktu*, his trek across Africa by public transport was published to great acclaim in 1988, and was a runner-up in the Thomas Cook Travel Book Award.

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