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Writing Romances

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In Vitro Conception
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Niihau—the Unknown Island
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photography, poetry, fiction

Special issue on The Future
(Fall, 1986—see contest notice on inside back cover)

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Louis T. Milic

Stories of Love—For Women Only

Although there has been much recent concern about the decreasing interest in literature of the American public—perhaps even its decreasing literacy—it is a fact that fiction has made a strong comeback in the last decade or two. A new class of readers has emerged whose consumption of books is nothing short of phenomenal. This group seems to consist of women (mainly between the ages of 18 and 45 although some are older and a few much older), who buy one of every four books sold in the United States. The object of this voracious consumption is called a romance, and it can be found on metal racks in bookstores, five-and-tens, supermarkets, drug stores, newsstands, and even gas stations. The volumes are paperbacked and average 150-300 pages; the cover depicts an attractive young couple embracing. Harlequin, Avon, Silhouette, Fawcett, and Dell are the publishers’ names most often found on the title pages of these works, which are likely to bear such titles as Moonstruck Madness, Passion’s Blazing Triumph, or Sweet Savage Love. Not only the readers of these romances but the writers and the editors are mainly female. In other words, the enormous market for romance fiction is run by women for consumption by women for the ultimate profit of—men.

Until recently the term romance referred to medieval adventure stories involving knights, kings, giants, and noble ladies, in fanciful quests and escapades. The stories of King Arthur, Amadis de Gaule, and Tristan and Ysolt are romances, and so turned the mind of Don Quixote that he tried to emulate their heroes. The romance that we are speaking of is a completely different animal. It is basically a love story in the course of which an unattached young woman is courted and won by a strong, sexually attractive man of whom she is initially afraid or whom she initially rejects. The canonical form of the romance has a happy ending involving a union, either sexual or formal, between the two protagonists, told in such a manner that the woman’s feelings are the focus of attention. Silhouette, for example, notifies its writers: “Your story should be told in the third person, primarily from the heroine’s point of view. However, the hero’s perspective may be used to enhance tension, plot or character development . . . .”

Because love and sex are of central interest in the romance, there is a good deal of feverish description of sexual activity, ranging from the euphemistic to the no-holds-barred explicit. Though the settings vary geographically and historically, these novels can be classified into a few distinct categories. Indeed “category fiction” is another name for this genre. Eileen Fallon, a former romance editor, has divided these into the following “sub-genres”:

1. The sweet romance was the original Harlequin and Silhouette product. It has a virginal heroine, aged 18-23, whose first love is described in 50,000-55,000 words.
2. The sensual romance came into being in 1973 with the Harlequin Presents line and matured in Dell Candlelight’s Ecstasy series in 1982. The heroines are sexually experienced, between the ages of 24 and 39, and have a consummated affair with the hero well before the end of the book, which also runs 50,000-55,000 words.
3. The longer romance derives from Silhouette’s Special Editions. It focuses on the de-

Cover cameo for Golden Illusions by “Sarah Crewe” (Virginia Blanford) in the “Second Chance at Love” Series.
veloping love relationship between the main characters but introduces more secondary characters. The heroines and the level of sensuality are similar to the previous category. Length is 70,000-75,000 words, but has gone even higher.

4. The teen-age romance is a shorter sweet romance with a young heroine getting involved with a boy for the first time. Scholastic’s Wildfire series was the progenitor but Bantam’s Sweet Dreams and Silhouette’s First Love carried the type forward.

5. The historical, which can be set in the declining years of George III, when his son George was Prince Regent (1811-20), his later reign as George IV (1821-30), the Victorian (1837-1901), the Edwardian (1901-10), as well as other less well-defined periods. The emphasis is still on the emotional life of the heroine and the historical background is lightly sketched. The works range from the demure Regency to the sensual “bodice-rippers” like the works of Kathleen Woodiwiss and Rosemary Rogers, which have been described as containing “explicit sex with the hero and additional male characters; graphic sexual variations; abuse and/or rape . . . .”

6. The romantic-historical is more carefully researched and better written than the average romance. A prototype is the Rosalynde Chronicles, a series of novels, written by Roberta Gillis for Playboy Books.

7. The Gothic romance is set in a foreboding castle or large house and contains supernatural aspects affecting primarily the heroine, who is under constant menace.

To understand the full meaning of the term “category fiction,” one needs to refer to the guidelines provided to romance writers by publishers. Silhouette’s four lines of romances range in length from 50,000 to 85,000 words. The pure “Romance” category (the shortest) limits lovemaking between characters to those who are married, but makes plain that “sexual tension is a vitally important element.” The “Desires” category goes further: “the heroine is someone we identify with; the hero irresistible. The conflict should be an emotional one . . . . The focus is on the developing relationship . . . . The characters don’t have to be married to make love, but lovemaking is never taken lightly.”

Similarly, Harlequin publishes a set of editorial guidelines covering its eight categories of romance fiction for the benefit of intending “romance authors.” The guidelines for each category have most of the following headings: “Length,” “Plot,” “Style,” “Sex,” “Heroine,” “Hero,” “Setting,” and “Submission Format.” There are variations among the guidelines for different series beyond those resulting from their differing audiences. The style of the Harlequin Romance series is expected to be “Generally light and natural; humorous, but only if you have a bent for humor and humor fits naturally into the story. Do not allow long passages of narrative unbroken by dialogue. Dialogue should reflect the way people actually speak, but keep ‘strong’ language (swear words) and highly provocative, sensual language to a minimum.” On the other hand, “Harlequin Presents books have no set writing style. The style of a book is determined by the personality of the author and the demands of the story.” For Harlequin’s American Romance, the guidelines are stark: “The writing should be of the highest quality. Use your five senses to enhance the writing.” Superromances are more specific, even finicky: “Correct grammar and American spelling, except where improper usage is important to the depiction of the character. Please refer to the Chicago Manual of Style or Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary for detail questions.” We can assume that these variations reflect different editors’ predilections and the difficulty of talking about style without recourse to technical or abstract terms.

Differences in plot, character, and setting are the consequence of policy decisions based on readers’ preferences. The Harlequin Romance series guidelines are quite plain about plot:

Story lines may be relatively simple, though there must be enough complexity to maintain interest for the required 50,000-plus words. Subplots that add elements of mystery, suspense or adventure are fine, as long as the emphasis remains on the central romance. This central romance should fulfill readers’ fantasies of ideal love and meet a high moral standard. The plot should not be too grounded in harsh realities—Romance readers want to be uplifted, not depressed—but at the same time should make the reader feel that such love is possible, if not probable.

A more detailed suggestion is given by the editor of Harlequin Presents:

It is stating the obvious to say that the books should deal with the love between a man and a woman, a love that is resolved happily by the end;
but the emphasis is on the shattering power of that love to change lives, to develop character, to transform perception . . . Any situation may be used—from those that confront such contemporary concerns as divorce, affairs, illegitimacy or the problems of materialism, to those bordering on fairytales . . . Strong characters in conflict or kept apart by misunderstanding are part of the appeal of Presents. If hero and heroine are too obviously compatible too early, the plot loses its suspense or tension. The story should convey the acute sensitivity of emotion that accompanies falling in love, and writers should remember that only the strongest emotion can justify extremes of behavior.

The warnings embodied in these guidelines indicate the sort of difficulties editors sometimes have with inexperienced authors.

At times the editor's demands appear impossible to fulfill—originality and freshness with radical constraints:

Problems, though contemporary ones, should not be so strongly realistic that they overshadow the romance. The story should always leave the reader with an uplifting feeling of fulfillment, and though twists of the plot should aim for originality and freshness, the romance should remain the prime focus. Most importantly, the story should be a good, fast-paced exciting read. The book should conclude with the couple making a mutual decision to a lifetime commitment and marriage.

As might be expected, Gothic, Regency, and Romantic Intrigue have more specific plot requirements. And sex, of course, is subject to a variety of constraints, ranging from none (Harlequin Romance, Gothic, Regency) to the rigorous ones laid down for American Romance: “Love scenes should be fairly explicit without being graphic, and NEVER carnal.” And for Superromance:

Sex may be explicit as long as it's written in good taste. Sexual encounters may be frequent, although they should never be gratuitous. The emphasis should be on shared sensual feelings. And don't forget the romantic aspects of relationships. Modern attitudes toward sex should be reflected while reinforcing the values of love, caring or commitment.

The purpose of all this categorization is to insure that the huge market of readers receives what experience has shown they want. Despite the large number of individual women who constitute that readership, it

Right: a historical and a sensual romance, both by Nina Pykare, who discusses her work in the following pages.
has a considerable unity and entirely homogeneous desires. Although the publishers vary in their depiction of their readers’ demographic profile, they generally agree that they are probably married, over 25, with little education beyond high school, and are equally divided between working women and housewives. Harlequin’s press kit offers these facts about its readers: 40% have some higher education, the same proportion work full-time and have a family income in excess of $30,000.

But more significant perhaps than their demographic homogeneity is the extensive-ness and intensity of their reading habits. These readers do not merely read an occasional romance; they read regularly, usually one book a week, sometimes eight to twelve a month. Harlequin claims that two in five read a romance every two days, and one in five one per day, the average reader spending $60 a month on romance books. Some publishers have established subscription services which provide a steady flow of this reading matter to the consumer, thus bypassing the bookstores. It is clear from these quantities that romance readers do not just read themselves to sleep every night. To read at this pace, even the fastest reader must devote a number of hours to the task every day. For a working woman, especially with a family, this requires putting other tasks aside and therefore represents a dedication to literature rarely found elsewhere these days.

Janice Radway, a scholar who has made a careful study involving deep interviews with a group of readers of category fiction, reached the conclusion that these works are obsessively read because they fulfill an important emotional-psychological need for the women making up the essential readership. The typical reader in her study is a woman who has a husband, a child or children, and a house to take care of. Her marriage, like most people’s, is not ideal but is not in danger of collapse. The effort required to maintain the household leaves the woman drained of emotional resources. This lack is made up, she believes, by burying herself in a fantasy in which the heroine, with whom she identifies, becomes involved and eventually enveloped by the protective strength of a powerful, capable, successful and attractive male, who yet reveals after a good deal of fencing that he is also dependent on her.

The readers insist on a heroine who is intelligent, independent, and beautiful, on a hero who first misunderstands her before capitulating to her charms, and on a slowly developing relationship leading to a happy climax in which the woman’s feelings are uppermost. Within this narrow compass, very little significant variation is possible, and, beyond changes in setting, very little is tolerated. To fill the emotional abyss in their lives, these women must re-experience this satisfying trajectory as often as time will allow. Despite the apparently wholesome cultural aspects of such reading (learning about history and geography, and obliviousness to television), it is basically an addiction.

These addicts need a constant source of new romances. Where do they all come from? To find out, we questioned three writers of romances. Each answered a long questionnaire from which the following sketches are constructed. Each of these authors—they are all women, of course—has a doctorate in English and either is a teacher or prepared herself for a career in teaching. But each now considers herself a professional writer, for whom romance writing was a passport to being a published writer of fiction.

Nina Pykare

Although she has been writing romances only since 1978, she is the author of 32 works (historical, Regency, inspirational, and contemporary) published by Dell, Pocket Books, Silhouette, and New American Library. Born in Alliance, Ohio, a graduate of Youngstown State University and the holder of a doctorate from Kent State University, she has always wanted to be a writer. She is the mother of four sons and a daughter and has three grandchildren. A lack of teaching opportunities led her to the position of secretary in the Department of Religious Studies at Cleveland State University. She began her writing with children’s stories and poems for Sunday School papers (which literally paid pennies, she says), moved to confessions (which paid much better) and finally plunged into the novel. This is how she describes, in her own words, the beginning of her career.

One day I was reading People magazine. I think it was in the dentist’s office. And
I read that Rosemary Rogers was “taking the historical into the bedroom.” This was in 1978 when such things were still noticeable. I said to myself, “Heck, I’ve been writing about the bedroom for quite a while now. Why don’t I write a historical?” Not knowing anything about writing a novel (and not even thinking of doing research on the subject) I started looking for a setting. I was tired of reading so much about the nineteenth century, so I decided to use the first century in my book. As an ordinary American, I had never been able to do much of an ethnic thing, but then I discovered that the Celts had been common ancestors of my German, Scotch, Welsh, and English forebears. So I set my novel in first century England and made my heroine a Celt. Then I did bushels of research.

Some months later I received my first rejection slip, which, of course, told me absolutely nothing except that they didn’t want my book. After much debate I spent a hundred of my hard-earned dollars to have my masterpiece critiqued. Of course, I got cheated. At that time I didn’t know that a reputable agent wouldn’t charge for reading a work. So I got four closely written pages of criticism that (1) could have been applied to any work ever written and (2) clearly showed that no one had read my book.

By this time, I was out of graduate school and working at Cleveland State. A friend of mine was reading about the publishing business and how agents are supposed to operate. The book (an autobiography) included several anecdotes about agents. I picked one the author praised and wrote him, asking if he’d be interested in seeing my novel. I was fortunate in that I had a lot of credits. All those children’s pieces and confessions made an imposing list.

The agent wrote back that he would be glad to see my novel and I shipped it off. As it turned out, there were a lot of things wrong with it. The wrong century, for one. It seems that if you want to sell, you write about what is currently selling—namely, at this time, the nineteenth century. But the agent did ask me if I’d like to try romances. He sent me a dope sheet and I was on my way. I wrote one romance for practice. Then he sold Love’s Promise to Dell.

I love to write. It makes me feel good. It’s not just the playing around with words. I did that in graduate school when I wrote papers and I actually enjoyed it. But here there are characters. They become very real to me, so real that sometimes they run away with the story. I like best to write without outlines, to just let the book happen. I don’t get to do this often because my editors usually buy from outlines. Sometimes, though, I write a book purely on speculation. Then I let it come as it wants to. I like creating people, good decent people. I like making them interesting, I don’t think Oscar Wilde was right when he claimed that only the wicked make good characters. Good people can be interesting, too. I like seeing how they behave. I like seeing them learn and grow. I like giving them a happy ending.

Beyond this there are the other benefits that writing gives me. When I write every day, I feel better, physically and mentally. Writing gives me some kind of emotional release and psychic energy. I don’t pretend to understand how this happens, except that I think that when I write I am in the alpha brain state and this is good for me. At any rate, I love writing, I like being a writer. It’s part of my identity. It’s also the realization of a childhood dream. I always knew I wanted to be a writer.
Usually I sell from outline. This means that the editor chooses a book before it is written. So the first thing to do is to get an outline accepted. This is the hard part. Editors are busy people and it often takes months before they decide on an idea. Then I begin writing. I work the first thing in the morning, beginning while I eat breakfast. Generally I do five pages a day, producing a book in about six weeks. I have, on occasion, finished one in a month, but most of the time I like to take at least six weeks. Not rushing the job allows for more development. The fact that I have an outline doesn’t necessarily limit the book. Outlines can be deviated from. And giving myself more time allows things to percolate in my mind.

I write longhand in a 6 by 9 1/2 inch bound spiral notebook. This way the whole manuscript stays together. I line each page down the middle before I begin, having learned from my daughter that my arm doesn’t tire so fast if my hand has to travel a smaller distance. This makes the transcribing easier, too. If I am at home when writing a book, I try to put the day before’s production into the computer each afternoon. I often write away from home, however, and then I have to type overtime when I get back. Typing is one of the parts I don’t care so much for, but until they get a reasonably priced voice typewriter I guess I’ll be stuck with it. Since I do so much writing away from home I have deliberately not attempted to compose at the computer. I would not want to limit where I can write. Also, I’ve found that doing things directly on the computer produces a different rhythm in my work than that which I’ve established when writing by hand.

I begin each day by reading what I wrote the day before. This primes the pump and gets me going. At this time I may make minor revisions. I also do a little revising during the first typing and as things occur to me during the various proofings. Large-scale revisions are not usual for me. When an editor does ask for one, the computer is worth its weight in gold.

After the book is finished, I print out a rough draft, make more minor corrections on it, then print the final one, proof it again, and send it out. Then I wait.
Sometimes several months go by after deadline before the editor gets around to reading it. Editors operate on their own perverse time schedules. Galleys arrive today and should be back yesterday, but they take their own sweet time on the things they have to do. When the editor gets around to reading the manuscript, she may ask for revisions. To do these I go through the whole manuscript at least four times. First I read it and mark places I think should be changed to give her what she wants. Then I make the changes, Then I read it again to see if it still works. Then I print the new copy. Then I read the whole thing again, proofing and being especially careful to make sure that the changes haven’t damaged the book’s internal time schedule or changed things in some unforeseen way. I do this with the changes editors make, too, since they can’t be expected to remember all the ramifications of the plot.

Later, galleys come. I read and mark them and send them back. One of my publishers is now in the process of changing to computer printouts. Eventually we are supposed to be able to send our disks, if our machines are compatible.

Then, finally, months after the book is finished, my copies arrive. I put one on my bookshelf and take one to my mother and each of my children. And that’s it.

Because of the time gaps, the process of each book overlaps that of several others. Thus, I may stop in the middle of one to proof another one, to write another outline, or to do revisions.

Ideas come from all over. From newspaper articles, travel, research, etc. This can probably be best shown by example. My latest Silhouette Romance, A Woman’s Wiles, grew from an article my father saved for me from my hometown newspaper. The whole plot practically sprang full grown from this review, written by a man, about a book on how to catch a husband. The man’s antagonism permeated the whole piece. Here was my hero, made into a TV interviewer with a Mike Wallace approach. My heroine, of course, was the woman who wrote the book. Having recently lived for a while in Memphis, I set the book there and used a lot of the local scenery.

Locale is often the beginning of plot. I visited Montana some time ago and fell in love with the place. Since I’m also very fond of horses and the old West, I have used Montana as the setting for quite a few books. Sun Spark has a businessman hero and an environmentally sensitive solar engineer heroine. No horses in this one; they are bicycling through the state. The heroine of Passion’s Domain runs a concrete construction company and the architect hero wants to build an eyesore on her beloved prairie. Dream of the West’s artist heroine clashes with a wealthy art collector as she researches a book on the great Western artist, Charlie Russell.

When I began doing contemporary romances, I looked for a locale that no one else was using. Southeast Asia offered a lot of possibilities. The first thing was to consider what goes on in these places. The growing of teak wood was the beginning of Love’s Promise. In Affairs of the Heart the photographer heroine ends up on a jungle quest for rare tropical flowers (courtesy of National Geographic). In Design for Love, the heroine, visiting Bali to find a Batik designer, also finds love with a Dutch colonial. In Time Stands Still the geologist heroine works with a crew that scouts for oil in the tropical jungle. The hero is her one-time husband, a man she still loves. In This Brief Interlude the graduate-student heroine tours Southeast Asia with a summer class on Asian theater, taught by a man she loved when she was very young and has continued to love.

One problem I have with books like this which require a great deal of research is that I have a tendency to put in too much background. Also, some fascinating facts about other cultures don’t strike editors as fascinating at all. I had to cut a whole chapter from Design for Love because it took place during a funeral celebration, a very festive Balinese occasion, but one which the editor felt American readers could not empathize with.

I usually look for book material when I travel. A trip to Las Vegas was the start of In a Moment’s Time. My agent said that Vegas itself was too glittery for a setting, but I took bus tours during the day and found a rebuilt ghost town which became the setting for the book. When I asked for printed material about the place, I discovered there was none. Here was my heroine’s purpose readymade: she was called in to write a publicity brochure. My fascination with the oldtime photography shop, stocked with costumes ap-
propriate to the period, gave rise to the hero taking a rest from his regular work as a writer by working incognito as a photographer. Generally speaking, a plot that can work with the past (using old costumes, masquerade balls, etc.) is fun. Readers like the excitement of dressing up, of becoming someone different for a little while.

Some books begin with the search for different or unusual occupations for the heroine. In writing contemporary books it's getting harder and harder to come up with exotic occupations. Besides being veterinarians, photographers, writers (both magazine and book writers), and concrete construction company owners, my heroines have been famous mathematicians, rodeo riders, artists, geologists, solar energy engineers, psychiatrists, and motel managers. The heroine of No Man's Kisses, scheduled to come out in January, runs a horse ranch in (you guessed it) Montana.

As far as autobiographical material goes, a lot of the feeling comes from my experience. However, a lot is also imagination. For instance, I have never made love in a Montana meadow or a Sumatran jungle pool. Imagining it can be a lot of fun, though. And I don't have to worry about the bugs.

I don't believe I have ever used someone I've known in a book, that is, transported whole. Real people have a tendency to get in the way. Their ways of behaving are already established and it's not so easy to bend them to the demands of the plot.

Probably I use my experience of places most often. Last year when I visited Florida with the express purpose of getting book material, I just sort of soaked up the feel of everything I could: the ocean, the heat, etc. Sometimes a very little thing can mean a lot. For instance, in Promise Me Tomorrow, a little snowflake paperweight that I bought as a souvenir for my granddaughter later became important in the plot. This was another book that started with the setting. I spent a weekend at Conneaut Lake Park, Pennsylvania, which I remembered from my childhood because of its beautiful old Victorian hotel. This time I pretty much had the plot in mind before I got there: the heroine, an artist/writer doing a book on old hotels, literally runs into the hero, who is there to sell his grandmother's cottage.

Unlike most writers of "mainstream" novels, Nina Pykare has no difficulty obeying publishers' demands. Indeed she is comfortable working within the orderly world of the guidelines (or "tip sheet") which for many writers are constraining. Her comments continue with an explanation of how she satisfies her own creative needs and her publisher's as well.

Every editor has her own criteria. Sometimes it's hard to discover exactly what they are. Each house also has its own restrictions and guidelines, which often change. When I first started writing romances, there was no completed sexual consummation in any of them. Now it's an old story. Innovation, again, depends on the particular editor. Generally, I find that editors that I can talk to directly about an idea are more amenable to stretching the boundaries. Some editors are very innovative themselves. For instance, the rule used to be third person, heroine's point of view, only. One of my editors encouraged me to use the male's point of view (something I had done on occasion in a confession). It was the only book I ever did which has only two characters throughout the whole book.

Styles change, of course. That's one reason for having an agent. They keep up with what's going on. When I started, young heroines, seventeen, eighteen, etc. were the rule. Lost little waifs, there for the hero to rescue. Now, no self-respecting editor will look at such a heroine. Today's heroines are twenty-five or older, self-sufficient and successful. They need men for love and companionship, not for financial support. I myself prefer this sort of heroine; she allows for much more scope in character development and plotting.

There are certain restrictions inherent in all forms of romance writing. The first, and most important, is the happy ending. Romance readers expect happy endings. Everything must work out right. I am all in favor of this. As a reader, I am distressed when I invest a lot of my time in a character who ends badly.

Regencies—novels set in the period from 1811-1821—of course have more restrictions than regular romances. Regency heroines have heads, waists, and hands; once in a while, ankles. An occasional kiss is allowable.
and references can be made to a heaving bosom. But other parts of the anatomy are strictly forbidden. This, incidentally, has a tendency to heighten the sexual tension. A lot can be done with an "accidental" touch to the nape of the neck, as any reader of Regencies well knows.

"Sweet" romances still do not allow the final consummation of sex, but they may come very very close. The steamier ones allow sex scenes—sensual, as the guidelines point out, not graphic. Still, there's hardly anything that can't be done with a little finesse and subtlety, and the judicious use of euphemism. Rape, however, is definitely out, even the sort of semi-invited kind that used to flourish in the genre. Women's raised consciousness has disallowed this kind of thing. Rightly so, I believe. Heroines now (at least mine) know what they're doing when they make love. They're aware, mature people, responsible for the choices they make.

As a writer who has ventured on occasion into other genres, I have to admit that the formula lines are helpful. It is not easy to write a formula book. It is even harder to write an "unformula" one. I find romance guidelines more helpful than binding.

I have written in several romance genres. Regencies, though they have the same love interest, are rather different from the other genres in tone. They have a lot of wit and interesting details about the manners, clothes, and customs of the time. Sometimes a great deal of research goes into them. One of my favorites, *Love Plays a Part*, worried my agent because of the amount of theatrical material it included. The heroine worked in a theater and knew the greats of the period, like Kean and Kemble. All the minor theatrical characters were also fictionalized real people. It turned out that the readers very much appreciated seeing something new about the Regency. That period is very restricted historically, and there are only so many events which can be used. Still, these are my favorites of all my work.

Sweet romances, which began with Harlequin, used to be stories in which the heroine was always saved from disaster (translate to sexual consummation before marriage) by a variety of strange circumstances, some of which included the hero having willpower of superhuman proportions. These days sweet romances don't necessarily have scenes that end in interruption. My *A Woman's Wiles*, which came out last August, has nothing steamier than several kisses. But it's full of sexual tension.

The steamier romances—Desires, Ecstasies, Raptures, Loveswept—all feature long love scenes. The emphasis is on the sensual not on the graphic details. Nevertheless, some writers do get quite graphic. I generally concentrate on pillow talk. A lot can be learned about a person's character from what goes on before and after lovemaking. Sometimes writers try for exotic settings for their lovemaking scenes. The Sumatran Jungle or the Montana wilderness are favorites of mine. Beside a pool also works well.

For me, writing is a career. I love to write. And by the time I started selling these novels, writing had become a habit. It's a habit that's hard for me to break. (I write on vacation, for example.) I've been told that I'm very disciplined in this respect. I can't really see it, since generally I find writing a most enjoyable activity. (I hate outlines, but that's another story.)

I was fortunate to enter the field when it was just beginning to grow. I was around when Silhouette began; *Affairs of the Heart* was one of their first offerings. I think it still goes out to readers as one of the first book club selections. I was there when the sweet romances became more steamy and my experience in writing confessions came in handy. In graduate school I facilitated women's consciousness raising groups and I was very much aware of women learning to accept their sexuality. This had figured in my confessions, and the transition to the novels, though the styles are very different, was, therefore, easy for me.

As one who has been a full-time writer for the last four years, I think that anyone who makes a living this way has to be strong, emotionally and physically. (Independent financially would be nice, too.) It's not a career for the faint of heart. When the only paychecks you can absolutely count on come twice a year and you've no idea what amount they'll be for, when editors play musical chairs and the one who loved your outline disappears before the book is finished and the one who gets it has completely other ideas, when the market goes up and down like a yo-yo and there's not a thing you can
do about it—well, you'd better be able to hang loose.

There's still another reason, perhaps the most important one, that my books have succeeded. I believe in love. That may sound rather unimportant, but when I'm writing about the value of romantic love, I need to believe in that value. I need to believe wholeheartedly that such love is of vital importance. I do. And I think my readers recognize that.

Within the confines of the romance it is possible to explore a great many philosophical ideas. For instance, my heroines have considered such things as the nature of reality, the preservation of the past, the possibility of alternate realities, and the conservation of the environment, as well as the position of woman in society and the many ramifications of the male/female relationship. I read rather widely and things that interest me may find their way into my books. Since I believe that literature influences people, I often create people with beliefs like mine: love is important, the environment should be saved, women are the intellectual equals of men, etc. However, I favor the subtle approach and try not to beat my readers over the head. Creating a character who is believable and who engages the reader's sympathy is half the battle. This makes them automatically sympathetic to her beliefs.

As a social critic I believe I could write a whole dissertation, or base a good portion of a career, on tracing the changing position of women in modern society through the development of different heroines in the romance. It's clear that the romance mirrors the changing way women see themselves. For instance, the new successful, independent heroine reflects woman's advancement in the world. The heroine may, in fact, be a little further advanced than the real woman, but that's all right. Women can always use some good role models.

As a literary critic (though I must admit I have a writer's bias against critics) I would say that the quality of writing in many Regencies is quite high. The novel of manners (which is essentially what a good Regency is) demands a certain wit and elegance of style that is not easily come by. I believe that most contemporary romances are basically well written, too. In fact, I believe most romance novels are as well, if not better, written than many mainstream works. I am of the old school, that insisted that writing was meant to be understood, to tell a story. Romance writers do that and do it well. Some people may laugh at happy endings (or sneer), but in a world with so much everyday tragedy a little happiness, even the make-believe variety, is welcome.

Nina Pykare, as is clear from the foregoing, is a devoted believer in the romance. Soon she will be teaching a class in romance writing for a community group. And of course she reads romances—Regencies, especially Georgette Heyer's books—she says, entirely for pleasure. Other romance writers are quite different in their affection for the genre, as the comments of our other two authors illustrate.

Susan Gorsky

Until 1979, Susan Gorsky was a tenured Associate Professor of English at Cleveland State University. In that year she decided to follow her husband's career needs—he is an anesthesiologist—and as a result she began teaching at the secondary level, first in a small private school in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, then in a larger one in Honolulu. Born in Hartford, Connecticut, she graduated from Smith College and earned an M.A. and a Ph.D. in English from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. She has written literary criticism (on Yeats, Virginia Woolf, women in literature), a monograph on women's rights for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, popular articles on travel and other subjects, and co-authored medical articles and a book with her husband. One might say that putting pen to paper (figuratively, since she writes with a word processor) has considerable appeal for her. Her emergence as a writer of fiction, which she describes below, is typical of her energetic approach to all her work.

One weekend, while still teaching at Cleveland State, I caught some kind of a bug, so I asked my husband to find a light novel for me from the local library. I read about half of a hardbound novel that I later learned was a good example of contemporary Gothic writing, then threw the book on the floor, announcing to my cats that I could write as
well. I couldn't; but what I could—and did—do was to produce my first novel, in three literally and metaphorically feverish days of writing. No plan, no outline, no draft—just three days of nonstop typing, and I had written *The Lighthouse at Wolf Run*, a historical Gothic that owed a lot to *Jane Eyre*. Considering my efforts largely as a joke, I built in many allusions to Virginia Woolf, subject of my first book, and found the entire process a great deal of fun.

I showed the 180-page typescript to a few people and, perhaps because they were more accustomed to scholarly, scientific, and literary writing, they encouraged me to submit the novel to a publisher. I did, selecting likely publishing houses from a writer's handbook, and I had written *The Lighthouse at Wolf Run*, a historical Gothic that owed a lot to *Jane Eyre*. Considering my efforts largely as a joke, I built in many allusions to Virginia Woolf, subject of my first book, and found the entire process a great deal of fun.

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When I'm writing a novel, first come the main characters, always very clearly visualized and nearly always appearing in some specific setting. I let myself imagine what they might be doing in that location and what they feel like, and then I introduce other people or complicating factors to see what will happen. If a young woman has always wanted to travel by boat and finally gets a chance to work as a crew member on a sailboat in the Caribbean, whom might she meet, and what challenges might she encounter? What if there's a storm at sea? What islands might she visit? What if there's a drug-running group operating out of one of the islands? How will she behave under these circumstances, and what will happen?

When I have the basics of a plot in my mind, the next steps depend on how practical I'm feeling. If I truly want to sell the novel, I decide what publisher and what line I'm writing for; that determines length, among other factors. Then I can outline the chapters I'll need and I'm ready . . . to sit at the word processor.

I write only during the summers (though I have a friend, also a teacher, who's been known to write on Saturday mornings at McDonald's, in order to escape both students and family). My days start early, and I'm at the word processor from about 6 to 11 or 12, drafting a chapter in that time. In the afternoon, I swim, bike ride, or walk to clear my head, and then put in a few hours either doing research for the next chapter or revising earlier material. Working only weekdays and with time for other kinds of reading or research, I can write a short romance in about six weeks, from initial idea through background research, drafting, polishing, and printing. That way I've been able to do other kinds of writing each summer too.

Where I most use personal experience is in the little details, the kinds of descriptions which add sense-appeal, immediacy, and impact to the novels. For example, the picture of the DC3 which transports the heroine of *Stormy Paradise* to the tiny island where she will practice medicine, is based on two experiences: my familiarity with the small planes which connect some of the out islands in the Bahamas (as well as the light
planes we use here in Hawaii) and a wild trip through part of New Zealand on a bus which served to link small rural towns, to deliver the newspapers and the milk, and to bring children to school—a bus with a driver who negotiated mountain passes while reading the newspaper to his riders.

Editors tell me that my strengths lie in description, characterization, and especially in style. I suspect that years of writing in other fields and of teaching writing have helped me to gain a needed control of language that the willing amateur lacks. Perseverance and effort are two more assets. Within the confines of the genre, I create strong women characters, and that has both helped and hindered. Three or four years ago, when I started writing novels, heroines had to be docile ingenues; that, fortunately, has begun to change, but I still tend to be ahead of what the publishers want.

My current research project, a book tentatively titled *Victorian Fact and Fiction: Reality and Convention in Nineteenth-Century Novels*, involves in part a study of formula fiction. That study may not have inspired my own writing, but it taught me a lot about popular writing: its purposes, its effects on “serious” literature, its impact on society.

Scholars continue to examine the reasons why certain genres became popular at given times—the “dime novel” in America, the Gothic in eighteenth-century England, the realistic novel a century later. They consider the social or historical conditions, the availability of alternate forms of entertainment, the fact that success is imitated, the way that popular philosophical assumptions color fiction (as Sentimentalism helped foster the Gothic novel, or a new confidence in science and technology helped create the realistic novel). By studying earlier forms of popular culture, we learn about society. So, today, people examine the implications of television, the impact of Rambo as a hero, the rebirth of romances, or the spread of other popular formulas.

The more genres I attempt, the more convinced I am that all writing has elements of formula writing. When I sit down to work on my study of nineteenth-century fiction, I must think like a literary critic and social historian; my potential audience and publisher have certain expectations of style and content which I must meet. When I write for a travel magazine, I must include facts about costs, activities, dining, and housing, and I must provide certain kinds of subjective evaluations. Virtually all articles in scientific journals follow the same format: introduction, methods, data analysis, results, discussion. Writing detective novels, historical Gothics, or contemporary romances is no different. You can be innovative within the formula, and working out the limitations is one of the challenges.
A practical note: when writing historical fiction I make extensive use of my research in nineteenth-century novels and society, not only to be accurate but also to include the kinds of details which create verisimilitude.

Publishers provide tip sheets which range from reasonably free to ridiculously picky. Recently, more publishers have gotten away from tip sheets and encourage more variety, but the big houses in romance still expect certain elements. It's also a good idea to read examples of the genre you're trying to re-create. I read other romances when I'm writing a book, and only then. I find it useful to read two or three novels after I've sketched out characters and plot and while writing, because that reminds me of the typical language, attitudes, and descriptions.

I think I've learned a tremendous amount about writing from these novels. After working to free myself from the constraints of scholarly style, I found I could write in all sorts of genres; I owe my freelance career to that. Now, whether I am writing an article about a new medical technology for a journal intended for hospital administrators, a travel essay on the Bahamas or on scuba diving, or a chapter of my book on Victorian fiction, I strive for a more lucid and more appealing style. I'm also more aware of practical options in style, which must make me a better teacher of both expository and creative writing.

Frankly, it's fun to travel in my mind, to explore places I'd like to go or roam mentally through places I've visited before. I enjoy creating characters, imagining their histories and personalities, and then placing them in challenging situations to see what they'll do. Writing fiction both requires and allows my imagination to take over, at least in the early stages, even though it is the rational mind that organizes, connects, edits, and polishes. This process is startlingly different from the wholly rational approach I use in research and scholarship; it has its own demands and some compensating freedoms.

From this account it is evident that Susan Gorsky is interested in much more than romance writing, though romances, in addition to their financial rewards, have served as an opening into fiction. Still, she is more tolerant of the genre's restrictions than many.

Virginia Blanford

Like the two previous respondents, Virginia Blanford turned to romance writing as an avenue to professional writing. A native of White Plains, New York, she graduated from Cornell and received a master's degree in English from the University of Chicago, where she is now a doctoral candidate and expects to defend her dissertation in 1986. She has two children, is married to an academic whose work has taken the family on a number of trips around the country and in Europe. She has held a number of jobs involving writing while awaiting, without realizing it, the key that would open the door to professional authorship.

I'd always wanted to write books. When we first moved to Sharon, Pennsylvania, five years ago, a new acquaintance who was trying to write a romance asked me to edit it for her since I had advanced training in English. In the course of that, I read a dozen or so romances and had the response that any remotely talented writer would have: I can do this. I started writing in June, 1981; in August I sent a proposal (three chapters and outline) to a half-dozen agents culled from a list published by Writer's Digest. Several responded positively, and I selected one. She
sold a proposal (not the original one—I had by then churned out three proposals) in November, and the first book was published the following June. I have since learned that my agent receives several hundred inquiries and manuscripts per week and takes on only five or six new clients per year. So I was fortunate to have written something the first time out that caught her eye. My own relative ease in entering the ranks of the published is not typical; and I suspect that I couldn’t duplicate my success now, since the market for romances has flattened out considerably in the last two years, and more and more “professional” writers (those, for instance, with advanced degrees or experience as editors, as opposed to the stereotypical housewife writing on the kitchen table) are entering the field. The competition is much stiffer than it was five years ago. [She has now published four books in Jove Press’s Second Chance at Love series under the pseudonym Sarah Crewe.]

Editors give lip service to wanting writers whose work pushes the formula to its limits, but my own experience suggests that those limits are pretty rigid. (I tried to make one hero the same height as the heroine and a tad chunky—on the theory that some of us prefer Alan Bates to Robert Redford—but by the final version he had become six feet tall and slender just like all the others.)

Writing the four romances took about six months each. Since I began writing, I have produced a second child and finished a Ph.D. dissertation; I have maybe three hours a day, four days a week to actually devote to writing. With romances, I generally settle on a setting first, then cook up the characters who might logically inhabit it. I develop a first scene in my head—a visual image, really—before I sit down to write. Then I write out the first chapter (and sometimes the second) before trying to outline the entire book. Actually writing the first chapter allows me to get to know my characters and figure out how they would logically react to certain situations; then I outline the book and create the situations. I try at all costs to avoid idiot plots—the kind where if one person asked one sensible question at any point, the book would be over. All four books were accepted by my publisher on the basis of three chapters and a fairly detailed outline.

**The Romance Boom—Phenomenon of the ’70s**

As Virginia Blanford has noted, the market for romances is volatile and may have peaked, despite the efforts of the publishers to keep the momentum going. Although most interested parties date the origin of the romance boom at around 1970, romance writers claim descent from Jane Austen (whose novels appeared 1811-18); Gothic writers go back even earlier to Walpole’s **Castle of Otranto** (1764), the novels of the Bronte sisters and other first-class literary monuments, or Daphne Du Maurier’s **Rebecca** (1938), and the historical novels of Georgette Heyer. But a more accurate classification of these works places them with other formulaic fiction, such as Westerns, science fiction, mysteries, espionage, and adventure, all of which struggle for variety within a formula constraining the choice of setting, characters, and plot. There were romances before the romance boom, but they were the Gothic or the historical type. How these led to the development of category romances is the story of an attempt by publishers to achieve greater control of their markets.

Early paperback fiction was almost exclusively a business of reprinting hardback originals in paper covers at lower prices. In the late ’60s, paperback originals of the Gothic or historical type began to be very
popular, partly by chance, mostly because of the shortage of popular hardback fiction to reprint. Publishers now needed a sufficient number of writers in these genres and came to accept unsolicited manuscripts—very rare in publishing—and even to answer enquiries with encouraging responses. Each publisher wanted a “stable” of writers to provide the necessary raw material for the boom in love romances of the early and mid ’70s.

A publisher, in the nature of the business, has difficulty securing brand loyalty from readers. One does not buy a novel because it is published by Scribner’s or a textbook because it is produced by Heath. Each product (i.e., book) must be sold separately, a situation that makes publishing a constant gamble. If only there were some way of making the readers buy the brand-name product... That is how category fiction was born. Founded in Canada in 1949, Harlequin Books originally published a variety of books. Its best sellers, however, were always romance titles acquired from the British firm of Mills and Boon. The publisher’s wife, Mary Bonnycastle, noticed this trend and recommended a shift to romances. By 1964 Harlequin was publishing only romances. It is now part of a publishing conglomerate, Torstar, which publishes the Toronto Star and has also acquired Harlequin’s main competitor, Silhouette Books. Around 1970 Harlequin Books began to see the possibility of introducing efficiency into the gentlemanly and casual business of book publishing. Now a world-wide enterprise—its books are sold in 90 countries and translated into 15 languages—Harlequin apparently got the idea first, or was first to put it to work.

The publishers correctly expected that categorization (e.g., sweet romances, Goths, historicals) would establish a reliance by readers on a series or line of a given publishing house, especially if the house owned the pseudonyms of popular writers. In order to solidify this readership, publishers made the romances available by subscription. Harlequin publishes 30 titles a month, a quantity of reading that would tax the most robust appetite. Silhouette publishes 26 titles a month. Most subscribers apparently take 6-12 books a month, probably running to B. Dalton’s or

Most bookstores—not to mention drug stores and gas stations—have racks of romance novels for women who need a quick romance fix. Left: a stand at B. Dalton’s.
other chain bookstores for extras when their regular supply runs out. Although both writers and publishers say that the market has levelled off, the number of readers is still phenomenal. In 1979 Harlequin had 16,000,000 readers and had already printed 168,000,000 books. Today there are probably more than 20,000,000 readers in the U.S. and Canada and 200,000,000 in the world. Of all the readers of books in America, 60% are women under 50, reading romances. The influence of this medium approaches that of television and may even exceed it because of the concentration of the subject matter.

Although publication figures are highly confidential, it is known that the big romance houses do not trouble with books that cannot make sales in six figures. The usual print order is therefore 200,000, of which half to three quarters are sold. Under its four imprints, Harlequin sold 230 million books in 1984. In 1985 Harlequin printed its billionth book in English and has printed a total of twice that number worldwide.

These totals are striking to any observer but enticing to the would-be writer, who receives an advance of at least a few thousand dollars and looks forward to royalties beyond the original sum. At the usual low rate of royalty (five to ten percent of the cover price) a sale of half the first printing may net about $10,000. If sales are lower or if the royalty is discounted for book club or subscription sales, there may be nothing for the writer beyond the advance. We have seen that a really assiduous writer like Nina Pykare can turn out a book in six weeks. Others have distractions which limit them to one every three to six months (2-4 per year). A writer who can finish six books a year can gross $30-60,000 for her work, a decent income but one from which expenses must be deducted (word processor, postage, travel, research). Such work also has the disadvantage that payment comes long after the work is done (twice a year, about three months after the period covered) and it is impossible to predict the amount of the pay check. Such facts diminish the financial appeal of being a professional writer of romances. There are satisfactions, as we have seen, but these are greater if the writer does not have to depend on the income from writing romances to pay the rent.

One of the surprises that emerged from the comments of our three authors was that they have no compunction about writing within guidelines. Susan Gorsky correctly reminds us that all genres have their conventions, some as strict as the romance publishers’ guidelines. These help to work with readers’ expectations, whether the reader is poring over a scientific report, a newspaper, a mystery or a romance. From a sociological perspective, then, any reading matter fulfills a reader’s requirements. Romances, because of their immense popularity, must be doing this in a very special way. Analysts of the subject have provided answers that range widely. Some take the view that romances are pornography, others that they are an opiate. Still others see them as making the patriarchal order of our society acceptable to women, allowing them to cope with its many dissatisfactions. Feminists have noted the parallel rise of romance reading and feminist consciousness and have concluded that the enthusiasm of women for this reading matter must represent an effort to subvert the male-dominated world in which they see themselves contained. What is sure is that reading romances must do something important for the women who read them.

It is not certain that this riddle can be elucidated by turning to the works themselves, but a brief look at a snippet from one may be appropriate. I have chosen from a work by one of the most popular living authors. Janet Dailey had, as of 1983, published 77 romances in eight years and had written three more, an average of nine per year. In three peak years her several publishers brought out more than one per month. More than a million copies of each novel have been sold. It should not be surprising that she is wealthy and the envy of every romance writer, actual or intending.

Her Dakota Dreamin’ was originally published in 1981. It is the story of an Illinois woman approaching forty whose husband has died and left her with a daughter, a stepson, and a small fortune. They decide to move to South Dakota and buy a ranch, something the hero (Edie) has always dreamed of doing. When the family arrives, it discovers that a powerful neighbor, Will Maddock, wants their piece of land. After making several vain efforts to buy the ranch, he exerts financial pressure, outbidding
them at stock sales and keeping them from getting credit in the town's stores. After a brief time, he begins to stop in to castigate Edie for one thing or another and gradually comes to admire her independence and tenacity, as well as her feminine attractiveness. Eventually, he proposes and all is resolved.

There are incidents in which he saves her from barbed wire, some drunk cowboys and his daughter's insults. There are subplots involving the children. It is a bland, readable story with no surprises and a very limited vocabulary. Except for one feature, it would be simply a story suitable for American Legion magazine or Family Circle. That feature is prominently displayed in the following excerpt:

Edie turned, wiping the tears of laughter from her cheeks. A blue-and-white pickup was parked in the yard, with the driver's door held open by the man standing near it. Maddock shut it when they all looked at him.

Edie wondered how a man could be 50 powerfully built and look like a muscle-bound freak. He started toward them, and the three of them moved forward together to meet him halfway.

A lazy smile was making attractive grooves in the sun-browned cheeks while his dark eyes were silvered with a glint of amusement and curiosity. Edie felt the magnetic pull of his male charm. Sexual and potent, it quivered along her nerve ends.

Without the sentences that I have italicized, which are typical of about ten percent of the total mass of the book's 186 pages, it would be at best a mediocre novel. With that extra ten percent, however, it becomes a highly charged account of a woman's feelings—and a best-selling romance. The secret, if this estimate is correct, is not so much in the choice of character, setting, or plot, as in something conveyed only through the writing, the words themselves—namely, the heroine's intimate emotions. For that reason, the romance reader has no alternative source of satisfaction. The point of view of the heroine cannot be communicated nearly as well, if at all, in any other medium: film, television, theater, or comic book. The communicative power of print and the privacy afforded by the solitary activity of reading are the driving mechanisms of this phenomenon.

The dimensions of this readership and the products manufactured to assuage its needs proclaim that something of major significance is taking place in the bosoms of today's women. The social observer, the statesman, the psychiatrist, the businessman should all hearken to this powerful heartbeat and draw from its rhythm the appropriate lessons. The message has to do with women's feelings, long ignored, dismissed or misunderstood.

In the words of Nancy Moulton, a recent recruit to romance writing: "Oh, escapism, that is all it is, pure escapism... Happy-ever-after Cinderella stuff, but we need that, especially in this society, where there are so many marriages breaking up... The women, I identify with; the man is what I would like him to be... Trying to make it romantic rather than sexual—you don't want to make it graphic because that is sex—we want romance. Women want romance."

*Eileen Fallon's Words of Love (New York: Garland, 1984), is both an analysis of romances and a list of writers in the field with biographical data and bibliographies. I have learned much from looking over these lists.

*Janice A. Radway, Reading the Romance (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984), although biased by Marxist analysis and dependent on what is probably not a random sample, is full of valuable facts and insights. I have depended on it in putting together this article.

*This story uses one of the stock devices for bringing the hero and heroine together: the Inheritance. Other standard encounters include the Collision, in which the heroine physically bumps into the hero (or vice versa); the Rescue, in which she is saved from a danger; an awkward situation, or an embarrassment; the Overheard Conversation; the Arranged Marriage; the Assignment on Location. See Rosemary Guiley, Love Lines (New York: Facts on File, 1983), pp. 116-18, for some other, less standard, examples of what Hollywood called "meeting cute." This book is a remarkable fareggio of data about the romance world.

*These words are taken from the script of an informative television program, Almanack, broadcast on December 29, 1985, obligingly loaned by the writer, Mary Horst of WJKW-TV 8. I am grateful for her willing cooperation and for her suggestion of the Rosemary Gailey book.

I also want to thank the publishers and their staffs (Harlequin, Silhouette, SOS) for their cooperation.
James Thompson

Historical Errors about the Ancient Olympic Games

Preparations have already begun for the next Olympics, to be held in 1988 in Seoul, Korea. Korean officials are beginning to consider the possible problems arising from political discontent and overcrowded hotels, and over the next three years, we will be bombarded by an ever-increasing number of articles, editorials, interviews, and newscasts about this event. Most of us will accept at face value what we are told about the original Greek Olympics and about the history of the games, but many of these reports and anecdotes will be inaccurate or misleading. If skepticism about believing everything we read were more consistently applied to the history of sport, perhaps this area of study would be less saturated with erroneous information.

For example, prior to the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games, an article in an East Coast newspaper described the first Olympic games thus:

Back in 776 B.C., when Typhoeus the giant was rearing back to hurl the discus in the first Olympic Games, he was completely nude . . . before an all-male audience and was anything but an amateur.

While this statement may have captured the imagination of the reader (as its author insisted when challenged regarding the validity of his statements), the information, nevertheless, is absolutely incorrect. According to the ancient texts, the first Olympic Games in antiquity consisted of one event, the stade race (approximately 200 meters long). The victor was not Typhoeus (who in any case was probably mythical), but Coroebus of Elis and he did not perform in the nude. In fact, nudity was not in evidence until at least 720 B.C. and perhaps even later. The discus competition, moreover, never appeared as a single event in the ancient Olympics, but was part of the pentathlon contest, a five-part event added in 708 B.C., which consisted of the stade race, long jump, javelin, and wrestling as well as the discus.

Another article argued that the "ancient Greeks allowed their Olympic Games to go on for nearly 400 years before Emperor Theodosius, annoyed at the commercialism and corruption, banned them." This suggests that the Olympic Games of antiquity were no longer in existence in the early part of the fourth century B.C., when in fact, the Games were probably at the peak of their popularity. The Greeks were still adding events to the Olympic program until 200 B.C. And while commercialism and corruption were no doubt associated with the Olympics, the main reason for the abolition of the games by Theodosius (who reigned from 379 to 395 A.D.) was their pagan nature. Christianity had become the religion of the Empire, and although the religious link of the ancient Olympics to the god Zeus was declining, there was, nevertheless, a histori-
A text titled The Olympic Story has presented yet another misleading account regarding the ancient Olympic Games. The Foreword states:

If you have a chance to visit ancient Olympia and can walk on that track where the athletes ran so many centuries ago, it’s easy to visualize the grassy slopes nearby crowded with spectators who journeyed from the far reaches of the Greek world to share the love of sport. Many of them did not understand each other’s language and had to use signs and gestures, but they were all gathered together in admiration of the athletic ideal.

The facts here are partially true: the Games were a powerful unifying force. They attracted Greeks from all over the Greek world. These same Greeks who were famous for their unique city-state system were notorious for their inability to unite as a nation. The Games constituted almost their only form of unification. The suggestion, however, that many Greeks could not communicate with each other and used sign language
to deal with the problem is far from the truth. Athenian Greeks spoke with Spartan Greeks and Spartans with Greeks from Asia Minor. Congregating at Olympia reminded them that they spoke the same language, believed in the same gods, and shared similar customs. This aspect of the Games had a profound impact on Greek society. Greeks from the far reaches of two continents assembled every four years and shared their "Greekness," as would be the case if games were held for the English-speaking nations of the world. In addition, the Olympics were more than an athletic festival. While it is true that the athletes were admired for their athletic prowess, the religious significance of the festival was just as important. When the religious ideals began to wane and the festival emphasized only the athletic aspect of the celebration, the Olympics began to lose their importance.

A late nineteenth century classical scholar, Paul Shorey, was no less guilty of inaccuracy than his twentieth century journalistic counterparts. In an article promoting Baron Pierre de Coubertin's efforts to revive the Olympic Games, Shorey stated that the "Greek record for the high jump or the hundred yards' dash may be better or worse than ours." At Olympia there was no high jump event, and the hundred-yard dash, which is approximately one-half the distance of the stade race, did not exist. Shorey is mistaken on another important point. He portrayed the ancient athletes(15,110),(987,987) as amateurs:

But can we revive, in any sense the genuine thing? . . . The athletes, the "events," the crowds, the excitement, the applause we can furnish. But can we recover or in any way reproduce the harmonious beauty of ensemble, the banishment of the professional and commercial spirit? . . .

Shorey further exhorted our modern athletes to learn a lesson from the ancient Olympic athletes:

They must strive like the young heroes of Pindar, only for the complete development of their manhood, and their sole prizes must be the conscious delight in the exercise of perfectly trained powers and some simple symbol of honor. They must not prostitute the vigor of their youth for gold, directly or indirectly through division of gate-receipts, acceptance of costly prizes or coining into money the notoriety that newspaper press and the telegraph instantly lend to every form of ephemeral pre-eminence. In reality, the Greek athletic system rewarded its victors. According to one of Solon’s laws, an Athenian champion at the Olympic Games was paid five hundred drachmas, and one hundred drachmas for a victory at the Isthmian Games. Considering that the average wage of a skilled worker was one drachma per day in the late fifth century B.C., the prize was substantial. Some city-states subsidized the training period for their athletes prior to the Olympic and Isthmian Games. This practice enabled the athletes to leave their occupations long enough to take part in the mandatory one-month training period before the Games began.

Record-keeping was not a primary concern in ancient Greek athletics, but there is an interesting account concerning the long jump. The evidence states that Phaiylos of Crotona, a Greek athlete from Italy, jumped 55 feet (breaking the record of 52 feet set by Chionis of Sparta). This jump surpasses the modern-day record by slightly more than 25 feet. Phaiylos recorded his extraordinary feat not at the Olympics, but at the Pythian Games in 478 B.C. He never had the opportunity to jump at Olympia because his career ended after his record-setting performance at Delphi: he jumped five feet beyond the jumping pit and broke both legs. We know that the Greeks jumped with halteres (weights) and that these weights improved performance. But it is doubtful that halteres could have made a difference of more than 25 feet. When one compares the coaching techniques and exceptional facilities that today’s athletes have at their disposal to the coaching and facilities of their ancient counterparts, there simply is no reasonable explanation accounting for a single leap of 55 feet. Moreover, when the physical characteristics of modern-day long jumpers are contrasted to those of ancient athletes the accomplishment seems even more superhuman. Was the Greek foot equivalent to 12 inches, or were there many "Greek feet" of differing lengths? Was the jump a triple jump, which would bring it more in line with the modern-day record of over 50 feet? Perhaps the jump of Phaiylos represents an aggregate total of three separate jumps. Unless there is an attempt at interpreting how such an effort might have been accomplished, it is unlikely that Phaiylos’ 55-foot jump can be accepted as comparable to today’s feats.
The officials of the modern Games may also have been guilty of perpetuating an ancient canard by including in their program a contest based on an unsupported legend, the marathon. While it was Baron Pierre de Coubertin who conceived the idea of reviving the ancient Games in a modern version, it was a French compatriot, Michel Breal, who thought of including a marathon race in the program of events. There was no marathon race in the ancient Games. The marathon race was included in the 1896 Games to commemorate the run of the ancient Greek hero Pheidippides from the battlefield of Marathon to Athens. It is possible that Breal's insistence that the marathon race be included in the modern Games may be based on a fiction. The source closest to the 490 B.C. battle, Herodotus, never mentions Pheidippides' supposed run to Athens proclaiming victory with his last breath as he fell dead in the agora. Herodotus does, however, refer to the more demanding feat of Pheidippides' long distance run from Athens to Sparta asking the Spartans for help against the Persians. In fact, the Marathon to Athens run was not mentioned in the literature until approximately six hundred years after the battle of Marathon took place. It is entirely possible that as centuries passed, and the Greeks recalled their spectacular victory over the Persian invaders, they romanticized and invented Pheidippides' shorter and less fatiguing run. There is nothing wrong with including the marathon race in the modern Olympic Games in honor of an event that may never have occurred, but it does call attention to the amount of legend surrounding the Games.

What the future holds for the modern Olympic Games is problematic. The political overtones sounding all through recent celebrations of the Games have caused a great deal of concern for all who support the Olympic ideal. Yet politics were inextricably linked to the ancient Games. There was nothing more political than the Greek city-state system, and, of course, individual city-states, rather than a unified Greek nation, were the participants at the original Olympics. As our society increasingly values entertainment over truth, reports of future Olympic Games are likely to contain an increasing number of exaggerations and errors. But historical accuracy has its value in the study of sport as in other subjects. Let us cultivate here as elsewhere the ability to distinguish fantasy from fact.

NOTES

2 Pausanias 5.8.6; Strabo 8.3.30.
3 Pausanias 1.44.1.
4 Thucydides 1.1.6.
5 Pausanias 5.8.7.
12 Drees, p. 32.
13 Shorey, p. 317.
14 Shorey, p. 321.
15 Plutarch, Solon 23.3.
"J.K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (Oxford, 1971), p. xxii. Harris p. 37, states that even the smaller Isthmian payment of one hundred drachmas was almost as much as the year's earnings of a working man.


"Walter Donlan and James Thompson, 'The Charge at Marathon: Herodotus 6.112,' *The Classical Journal*, 71 (April-May) 1976, p. 341, Note 4. The height of the classical Greek male was approximately 170 cm. Dr. Richard Nelson, Director of the Biomechanics Laboratory at The Pennsylvania State University, believes that the shorter Greek athletes would have been at a disadvantage in the long jump when compared to their modern-day counterparts whose average height is 178 cm. Nelson said that a shorter athlete would have more difficulty than a taller athlete in generating faster sprinting speed and projecting one's center of gravity. Both of these factors are important considerations in the long jump.


"Herodotus 6.105.

Bonnie Herbst became interested in telephone booths when she needed a research topic for an architecture class—she wanted something novel, something that would bore neither her nor her professor. She is an art student at Cleveland State University, and is as enthusiastic about research as she is about drawing: "I love to dig for information; I never seem to like easy research projects." Ms. Herbst, a native of Cleveland, is employed as a graphics assistant at the Ohio State Lottery Commission, and in her spare time enjoys playing guitar and gardening.
nobody had heard my row. Later inventors improved my booth, making it more comfortable for a pampered public but not a bit more sound-proof."

The first real, solidly constructed phone booths were probably those put into use in 1878 by Thomas B. Doolittle’s Bridgeport-to-Black-Rock private intertown connection, a service of the Social Telegraph Association of Connecticut. These pay phones had attendants who would place the call and collect the money—fifteen cents per call—after it was completed."

Booths came into use in Chicago in 1881 as shelters for Police Emergency call boxes. They were octagonal with a sloped roof and a gas lamp on top, showing that a structure could be functional and stylish at the same time. The following year, the first actual public phone booth was inaugurated in Chicago when Alexander Graham Bell himself used it to place a call from New York to Chicago. Such a call then cost $9 for the first five minutes, and the connection took an hour to make. This booth reflected America’s love for Victorian ornateness, being more elaborately decorated than the emergency booths and providing a more comfortable setting for the affluent to use the telephone. In those days, $9 would pay for a dinner for six at a fancy restaurant: at such prices, only the rich could afford the luxury in 1882.

Amidst such Victorian luxury the telephone—and the telephone booth—first penetrated the private drawing rooms of well-to-do American families. Mounted on wheels, the private booth was a movable piece of furniture like a large wardrobe. It was a highly ornamented wooden or metal box, 4 by 5 feet square, with a domed roof, a ventilator, fancy-paned glass windows, and a writing desk with pen and ink as well as—oh, yes—a phone. In essence, it was a little drawing room that provided privacy for a young woman who wanted to chat with a friend or write a bread-and-butter note.

The popularity of the telephone rapidly increased, but for many years it was largely an urban convenience. By 1885, 134,000 U.S. subscribers were serviced by the Bell Telephone Company, and there were public booths in a number of towns and cities. Some booths had become quite lavish, and in 1890, a standard luxury line of five different booths became available. These booths, as described in an April, 1891 AT&T Company brochure, all had domed roofs and were available in either oak or cherry at a cost between $112 and $225, without “fixtures,” depending on the size and number of walls with windows. Double walls and doors provided privacy and better sound-proofing. Optional fixtures, calculated to rival the finest Europe could offer, included a Wilton rug—$3.50 to $6.50; revolving stools with
The public, enticed by a sense of adventure, began to view a visit by phone as a luxurious but attainable excitement. In 1892, the telephone company set up a special long distance salon in New York City: cabs picked up customers who on arrival were ushered over Oriental rugs to a gilded booth, draped with silken curtains. This was the famous "Room Nine." An attendant placed the call, ushered the customer into the booth, closed the door, timed the call, opened the door and collected the charges after the conversation. It is documented that some overzealous attendants would lock the patrons in until they paid the fee.

In 1893, the four-hundredth anniversary of Columbus’s discovery of America, Chicago was designated as the site of the great Columbian Exposition. It was to be America’s showcase. Daniel Burnham, the director of the project, decided to create a dream in the classical style, a display of lofty idealism. The artists of the time embraced this return to classicism, which reached even to the design of the telephone booth. Clean,
streamlined booths, devoid of ornament, began to spring up, often in the company of the Victorian booths. Then in 1900, Bell engineers decided to draft specifications for a smaller and simpler model to be built by outside suppliers on a competitive basis. These booths were about 3 feet square with single walls and some sound-deadening material added (instead of doubled doors and walls) and a lining of embossed metal. They could be assembled in groups, rather than individually. As in previous models, the door swung outward, a hazard to bystanders and passersby who often were smashed by users coming out. Also, as in previous models, the floor was raised four inches off the building floor to provide structural strength, a detail which tripped many a customer unaware of the step.

Around 1904 the door problem really began to be serious. Booths were being installed in narrow passageways and odd corners where the outward-swinging doors were awkward as well as hazardous. Maurice Turner, then with the New York Telephone Company, proposed a design that would run a flat door on a curved track and swing inward and parallel to the side of the booth when it opened, eliminating the outward swing. This worked and was installed, but proved too intellectually demanding for a public that pulled rather than pushed and either couldn’t open the door or, if they did, became trapped inside. Also, dirt would clog the floor track, making the door stick.

As a solution to these problems, Turner patented a double-hinged folding door that operated easily and folded inside with its guide track on top, gathering no dirt. The floor space was reduced to 30 by 30 inches and the four-inch step was eliminated. Booths of this simplified design had front and exposed sides of well-finished hardwood but the backs and sides were of lower-grade materials, since they were not visible in the groups of two or more.

As the approach of World War I brought rationing and a focus on national defense, the grand image became less important than economy. Architecture was designed simply so production could be inexpensive. Even before the war years, in 1912, a new standard model appeared in the Western Electric catalog, which replaced the modified Victorian No. 4 and 5. Western Electric’s new series looked like this: No. 1 was the folding-door booth that could be assembled in groups. No. 2 was very similar

No. 1 folding-door telephone booth (c. 1912). Courtesy AT&T.
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but was a single unit with finished wood on all sides. No. 3 and 4 were less expensive, using the receding and swinging doors rather than the more costly folding door. All were clean in design—almost sterile looking.

This new style suited the taste of the post-war America of the '20s. Geometrical design, a lack of frills, was in. The "up-ended coffin" was born, a telephone booth that looked very much like a coffin, with solid wooden sides and front, and a small window panel. As knee-length dresses were the fashion, the booth offered privacy for a woman to straighten her stocking seams and fix her dress when dressing rooms were nowhere to be found.

The rising hemline was only one sign of the rebellion of America. The lure of easy money was tempting and opportunities were many, creating such by-products as gambling tracks, bathtub gin, speakeasies and gangsters like Al Capone. To them, the "coffin" took a more literal meaning. George "Bugs" Moran, one of Capone's relentless foes, had twice attempted to kill Capone's triggerman, "Machine Gun" Jack McGuin. Two of Moran's men, the Gesenberg brothers, finally caught McGuin in a phone booth and opened up on him with a tommy gun. Major surgery and a long hospital confinement were necessary to save McGuin's life. The humble phone booth also plays a key role in the well-known story of the pursuit and arrest of Al Capone for tax evasion by I.R.S. agents Frank Wilson and Michael Malone. Malone, who infiltrated Capone's organization, kept in touch with his contact Wilson with a pocketful of nickels and strategic trips to the corner phone.

The fevered pitch of America cooled with the depression in the 1930s, and Art Deco, Neoclassicism, and related functional styles began to appear even in phone booths, with their straight lines, large plate glass window panels, and the simple ornamentation that reminds one of the tops of ancient temples, sophisticated and sedate. The "up-ended coffin" that Western Electric had been making since the mid-twenties when they bought out their competition, the Queensboro Shop of the Turner-Amour Company, gave way to various attempts to improve the design. In 1930, the No. 5 and 6 booths were introduced, similar to the 1912 standard except for the addition of a seat in

No. 6. (Up to this time, the smallness of the booth and tight floor space would not allow a stool.) These two booths introduced the flush door, improved lighting and ventilation, and an accessory list that included an outside shelf for holding the telephone directory, and an identifying telephone plaque. At this time Western Electric became the official Bell System booth supplier.

A young man whose name has been lost to history suggested that people might be more strongly attracted to a booth painted a bright color rather than the natural wood finish of the "up-ended coffin." At first no one paid him any attention, but he finally won his point, and a bank of telephone booths at a busy community location, a Hudson River Ferry terminal, was chosen for a test. Half of the booths were painted an "unoffensive red," and the other half were left their drab plain finish, which in comparison made the red booths seem fire-engine red. In the first month, revenue from the set of red booths increased 50 percent. Conservatives
British phone booth still in use is original 1927 design of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.

were unwilling to acknowledge that the color had anything to do with the difference, and demanded that the booths be interchanged, assuming that traffic at one side of the station was heavier than at the other. The red booths again increased the number of calls by 50 percent. Diehards now demanded that all the booths be painted red to show that color had no effect on revenue, even though throughout the test the natural booths had not lost business. The young man proved his point: the final test result was a 50 percent increase from all the booths.  

Fanciful designs now began to appear, such as "Pagoda" booths in San Francisco’s and New York’s Chinatowns. Other special booths were developed for rapid transit lines. Those used in New York subways were of an all-metal construction and made, for sanitary reasons, without doors. The first waterproof booths were installed on New York elevated railroad platforms. About 75 special outdoor booths were used at the San Francisco Golden Gate Exposition in 1939, but widespread use of this type did not come until later. 

The design of American architecture turned in the 1950s to the International Style, which featured modular frames of steel and glass with increased life expectancy as well as lower initial cost. The aluminum frames of the telephone booth reflected the skyscrapers of the time, and the fascination with verticality appeared in the airiness and height of the glass booths of the ’50s and ’60s. The design included the basic form from 1935 with the addition of a swivel chair and rubber flooring as well as the extension of the glass panels to full glass walls. The booths were brightly colored and well-lit. The startling transformation from wood to glass came partly at the request of department stores whose studies showed that shoplifters were using the privacy of the solid booths to hide stolen merchandise on their persons. The drawback of the change was the loss of privacy for honest users like Clark Kent. But—sad commentary on changes in American society—most telephone users have been happy to remain visible while making a call, as a protection against being mugged. Even elevators are being designed nowadays so that users will not have to pass any time hidden from view and vulnerable to a possible assailant.

In New York, these new booths drew a great deal of attention. On October 21, 1961, The New York Times reported the installation by the New York Telephone Company of fifty glass-panelled, golden aluminum booths be-
Phone booths have been an inexhaustible source of humor and folklore. This cartoon from a 1950 New Yorker reflects the male-chauvinist assumption that women spend more time on the phone than men do. Reprinted by permission. Drawing by Starke; copyright © 1950, 1978 The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

SHE DUCKED INTO A PHONE BOOTH...

between 34th and 59th Streets, just off Fifth, Madison, and Park Avenues. They were being installed on the Manhattan sidewalks in response to requests by the Fifth Avenue Association that the booths be in keeping with the tone of the neighborhood. "In addition to pleasing the Fifth Avenue Association, the gold booths might induce people to spend more money on calls," a telephone official said. "Nearly 60% of booth calls are on impulse, and there is evidence that brightly colored booths lure more callers than drab ones," the official noted, obviously recalling the experiment with the red booths. An editorial that ran in the Times on October 25, just four days later, showed that not everyone loved the golden booths. The editorial stated that "the bogus opulence of phone booths and golden trash cans—an abomination installed some time ago—merely detracts from the integrity of the Avenue." It points out that "in the early years of the century immigrants flocked to New York in the belief that its streets were paved with gold" and that "now the world recognizes that our civilization hardly requires such garish expression."

Some '60s phone booths reflect Frank Lloyd Wright's fascination with circles, evident in his Johnson Wax Building in Racine, Wisconsin, and the Guggenheim Museum in New York. Wright felt that the rounded corners draw us, the viewers, inward and release us into a novel and exciting enclosed space. Such ideas, aided by the 1964 New York World's Fair, helped to develop the booth's design in a new direction. As early as 1961, plans were disclosed by AT&T for a glass rocket-shaped booth for the Fair, perhaps in honor of the evolving space program. It would be air-conditioned (an advance over the ventilator fans of past models), have glass contour seats, and, instead of a dial, a panel of buttons (an early Touch-Tone system). There would be a microphone for speaking and a kind of loudspeaker for hearing. The World's Fair was also the scene for the World's Fair Family Booth, an air-conditioned glass bubble that was equipped with a speaker-phone that
Superman's favorite dressing room has long been such a part of American folklore that even this 1969 comic book cover could ring changes on the theme.

would allow more than one user at a time to hear and speak. Cluster housing had become popular in the '60s; the idea of "clustering" was evident in the large groupings of serpentine booths, curved booths first introduced at the Fair. They were glass-like fiber sections supported by metal columns with an overhead canopy of plexiglass and aluminum. Since they could be made in an unlimited range of colors, they were ideal for outdoor areas like parking lots and shopping malls where multiple phones are needed. The wrap-around quality of each booth provided the user with a good amount of sound insulation (needed in such noisy public areas) and are reminiscent of the popular wrap-around sunglasses, providing a sense of privacy.

Meanwhile, the all-glass booth was being updated. The three sides and folding door were of tempered glass, supported by a framework of stainless steel, bronze, or satin-polished aluminum. The writing shelf was made of tempered glass as well, maintaining the booth's verticality. Even the phone panel was vertical in its design. The first soft seat was introduced, vacuum-formed of black plastic and filled with black foam to minimize the effect of vandalism if the seat were slashed. This sleek update showed the influence and the fascination of the ever-rising skyline and the practical use of current materials.

The times were changing, the country was on the move. No longer did customers
have to go to the phone, the phone could come to them in the form of the mobile phone booth, a two-wheeled unit for on-the-site coverage of golf tournaments, political conventions, disasters, and the like. The unit housed eight phones—four shelves and four booths, all paneled with a sound-absorbent material covered with disturbed aluminum that provided acoustic insulation and discouraged doodling. The unit was light enough to be pulled by a compact car and narrow enough to fit through an average building entrance. Once in place, the rear license plate folded down to become part of the frame, and the unit was then hooked up to the nearest phone line, ready for operation.

A similarly efficient operation is evident in the curved glass door model, introduced in 1965 and reflecting Frank Lloyd Wright’s interest in circular design. Basically a circle in a square, the booth maximized all the space in the square while using the least amount of surrounding space. The door was hung from a top track and slid back into the booth when not in use. It was the door’s innovative construction that made it less costly. Two sheets of tempered, curved glass were set in an aluminum frame and divided by a horizontal bar to prevent people from walking through it. An indentation on the frame served as a grip to open the door, and the overall glass design allowed outside light to enter the booth, adding to its airy look. The three square walls were of steel with a porcelain enamel finish that was easy to clean; its seat was 17 1/2 inches off the floor and slanted downward an inch toward the back to prevent users from slipping off. This design did indeed draw the user in.

Having taken the parlor out of the home, the next move was to take the office out of the building. In 1968, Washington’s National Airport installed a booth large enough to house a businessman, his secretary, and some office furniture.

The ’70s brought increased interest in the environment, reflected in efforts to make the phone booth less obtrusive. The reduction of the full booth to the half booth (of the sort that frustrated Clark Kent) could be attributed to the effort to cause the least possible intrusion upon natural design. The unit has slimmed down even more in the ’80s, with unobtrusive smoky colors and a muted aluminum framework, blending in well with downtown. And of course the safety of users continues to be a factor in the open design of phone facilities.

The telephone booth has endeared itself to generations of Americans, as is evidenced by its appearance in innumerable movies and stories. In an episode in American Graffiti, two would-be thieves attached one end of a chain to a phone booth and the other end to their car. They sped off with the intention of taking the phone with them, but they had no idea how well the phone was anchored. Upon reaching the end of the chain, the drive shaft parted company with the rest of the car, the phone remaining firmly in place. The men took off their license plates and walked away. This mirrored a real-life event when a carload of Chicago coin thieves was apprehended as they drove down the street, dragging a phone booth behind their car. Their attempt to dislodge the phone booth was successful, but the result was the same.

The stories go on. From Thomas A. Watson’s blanket booth to Al Capone to Superman, the telephone booth has always been standing there, in the lobby or just around the corner, a modest witness, participant, and reflection of our changing times.
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'Talese.

'Talese.


Photo by Weegee, c. 1938.
FICTION: Gary Fincke

Binghamton Bus

"I think I am speeding up," I say to my wife.
"You've said that before." Her reply is a variation on what I expect her to say.
"This time I mean it."
"It's the coffee. The caffeine gets you started."
"It's not the coffee. It's like the coffee."
"Coffee is a drink. Speeding up is not like a drink."
"I can't wait anymore."
"You're thirty-three years old, Stephen. You can wait."
"You're wrong."
"You'll see."

Half an hour after I get on the bus to Binghamton, it begins to slow. For the first time I look out the window. We are approaching the end of a double lane of parked cars. A curve in the highway keeps the beginning of the line hidden.

A man in front of me says, "Route 80 strikes again."
"Pennsylvania for you," someone answers without turning his head.
"Probably some goldbrick holding a stop sign up there and he's waiting for the foreman to kick his ass so he can turn it around to the side that says 'slow.'"

The conversation spreads to several seats. Pennsylvania has more highway jokes than any other state.

"The damn politicians appoint crooks to the highway commission and this is what we get." This time the speaker turns. Perhaps he thinks I have spoken.
"Mafia," he says. He glances around the bus. "Niggers," he adds.

No one replies to this. A few people go back to reading books or magazines. The woman across the aisle from me is sorting through an article headlined "Elvis Rock and Rolls in Heaven."

Sometimes impatience keeps me from harm. One Friday I hitch-hiked because my home-from-college ride was late. I was standing beside my suitcase three blocks from the school when my friend's mother drove by. She waved. I knew she would be back in a couple of minutes. I knew she would drive me right to my door. And so it was stupid to keep my thumb out, but the next car pulled over and I hopped into the front seat.

Gary Fincke, Director of the Susquehanna University Writing Program is a native of Pittsburgh. He attended Thiel College, Miami University, and Kent State University (Ph.D., 1974). He has published several hundred poems and about thirty stories in the past ten years, most recently in Prairie Schooner, Poetry, Florida Review, Cimarron Review, and Literary Review. He has had two chapbooks of poetry published, Breath (1984) and The Coal in the Heart (1985). His story "Fleas", which won The Gamut Prize in Short Fiction, appeared in Gamut No. 12 (Spring/Summer, 1984). His work usually deals, he says "with minor pain, how choices are diminished yet available, how experience somehow makes us inarticulate."

Drawings by Kathryn Heim.
The driver was a salesman who wanted to know all about coed lusts. “You college kids are the luckiest guys in the history of the world,” he said. I thought of my grades; I thought of my miserable part-time job scraping plates in the cafeteria. “You’re right there just at the time when the girls will do anything for you that you can imagine.”

I looked at the road sign to check how far it was to Pittsburgh—47 miles. “Hey,” he said, his voice louder. I was getting nervous because he was one of those drivers who look at you instead of at the road when they speak. “I’ve got fantasies that they don’t even have names for, and there you are with your pick of all that young stuff.”

I didn’t have to tell him any stories because he was getting off the thruway at Slippery Rock. There was a college in that town, too, one that got famous for its football scores in Michigan because everyone there thought the name was humorous. I wondered what he could be selling. The business district of Slippery Rock was three blocks long—pizza shops, a hardware store, an Isaly’s. A local ordinance kept the nearest bar a ten-minute ride away. Maybe he was going to enroll.

He left me at the beginning of the exit ramp. I expected to see my friend and his mother within a few minutes. He would be driving and she would ask me why I was in such a hurry. I would shrug and ask my friend to pick up one of the FM rock stations from the city.

By that time, though, they had crashed into the side of a milk truck which had run a stop sign just before they entered the thruway. The woman who had waved to me was dying.

She would have let me ride shotgun. The radio had kept her in the back seat before.

Fifteen minutes go by and we are still not moving. The driver has gotten out and started walking. He has disappeared around the bend.

The woman across from me has turned to an article called “How Cabbage Soup Changed My Life—160 Pounds Lost in Months.” She folds the tabloid and looks over at me.

“A bad place to be stuck, you know.”

I am blank. Through her window I notice that a man is running with an Irish Setter along the shoulder. I have to say “Why’s that?”

“Berwick.”

She says it like the word is an essay, as if the name would accumulate paragraphs of logic as soon as it was spoken.

I try “Is that where we are?”

“You’re not from here?”

“Sunbury.”

“And you don’t know Berwick?”

“I wasn’t paying attention.”

“That nuclear reactor is close enough to be radiating us right now.”

“It’s probably OK.” I wonder why I am not certain. Her tone makes me check outside again. The man and dog are getting back into a car. I look at the horizon line but cannot see a cooling tower.

“It’s like x-rays, you know. Living near one of those things is like getting an x-ray every day of your life.”

I notice that the driver has reappeared.

“If we sit here long enough we’ll be able to see our bones.” I try to smile.
"Berwick," she goes on. "It's like Three Mile Island, Part II. You know, like one of those sequels, *Rocky* and more *Rocky* and then even more *Rocky*.

She stares at me. An ambiguous moment goes by. "You know," she says, "there's an article in this newspaper about Sylvester Stallone. It's called 'Rocky Gets Paved.' Pretty clever, don't you think? It's all about how Stallone and Rocky are both getting smarter."

"Is that right?"

"Sure it is. Don't you go to the movies?"

"Sometimes."

"Sunbury's closed, isn't it?"

"It's open again."

"Oh yes, now I remember—somebody reopened it and they had a strip show there."

"The Bodyworkers."

"Guys. They had naked guys at that old movie theater."

"Something like that."

"Sunbury's in trouble, you know."

"How's that?"

"It's going to collapse. There's so many mines underneath it that sooner or later it's going to collapse. You live right downtown?"

"Not quite."

"Well, that's good anyway. The heavy buildings will collapse first. But nothing's worse than this invisible stuff from Berwick. You know, maybe that's
what’s happened up there—the reactor blew up or something and we can . . .

closer. These things happen, you know, and more times than anyone lets on.’

Two hundred yards ahead the cars are beginning to move. “Here we go,” someone in the front shouts. Magazines and books close up again. I look away from the woman.

"The driver oughta get his ass in gear," someone says. "Those trucks behind us aren’t going to pissass around waiting for us to get started."

In another minute the driver climbs back in. The cars nearest us are pulling out. "Accident," he yells back the aisle and then drops into his seat. "A bad one," he adds without turning around.

Everyone watches the road. Ahead of us are several squad cars. Two policemen are funneling the traffic into the outside lane.

Another half mile and we see it is two trucks and a car. One of the trucks is overturned on the highway. Large cardboard boxes labeled “Weis Markets” are scattered near where one side of the trailer has been peeled back. The other truck is jammed into the hillside. The cab appears to be boring into the rock.

The crushed car cannot support life. It reminds me of a photograph that appeared in the newspaper a few months ago. A large boulder had fallen onto a car from a high cliff in Pittsburgh. The story that accompanied the picture explained how difficult it had been for the authorities to establish the identity of the driver.

"Jesus Christ," a man says, "look at that car."

A man near him offers, "Shit out of luck, whoever was in there."

My wife is the kind of person who introduces fear into normality. Her phobias have pushed her into accepting a stupid job because I have not been working. Because she needs our car in order to sell, I am riding a bus to Binghamton; she does not understand pace.

Once, though, by some fluke quirk, she was watched by a Peeping Tom. I was not at home. By the time she noticed the face at the bedroom window, she was already dressed for bed. He had seen whatever intimate part of her that could excite him.

When she looked directly at him, he fled. She turned on every light inside and outside the house and then called the police. One officer checked the yard while the other one sat on the couch and asked her questions. Within a few minutes she was embarrassed. She had read about women who were intimidated by an interrogation after being raped. She began to believe that the policeman was imagining the particulars of what the voyeur had seen.

A baseball cap was the detail she repeated. Red. A Phillies logo. And the dead face. Older than she would have thought. Gray. “Like an away uniform," she had said to the policeman, trying to connect everything to a baseball image. He had looked puzzled but did not ask her to elaborate.

Under the window a concrete block was sitting on the grass. We did not own anything like it. The Peeping Tom had walked through the neighborhood lugging a heavy cement block without being noticed. Had he found it nearby? Did he have a collection of them stored in his garage? Maybe this was his first time out . . .

"We know this guy," the policeman said before he left.

"Well?"

"It’s probably Vernon Sweitzer. He’s been arrested for this kind of thing before."

"Are you going to arrest him now?"

"Do you really want to press this?"
"What do you mean?"

"He’s harmless. Old Sweitzer’s up into his sixties by now. Lives just a couple of blocks from here, but I wouldn’t worry. He’s just a looker. A little short in the head, but he’s just a looker." My wife thought the officer was watching her expression. "Always wears a Phillies cap," he added. "Loves Pete Rose, he told us the last time we had to pick him up."

"He lives right here in the neighborhood and you’re not going to do anything?"

"Well, we could, if you want to press it, but believe me, a guy like Vernon Sweitzer won’t be back here. He’s afraid of this house now."

"Listen," the other officer said, "you’ll have to spend an awful lot of time and go through a certain amount of public humiliation and even then it might not stick. It was dark. You only got a glimpse. There are an awful lot of Phillies caps in this town."

He left the cinder block on the porch. "Maybe you can use this for something," he said.

I could blame her nervousness on this, but she was afraid of sound and movement before. She bought double-lined drapes and still keeps them permanently closed. In the morning I always think it is raining or foggy. The sunshine surprises me the way it does when I leave a matinee, stepping out into the squint-bright parking lot of a shopping mall.

Last night as I tried to explain about the nature of the jobs I had to travel for, she tensed beside me. "Do you hear that ticking?" she said.

I had my better ear in the pillow. I rolled over, faced away from her to listen. Nothing. It was eleven o’clock, and I was thinking of how early I had to be at the bus station.

"Don’t you hear that?"

"What?"

"That ticking."

"No."

"You’re not even trying to look for it. It’s coming from over there."

"Where?"

"Look at me, Stephen. At least look at me."

She was whispering. I could imagine that she thought I was the cause of her fear.

I rolled back over and her voice nearly disappeared.

"So?"

"By the window."

"Which one?"

"By my dresser."

I propped myself up to look. Nothing. I listened again while my ear was out of the pillow. Nothing.

"Maybe it’s your heart," I said, and she turned away from me, moving closer to whatever she heard.

She sat up then, and I was surprised at her courage. Usually I have to inspect the house for her, checking locks and the children.

"It’s my watch," she said seriously.

I could not laugh.

"I thought it was someone outside the window, but it’s just my watch on the dresser."
I buried my good ear. There was nothing I could say to her about how the danger in our lives came from speed.

Near Scranton the bus slows to a pace that makes me imagine I can outrun it. Twice I’ve done that—run against a car. During high school I sprinted beside our station wagon while my father duplicated my speed. I ran a 10.2 hundred that spring, which got me into the district finals, but I could never manage to get out of the starting blocks quick enough to reach 10 flat. For months I dreamed about 9.9—it won states that year—afer practice one night I figured out how many miles per hour I was running if I did ten yards per second.

The other time was when I was late to take a scholarship exam. I had an opportunity to win four years of free tuition and we were stuck in traffic. As I watched the clock on the billboard at the end of the bridge, I decided to run. My father yelled when I opened the door, but I took off along the sidewalk, figuring I could make the last mile in about five minutes, which would leave me a minute or so to register.

It was a pretty stupid thing to do. Even pumped up like I was I couldn’t do a mile in six minutes wearing street shoes and a coat. The testing site was more than a mile away; my father pulled alongside me after ten blocks. All he said was “Nice try.” I was sweating and breathless and it turned out the test had a fifteen-minute grace period for late registration.

But now I don’t feel at all like running. Of course, there are the interviews in Binghamton that I may be late for, but I probably don’t want the jobs anyway. What I feel like is that I have already reached the city, that I have already spoken to the strangers who will send me a rejection letter later in the week, that I have spent most of my life thinking ahead of myself.

And here it is just another stretch of road repair, 20 miles of it according to the temporary sign. Last year, I remember, a movie called That Championship Season was
filmed in Scranton, and though Sunbury is only 100 miles away, the film was never shown in our area. I saw clips one night on Sneak Previews. The critics complained that the picture dragged because everyone talked instead of doing anything. What I recall now is the interview I saw on television. Robert Mitchum and Bruce Dern were speaking; the mayor of Scranton was smiling benevolently at both of them as they answered questions about how the making of the film might assist the "comeback" of downtown Scranton.

"There it is," the woman across from me says.
I see a huge junkyard full of rusting cars.
"That place you're looking at is the largest car graveyard in the world."
"Really?" Grouped together are dozens of school buses. In another cluster are tractors and bulldozers.
"You know," she says, "you'd never guess you were from around here."
"I'm not."
"You said Sunbury."
"Yeah."
"I don't understand."
"I'm from Pittsburgh."
"Are you sure?"
"Yeah."
"Well, there's the end of it."
"What?"
"The junkyard."
"Already?"
"It's the biggest in the world."
She sounds angry, and when I say nothing else, she turns to gaze out the window on her side. The raw surface of an excavated hill is passing by.

Just before we reach the New York border, both lanes reopen. A few more Pennsylvania jokes move around the bus.

Because of the delays, I will be late for the first interview in Binghamton. Maybe the second is the better of the two. Anyway, "things are opening up there" according to my brother-in-law, who called last week to tell me about the round of interviews.

"Thirty-three is a good age," he said, "experience and youth." My son is eleven years old. This summer he is telling me he wants to work with his hands instead of his brains when he grows up.

A few days ago I watched him and two other boys tossing stones through a window of the abandoned house at the end of our block. All of the windows have been broken for months. The one they aimed at was in an addition that had been built onto the original frame three years ago. A jagged edge of glass remained around its edge.

I could tell it was a contest. Each time a rock went through they shouted a number. While I watched, my son scored and hollered "Six!" Another boy hit the sill, but the stone skipped through. He yelled "Eight!" Sometimes they laughed when one of them hit the house more than a few feet from the hole.

I watched until my son succeeded again. "Seven!" he screamed, and bent over to pick up another stone from the pile at his feet.
Robert Cluett

The Fall of the House of Cruse: The Politics of Wine

It is a fact of life that a certain number of tyros will jump aboard any speculative bandwagon that seems to have momentum. And when the shineboys start touting stocks, when the English professors start touting gold, when the dentists open wide and drill their patients with tales of their real estate holdings, the professionals often hear, beneath the foreground noise, the not-so-distant thunder of the impending crash.

The 1970s were notable in many ways. But to the student of popular delusions and the madness of crowds, the decade was most notable in two respects: (1) a precipitous loss of stature in certain widely respected institutions (the U.S. Presidency, the British pound), and (2) a level of speculation in land and commodities unprecedented in modern times. Good farmland rose by a multiple of six; gold, by fourteen; platinum, fifteen; oil, twelve. And a twelve-bottle case of 1961 Château Montrose—a second-growth classified wine from the village of St. Estephe in the Médoc district of the French region of Bordeaux—in 1972 was listed for sale in New York for $500, exactly sixteen times the amount for which it had been listed a decade earlier when first offered in the U.S.A. If Bordeaux wine needed a further mark of being a top performer, along with Picasso, gold, farmland, antiques, and IBM, one did not have to look far to find it. A consortium of New York stockbrokers, in the winter of 1970-71, leased a warehouse and filled it with the most expensive wines they could find. The speculative bandwagon was clearly rolling, and the tyros were jumping aboard.

Such a market environment posed hazards and elevated the temptation to commit fraud, especially for the wine negociants of Bordeaux. The main hazard was a simple one: that of selling more wine than one had on hand or on order, at market prices (double the historic highs) that looked as though they would “inevitably” be lower in a year’s time, when the wine came due for delivery. The chief temptation was related, lying in the fact that in the buying frenzy many of the buyers were new at the game and hence were unlikely to be aware that what they bought as St. Émilion (a good Bordeaux, worth $39 a case in New York in 1971) might in fact be Bergerac (a lesser wine from farther up the Dordogne valley, not even a Bordeaux, worth under honest labeling perhaps $17.50). And indeed, even cognoscenti among the buyers, knowing themselves lucky to get any wine at all amidst all the speculation, although Robert Cluett is a professor of English and Director of the Graduate English Program at York University in Toronto, this description does not begin to reflect the variety of his activities and interests. In this article his connoisseur’s appreciation of wine and his fascination with financial speculation find common ground. Because his family was one of the big losers in the crash of 1929, he wanted to learn more about Wall Street and so worked there while attending Columbia University whose B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. he now holds, along with a certificate of Registered Representative from the New York Institute of Finance. In Toronto, where he lives with his wife Thayer and three daughters, he heads a consulting firm, Discourse Associates, Ltd., coaches York University’s successful women’s squash team, and has one of the best wine cellars in town. He sometimes makes his own wine and has written a book on the subject, Making Wine at Home (1981), as well as a number of works in his scholarly field, English prose style, particularly that of the seventeenth century. Among various tidbits of information about himself, Cluett mentions that he managed to drop a bundle on Rex, the only Richard Rodgers show in 40 years to lose money. And he once held, by inheritance, a lifetime pass to the New York Giants’ baseball games.
were doubtless not likely to be so fussy as usual. Many firms, even by mid-1972, were in what the trade calls "an oversold position." When the mean, ungiving wines of the 1972 vintage were totted up in the winter of '72-73, the gallonage was less than half of normal. In the consequent scarcity, prices for the inferior 1972 wines were four times what prices had been for the excellent 1970s. Temptation levels rose.

In the midst of all this, a visit by ten tax inspectors to the august and venerable negociant house of Cruse in Bordeaux on the morning of June 28, 1973, initiated a sequence that was to end the following year in two related events typical of their decade: (1) the disgrace and apparent fall of a great French institution—the house of Cruse et Fils Freres—and with it other, lesser houses; (2) a worldwide speculative crash in wine prices that had its greatest impact on the prices of Bordeaux wines of the vintages 1971-1974. For some growers of Bordeaux, it was a setback to rank with the nineteenth-century infestation of the phylloxera root-louse. For the Bordeaux negociants—traditionally foreign and traditionally the growers' overlords—it produced major losses of money, power, and influence. As is often the case in such events, politics was a factor.

The noses of the politicians have been drawn into the wine vat throughout history and for many reasons. Governmental greed for revenue makes for a strong bond between politics and wine in both England and North America. Juridical entities like the State of Pennsylvania and the Province of Ontario not only tax wine exorbitantly but use the government-owned retail marketing network as an extension of the welfare system, to provide employment for people of suitable aptitude not covered by the post office. But patronage and greed have not been the only—or even probably the dominant—reasons for political interest in wine. There are several others, of which the main ones are listed below.

Protecting Consumers. This generally falls to the civil servants rather than to the politicians, but the politicians do make the laws and the matter does sometimes break into the public political consciousness. It did so in early 1985 with the discovery by an Austrian civil servant that certain Austrian wine-makers had enriched their products with ethylene glycol, best known in automobile radiators as the principal ingredient of antifreeze. When the presence of the chemical was made public, it was a Day of Infamy for Austrian wine, and for anyone holding Austrian wine, adulterated or not. Other consumer protection comes from things like the D.O.C. laws in Italy (denominazione d'origine controllata—"name of regulated origin"), the A.O.C. laws in France (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée—same meaning as "D.O.C."), and the B.A.T.F. regulations in the U.S.A. (Bureau of Alcohol, Tax, and Firearms). Such laws and rules not only set maximum production per acre but also define areas (in progressive degrees of delimitation: California, North Coast, Napa; Bordeaux, Médoc, St. Estèphe) and specify what proportions of what grape varieties are permitted in specific appellations. Consumer protection laws sometimes mandate that when vineyards are replanted there must be upgrading of the grape varieties. This is especially the case in France and is finally, fifty years after France, becoming the case in some of the better growing areas of Italy. In France, there are some people who hold that the A.O.C. laws are next only to Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity in keeping France French, for it is they that guarantee the authenticity and sustain the reputation of the nation's premier export, A.O.C. wine.

Protecting Producers. Regulators, especially French ones, often argue that consumer protection is producer protection as well; the law that requires a producer in Roussillon to replant a vineyard of high-yielding Carignan grapes in a lower-yielding variety that makes better wine does so for his own good. Left on his own, the argument goes, he would plant the highest-yielding grapes possible and would produce unsaleable wine. France is far ahead of the rest of the world in this kind of benevolence to producers. More widespread is the oldest protection of all: tariffs. And these work not only at international boundaries but at state and provincial boundaries as well.

Another kind of producer protection is the reverse tariff, or the export subsidy, for years employed by the French to give their wines a competitive edge in foreign markets and to sustain their position as putative
number one in the wine world. The policy gave rise to a lot of resentment in France, as it was possible for a Frenchman to buy a bottle of classed Bordeaux in London for barely half of what he would have had to pay in Paris. Such benevolence to producers nearly always brings along with it a stronger and more benevolent regulatory hand as well.

Specific Social Goals. Usually these goals can be reduced to the wish that the public drink less alcohol, less potent alcohol, or none at all. It is the last of these that has had the least happy history. Most notably in the form of the Volstead Act, which implemented the total prohibition of drinking alcohol by the Eighteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Other experience suggests that the torrent can be diverted but not dammed up entirely.

The French tend to be schizophrenic on this point. Over half of France's arable land is under vines, but alcoholism is the country's greatest medical/social problem. As a result, in the early 1970s, one could see on the same public conveyance a poster promoting French wines and another poster with a large black "1 and 1/2" circled in red—the trademark of the health ministry's campaign to reduce the wine consumption of the average Frenchman to a liter and a half a day.

The government's position has been to try to increase total consumption while inhibiting certain individuals. As in French Canada, where the production of asbestos has been a mainstay of the economy, it seems difficult to pursue "good" economics and public health simultaneously.

Settling Political Scores. Sometimes the issues that animate such scores are imaginary, based on nostalgia, as in the boycott of California wines and wine grapes long after the winegrowers (as opposed to the table grape growers) had settled with Cesar Chavez. At other times, as in the current boycott of South African wines sanctioned by many governments, the issues are both real and ideological. And in France, the political issues that surround wine are matters of national honor, of life and death, and are always likely to be spiced by a mix of personal vendetta, regionalism, nationalism, and ethnic pride. Let us not forget what happened to poor Mendès-France after he advocated that milk be made the national drink. He who defames wine, however obliquely, can expect harsh treatment. Indeed, a politician perceived as even indirectly associated with someone who has defamed French wine can number his days.

All of the things that draw politicians to wine were present in l'affaire Crusé. Consumer protection (authenticity) and producer protection (product integrity and defense of markets) would seem to be the animating pretexts for the attack on the House of Crusé and the prosecution of its principals. But there remains and always will remain about the affair a strong whiff of French politics. The Crusés, like many other negociant families in Bordeaux, are not true Frenchmen. Their primal Bordelais ancestor, Hermann Cruse, moved to Bordeaux from Schleswig-Holstein around 1820, and though they have lived in Bordeaux for five generations now, the Crusés have remained aloof from the largely peasant society around them. Their marriages have been into other Protestant negociant families, which by and large are either Dutch (Kressman, Schröder, Schyler), Swiss (deLuze, Mestrezat), or Anglo-Irish (Lawton, Barton, Johnston). "Not racially French" was the scathing judgment of one Gallic journalist in 1974. As owners of an old and wealthy and influential firm, the family had powerful and influential friends. But the friends in turn had powerful and influential enemies.

The role of the negociants in the Bordeaux wine business emerged from the debacle of the mid-1970s much diminished. But from the end of the eighteenth century until then, the influence of these colonials over the wine business of Bordeaux was strong enough to amount to control. They liked to call themselves "Negociants-Eleveurs" and still do: not merely merchants but docents who "reared" the young wines as Eton and Harrow had reared so many of their young sons until the youngsters—wines and boys alike—were ready for a more public sort of life. The wines were bought from the capital-poor growers either on the vines in the middle of the growing season or under "alouements," long-term contracts whereby the grower might give up some of the bonanza possible in a year that produced a large quantity of superb wine (1955, 1959, 1966, 1970) in return for the safety of a guaranteed buyer at
a specific price. The better wines would be bottled under the name of the property where grown; the lesser would be blended and bottled under the appropriate, or perhaps merely the most plausible, Appellation.

Some of the negociants from time to time did hit a jackpot—the result of taking a large position in good wine cheaply just before a major price rise. And what more natural place to invest the proceeds than in some choice property or other in the region? Such jackpot acquisitions were made by old Hermann Cruse (Chateau Pontet-Canet in 1865), Edouard Kressman (Chateau Latour-Martillac in the 1870s), Daniel Guestier (Chateau Beychevelle in 1815), Louis Eschenauer of Strasbourg (Chateau LaGarde and Smith-Haut-Lafitte in the early 1900s), among others. The last big coup by a negociant was by Jean-Pierre Moueix, who bet his wife, his children, his two Citroens, and his yacht on the 1959 vintage while it was still on the vines. He became the owner of Chateau Petrus in Pomerol, which currently commands the highest prices of any of Bordeaux’s red wines. But his story has a happy ending and is only tangential to matters at hand. Back to Cruse et Fils Frères.

As of the day the tax inspectors arrived, the Cruses were a very big deal indeed. They owned eight properties, including two classed growths in Pauillac that alone had an annual production of 34,000 cases (over 75,000 U.S. gallons, nearly half a million bottles). It is probable that no other negociant in Bordeaux exported more wine out of France than the Cruses; it is equally probable that only one other negociant owned more A.O.C. acreage in the region. It does seem preposterous that a family firm that produces (as less than 10% of its total) half a million bottles of classed Pauillac alone got themselves into an oversold position. But oversold is what they got, and by the spring of 1973 the combination of their commitments and the rising price of new A.O.C. red Bordeaux to cover those commitments had driven them to the point of desperation. They badly needed an act of rescue.

The offer of help came from an unlikely source—Pierre Bert, a rascal himself and grandson of one of the all-time rascals of the region. (One uses rascal here in St. Clair McKelway’s sense, meaning a man given to acts of criminal fraud in the white-collar style, who fancies in himself strong elements of kinship with d’Artagnan and Robin Hood.) Bert had discovered for himself Francis Bacon’s dictum that credulity and imposture are merely two sides of the same coin. His loquacity and his ability to play the rogue (the press loved him!) made him a marvelous foil for the silent, retentive Cruses in the forensic drama that developed out of their partnership. The families had in fact been polar opposites for several generations—the Berts Roman Catholic, very French, poor at business, sentimental (especially about their land and châteaux), always rather publicly flirting with the outer edges of the law; the
Cruses Germanic, visibly Protestant (whatever faith they might have come to avow by way of marriage), shrewd, ruthless (the business before property, the business before sentiment), and ostentatious in their zeal to sustain their reputation as models of probity. There might even have been ancestral ill-feeling between the two families. It is a measure of their desperation that the Cruses consented to deal with Bert at all. But economic vicissitude has transfigured many a business bedfellow more repellent than Pierre Bert, and the toughness possessed by the original Hermann Cruse is hard to sustain over three generations, let alone five.

Bert was not 100% rascality and raffish charm. Educated by Jesuits, he had a reflective, meditative side as well. And he had spent long hours meditating the varieties of fraud possible in the wine trade. When, in January of 1973, he discovered that local tax offices permitted trusted negociants, as a convenience, to have in their possession a franking machine for the validation of the certificates of origin without which wine cannot be lawfully shipped, those long hours of meditation paid off. No tax official would permit Bert to get within ten feet of a franking machine, but a man of his connections did not have to pray hard or undertake a lengthy quest in order to be delivered into acquaintance with a suitable front man. Thus the miraculous birth of Serge Balan et Cie., of St. Germain-en-Graves, whose assets were a lease on a warehouse (22,000-gallon capacity), a franking machine on loan from the tax people, a tanker truck (4,000-gallon capacity), and Bert’s analysis of how the tax authorities tried to prevent the selling of more A.O.C. wine than in fact had been grown and produced.

This last item, Bert’s analysis, was crucial, for the government control system was very tight. A.O.C. wine started out in the cellar of the producer, the appropriate quantity easily verified by the gallonage-per-acre formula appropriate to the particular appellation. When shipped (to a merchant, broker, exporter, or whatever), it had to be accompanied by a franked turquoise certificate of authenticity, the “acquit vert” without which no buyer will accept a shipment of A.O.C. wine. Table 1 illustrates how the certificates and their various parts would move in a transaction. For non-A.O.C. wine (Consommation Courante, or C.C.) the system was similar, except that the “acquit was straw-colored, the so-called “acquit blanc.”

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Destination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original franked certificate</td>
<td>When shipment arrives, goes to buyer’s tax office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon copy</td>
<td>Seller’s records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbon copy</td>
<td>Seller’s tax office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detachable stub from original</td>
<td>When shipment arrives, goes to seller’s tax office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(specifies gallonage only)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All four items bear the same serial number.

Every time wine—either A.O.C. or C.C.—was moved from one owner to another, a new “acquit” was issued that ended up eventually in the tax office of the buyer, with the detachable stub from that “acquit” ending up in the tax office of the seller. The seller’s tax office then matched the stub and its amount with the carbon copy of the same “acquit” from which it had been detached and with the original “acquit” that had accompanied the wine when the seller had bought it. Hence at every step there was a strict accounting, and only as much A.O.C. as was grown and produced could be sold. But there were two flaws in the system: (1) the detachable stub did not specify the color of the wine, and (2) at no point was any original “acquit” matched against its predecessor original, as the new original always went to the tax office of the destinataire. Hence it was possible for “Serge Balan et Cie.” to buy 10,000 gallons of A.O.C. white wine and 10,000 gallons of C.C. (non-A.O.C.) red, and have both wines miraculously change color during their brief stay in the warehouse in St. Germain. The incentive was basic: A.O.C. white Bordeaux sold at a 10% premium over C.C.; A.O.C. red Bordeaux sold at a premium of 300%. It was the A.O.C. red Bordeaux that had become almost beyond price. A.O.C.
white, sold as C.C., represented a 10% loss; C.C. red, sold as A.O.C., represented a 300% profit. It was easy for Bert-Balan to provide carbon copies to the local tax office that did not fully correspond with the acquits that accompanied the wines downriver to the buyers in Bordeaux. In the hypothetical ten-and-ten transaction above, Table 2 shows what the relevant tax offices would receive (documents are numbered, #1 through #9).

**TABLE 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bert-Balan’s Tax Office</th>
<th>New Buyer’s Tax Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Original acquit vert for 10,000 gallons of A.O.C. white from previous seller.</td>
<td>2. Original acquit vert for 10,000 gallons of A.O.C. red from Bert-Balan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. “Carbon copy” of document #2 but stating that wine was white.</td>
<td>5. Eventually, the stub from the new original acquit vert issued when buyer resold the wine, also its carbon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Detachable stub from #2 specifying receipt of 10,000 gallons A.O.C. wine but not stating color.</td>
<td>6. Original acquit vert for 10,000 gallons of C.C. red from previous seller.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. “Carbon copy” of document #7 but stating that wine was red.</td>
<td>7. Original acquit blanc for 10,000 gallons of C.C. white from Bert-Balan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that at no point does there take place the ultimate verification of color, amount, and A.O.C.—the comparison of an original acquit with its predecessor original.

Bert-Balan had been in business only two months when Bert decided to approach the Cruses, who originally would not even consent to see him. But their reserve lasted less than a week, and by the end of April, 1973, the ancient house of Cruse was taking 8,000 gallons a day from “S. Balan et Cie.” (maison fondée en 1973). The Cruses were doing this in an arms-length way, through a broker, but they knew what they were doing. Before long, the parties to the transaction decided that it was not necessary for any wine to be transferred, that only the papers need change hands, since the deal between the Cruses and Bert provided that “S. Balan et Cie.” buy an amount of C.C. wine from the Cruses equal to the amount of A.O.C. wine that he was selling to them.

Bert was in the magician business for only four months before receiving a visit from the tax people; on June 22, 1973, the same tax people that, six days later, descended upon the offices of Cruse et Fils Frères. It is strange indeed that the usually loquacious Bert said nothing to the Cruses about recent government interest in his activities. And though the whole affaire took nearly a year and a half to work its way through investigations, charges, trials, and_sentences, the June 18 visit to the Cruses put an end to the scam. The magnitude of the fraud, in relation to its life-span, seems staggering even at this distance of time. Bert-Balan managed to upgrade roughly 750,000 U.S. gallons of wine, 325,000 cases, in the four months of the firm’s existence. That amount is 15% greater than the total amount uncovered in 177 separate A.O.C. tax offenses in all of France for the entirety of 1972.15 Set against the annual production of other A.O.C. wines or Italian D.O.C. wines, the amount shows its true magnitude. It comes to sixty years’ production of the A.O.C. Burgundy, Chambertin Clos de Beze; it is ten years’ production of the entire D.O.C. village of Gattinara; it is one third the annual production of one of Italy’s commonest D.O.C. white plonks, Frascati. And most staggering of all, from all this transformed gallonage Bert, true to his family’s tradition of being second-rate businessmen, made only a little over a million dollars.

Two grandsons of the original Hermann Cruse, Emmanuel and Christian, had run and managed the business from the
1920s until the mid-1960s, when Emmanuel retired. He passed the management along to his own son Lionel, to his youngest brother Hermann Cruse III, and to a fourth-generation cousin, Yvan. Numerous other Cruses were employed by the firm, and there were five outside directors, but the running of the firm was done by the triumvirate of Lionel, Yvan, and Hermann from 1964 on. They had every reason to believe themselves invulnerable as of the morning of June 28, 1973. After all, they were the biggest exporting firm in the region and their connections with the Minister of Agriculture, who was also Mayor of Bordeaux, Jacques Chaban-Delmas, were unequalled in the business. They had known him since the Resistance, and it was through some cousins of theirs that Chaban had gotten himself established in Bordeaux, his adopted city, shortly after World War II. The pushiness and presumption of the tax inspectors that arrived on June 28 came therefore as a shock to the three Cruses, who responded with an angry display of stonewalling. Books could not be found; certain things could not be verified; the lack of notice preceding the inspectors’ visit was termed “inexcusable.” But the inspectors had known from the start that they were on to something.

It took them weeks to unravel the precise mechanism of the fraud, their investigations having provided “certitudes but no evidence.” While poking around the premises, however, they uncovered irregularity after technical irregularity. It was clear that the sacred cow of A.O.C. was not an object of veneration among the Cruse family. An examining magistrate—who in the French system of justice does everything from voir dire right up through indictment—began work on October 18, 1973. The complexities of the case were such that it was not until exactly a year later that the eighteen defendants were brought to trial.

But before the justice system could go to work, Lionel and Yvan, together with their lawyer, waged through the summer of 1973 a vigorous public defense by writing letters, appearing before a meeting of the merchants’ association, and making statements to the media. They took the position that what was under suspicion was the wine of Bordeaux itself. It seems they hoped to rally the support of their colleagues. But the attempts sounded shrill and hollow, especially in the late summer of 1973 when Lionel Cruse compared himself to Richard Nixon as a victim of media malice and made public ref-
ference to the Cruse family's long relationship with Chaban-Delmas. Later on, in the middle of 1974, with things having gone from very bad to very much worse (*Cruse et Fils Frères* was to sell almost no wine at all for the first six months of 1974), Hermann Cruse III was to commit suicide by throwing himself off a bridge. The other Cruses have maintained to this day, and not implausibly, that they were the victims of a political vendetta.

In the summer of 1973, Georges Pompidou, President of France, was on his deathbed. There were two principal contenders to be his successor as Gaullist leader and President. One was Jacques Chaban-Delmas, Minister of Agriculture and friend to the Cruses. The other was Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, Minister of Finance and chief enforcer of the tax laws. *L'affaire Cruse* offered Giscard several opportunities all at once: (1) to give a public demonstration of the "incorruptibility" of the tax laws widely held to be suspect; (2) to show that the tax department did not show favor, as alleged, to people in high places or with well-connected friends, in short to people like the Cruses; (3) to tie a gigantic and somewhat un-French albatross around the neck of Chaban's candidacy to be Pompidou's successor. At the trial in the fall of 1974, which took place after Giscard had won the succession, the Cruses defended themselves by asserting (truthfully) that nobody had been able to say that they had ever delivered bad wine, or wine that could not plausibly live up to its avowed A.O.C. Bert defended himself by saying (less truthfully) that he was only doing what everyone else was doing, though one straightforward defense witness did observe that to grow all the Beaujolais sold each year would require a vineyard of over 100,000 acres, whereas the actual Beaujolais "vinicole" comprised a mere 43,000. In light of these assertions, it is well to remember that France is a net importer of wine to the tune of 110,000,000 gallons per year. It is also well to remember that not long after the local Bordeaux investigators went to work on the Cruse warehouse the investigation was taken over and directed from Paris, and that the handling of it during August and September of 1973 was very leaky indeed, and
that every leak to the French press did some damage to the candidacy of Chaban-Delmas. The handling of the investigation produced headlines in France and prominent articles elsewhere. The retail public in London grew cautious, and buyers for the London distributors backed off. But in New York, retail sales were good through September, 1973, and the New York wholesalers continued to build inventory on into the fall.

New York had been a major center of the Bordeaux wine speculation of the years 1971-73, and in November, 1973, the city saw two noteworthy wine-publishing events: (1) an article by Waverly Root in the New York Times Magazine, "The Case of the Bad Bordeaux," detailing somewhat inaccurately the particulars of l'affaire Cruse, and (2) the Christmas catalogues of the big New York retailers, with prices in many instances more than double those of a year before. At Christmas, the retail customers cut back; they stayed away in droves. New York wholesalers, and a few of the New York retailers, as overbought in expensive wines as the Bordeaux negociants had been oversold the previous winter, took a massive bath.

The New York retail business was still largely controlled by canny wine men like Sam Aaron (of Sherry-Lehmann), Bill Sokolin (of D. Sokolin), and Al Luria (of Colony-Luria). Only a few of the big retailers had bet even as much as the family Volkswagen on either the 1972 vintage or the prices that older wines were fetching in mid-1973. But the wholesalers of 1973 were a different breed. The canny wine men had mostly sold out just before the top—Alexis Lichine to Bass-Cherrington, Frank Schoonmaker to Pillsbury, Dryfus Ashby to Schenley, Frederick Wildman to a British distiller, Austin Nichols to a major drug company. They were living in their villas in Bellagio or on the Côte d'Azur with their feet up, having all been replaced in their Manhattan offices by blue-eyed, three-button MBAs from Corporate Acquisitions who believed that the only way the market could go was up.

Those blue-eyed MBAs were wrong—1974 saw a crash in Bordeaux wine prices reminiscent of the crash in stock prices forty-five years earlier. Two examples will suffice. Chateau Ausone 1970, having been listed in the 1973 Christmas catalogues at $495 a case, was being offered in February of 1975 for $118.50, when it should normally have risen even higher. Chateau Cos d'Estournel 1969, cited by Playboy's Book of Wine as a steal in the 1973 Christmas catalogues for $140, was being offered publicly by December of 1974 for $35. Overseas, the London Wine Company, one of England's biggest retailers, went bankrupt, and Christie's auction house spent most of 1974 acting as midwife for the catastrophic overstocks then held in England.

A week before Christmas, 1974, the eighteen defendants in the Bert-Balan-Cruse affair assembled to receive the verdicts and the sentences of the three-judge court. Only

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Label from the Chambertin Clos de Beze. It would take 60 years of this 39-acre vineyard's production to equal the amount of fraudulent wine marketed by Pierre Bert between February and June of 1973.
eight were convicted, the remaining ten let go. The Cruses and Serge Balan were given suspended sentences. Pierre Bert, as principal instigator and as an old hand at the fraud game, was the only one given a prison sentence. He and the Cruses together were assessed fines and other charges of over $8 million. The Cruses were able to cover the obligation by selling one of their chateaux—albeit the premier jewel in their crown, Chateau Pontet-Canet at Pauillac. It was, however, not a totally excruciating sale for them, since it was to Lionel’s brother-in-law, Guy Tesseron the brandy merchant.

Less happy in the wake of the crash of '74 were the Cruses' fellow merchants, the Ginestets, pre-eminently the most honest, fair-dealing, and decent of negociants, who had not been charged with any wrongdoing at all. They honored all their agreements, even those dependent entirely on a handshake, and they delivered honest wine. For their pains, they ended up $12 million in hock—worse off by far than the Cruses. The Ginestets, too, had to sell a chateau, and in their case what had to be put up for sale was a national monument, Chateau Margaux, which their grandfather had spent twenty-five years purchasing during the first third of this century. Government meddling, with the perennial nationalist excuse, aborted an agreement to sell the property to National Distillers for $18 million: the Ginestets could not be permitted to sell something so utterly "French" to "foreigners." In the end, they sold the chateau to Felix Potin, a chain of French grocery shops, for $15 million. An ironic footnote is that the majority stockholder of Felix Potin was a Greek national.

Epilogue

The combination of the crash in prices and the unprecedentedly high interest rates of 1974-75, which made it uneconomic to hold large inventories of any sort for any length of time, dramatically altered the role of the negociants. Most of them are no more than brokers now, and control of the Bordeaux wine business—with encouragement from Giscard’s government—passed to the hands of the growers in 1976. On the whole, this has been a net plus, not only for the average grower but for the average drinker of Bordeaux wine as well.

The general trend whereby governments try to exert tighter controls over wine appellations, begun in France just after the turn of this century, has continued over the last ten years. The effects of that trend are a moot matter. Enforcement will always be a problem: there continue to be sold, worldwide, probably three times as many bottles under the label of the A.O.C. Burgundy Pommard as that village could possibly produce. The United States has tightened its appellation rules just at the point in history where grower control and estate bottling might be making that tightness obsolete. For example, the premier wines of Robert...
Mondavi and Joseph Phelps are called, respectively, "Opus One" and "Insignia." Though they are based on Cabernet grapes and bear a distinct kinship with the wines of Bordeaux, they are usually entitled only to the appellation "California Red Wine" because they are blends that do not carry the requisite 75% of a single variety grown in a narrow delimited area. "Cabernet Sauvignon, Appellation Napa" is a far more strictly defined wine, but the Napa-Cabs produced by Mondavi and Phelps sell for less than Opus One and Insignia. Italy, too, has tried to tighten D.O.C., and Italian estate bottlings have improved massively over the last decade and a half. But the growth of estate bottling in Italy, combined with a new respect for accuracy in labelling years, seems to have had far more to do with the improvement than the law has had, for the law in Italy can often be diddled.

One lesson to be re-learned from the Bordeaux-related events of the early 1970s is that history is recursive and every speculative frenzy has its crash. In that crash, moreover, it is not usually the seasoned professionals that get burned; it is the *nouveau-riche* amateurs who have no knowledge of a particular kind of marketplace, together with their dependents and clients. The amateurs accentuate both the blowoff at the top and the over-reaction, after the crash, that drives the market lower than its natural bottom. The victims of the Cruse catastrophe and the Bordeaux blowout of 1973-74 were not, by and large, the professionals, even though the trade as a whole had a couple of lean years afterwards. Among the non-culpable professionals, only the honest Ginestets got really burned. The major victims were Pillsbury Corporation and the other employers of those blue-eyed, three-button MBAs.

Bordeaux, meanwhile, has had a decade of peace. Prices are on the whole orderly. Futures on the Cordiers' Chateau Meyney of 1970 (the last good vintage before 1978 to enjoy sane market conditions) were priced in New York in mid-1972 at $36 a case. Futures on the 1982 Meyney, in mid-1984, were $80 a case; the twelve-year increase of 122% is just about even with the Consumer Price Index. But the 1982 vintage, one of the best and biggest ever, has sparked interest outside the normal wine-buying public, and some of the 1982 Bordeaux wines are already selling at two and a half times the prices at which they opened. The 1970 Ausone that one could get for $118.50 in 1975 is now over $1000. When the 1985 vintage hits the market—and after one of the longest, warmest falls within memory it will almost surely be a blockbuster—it will become (with 1981, '82, and '83) the fourth very fine vintage in the last five. Public interest will inevitably quicken. And one fine morning in September, 1986, when you call your man at Merrill Lynch and discover that he is not in his Wall Street office but out in Queens looking at a warehouse lease with some friends, then re-read this article from the first page. You’ll know more or less what’s coming next.

**NOTES**

1. Throughout this article, all references to "classed" or "classified" growths are in accordance with the famous 1855 classification by the brokers of Bordeaux available in almost any wine reference book.

2. *A negociant* is an intermediary in the wine business. He buys from the grower—sometimes through a broker—and then holds the wine until it is ready for the market, bottling it at the moment he finds proper.

3. The vast bulk of the two billion U.S. gallons of wine produced annually in France is *not* A.O.C. variety—well over 90%. A.O.C. wine does, however, dominate the export market to the tune of 67% of the gallonage and 90% of the dollar volume (1974 figures).

4. The State of New York subsidizes boutique wineries that do not export to places outside the state; the specific device is a tax forgiveness of around $3 a bottle. The Province of Ontario, by means of a "storage charge" and an extortionate markup system, makes sure that non-Ontario wines come in about $2 a bottle higher than the local stuff.

5. Actually France is #2 to Italy in total production, by about 50,000,000 U.S. gallons, and as an exporter it is about 200,000,000 gallons behind (1974 figures).
Two laws during the Victorian period in England were notably successful in diverting people from gin to less corrosive forms of drink. First of these was the Beer Halls Act of 1830; second was the act passed by the Gladstone government in 1862 that permits to this day the sale of wine in English grocery stores.

Nicholas Faith, in The Wine Masters (New York, 1978), passim, gives an excellent survey of the intrafaith marrying habits of the Protestant negociant families. He also tells, pp. 160-61, of the cutting off of Edouard Cruse’s children just before World War II because of their Catholic mother.


The practice was prohibited for classified growths after 1968, though it does continue for lesser properties.

Pontet-Canet and Haut-Bages.

D. Cordier, owner of two major classified growths in St. Julien, Chateaux Talbot and Gruaud-Larose, plus several other properties.

Faith, pp. 280-291.

Most comical of the several escapades of Pierre Bert and his grandfather Louis came in the early 1970s, when young Bert was “making” Barsac by adding sugar syrup to lesser wine. He was caught by virtue of having ordered 90 tons of sugar from the same grocer. Faith, pp. 253-254.

Faith (p. 257) says that the Cruses “had been at daggers drawn with the Bert family for generations” but does not elaborate.

Faith, p. 256.

The Cruses used only four different wines to top up all the different kinds of wine in their cellars. This itself would declassify all the wines in their cellars, since under the A.O.C. laws not a single drop of adulteration is permitted. Worse, suspicious chemicals were found here and there, and the firm had a curious habit of labelling things “Rhone type” or “Chablis type.” My favorite of all the things discovered by the investigators was a chalked inscription on a vat: “Roussillon rouge, saleable as Bordeaux-type or, in the Anglo-Saxon countries, as Beaujolais.” Had DeGaulle been alive, he would have dropped the investigation and made them honorary Frenchmen!

Lichine’s Encyclopedie (1974 figures).

Root, true to his English origins, attributes the Bert-Cruse connection to the Bordeaux “old-boy network.” A wild error, given the massive differences between the two families, but understandable in a writer who hails from the land of Philby, Burgess, and McLean. A worse inaccuracy in his account arises from his misunderstanding of just what Bert was doing. Root says he was making “good” Bordeaux from “bad,” not red Bordeaux from white. Still, Root’s account was the most widely read warning that the New York buying public had in 1973.

By Peter A. Gillette and Paul Gillette (Chicago, 1974).

There is a possibility that he was also being punished for the main line of his defense: “Everybody does it.”

The chateau was originally built and owned by Spaniards.


I would make an exception to this statement for many of the Chianti growers. In trying to compete for the Beaujolais market, they are making the wines light by short fermentation and by addition of white Trebbiano grapes to the must (up to 20%). They have compromised what used to be a great wine. Brunello, Barolo, Barbaresco, Gremme, and Gattinara, on the other hand, have gone from strength to strength.

That’s an average annual return of 24.5% annually compounded, better than twice as good as the Dow Jones Industrial Average, which incidentally was pretty low in early 1975.
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Without my knowing it, this article had been one year in preparation before I undertook to write it in November of 1985. The sources, both printed and oral, are too numerous to list and in any case quite beyond my capacity to recollect. Most prominent among the oral sources were conversations with Art Amster, managing director of Manhattan Chateau, in the early 1970s, and with Jack Boice, of the New York firm of Frederick Wildman & Co., during 1975, 1976, and 1977. The printed sources to which I returned are listed below.


Lichine’s is the major general reference work in the field. Penning-Rowsell gives an excellent and from all evidences accurate account of the history of the commerce of the Bordeaux region. Bert’s memoir is charming and entertaining. Gillette and Gillette are interesting mainly as an indication of what wine looked like at the very top of the speculative boom.

The best book on l’affaire Cruse is Nicholas Faith’s, though it has maddening moments of opacity and it commits some real howlers on matters of fact (e.g., it has J. P. Morgan dying in 1911, lists Frederick Wildman as a retailer, suggests that Sherry-Lehmann is a fine old firm rather than a 1960s synthesis). Despite the flaws, it is a solid and generally entertaining account and has to be the principal source for anyone interested in the events covered by this article. The article’s indebtedness to it is considerable and is hereby gratefully acknowledged.
Lester Adelson

Handguns and Criminal Violence

We and the vast majority of our fellow-citizens, regardless of our attitudes toward "gun control," earnestly desire to live in a peaceful and orderly society, administered by competent and upright government officials, and refereed by a wise and impartial judiciary. The Preamble to our Federal Constitution states straightforwardly and unmistakably that one of the motivating factors for creating this bulwark of freedom and democracy is "to insure domestic tranquility."

"Domestic tranquility" to me means that we and our neighbors are safe in our homes, on our streets and by-ways, and in our places of work and worship. The ready availability and subsequent misuse of firearms, especially handguns (i.e., pistols and revolvers) in twentieth-century America has made a mockery of our efforts to attain, let alone insure, our constitutional goal of creating a peaceful and peace-loving nation.

The Dimensions of Current Criminal Handgun Violence in America and Cuyahoga County

Any objective approach to the handgun situation (I will avoid calling it a "problem" or a "tragedy" for the moment) demands that we deal objectively and accurately with the realities of this emotionally laden matter. Any attempt to function without facts becomes an exercise in futility.

In this country, firearms, and particularly handgun, are currently the lethal instruments in thousands of feloniously caused deaths annually. The October, 1984, issue of the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin informs us that 19,308 homicides occurred in our country during the 1983 calendar year, a rate of 8 per 100,000 inhabitants. This figure indicates that every 27 minutes one of our fellow-citizens fell victim to lethal criminal violence. According to the Bulletin, the dominant weapon in these homicides was a firearm.

By a different count, 7,227 of our neighbors and friends were feloniously slain with handguns in 1984, an average of 20 each day of the year ("Crime in the U.S.," 1984 FBI Uniform Crime Report). During our peak seven years' involvement in the Vietnam War, more than 40,000 American soldiers were killed in action. During this same period, more than 50,000 American civilians were blown away with handguns here at home. Indeed, it has been calculated that we have lost more American civilian lives to firearms than have been lost as military casualties in all of our "big" and "little" wars from the Revolution through the Vietnam conflict.

My own community, Cuyahoga County, is an accurate reflection of what is happening nationally. The Cuyahoga County Coroner's Office investigates, records, and tabulates the cause and manner of all violent (i.e., unnatural or traumatic) deaths (suicides, homicides, accidents, and

Lester Adelson has worked at the Cuyahoga County Coroner's Office, as pathologist and Chief Deputy Coroner, for thirty-five years. Although he deals every day with death, his real mission, as he sees it, is the preservation of life. To this end, he is strongly committed to the issue of handgun control. "Too often I have to look at the body of someone—a young man, an elderly woman, a baby—who is dead because of a gun in the wrong hands." Dr. Adelson received his B.A. from Harvard College in 1935, the M.D. from Tufts College Medical School, and did his internship and residency at John J. McCook Memorial Hospital in Hartford, Connecticut. He interrupted his medical training only to serve in the military during World War II. He has published over 100 papers in national and international journals, including one that explores the sudden, unexpected and violent deaths in Hamlet: "The Coroner of Elsinore" (The New England Journal of Medicine, 1960).
demise from violence of undetermined origin) which occur or are discovered in this county.

During the ten-year period from 1974 through 1983, the Coroner's Office investigated 2,941 homicides. Seventy-six percent (2,228) or slightly more than three of every four victims were slain with firearms—revolvers, automatic pistols, submachine guns, rifles, and shotguns. Handguns (revolvers or automatic pistols) were the fatal instruments in 1,916 instances. This number represents 65% of all homicides and 86% of all death-dealing firearms fatalities. In other words, handguns accounted for more homicides than all other means of violence combined—more than all edged and pointed weapons (knives, daggers, ice picks, and broken bottles), blunt weapons (clubs, baseball bats, pipes, fists, feet, and the butt ends of guns), asphyxial techniques (hands and ligatures), poisons, fires, explosives, drowning, and rifles and shotguns.

Included in the foregoing 2,941 Cuyahoga County homicides are 251 (8.5%) which were ruled "justifiable." Here the perpetrator was either a private citizen defending his/her own or someone else's life, the privacy of his/her home, or the integrity of his/her personal belongings, or he was a law enforcement officer who killed during legal intervention. If we subtract these 251 non-culpable deaths from the overall total, we are faced with 2,691 murders and manslaughters, a truly disturbing number of unlawfully destroyed human beings. It is of interest that 236 (94%) of the 251 justifiable homicides involved firearms, and of these 195 were handguns. Pistols and revolvers thus accounted for 78% of this portion of the

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<td>Total</td>
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<td>Handguns</td>
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<td>Blunt objects (clubs, hammers, etc.)</td>
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<td>Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.)</td>
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<td>Other weapons or weapons not stated</td>
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According to the latest FBI information, handguns were used for 44 percent of the murders committed in the U.S. in 1984. The above table is reproduced from Crime in the United States, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1985.
It is worth noting that for every justifiable firearm fatality which occurred in our county, there were six accidental firearm deaths.

We must never overlook the inescapable fact that homicide is a unique crime in that it is always irreversible and uncorrectable. Stolen jewels, autos, furs, or television sets may be recovered, or one may earn enough money to ultimately replace them. Embezzled money may be returned or covered by insurance. Although rape leaves a permanent scar on the personality and psyche of the victim, life does go on with at least the hope of a better future. But we know only too well that death is permanent, irreversible, and non-remediable.

The havoc created by criminally misused handguns goes far beyond the number of fatalities. Gunshot deaths are the tip of the iceberg compared to the total number of injuries. Many persons who are unlawfully shot do not die: they may be left permanently paralyzed, as is former Governor George Wallace, whose spinal cord was severed by the bullet from Arthur Bremer’s gun, and Mr. James Brady, President Reagan’s press secretary, whose skull and brain were traumatized by the missile fired by John W. Hinckley, Jr., with resultant lifelong disability.

Thanks to advances in medical care achieved over the past several decades, many gunshot victims survive today who formerly would have succumbed either almost immediately or slowly and agonizingly. What would today’s gunshot homicide toll be if we had our current assault rate combined with the medical skills and techniques available in the days before World War II and the 1950s?

It has been established with certainty that the frequency of criminally motivated pistol and revolver incidents is completely and utterly dependent on the shooter’s ready access to a firearm. Again, statistics establish incontrovertibly that when fewer handguns are at hand (and thus in hand), many fewer homicidal and non-fatal shootings occur (New Republic, November 16, 1978). Canada, Great Britain, Scandinavia, Germany—industrialized Western Europe in general—and Japan, all of whom strictly control access to and availability of firearms of all kinds, have homicide rates which are but tiny fractions of what we who live (and die) in “the land of the free and the home of the brave” endure every day.

The foregoing are the abstract dimensions of the problem. But statistics don’t bleed. The impersonal numbers must be translated into hundreds of husbands and fathers torn away from their wives and children, mothers and wives snatched from their offspring and husbands, children and youngsters carried off in the prime of life, and law-enforcement officers killed in the line of duty.

Another pertinent fact about all firearms is their potential longevity. If a gun is properly looked after (that is, cleaned and oiled regularly and not abused), its life expectancy is many years. A significant proportion of the firearms used to commit crimes in our country are decades old. If we manufacture, import, or assemble no additional guns in this country for the next 20 or 30 years, we have on hand a sufficient number of these weapons to decimate our population. Opponents of firearm regulation often repeat the slogan, “Guns don’t kill people. People kill people.” My response to this statement is, “Guns don’t die. People die.” And I never heard of a person shooting another person without a gun.

And guns are being “born” every minute. Again, the 1983 FBI Report tells us that over 2.6 million handguns were produced in the U.S. in 1982, an output of one revolver or pistol every 13 seconds. It is estimated that 60 million handguns are currently in circulation in America, and at the current rate of production, there will be 100 million in our country by the year 2000.

Every American president killed in office from Lincoln’s assassination in Ford’s Theater in Washington in 1865 through John Fitzgerald Kennedy’s destruction in Dealy plaza in Dallas in 1963 was shot. Lincoln, Garfield, and McKinley were the victims of handguns. Kennedy was killed with an Italian military rifle. And attempted assassinations of other chief executives—Andrew Jackson, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry S Truman, Gerald Ford, and Ronald Reagan—all involved handguns. No other western nation has had anything approaching the number of attempted and successful assassinations of their chief executives that we have had.
The Psychology and Psychopathology of the Shooter

The most reasonable explanation for the use of firearms in the majority of culpable homicides is that a gun, illegally used, is a coward’s weapon. This is true whether the killing is committed in connection with a family argument, an act of political terrorism, an armed robbery, a drunken quarrel between friends, or a skulking assassination. With its peculiar lethality, a gun can instantly convert a disagreement into a death-spawning event. A handgun is effective at many feet, a shotgun at many yards, and a rifle can maim or kill at hundreds of yards. Because a gun can kill at a distance with an easy pull of the trigger, the slayer can destroy a fellow human creature with emotional detachment. Current euphemisms for murdering with a gun, such as “to blow away” or “to waste,” reflect the killer’s sense of wielding great power from a safe distance.

Facile access to firearms by legal purchase, leaving aside for the moment availability by borrowing or theft, is an invitation to their wrongful use by the neurotic, the psychotic, and the socially maladjusted as well as by the professional and the “occasional” criminal. Think for one moment of the havoc wrought by one James Huberty, a mentally disturbed person, with his arsenal of shoulder and handguns in a California McDonald’s restaurant, a mass slaughter, killing twenty and wounding a dozen others, characterized as “the worst single-day slaughter by one man in U.S. history” (AP dispatch in the Plain Dealer, July 19, 1984).

The Etiology of Handgun Violence

Because I am a physician, I tend to think of many kinds of problems in medical terms. Accordingly, I have come to regard our national and local homicide and attempted homicide data as mortality and morbidity figures arising from an epidemic of lethal and potentially lethal violence which is engulfing our nation and our community. Like so many other epidemics which kill and cripple, this one is contagious. It spreads from person to person and from community to community. Violence begets more violence. It is a vicious spiral.

Of course the gun alone is not the sole and exclusive cause of unlawful gunshot incidents. Many diverse factors participate in the pathogenesis of an act of violence involving a loaded weapon.

There is our so-called national heritage (“The Gun That Won the West”), the constant depiction of violence by radio, television, motion pictures, and comic books, the disintegration of the nuclear and extended American family, the decline of public schools as an influence for good, the weakening of religious admonitory precepts, the
miseries engendered by drugs, and the roles of local, state, and federal legislative bodies and courts in their dealings with the important fraction of our population which has developed a subculture of violence.

Superimposed on the use of handguns by the professional and occasional criminal is the inescapable fact that many persons become criminals for the first (and only) time in their lives when they unlawfully utilize a handgun to settle a family dispute or a disagreement with a friend or an acquaintance. A gun has the peculiar ability to transform in lightning-like fashion a quarrel into a killing and a spat into a slaying.

**Solution(s) to the Handgun Problem: Prophylaxis and Therapy**

How can we prevent or, more realistically, decrease the number of actual and potential destructive incidents whose single common factor is the malicious use of a handgun, the instrument that creates more havoc in our lives than all other means of violence combined?

Effective prophylaxis is the ideal. ("An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.") And it is at this point that we part company from the National Rifle Association and from our fellow-citizens who support its tenets and doctrines. The proponents of handgun regulation ("control," not "confiscation") subscribe to the statement, "If these instruments of potential violent crime were more difficult to obtain, the number of fatal and non-fatal civilian gunshot casualties in our communities would be gratifyingly reduced."

The opponents of meaningful governmental firearms control aver that stricter statutory handgun regulation would not reduce violent crime, but that, rather, such controls would impose sanctions on non-criminal firearms owners while the criminal element in our society would remain armed and comparatively unaffected.

Choosing the best prophylactic measures need not require an either/or decision. The desired goal may be most promptly and efficaciously reached by an approach which utilizes a combination of all available effective procedures to help remove this blot on our national face.

Certain, severe punishment (i.e., legislative prohibition of probation for perpetrators of firearms crimes, longer prison sentences for those utilizing firearms in their predatory behavior, and capital punishment) may well have a deterrent effect on those who might be inclined to participate in unlawful activities involving a handgun or any other type of firearm. The enactment of such legislation, however, does not preclude the institution of legal safeguards which would decrease the opportunities to misuse a gun by realistically reducing the number of guns in every community. Always to be remembered is the fact that the ready availability of a gun frequently transforms a law-abiding person into a criminal. The Uzarevic tragedy in Cleveland wherein the assailant, a man with no police record whatsoever, shot and killed his former wife on Christmas Eve, shortly before she and their two sons were to go to church, is a vivid example of this life-shattering metamorphosis.

Severe and obligatory punitive measures are frequently not as effective prophylactically as we would wish. We need only recall the days of public execution of pickpockets two hundred years ago at Tyburn Prison, while other pickpockets were busily engaged amongst the spectators gawking at the poor wretches dangling at the ends of their ropes. Nevertheless we must accept the proposition that severe and certain punishment at least does not encourage criminal activity. Accordingly, it has an important place in society’s armamentarium for fighting against this scourge.

But in addition to the foregoing approach, is it not advisable, or indeed mandatory, to institute whatever other reasonable safeguards would seem promising in helping to prevent the occurrence of such incidents? If there were significantly fewer (I will not say "no") handguns in our homes, automobile glove compartments, office desks, pockets, and purses, would there not inevitably be fewer instances of death and crippling by these lethal instruments?

Even a total absence of firearms will of course not eliminate homicide and non-fatal criminal assaults. People have been killing and hurting each other (and themselves) long before the Chinese invented gunpowder. (Indeed, if one is willing to overlook the seduction of Eve in the Garden of Eden,
homicide is the first crime mentioned in the Bible. Genesis 4:8 tells us that "Cain rose up and slew Abel his brother." Although the Bible does not tell us how Cain slew Abel, we can be certain that he didn't shoot him.) Still, even if we cannot totally eliminate the social disease of eruptive violence, should we not make every effort to mitigate its curse?

Sound legislation must be enacted to control the availability of handguns and ammunition to all persons. I subscribe wholeheartedly to the thesis that good laws, vigorously enforced and justly administered, are critical factors in this as in so many other aspects of our society. And good laws, well enforced, lead to the passing of better laws.

Ideally, such life- and limb-saving legislation should be federal in scope. Effective nationwide governmental regulation of handguns has not been forthcoming in the past, and there are no reliable indications that we will have it in the near or even distant future. When our Chief Executive, alive today only because superb medical care was instantly at hand after he had been wounded by his would-be assassin's bullet, states that he is opposed to "gun control," whatever form it may take, the paradox is clearly manifest.

Closer to home, the city council of Brookpark, Ohio, unanimously turned down an ordinance which would have made mandatory the issuing of a city permit for the acquisition and transfer of a handgun. "An audience of 130 cheered and applauded the decision" (Plain Dealer, December 16, 1981). And more recently, Cleveland Heights rejected a similar law in the spring of 1984. But where good and meaningful handgun control laws have been passed in this country (Massachusetts, Washington, D.C.), homicide rates have fallen significantly.

To educate the lawmakers, we must strive to develop a grass-roots movement among an informed, enlightened, and aroused electorate who will not only welcome but will demand the enactment of effective laws to control the deadly threats created by the handguns that are all too common in our communities. As someone ruefully observed, "In a democracy, people get the kind of government they deserve."

Although sound and enforceable legislation is essential to deal with handgun violence, good laws in themselves are not sufficient. Rather, we need a multi-pronged approach. We need education in our schools, we need guidance and good examples in our homes, and we need constant reiteration in our houses of worship that life is too precious to be squandered in today's profligate fashion.

The media, printed and electronic, have a vital role to play. And a "one-shot" type of involvement is worse than useless: constant repetition is required until the sanctity of all human life becomes an integral part of our community thinking. There must be a ceaseless effort to overcome the fallacious propaganda of those who preach that more guns in our homes, in our autos, and in the "right" hands means a better and longer life for all of us. The bench, the bar, the ministry, and the healing professions must unite to rectify the intolerable situation with which we live today.

This positive approach requires a persistent program that never ceases to demonstrate the reality of the never-ending threats to our "domestic tranquility" posed by the huge number of handguns in our society. A standing Task Force on Violence is unfortunately a sine qua non of our "peace time" society. The goddess of Violence is a strong and alluring siren. The secret of her power is engraved on her shield: "Let mankind persist in the belief that violence will cease by itself." She stands on a pedestal of granite, the pedestal of human indifference.

I am indebted to Ms. Liz Tidwell of the Statistical Department of our Coroner's Office for her patient and persistent assistance with the numerical portion of this exposition.
Undoing Babel

Negative and nagging comments about the translator's trade abound. "Traduttore—Traditore" ("translator—traitor") is a well-known complaint attributed to Giuseppe Verdi, whose greatest operas, it should be noted, are transpositions, if not actual translations, of French, German, and English literary works into Italian. A French bon mot used in the nineteenth century—presumably without fear of female retribution—has it that "translations are like women. If they're beautiful they are not faithful, and if they're faithful they are not beautiful." And in Germany, Goethe, in the last decade of his long life, dictated this to his amanuensis Eckermann: "Translators are like busy procurers hawking the special charms of a veiled beauty. They stir up an irresistible urge to see the original." A tongue-in-cheek reflection, no doubt at an ironic distance from his own rather extensive translations from the French.

Poetry is particularly intractable to translation because it is here that the fullest resources of the language are concentrated. Over- and undertones surrounding words can find their echoes only in the cultural and linguistic environment that gave rise to them. A poem, after all, derives much of its value from bringing about an expansion of expressive possibilities; by means of poetry, hitherto inchoate terror or pity, as yet shapeless joys and ecstasies, coalesce into communicable form. It is not likely that such an intensification of language should be easily transferable.

The difficulties and frustrations associated with translating, however, are not confined to poetry or creative writing. That is because words and phrases, wherever we use them, are encrusted with semantic histories, cultural conventions and emotional predispositions. The German Volk, for example, still resonates from its passage through popular Romantic and nationalistic waves, and it took the emergence of a new generation after the Hitler years for the word to lose its miasma of racial pretensions. None of the lexical equivalents of Volk, such as people, folk, or nation, can generate a similar allusive thrust, along with the same minimal reference to objective reality. Another example of such resonance—this time non-political—is the word birthday, which in English alludes to the issuance of a new life; but the French equivalent, anniversaire ("turning of the year") suggests a cyclical continuum, while the Italian compleanno brings to mind completion and closure.

Some words are so apt, and prove so useful, even beyond their native linguistic frontiers, that rather than being translated they will be absorbed unaltered into another language. We English speakers, for example, will sometimes swallow whole an alien expression and thereby expand our own lexical.

Peter Salm, Professor of Comparative Literature and German at Case Western Reserve University, was born in Hameln, Germany (of Pied Piper fame). At the age of eleven he moved with his family to Italy, where he attended high school in Rome, and in 1938 he emigrated to the United States. He set out to learn bee-keeping and fruit-growing at a trade school in Pennsylvania, but this career was interrupted by World War II, during which he served in the Intelligence section of the U.S. Army. After the war he entered UCLA, majoring first in astronomy and eventually in German. He received a Ph.D. in comparative literature from Yale and taught at Wesleyan University in Connecticut before coming, in 1963, to Cleveland, where he now lives with his wife June. His translation of Goethe's Faust is published by Bantam, and he is author of three other books: Three Modes of Criticism (1968); The Poem as Plant (a study of Goethe, 1971); and Pinpoint of Eternity: European Literature in Search of the All-Encompassing Moment (forthcoming from University Press of America).
repertoire. Here we need cite only such words as Kitsch, Wanderlust, laissez-faire, esprit de corps. On the other hand, stress, trend, and jogging appear unaltered in German—and the expression flipped out of the adolescent rock scene has become ausgeflippt in German street jargon and journalese.

Despite all of the obstacles to communication suffered by the heirs of the Babylonian confusion of tongues, translation is nevertheless a requisite means to discourse among nations. Without it, the regions of the world would remain self-centered and isolated. The first comprehensible verbal transactions between separate peoples whose speech had previously been gibberish to one another must rival in importance the invention of language itself.

It is difficult to think of a major civilization—like Europe's—whose different languages and idioms could be left untranslated. What we think of as our Western or European tradition is inescapably rooted in exemplars of intellectual and spiritual history such as Homer's Greek Iliad and Odyssey, Virgil's Latin Aeneid, and Dante's Italian Divine Comedy. Ideally, of course, Americans should learn other languages than their native tongue, as Virgil learned Greek and Dante learned Latin. But since World War II English has become the dominant language in the world, so much so that Americans easily neglect (to their peril) that peoples' native languages are a source of intense pride. A discrete common idiom is a guarantor and an effective symbol of tribal or national identity. By refusing to learn even the rudiments of the language of a people with whom we have regular dealings, we demonstrate a boorish indifference at best, and arrogance at worst. But life is short; even with the best will, we can learn only a limited number of languages. For the rest, we must depend on translations.

Translation is really "impossible" only when placed against the claims of an ideal. It is well to be aware of the original meaning of the word translation, which was still current in seventeenth-century England. The King James version of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews reads:

By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before the translation he had his testimony, that he pleased God. (XI, 5)

Clearly, "translate" in this passage—meaning "to carry over bodily"—is a literal translation of the Latin verb transferre (more specifically of the verb's participial form translatus). In our day "translate" is a faded metaphor whose origin has all but disappeared.

In practice the translator's job is obviously not "impossible" but only frustrating, challenging, and now and then, marvelously satisfying. While he usually cannot quite match the quality of the original, the translator can sneak up on it through the intricate byways of his own language. The task is daunting, to be sure. From the very outset the translator must face up to certain basic problems and publicly commit himself to necessarily makeshift solutions. If he deals with a work from another age—say, Don Quixote, the Divine Comedy, or the Odyssey, the question arises with the very first line whether his translation should sound like a work from a bygone time, or whether the ancient or medieval text should be transposed into something like modern speech and given the flow and cadence of a contemporary work.

Both approaches can boast of eminent practitioners. Alexander Pope refused to preserve Homer's Greek hexameters as such, and imperially transformed them into indisputably English rhymed couplets, a decision which contributed to making Englishmen out of Achilles, Hector, and Odysseus. For him and for the reading public, the Iliad began thus:

Achilles' wrath, to Greece the direful spring
Of woes unnumber'd, heavenly goddess sing!
The wrath which hurl'd to... on the part of the reader is required to savor this kind of Homer:

Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilleus

and its devastation, which put pains thousandfold upon the Achaians.
hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades
strong souls
of heroes, but gave their bodies to the delicate
feasting
of dogs, of all birds, and the will of Zeus was
accomplished.

And finally, here are the same opening
lines translated by E.V. Rieu, published in
1950. The diction is frankly "prosaic," and
the translator has traded value for value. By
giving up the "poetry," he has gained the el­
bow room to move in close to the prose sense
of the original:

The wrath of Achilles is my theme, that fatal
wrath which, in the fulfillment of the will of Zeus,
brought the Achaians so much suffering and sent the
gallant souls of many noblemen to Hades, leaving
their bodies as carrion for the dogs and passing birds.

Translations like Rieu's make for easy read­
ing, and in addition they drive home the
point that even works of great antiquity were
modern to their first readers or listeners. To
them the Iliad was not archaic. And if one
wishes furthermore to emphasize the fact
that in essential ways human nature has
changed but very little, a good case can be
made for giving the twentieth century an Il­
iad that can be read like a modern novel.

Judging by the large number of transla­
tions into English and most other languages,
the Divine Comedy is comparable in impor­
tance to Homer. How should the translator
handle Dante's terza rima—the aba, bcb, cdc
rhyme scheme—a significant aspect of the
poem's triadic organization? Keeping in
mind that the great poem's structure is
deeply implicated in its transcendent mean­
ing, it should be tempting to achieve at least
an approximation of Dante's verse form. On
the other hand, English end-rhymes are
much harder to come by than Italian ones,
and there is a real danger that the translator
would end up with forced or grossly imper­
fect rhymes and ipso facto bad poetry.

Let the moving lines in the twenty­
sixth canto of the Inferno serve as an example.
Here Dante on his visionary voyage encoun­
ters the spirit of Odysseus, who dwells
among the "evil counselors" and speaks
through the forked tongue of a flickering
flame. Dante, while revering God's justice,
yet sees grandeur in the adventurous sinner
who here recounts how he spurred the crew
of his ship to sail boldly beyond the straits of
Gibraltar across the river Ocean and to the
end of the world. Here is Longfellow's ver­
sion of 1865:

"O brothers, who amid a hundred thousand
Perils," I said, "have come unto the West,
To this so inconsiderable vigil
Which is remaining of your senses still,
Be ye unwilling to deny the knowledge,
Following the sun, of the unpeopled world,
Consider ye the seed from which you sprang!"

The rhyme is relinquished, though Longfel­
low decided to adhere to a pentameter
rhythm which is a close relative of the origi­
nal Dantean eleven-syllable line.

Now for a modern version, let us look
at the poet John Ciardi's translation of the
same passage:

"Shipmates," I said, "who through a hundred
thousand
perils have reached the West, do not deny
to the brief remaining watch our senses stand
Experience of the world beyond the sun.
Greeks! You were not born to live like brutes
but to press on toward manhood and
recognition!"

With this brief exhortation I made my crew...

Here are the lines from Dante's Inferno, Canto XXVI, translated above:

"O frati," dissi, "che per cento milia
perigli siete giunti a l'occidente
a questa tanta picciola vigilia
d'i nostri sensi ch'è del rimanente
non vogliate negar l'esperienza,
di retro al sol, del mondo sanza gente.
Considerate la vostra semenza . . ."
Here the first and third lines of each tercet are rhymed—a less demanding pattern than Dante's; and still it must be conceded that even in this simplified form, Ciardi was not able to avoid forced and awkward rhymes: "thousand . . . stand"; "sun . . . recognition." And he saw fit to forego the trumpet-call exhortation, "Consider ye the seed . . . !"

One additional version will serve to show how translators energize their own language in order to meet another, so that both fidelity and artistry may be served. Here is the same passage recently translated by Allan Mandelbaum:

"Brothers," I said, "o you, who have crossed a hundred thousand dangers, reach the west, to this brief waking time that still is left
Unto your senses, you must not deny experience of that which lies beyond the sun, and of the world that is unpeopled,
Consider well the seed that gave you birth!"

Mandelbaum adheres to the five-beat rhythm and drops the rhyme. There is enough play within these constraints to remain close to the sense of the original. At least for this passage, Mandelbaum has found the right key for an English version. In its eloquent allusion to Dante's formal patterns and in its accuracy of detail it is outstanding.

Translators of literary works are notoriously partial to their own versions. In view of the fact that as trans-creators they accept hazards similar—though not equal to—those confronting authors themselves, and that, much like authors, they grapple with language, their commitment to their own interpretation is not surprising. About the need for "faithfulness" in translation there can be little argument. Disagreement has revolved—and continues to revolve—not about its necessity, but about its definition.

Should, for instance, a literal translation be considered the more faithful one? The early translators of the Bible certainly thought so—for how could one tamper with the word of God? The fourteenth-century English Bible of Wycliffe and the soon-to-follow version by Tyndale showed their particular kind of piety by a close adherence to the principle of literalness. On the other hand, Martin Luther in the early sixteenth century gave free play to his extraordinary linguistic gift and verve. Casting the Latin Vulgate into a kind of composite German idiom, he felt free to deviate from literalness in favor of language that was apt and readily understandable by the general population. His translation contributed greatly to the stabilization of what was to become standard German. In his Letter on Translation of 1530, Luther vigorously defended his method of translating the spirit rather than the letter. Referring to a passage in Paul's Letter to the Romans, which in his version reads "Man is justified by faith alone without the deeds of the law" (III, 28), he observed, "It's true: these four letters: s-o-l-a [alone] are not there [in the Vulgate]. The papists cannot see that my 'alone' actually corresponds to the sense of the text . . . ." Luther elsewhere said, "One should not ask the Latin words to speak German to us, but one should ask mothers in their homes and children in the streets how they talk—and then translate accordingly."

A proponent of literalness has been the novelist Vladimir Nabokov, who translated Pushkin's verse epic, Eugene Onegin, from Russian into English. He held earlier versions to be "grotesque travesties," because by being relatively free in their transpositions into English, they failed to capture the peculiar style of Pushkin's verse. "The clumsiest literal translation," he wrote in a 1955 issue of the Partisan Review, "is a thousand times more useful than the prettiest paraphrase."

Most modern translators do not consider the equation of faithfulness and literalness to be valid. Their views often emerge from practical experience rather than from theoretical considerations. In one way or another, a translator is usually able to transpose the conceptual meaning of a foreign phrase into his own idiom. While he cannot usually quite match the peculiar quality of the original, he can at least approximate it, or adumbrate it. An example from my own translation of Goethe's Faust comes to mind. Near the end of the drama, the distraught Gretchen is scarcely beginning to recognize her lover, Faust, who has come to rescue her from prison. In order to reassure her and to tell her that he is truly her lover, he exclaims: "Ich bin's!"—"It is I!" The difficulty is that the intimacy of this heart-rending scene does not allow for such a stiff and antiquated locution as "It is I!" The German, being neither
stiff nor obsolete, does not call for it. And yet the most readily available alternative, “It’s me!” is too casual and not in keeping with the tense dramatic moment. I therefore departed from a literal transfer and instead had Faust say “I am here!” Is this a betrayal? Is it a faithful rendition of the poet’s intent? Whatever the verdict, the choice had to be made.

A statement casually made in 1861 by the painter and poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti seems remarkably valid for our day as well. He wrote (in the context of a Preface to his book *Dante and his Circle*), “A good poem shall not be turned into a bad one,” which means, I suppose, that a poem written in a foreign language should be, as it were, reincarnated as a genuine poem in the translator’s own idiom. But if a good poem in French, or German, or Italian, should be at risk of becoming a “bad” English poem, then the translator, unwilling to thus betray the original, may either abandon his efforts, or else choose to convert the poem into prose, which—prosaic though it must be—can be an excellent conduit to the original.

Translations of works of major cultural significance may become so often cited and discussed that their public will prize them as if they had arisen from their own tribal roots. The King James Bible, aside from its religious import, is a profoundly English classic which is revered and routinely quoted to this day. Among its treasured qualities is surely that it has the patina of age and that it moves on a level that is removed from people’s workaday busy-ness. Today’s translations cannot hope to elicit the old, familiar reverberations.

Similarly, at the end of the eighteenth century, Shakespeare became a spiritually naturalized German citizen by virtue of the outstanding and immensely popular translations of his plays, accomplished jointly by A.W. Schlegel and Ludwig Tieck. Because of these two great contributors to early German Romanticism, “Sein oder nicht sein, das ist hier

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**THREE TRANSLATIONS OF A PASSAGE FROM FAUST**

**MARGARET (aufmerksam).**

Das war des Freundes Stimmel
(Sie springt auf. Die Ketten fallen ab.)
Wo ist er? Ich hab’ ihn rufen hören.
Ich bin frei! Mir soll neimand wehren,
An seinen Hals will ich fliegen,
An seinen Busen liegen!
Er rief: Gretchen! Er stand auf der Schwelle.
Mitten durchs Heulen und Klappen der Hölle,
Durch den grimmigen, teuflischen Hohn
Erkannt’ ich den süßen, den liebenden Ton.

**FAUST.** Ich bin’s!

*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Faust, Part I (1808), lines 4460-70.*

**MARGARET (listening).**

That was my lover’s voice!
(She jumps up. The chains fall off.)
Where is he? I heard him call me.
I am free! No one can stop me!
I will go to him and lie close to him!
He called ‘Margaret!’ He stood on the
threshold, and through the shrieking and the clatter of
Hell, through the angry scoffings of the devils,
I recognized that sweet and tender voice.

**FAUST.** It is I!

*Translation by C. F. MacIntyre, New Directions, 1949.*

**MARGARET (attentively).**

That was the voice of my lover.
(She leaps to her feet, and the chains fall from her.)
Where can he be? I heard him call.
And I am free, my fetters fall.
I’ll clasp him to me, and none shall stay me,
And on his bosom I will lay me.
He called me ‘Gretchen’. He stood at my door;
In the midst of the hellish clatter and roar;
Cleaving the din and the devilish scorn
The sweet loved voice of my lover was borne.

**FAUST.** I am he!

*Translation by Philip Wayne, Penguin, 1949.*

**MARGARET (listening attentively).**

That was the voice of my beloved.
(She springs to her feet. Her chains fall off.)
Where is he? I heard him calling me.
I am free! No one shall bar me!
I want to fly into his arms,
hang on his breast!
He called “Gretchen!” He stood in the door;
Amidst the shrieks and clatter of Hell,
through Satan’s ice-cold scorn
I recognized, I knew the sweet, the loving sound.

**FAUST.** I am here!

*Translation by Peter Salm, Bantam, 1962.*
die Frage” became—and still is—as much used and abused as our own “To be or not to be, that is the question.”

The numerous English versions of the Divine Comedy, of Goethe’s Faust, of Don Quixote, will continue to glow—perhaps dimly, depending on the quality of the translations—in the refracted light of the author’s creative imagination, even though it is a light which must travel a circuitous route from one language to another. The fact that Dan­tesque, quixotic, Faustian, Kafkasque, and Freudian have become household words in English-speaking countries is evidence that translators and translations have performed a great civilizing task.

It is possible to regard the process of translation as merely a special episode in the larger context of understanding and being understood. From this more comprehensive perspective, translation and interpretation imply one another. The dictionary is not enough. A conventional response to the conventional question, “How are you?” would be “Thanks, I’m fine,” which may be straightforward and true. But it could also be uttered under circumstances of psychological duress which would make the most reasonable interpretation to be “I really feel terrible.” Or a charming lady, cocktail glass in hand and whiling away the final phase of a social gathering, may say to the eager young man facing her, “We must get together some time,” when in fact she means “I’m not particularly interested in seeing you again.” Perhaps a trustworthy inner voice—in microseconds—will interpret and whisper to him, “By that she means what I mean when I say . . . ,” transposing—or translating—the lady’s words, her intonation and rhythmic patterns, into his own key.

The subtleties of language are so pervasive that we can never escape the need, somewhere or other, for interpretation or translation. National languages have many subdivisions. There are regional idioms like Schwyzerdütsch typical of German-speaking regions in Switzerland, or like the Neapolitan and Sicilian dialects in Italy, all of them effectively communicative only for those who belong to these particular linguistic enclaves. Professional groups have their own jargon to which only initiates are fully privy. And, to push matters just a little farther, even the smallest assemblage of people—say members of a family or two lovers—may use words and phrases which only they can fully understand. Proust, in Remembrance of Things Past, let the reader in on such coded exchanges between Swann and Odette. “Cattleya,” which originally referred to his gift of a bouquet of orchids, became expanded into “doing a Cattleya,” or making love.

The Babylonian Confusion is a permanent affliction. We feel stymied even within the limits of our own language when our feelings exceed our ability to express ourselves. In such a case the hard labor of translation is liberating and will enhance our verbal repertoire. It enables us to say what was once “unspeakable.” And we can always dream of discovering those who “speak our language” perfectly: a pre-Babylonian tongue immediately understood by kindred souls, but no longer—or not yet—spoken by anyone.
Japanese has provided the English language with a number of loan words in recent years. We are all aware of such terms as *sushi*, *kimono*, and *Toyota*, which have become a real part of English vocabulary. Once these words are adopted into the English language, speakers of English can do anything with them that they can do with others which have been in the language for a much longer time.

One thing we have all done as children is to say words “backwards”: *book* becomes *koob*, *paper* becomes *repap*, and *bibliography* becomes *yhpar g oilbib*. The fact that some of these words are difficult or impossible to pronounce following the normal rules of English pronunciation only contributes to the fun of the game. We can even say the recent loan words from Japanese backwards: *sushi* becomes *ihsus*, *kimono* becomes *onomik*, and *Toyota* becomes *Atoyot*.

It may not come as a surprise that Japanese children play the same type of language game. The difference is that when they pronounce these words backwards, *sushi* becomes *shisu*, *kimono* becomes *nomoki*, and *Toyota* becomes *Tayoto*.

While this result may appear to add another mystery to the inscrutable Orient, the explanation is quite straightforward. In the game of pronouncing words backwards, English-speaking and Japanese-speaking children are dependent on the respective sound systems of their languages, and these sound systems are reflected in the way the language is written. Written English is phonemic (that is—with certain exceptions—there is a different symbol for each consonant sound and each vowel sound); and so English-speaking children spell the words backwards and then try to pronounce the result. Japanese children do the same thing, but because Japanese is written with a system in which each syllable has a symbol, not the letters but the syllables are reversed.

Japanese children are first taught to write in *kana*, a syllabary in which each syllable rather than each individual sound is given a distinct symbol. There are five vowels, *a, i, u, e, o*, and these vowels are always written the same way in *kana*. There are fourteen consonant phonemes. But, there are forty-six basic symbols, and several diacritical marks in the *kana* system because there is a separate symbol for *a, i, u, e, o*, for *ka, ki, ku, ke, ko*, etc.

When the Japanese child confronts the word *sushi*, for instance, the word is not perceived as a sequence of five letters, but as a sequence of two syllables, or two *kana* symbols, one for *su* and one for *shi* (the sound *si* does not exist in Japanese). Thus, going backwards involves reversing just these two symbols.

The other system for writing Japanese is termed *kanji*. These are pictographic characters which were imported from China perhaps as early as the third century A.D. The

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word kanji actually means "Chinese character." In the adult writing system, kanji are used to write conceptual words (nouns, verb and adjective stems), while kana are used to write the inflectional endings of verbs and adjectives, postpositional particles (analogous to prepositions in English), and words whose kanji are too difficult to write.

There are 1850 kanji that the Ministry of Education has determined are essential in terms of their functional value. Some people know more, some know fewer, but overall there is a 99% literacy rate in Japan.

The writing system is further complicated by two facts. First, most nouns are written by a combination of two or more kanji. Second, most kanji have at least two entirely different pronunciations, and many have more than two. Thus, merely to read a sentence in a newspaper accurately requires a considerable amount of study and effort.

The kanji for the word "one," for instance, is written with one stroke (一). It may be pronounced hito, ichi, or itsu, depending on context. The kanji for "two" is written with two strokes (二). It is pronounced hata, ni, or ji. The word for "three" is written with three strokes (三) and is pronounced mi or san. Despite what logic may seem to suggest, the kanji for "four" is not written with four strokes but with five (四) and is pronounced yo, yon, or shi.

After this, it gets very complicated. Common words such as "after" are written with a kanji which has nine strokes (五) and at least six different pronunciations with different meanings: go and nochi mean "after, later"; ko to ushiro(to) mean "behind, latter"; ato means "afterward"; and oku(neru) means "be late, lag behind." It is common for kanji to have more than a dozen strokes which must be written in the correct order. While there are some guidelines to help understand how to pronounce a specific kanji in a specific situation, more often than not the system works just like English spelling—you simply have to learn the correct pronunciation.

The system is not complete chaos, however. Most characters are actually built up from a limited number of basic elements. The way these elements are joined together is related to the meaning and/or the pronunciation of the kanji. Complex kanji are typically made up of combinations of simpler kanji. By segmenting a complex kanji into discrete parts—left, right, top, bottom, inside, outside—both the meaning and pronunciation can sometimes be deduced. The most general "rule" for this is that the meaning is on the left while the pronunciation is on the right, but of course, other combinations are frequent.

The kanji for "copper" is written 銅 and is pronounced like dough. This kanji actually consists of the basic character for "metal" (金) on the left, and a basic character pronounced dough on the right (钅).

When Japanese is written, one of two writing styles is followed. It is either written like English, horizontally from left to right, top to bottom, or it is written vertically from top to bottom, right to left. The latter style is the more traditional, and is used for most literary works. The first style is more common in scientific reports.

Unfortunately, there is even more to writing Japanese than this. The term kana was introduced earlier to refer to the syllabary, the phonetic representation of the Japanese language. There are in fact two distinct syllabaries, each with its own set of symbols. The one described above is called hiragana (the gana in this word is an alternative pronunciation of kana). This system was created as a simplification of kanji. The other is called katakana, and each of these was derived from a single part of a specific kanji. The function of katakana is somewhat similar to italics in English. They are used to write onomatopoetic words—which imitate sounds like crash or buzz—as well as words which are meant to be emphasized. Before the introduction of word processors which allowed kanji to be written easily, katakana were also used for computer input. They are still used in telegrams. Most important, however, they are used to write loan words. While English writers underline or italicize some recent loan words, once a word has become familiar, it is no longer italicized. Foreign words are always "italicized" in Japanese, al-
though there appear to be degrees of "foreignness."

English words are frequent in the Japanese vocabulary, although it may sometimes be difficult for English speakers to recognize either the pronunciation or the meaning of the word. "Coffee" becomes "koohii; "department store" becomes "depaato; "to demonstrate (politically)" becomes "demoru. There are over 20,000 of these loan words, primarily from English, used in contemporary Japan. And they are all written in katakana. Earlier loan words from China, of course, are written in Chinese characters.

There are loan words from other languages as well: pan "bread" comes from Portuguese, arubaito "part-time work done while a student" comes from German; kontkuuru "contest" comes from French. Once in a great while, a loan word is elevated into the Japanese language and is even assigned appropriate kanji. The word for "man's business suit" is "sebiro," and is written 背広. The two characters mean "(a person's) back" and "broad." Folk etymology explains that the business suit makes a person's back look broad. In actual fact, the original word is from English "Savile Row," the place where the best British suits are made.

A single line of text may contain kanji, hiragana, katakana, and English letters, as the following headline from a magazine article demonstrates. At the bottom of the page I have given the pronunciation of the kanji in capitals, the pronunciation of katakana in italics, and the pronunciation of hiragana in regular lower case. I have separated the words so that they are directly above their pronunciations. Japanese is normally written with no spaces between words.

This example also allows us to see something of the way Japanese sentences are put together. The order of elements in a sen-

tence is usually subject, direct object, verb. But this order is quite flexible, especially in spoken Japanese. Many elements of the sentence appear to be the reverse of English. Relative clauses, for instance, precede rather than follow the noun they modify; while negative elements (the equivalent of "not") follow the main verb rather than precede it. Instead of prepositions, Japanese has postpositions. And, in fact, these postpositions have much more extensive use than English prepositions. Not only do they indicate such relationships as "in," "on," "by," and "from," there are also postpositions to indicate the subject and the direct object of a sentence. There is even a special postposition whose major function is to indicate the "topic" of a sentence.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Japanese is the fact that in the majority of sentences, the subject (as well as other elements) may be left out. Utterances like "went," "gave," and "will try to do" abound and are in no way incomplete; Japanese speakers appear to have no difficulty understanding who did what to whom. At least they have no more trouble than English speakers have with utterances like "She went there," "They gave it to him," and "I will try to do it." In English, if you know whom the pronoun refers to you can understand the full intent of the utterance. In Japanese too, if you know who is intended in the utterance, you can understand it.

The "rules" for determining who did what to whom in Japanese are quite straightforward, just as straightforward as they are in English. We generally know who or what a particular pronoun in English refers to, but not always. Japanese generally know who is being referred to in these elliptical sentences, but sometimes they don't. This is shown quite clearly in the following anecdote.

Several years ago, my wife (who is Japanese) and a friend were talking when I returned home from school. I played with our young children for a while, and then I walked into the living room. My wife said to me, "Nete kara hashiru?" This sentence has no nouns in it. A literal translation is, "After (someone) sleeps, will (someone) run?" I responded "Yes," since I knew what my wife meant. The friend, however, had a puzzled look on her face. The general rule the friend was following in attempting to interpret this sentence is that when a question is being asked, an unexpressed subject refers to the addressee. She was not aware that I would play with the children until they went to sleep and then go jogging. Since the friend did not know our routine, she was confused about who would run and who would sleep.

Social relationships are important in any sphere of human activity, but in Japanese, reflections of such relationships are always shown directly in the way people speak to one another. In English this may also happen, of course, since the way we speak to a child who has committed a faux pas and the way we speak to an adult in the same situation differ considerably. But notice that we can use the same words and expressions to speak to both a child and to a doctor. In Japanese, however, we must use different grammatical constructions depending on the perceived relationship with the addressee.

Let's take a concrete example. What, you might ask, is the word for "go" in Japanese? A nice simple question. Even simpler when you realize that Japanese verbs do not inflect for person, number, or gender as many European languages do. There should be a single form corresponding to "I go," "you go," "he goes," "we go," etc. But if you ask that question of a Japanese, the truly contemplative speaker will answer, "It depends."

It depends on whom you are talking to and whom you are talking about. If you are talking to someone within your "in group," a loosely defined group of people with whom you are very close, you use a different inflectional ending than if you are speaking with someone from your "out group." Taking the most neutral dictionary form for "go," iku, you say kiku to your friend to mean "I go," "we go," etc. To an acquaintance you say ikimasu to mean the same thing.

But what if you are talking about yourself or a family member to an acquaintance, and you wish to be properly humble? In that case you say marimasu. And if you are talking about your teacher and want to be properly respectful, you say irasshaimasu. If you are talking to your friend about your teacher, you would say irassharu.

For many verbs in Japanese there are separate suppletive forms (forms unrelated to the base or root, i.e., went for past of go) to refer to what we term the axis of address
(whom you are speaking to) and the axis of reference (whom you are talking about). But even for those verbs which do not have separate forms, there are regular processes to create such distinctions. If I want to say to my friend, neutrally, that “I will read something,” I say yomu. To an acquaintance I say yomimasu. If I want to say the same thing humbly, I say oyomi suru to a friend and oyomi shimasu to an acquaintance. If I want to talk about my teacher reading, I say oyomi ni naru to my friend and oyomi ni narimasu to my acquaintance. Almost all verbs can make this type of distinction.

What if you decide after getting this far that Japanese is too difficult; that you don’t want to know that much about the Japanese language? You do want to salvage something, however, from the time you have spent, and so you decide you just want to know how to say the word for “I.” Again, the situation appears to be simple since there are no modifications of the type we have in English where we use the forms “I,” “me,” “my,” and “mine.” Just one form is used for all cases. But again our contemplative speaker of Japanese, in answer to the question, “How do you say ‘I’ in Japanese?” would have to answer, “It depends.”

The word you will most often be told is watakushi. This is the most formal way of saying “I.” In slightly less formal circumstances, most people will say watashi. Females, however, if they wish to assert their gender, will use the forms atakushi to be formal and atashi to be relaxed. Males also have some options open to them. In nonformal situations, they will generally use the word boku which, incidentally, is also a term of address for all boys up to about the age of eight or ten. If males wish to assert their masculinity and coarseness, they will use ore. Older men and sumo wrestlers will use washi, and people from the north use ora while people from the Osaka area use jibun. There is a special form that someone in an official post uses, honkan, and a form reserved exclusively for the Emperor, Chin. And despite this plethora of forms for the word “I,” people use various circumlocutions to refer to themselves: kochi, “this direction,” and achi, “my house,” being two of the most common. When speaking with children, roles become important: a mother never refers to herself with a pronoun when speaking with
her children; she always uses okaasan, "mother."

There is an equally bewildering array of terms for "you." Anata is the most neutral term, but anata cannot be used with anyone who is your superior. Kimi is used by men generally to men. Onnae is rough, while kisama is used only as a prelude to a fight. Anata is used as a term of endearment by women to husbands or lovers. Again, despite a wide range of second-person pronouns available, people prefer other means to address someone. One never says to a teacher, anata no hon, "your book." Rather one says sensei no hon, "the teacher's book," somewhat akin to the English expression, "Would Her Majesty care for a cup of tea?" The greengrocer is addressed as yaoya-san, "Mr. Greengrocer" rather than "you;" the shoe shop clerk is called kutsuya-san, "Mr. Shoeshop Clerk." Euphemistic expressions such as sochira, "that direction," and otaku, "honorable house," are frequently used instead of pronouns, and as we have seen previously, there are many ways to avoid saying anything at all.

Finally, just as we distinguish among forms such as "Mr.," "Mrs.," "Ms.," "Master," and "Miss," so Japanese have a large variety of suffixes which attach to people's names: san is the most neutral, as in tanaka-san. Sama is very respectful, while kun is familiar. Chan is used for children, usually girls, and shi is formal, and is usually reserved for newspaper articles, envelopes, and news broadcasts. In almost every situation, one form or another of the suffix must be used, and to neglect to use it may give serious insult. In fact, one of the more illuminating uses of this custom concerns the reporting in a newspaper of a crime. When the person is a suspect, he is referred to as miurashi. After he has been convicted, he becomes a nonperson and is referred to simply as miura, with no suffix attached to his name.

It is clear that Japanese is very different from English. It is also clear that there are many features of the Japanese language which are difficult both for native Japanese and for foreigners attempting to learn their language. As a result of these differences and difficulties, prominent scholars in Japan have claimed that Japanese is unique. This claim is certainly true, but of course every language is unique among the languages of the world.

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Word Watch

by David B. Guralnik
Editor in Chief Emeritus of Webster's New World Dictionaries

Neologisms: A Corporate Vocabulary

The American language in the 1980s is being enriched by a number of creative neologisms emanating from the business community, a sector not previously noted for its linguistic imagination. Much of this language ferment derives from the current trend toward company takeovers and mergers. If, for example, a pending takeover of one company by another will have apparently unfavorable consequences for the former, and a third party appears with better terms for a merger, that rescuer is termed a white knight, in allusion to the kindly character in Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking Glass, who rescues Alice from a fate worse than merger. Although white knight in this sense was first used in the 1950s, it was not until the late 1970s that it began to appear with any frequency on the financial pages of the newspapers. Much more recently, the inevitable antonym, black knight (also called unfriendly suitor) has appeared to designate the preda-
tor seeking to gobble up a company. Actually, the White Knight’s opponent in Carroll’s literary chess problem is, naturally, the Red Knight, but then I don’t suppose that Through the Looking Glass will be found in many corporate libraries.

Now when a hostile takeover has been effected, one of the first steps usually is to replace the top management of the taken-over company, but not to worry. The descent from those lofty heights is usually broken by a golden parachute (a guaranteed salary, bonuses, and other perks for a number of years), that serves to cushion the impact with the ground somewhat more effectively than the current administration’s leaky safety net will do for those living at the poverty level. Golden parachute was probably patterned after golden handshake, an earlier term with somewhat the same meaning, but applied usually to the handsome emoluments offered to encourage an early severance not occasioned by a takeover. And those prurient terms have spawned the even more recent golden handcuffs, future benefits designed to shackle desirable employees, who lose them if they depart to other pastures, and golden hellos, substantial bonuses given to the best and brightest for signing on. These are particularly popular in Britain, where, however, they are stuffily referred to as “relocation expenses.”

In this game of corporate musical chairs, a marauding investor or group of investors will sometimes buy a sizable block of a company’s stock, threatening a takeover and prompting the company to buy the shares back, usually at a hefty premium. That ploy is known as greenmail, a blend of slang long green (money) and blackmail. Such greenmailers are also called sharks, and measures taken to obviate such depredations are qualified by shark-repellent. Such measures, which include limiting the way shareholders’ meetings can be called, staggering the terms of directors, and issuing large volumes of stock that would make them unpalatable to sharks, are now also designated poison pills. The courts and the SEC have been kept busy juggling suits, both pro and anti such measures. If an offer to take over a company has been rejected, a follow-up offer with better terms, but also containing threats of actions that would force acceptance, is known in Wall Street parlance as a bear hug.

A shark-repellent tactic used when a greenmailer has bought up a substantial percentage of a company’s common stock is to announce that if the raiders buy any further shares, all other shareholders could sell their shares back to the company for a premium price. That tactic is called lollipop because, as a vice president of Kidder Peabody & Co. put it, “it tastes good to all shareholders” except the hostile bidder.

Moving from high finance to high-tech industry, a small unit of employees assigned to a special, complicated project, often at some distance from corporate headquarters and staff supervision, is referred to as the skunkworks, after the place where Li’l Abner worked—when he worked—in the Al Capp comic strip. And while we are in the plant, let me mention the latest additions to the compounds formed with -collar, the new-collar workers, young Middle Americans, who do not aspire quite as high as their cousins the Yuppies (Young Upwardly Mobile Professionals). They are the offspring of blue-collar workers, young Middle Americans, who do not aspire quite as high as their cousins the Yuppies (Young Urban Professionals). They are the offspring of blue-collar workers, work in the service industries, and are in the $20,000 to $40,000 salary bracket. And now we also have The Gold-Collar Worker, the title of a book by Robert E. Kelley, who writes of those who use their brainpower for a living (engineers, managers, financial analysts, and the like), translating their knowledge into profits.

Yuppie is, of course, an extension of the original Yuppie (Young Urban Professional), carefully chronicled by Marissa Piesman and Marilee Hartley in their Yuppie Handbook, along with such cultivars as the Guppie (Gay Urban Professional) and Puppie (Pregnant Urban Professional). And these have spawned Yummies (variously Young Urban Mafiosi or Young Upwardly Mobile Mothers), Buppies (Black Yuppies), and refashioned Guppies (Groups of Yuppies, as in chic watering holes). The Yuppies manqué, those who just did not make it, are now designated Yuffies (Young Urban Failures).

By golly, it’s getting to be almost fun to read the Wall Street Journal and Business Week these days.
The Case of Dr. Berjot: a Lesson in Creative Autobiography

When we read biographies, we usually assume that they give us information based on solid facts and records. Actually they are always a kind of fiction, because there are documentary gaps in any person's life which the biographer must fill by conjecture, and also because the records themselves are often distorted, either innocently or by intention.

A number of years ago I began to study the life of Dr. Marie Eugène Berjot, a French writer who lived in New Orleans during the last century. The more I probed the records, the more contradictions I found. And most of the distortions turned out to be manufactured by Berjot himself. It was then that I discovered not only how difficult it is to separate actuality from invention, but also how rich and suggestive are patterns of fiction, whether written on a page or woven into the fabric of a life.

Dr. Berjot, a French physician who came to the United States around the time of the American Civil War, merited a short mention in Edward Laroque Tinker's *Ecrits de langue francaise en Louisiane au XIXe siecle: Essais biographiques et bibliographiques* (French Writing in Nineteenth Century Louisiana: Biographical and Bibliographical Essays) by virtue of his life-time avocation: he wrote short narratives which he published and distributed around his adopted city, New Orleans. Thirteen prose pieces and one poem are all that remain of Berjot's literary work. Copies of individual texts have found their way into several libraries around the United States, but the only complete collection is found in the Howard Memorial Library of Tulane University.

All thirteen pieces are written in cultured, educated French, and all reflect strongly the major literary currents of continental French literature. Berjot's favorite themes are travel and foreign lands, the adventures of poor girls who fall on hard times, suicide, and autobiographical sketches.

Berjot's works show signs of being hastily written and typeset: there are lapses and repetitions, typographical errors, and factual mistakes which the doctor did not bother to correct. The stories range in length from seven to seventy pages, and the longer they are the more frequently the narrative jumps, wanders off, doubles back, and generally breaks down. But these faults only add to the over-all impression of energetic enthusiasm for the subject matter which permeates

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Although she has spent several weeks in New Orleans, the most French of American cities, she does not find it holds the same fascination for her as the City of Light. The owner of two cats, a great reader of personal literature (biography, letters), a serious student of French and Oriental cooking, an indoor gardener, she is also a dedicated music lover; an interest she shares with her husband, Albert. Their house in Cleveland Heights has been decorated since the Bicentennial with the words "We, the People" in patriotic colors. For the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution next year, Albert is searching for a suitable quotation from that document.
the texts. Berjot communicates to us on every page his intense involvement in the scenes and people and situations he has created, even the most improbable.

Berjot’s preferred approach to telling a story was through the use of a first-person narrator who is usually either a physician or an artist. These narrators on several occasions yield the floor to another, creating a story-within-a-story form. At other times, minor characters suddenly claim Berjot’s attention and find themselves developed more thoroughly than they would otherwise have been. Although the overall tone of Berjot’s works is sober, even somber, the author’s appreciation for the comic side of human behavior comes through. In general, however, the stories end unhappily, frequently with an abruptness which suggests Berjot cannot tolerate further consideration of that tale of suffering and sadness.

When I first discovered Tinker’s reference to Berjot, I was looking for the fictional works of lesser-known French authors who wrote about the United States using substantial first-hand information on their subject, as opposed to writers such as Chateaubriand, whose “American” novels, notably *Atala*, were wild improvisations based on the author’s most sketchy experiences in the New World. Berjot seemed to be a good lead to pursue because one of his stories was a fictionalized account of a trip across the Atlantic from France to New Orleans, a voyage Berjot must have made himself at least once. What I was to find over the next several years of research was that the pursuit of information about Berjot’s life was almost as interesting as the study of his short stories. Moreover, once I arrived at the inevitable end of the chase, and had to form the bits and pieces of information into a coherent view of Berjot’s life, I came to suspect that this wily old doctor thought of life as the process of creating one’s own biography by freely manipulating the facts. In a word, not only did Berjot write fiction, but he strove to fictionalize his own life.

Marie Eugène Berjot was probably not handsome: he had a dueling scar running down the side of his cheek into his full-face beard. The sketch which ran at the head of Berjot’s obituary in the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* on November 26, 1898, shows a stiffly posed, slightly balding man of his times. The anonymous journalist began his eulogy of Berjot by proclaiming, “A soldier of France died today . . . ;” but he might as well have written, “Once upon a time . . . ;” because the column which followed plays out one last time the fantasies spun by Berjot about himself. Berjot’s will is on microfilm at the New Orleans Public Library. Although not a place that Mardi Gras revellers frequent, the library’s Louisiana division is usually well populated with readers eager to find traces of their relatives among the documents lodged there. Along with the will, I found a copy of
Dr. Berjot was born in 1816, either in Valence, France (in the Rhône Valley), or in Paris. Berjot's will says Valence, while the journalist who wrote his obituary says Paris. It is not difficult to explain this contradiction: in New Orleans society of the late nineteenth century, with French cultural heritage in swift retreat before the growing American population, Paris was a more recognizable town-name and provided its sons and daughters with more distinction than an insignificant place like Valence. Berjot probably told the truth in his will, but let it be known in New Orleans, his adopted city, that he was a Parisian by birth, and thus presumably a person of distinction.

Berjot took much care in establishing among his American friends that he was raised among the most distinguished families of France. His obituary tells us that the doctor discreetly let it be known that his father was a personal friend of the young Marquis de Lafayette, that he came with him to America to fight in our Revolution, then returned to France with him. Later, it continues, the elder Berjot took part in his own country's revolution, fighting on the side of the people but voting (in vain) for mercy for the deposed king, Louis XVI. The friendship between father Berjot and Lafayette was such that Lafayette agreed to be godfather to Marie Eugene at his birth. In addition, Berjot claimed to have played with the children of the Duke of Orleans when young. To top all this the obituary tell us of Berjot's claim that he had been a beneficiary of Lafayette's estate!

How much of all this can be confirmed? In January, 1793, during the Reign of Terror, when French deputies voted on whether to execute Louis XVI or to spare his life, lists were kept and published of how individuals voted on this monumental question of regicide. A check of these original documents shows that there was no Berjot who voted on the fate of the former king. As for the close relationship between Berjot's father and the famous Lafayette, which was supposedly maintained between the son and his godfather, that cannot be substantiated.

To this day the descendants of Lafayette have never permitted his will, along with many other of his papers, to be made public. We are at an impasse which is not different from that of Berjot's own contemporaries. For Berjot skillfully discouraged inquiries from skeptical New Orleans friends by letting it be known that when Lafayette's family became destitute, he, Berjot, magnanimously renounced all claims to the estate.

To anyone familiar with French history, Berjot's assertions about being the godson of the Marquis de Lafayette as well as an intimate friend of the Orleans family show that his personal legends were not only entertaining, but that they also had a neat political consistency. The Duke of Orleans, whose offspring Berjot claimed to have played with in childhood, became King Louis-Philippe in 1830, in part due to the support given his cause by the Marquis de Lafayette. Both Louis-Philippe and Lafayette represented an attempt to compromise between the past—the ancien régime in France with its hereditary monarchy and entrenched nobility—and the future, with its inexorable move toward liberalism, begun with the Revolution of 1789. Orleans, once on the throne, was called the 'citizen king.' By letting it be known in New Orleans that he was on familiar terms with the Orleans and Lafayette families, Berjot was suggesting that he was equally at home with pre- and post-revolutionary France. This two-sided image must have been especially useful in New Orleans, where the shrinking French population clung desperately to the old ways of their home across the ocean, while the English-speaking American population would always prefer democracy to monarchy. Claiming such a background would have permitted Berjot to align himself socially, politically, and philosophically as he wished. And of course, to have enjoyed a childhood friendship with the scions of the noble family which gave its name to his adopted city would have provided Berjot with an unmatched panache.

The obituary makes an important point out of Berjot's military career, probably reflecting the man's own emphasis on that part of his life. And the few, brief mentions of Berjot in books such as Tinker's invariably describe him as a military man, as well as a doctor. Corroborating this is the fact that
many of Berjot’s stories are set in military environments in Algeria, with vivid portrayals of the land, its people, and its French conquerors. It is disconcerting therefore to discover that there is no independent evidence to confirm that Berjot was ever in the French army or navy. At the Chateau de Vincennes near Paris, where old military records can be consulted, working beneath a chandelier made up of antique rifles, I attempted in vain to find any trace of a Berjot or any possible version of his name. When the archivist learned that I was not investigating a relative, and thus presumably was not emotionally involved with the research, she told me that I should be suspicious about Berjot: it would be most unusual, she said, for any doctor who served in the French army, even for a short time, not to have a dossier, since doctors were considered officers about whose careers records were customarily kept. Across the hallway, in the more sterile factory-gray of the naval archives, no trace was found of Berjot either. So the doctor’s stories about Algeria may have grown from his own civilian travels in North Africa, coupled with his father's stories of army life.

Whatever the truth, however, Berjot captured not only the color and exoticism of Algeria in that era, but also the overtones of hostility which characterized French-Arab relations and which would erupt frequently through the years until the culminating explosion of the Algerian War in 1958.

Berjot was a physician: that much is clear. His name is found both in the records of the Orleans Parish Medical Society and in the Medical and Surgical Register of the United States. The entry in this latter volume is troublesome, however: he is listed as an 1869 graduate of the New Orleans School of Medicine. How can this piece of information be reconciled with advertisements Berjot placed in New Orleans newspapers, in which he claimed to be a “D.M.P.” or Doctor of Medicine of Paris, in other words, a physician trained at the University of Paris? The attempt to clarify this aspect of his life is instructive.

The New Orleans School of Medicine was founded in 1856. It was a respected school, known for innovation, but it closed its doors in 1870, unable to recover from the upheaval of the Civil War. Thus in 1869, the year Berjot was supposed to have graduated, the school would have been on its last legs and Berjot already fifty-three years old. To further complicate the matter, in 1880 Berjot was identified in a professional journal as “former physician-in-chief of the Imperial French Marine Hospital in Havana.” Since the term “Imperial” would have been inappropriate after the fall of the Second French Empire in 1871, if we take the Medical and Surgical Register at its word, we have to assume that Berjot, on the strength of credentials earned in 1869 from a collapsing American medical college, was immediately upon graduation (prior to 1871) appointed to a responsible position in a French naval hospital.

(We should take the time here to discard the notion that the Berjot listed in the Medical and Surgical Register was our Berjot’s son. If Berjot’s son, who died before his father, had followed him into the medical profession, the father’s obituary would have mentioned this, given the pre-eminent role of the medical establishment in New Orleans in the late nineteenth century.) Since this sequence of events will not stand scrutiny, we are left with another explanation, one which is supported by what we know of New Orleans medicine of the times.

It is possible that Berjot did in fact attend both the School of Medicine of the University of Paris and the New Orleans School of Medicine. Although trained in Europe, he may have been obliged to re-establish his credentials in New Orleans through affiliation with a domestic medical college. Medical licensing procedures were notoriously lax in Louisiana until the 1880s. In addition, the professional climate in Louisiana medical circles was marked by undisguised hostility between French- and English-speaking physicians. A spirit of acrimonious competition, when coupled with an absence of agreed-upon standards, may well have created circumstances in which capricious professional decisions could result from ethnic rivalry. Under these circumstances, we can imagine Berjot arriving from France and being confronted with a growing majority of American doctors eager to impose their home-grown standards on newcomers. And it would have been understandable that Berjot, although acquiescing, clung tightly to his Frenchness, refusing to acknowledge the American portion of his training. The fact that Berjot later was treated condescendingly in a professional article published in The New Orleans
Medical and Surgical Journal by one of his American colleagues would only have strengthened his determination to remain apart from the English world on the other side of Canal Street.

The records of Berjot's life are never simple to interpret: his demonstrated ability to create his own world from imaginings makes me suspect double meanings, multiple explanations, and masks hiding masks. By withholding himself from the mainstream of his profession, Berjot may also have been attempting to hide a side of his medical practice which was even less acceptable on the western shores of the Atlantic than it was on the other side. In 1858, a certain Eugène Berjot published in Paris a sort of do-it-yourself book on mesmerism. By the middle of the nineteenth century, mesmerism, a forerunner of hypnotism, was already showing signs of evolving in the direction of more conventional ideas about consciousness and suggestion, but it was still clearly colored by the earlier scandals and the flamboyance of Franz Anton Mesmer and his followers. The fact that Berjot, spelled in this way, is an unusual name in French, that Berjot was in all probability living in France around 1858, and that the mesmerist-author gave indications of being a trained medical doctor himself, lend credence to the hypothesis that the New Orleans Berjot practiced animal magnetism in Europe before coming to the United States. But once he arrived in the States, that side of his professional practice remained hidden, never to appear even in his fictional writings.

The doctor's apparent attempts to manipulate the facts and to create his own reality can easily be interpreted as a resolve to remain independent. The strength of that resolve can be measured by his behavior toward the literary establishment in New Orleans. The most important organized force behind the arts in French New Orleans in the nineteenth century was a group called the Athéénée Louisianais. The publication of that group of French-speaking followers of the arts was the Comptes Rendus, a literary review, which provided an outlet for many of the French language writers of its day. It would have been natural for Berjot, who loved to write, to have become affiliated with the Athéénée, except for one fact: among the founders of that group, begun in 1876, was a disproportionate number of physicians, who maintained a prominent position in the organization. Given the real possibility that Berjot was coerced by his colleagues into authenticating his professional training, it is reasonable to think that he may have avoided their company in the Athéénée, even if it meant having to serve as his own publisher. So rather than seeking to publish in the Comptes Rendus, Berjot had most of his stories printed, presumably at his own expense, in pamphlet form, and distributed them himself. What remains for us to read today, then, are unedited, hastily printed texts, full of errors, about whose original readers we can only guess, and which were only preserved by lucky chance. Most of the thirteen stories are clearly works of imagination, with only three or four containing autobiographical material. But many of even the most fanciful ones have a great deal to tell us about Berjot's experiences, attitudes, and preoccupations.

Two themes dominate the most clearly fictional of Berjot's works: the struggles of young women in distress, and the experience of the French military in Algeria in the first half of the nineteenth century. There are seven such stories, and all can be read as musings on the subject of power.

Four young women who attempt to cope with life rather than passively accept it as it is arranged for them are depicted in four separate stories. "Louise" is the baker's daughter who is suddenly elevated in society through marriage to the rich Baron de Verzin, a devoted but older man. She is seduced by a treacherous, debauched younger man, and runs off with him; two years later, pregnant and repentant, she leaves him and attempts to live on her own. Her husband's forgiveness causes overwhelming guilt and she kills herself, with the Baron following suit out of grief. "Marietta" is even more adventurous: when her lover, the narrator, leaves for Algeria, she secretly follows him across the Mediterranean and through the desert, only to find herself lured into a harem as the new favorite of a powerful Arab leader. Before the story ends with her illness and death, she escapes from the harem, becomes an actress, takes on another lover and bears him a child. "Cecilia" is the victim of incest, one of three daughters who suffered at the hands of their father. She is struggling to support herself by sewing, while waiting for
her father to be sentenced for his crimes and deported. When her lover abandons her upon learning that she does not represent the level of purity he requires of a woman, she enters a convent to expiate the sin which society implies she participated in. Marguerite, an honest country girl in "An Old Lady's Story," goes to Paris to earn money for her poverty-stricken mother, but becomes the mistress of a wealthy man. When he is ruined and commits suicide, she and her mother struggle with urban poverty: Marguerite dies of consumption and the mother spends her last days in the charity ward of a large hospital.

All of these stories have two things in common: they are conventional in their plots and unconventional in the narrator's attitude toward his characters. Infidelity, rags to riches stories, adventures in far-off lands, violence in lower-class life, all these themes were commonplace in popular French literature of the nineteenth century; what sets Berjot apart is that he is unquestionably troubled by the fate of these women and by their treatment at the hands of men. His dismay is suggested only by an occasional line, such as, "Still today, thirty-five years after this lamentable history, I never think about it without emotion," or by a story which ends too abruptly. But the consistency of Berjot's attitude toward these characters which he has created convinces us of its sincerity.

The unease we can detect in Berjot's stories about women is also present when he writes about Algeria. After 1830, when the French army and navy began their conquest of Algeria, the theme of North Africa and the Arab world became so popular in the arts, the theater, even clothing and interior decoration, that the political struggle which prompted the fads was frequently lost from sight. Berjot, although he preferred exoticism to politics, captured portentous encounters between Frenchmen and Arabs; it is clear from his stories that he sensed the danger inherent in this massive colonial effort. In Berjot's three North African stories, "The Assassination of Lieutenant Lebon," "A Lion Hunt," and "The Story of a Caravan," the Algerian characters are subjugated but unbowed, while the French military, although never directly criticized, are shown to have assumed all too easily the thoughtless arrogance of a master race.

Four of Berjot's stories appear to be autobiographical, and they are among the best he wrote. They show us a reflective man, with a conscience, who was not a social reformer or an advocate of radical change, but who was repeatedly struck by injustice, suffering, and a sense of lost ideals. Berjot favored first-person narratives in which the speaker is either a doctor or an artist. Of the two, the artist is more attractive as a character. One of Berjot's most interesting stories is told from the point of view of a fourteen-year-old boy, enrolled as a boarder in a Parisian art school to study sculpture. In this story, "An Episode of the Revolution of 1830," we witness what are known in France as the Glorious July Days. The nameless youth ventures out into the streets amidst the fighting and is swept away from his friends by excited crowds attempting to overthrow the regime of Charles X and his hated minister, the Prince of Polignac. For the next several days the boy receives a lifetime of lessons in street fighting, politics, death, and mob psychology. The narrator's curiosity about events taking place in Paris leads him all across the city where he observes one scene of bloodshed and violence after another. But the young artist's eye for detail and appreciation for striking tableaux never obliterate his growing sense of outrage at the conditions which had led the people in desperation to the streets. In the end, the boy returns to his school, only to find his art master dead. Riding through the streets of Paris on his way home to his family in Fontainebleau, from the top of a coach he sees the streets where he so recently fought and views them from the heightened perspective of a veteran.

This narrator is created with a special warmth and attention which suggest that Berjot may have been using his young self as a model. Support for this idea is found in the fact that Berjot was fourteen years old in 1830, and could well have witnessed the Revolution. In contrast to this attractive artist-narrator, Berjot's doctor-narrators are usually less pleasant as people, and Berjot shows his own appreciation of this by frequently making them uneasy about the type of men they have become. Perhaps these doctors are the child-artists grown up, and when confronted with miseries of the body and spirit, they rebel against their impotence and regret
their youthful dreams of creativity and beauty. In "A Memory of Auvergne, or The Two Sisters," a story which Berjot had serialized in Le Progrès, a New Orleans newspaper, Berjot shows us an example of a young artist who does not abandon his dreams, and who is rewarded for his constancy with marriage, at the age of forty, with the woman he loved as a youth. It is no wonder, then, that Berjot treasured the works of art he produced; among the few objects mentioned in his will are his own paintings which he left to his nephew.

Although Berjot seemed to value the sensibilities of the artist over those of the man of science, even the man grown into a doctor is capable of change. In the long autobiographical story which first attracted me to Berjot, "A Trip to New Orleans," we make the acquaintance of a doctor-narrator who begins by being a pompous, self-satisfied physician, but who in the course of his journey, gradually puts his professional demeanor aside and permits himself to express his enchantment with the New World. After dispensing advice to all his shipmates in a god-like manner during the ocean crossing, the narrator distances himself enough from his old self to be able to feel disgust at the sight of a slave auction in New Orleans. And by the end of the story, he is eager for new adventures and further exploration of the United States.

Taken as a group, the stories are consistent with Berjot's inventive approach to life. The same Berjot who constructed the flexible inventions about his connection with Lafayette and the Duke of Orleans also managed to write stories in which social ills and miseries of the flesh are exposed by perspicacious first-person narrators. Berjot, aligned with the hereditary nobility, could sympathize with a belief in the ultimate superiority of certain individuals or groups, whether defined by birth, profession, or some other characteristic. At the same time, with his heritage from both the French and the American Revolutions and his training as a man of science, he could also acknowledge the value of more liberal, enlightened attitudes. Berjot's written fictions harmonize well with his life, and his life, to the extent that he revised it into fiction, approached a satisfying aesthetic unity. In the end, we find ourselves more fully informed about this man Berjot by all the fictions than by any of the facts.

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Will Number 57948, filed in New Orleans, November 28, 1898 (New Orleans Public Library).
From *A Voyage to New Orleans*  
by Dr. E. Berjot

based on a translation by Bethany S. Oberst

The narrator has described his embarkation from Le Havre in a "magnificent three-master" on "December 1, 184-" with his wife and his old friend Duval, a retired army officer. They have not been long at sea when the ship's regular doctor dies of tuberculosis; the narrator takes his place and wins the admiration and gratitude of everyone aboard with several displays of his wisdom and medical skill. After docking at Havana for a couple of weeks, where the narrator observes some horrifying instances of the slave trade, their ship makes its way across the Gulf of Mexico to the mouth of the Mississippi.

The captain told us that we were drawing near and if the wind continued we would arrive that evening. Hardly had he finished his sentence when the lookout cried, "Land!"

Immediately the passengers who were in their cabins came out on deck, but as in Havana, no one saw anything other than a long dark cloud on the horizon. Everyone busily unpacked what they would need when they landed. We arrived at the channel about five o'clock; we were sighted by a pilot a half hour after having dropped anchor, but it was too late to dock. We were forced to wait until morning for the quarantine boat to come and make its required visit. It arrived around seven o'clock and after our license had been examined we were given a certificate and allowed to go up the river. We set off immediately, towed by our tugboat. Everyone was happy; we saw trees to the right and to the left, we heard the crowing of cocks, the barking of dogs, and the sound of bells calling the faithful to prayer. From time to time we passed a small house and saw the inhabitants watching us.

Monsieur Darimon [a Louisianan whom they had met aboard ship] was proud to point out to us the magnificent orange plantations on the right bank of the river; the sweet smell of earth and greenery came to us on gusts of air, much to our delight.

The lunch bell rang, but nobody wanted to leave the deck, so busy were we looking around us. We passed several large ships ready to set sail. The sun appeared around noon, the weather was superb, the temperature warm; we noticed the richness of the vegetation in St. Bernard Parish, with its century-old live oak trees, which stayed green all year round.

The width of this rich river (the largest in the world after the Amazon), and the panorama that spread out before us, occupied us constantly. Everyone pointed things out to his neighbor—a small house tucked into a stand of trees, a tall bell tower; all day long we noticed on the banks of the river a species of black pig which we had never seen elsewhere, and which several of the ladies took for wild boars. We said to one another: "So this is that beautiful, rich Louisiana which once belonged to us and which distance and politics lost to France." We hoped to find descendants of the former owners: we were so disposed to love them that if one of them had appeared, we would willingly have embraced him.

This indeed is the French character—enthusiastic, loving, generous, quickly forgetting injury, and remaining resentful only toward those who do not themselves forgive . . .

[After finding a hotel,] I went out with Duval to visit the city. I must admit that our first impression was not favorable: we encountered many unpaved streets full of offal. We could not understand how everyone appeared
Map of New Orleans a few years before the events in Dr. Berjot’s narrative.
in good health in a town so badly kept: the climate must truly have been very healthful.

We presented ourselves at the post office where we found letters from our families; one of my cousins with whom I had been raised and who was concerned about us gave me his news and asked me for details of our trip.

At the end of a week I was able to give him the following information:

New Orleans is a city of great size, but it is poorly cared for: many streets are not lighted at night; there are ditches running the length of the streets in the third district into which it is difficult not to fall when it rains; one walks along in front of the houses on top of planks, poorly joined, and sometimes overgrown with grass, next to a muddy stream where small snakes can sometimes be seen.

Sidewalks are found only in the wealthy neighborhoods of the second district and above Canal Street where the American quarter begins. Some very beautiful pieces of property are found there: there are even some princely and luxurious ones which bear witness to the good taste and fortune of their owners.

Not having introductions to anyone in the city, I resolved to appear at Charity Hospital, where I quickly became acquainted with the Louisiana doctors, who received us very cordially. In truth, the inhabitants of New Orleans are charming and represent the very type of French gentlemen, fastidious on points of honor, generous and brave to the point of recklessness.

We had not yet visited the port, and, desiring to see it, we went in that direction down Canal Street. There we found more than two hundred boats from all nations; this forest of masts gave us a good idea of the importance of this magnificent city.

One constantly encounters black women, young and old, with a black pipe held between lips blacker still. Most often they are clothed in rags, but after nine o'clock in the evening this section of the population disappears.

A cannon fired from Congo Square signals curfew for the blacks, and any one of them met on the streets after this signal must instantly produce a permit from his master in order not to be taken to the nearest jail.

Certain free black men or women hold slaves and are very cruel to them. One might say here that the enemy of the black is the black. The blacks are treated in Louisiana with more indulgence and less severity than in Havana. One rarely hears stories of harsh treatment.

The French Market, situated in the second district in front of St. Louis Cathedral and on the banks of the river, is one of the curiosities of the city. Almost the whole population comes here to buy food; one finds anything that one might want, from clothing of all qualities to linen and shoes. There are tortoises weighing up to two hundred pounds; in winter, venison, sides of bear, wild ducks. Oranges are in

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Early photograph of the old French Market, taken by George Francois Mugnier about 40 years after the events in Dr. Berjot's narrative. (From New Orleans and Bayou Country, ed. Lester Burbank Bridgham, Weathervane Books, 1972.)
such profusion there at this time that they are sold at ten sous per dozen. This market is a veritable bazaar; nothing is missing from its stalls. Every Sunday morning the Creole women, whose beauty and elegance are proverbial, come to walk here, looking at everything but buying nothing; it is the cook who is charged with making the purchases, and, here as at home, the basket has a single handle.

One day while we were walking on the Esplanade quite near the river, we noticed these words written on a board above the door of an old house: "Negroes for Sale." There, twice a week, they sell at auction Negroes and mulattoes of both sexes and of all ages.

That very day was a sale day; the auction was to begin at eleven o’clock—we had no more than half an hour to wait. Curious to be present at a scene which we were not acquainted with even through the stories of travelers, we decided to enter. On the left, there were a dozen women, blacks and mulattoes. We immediately noticed one of these latter who was very beautiful, almost white-skinned, with long hair which fell to her waist; she seemed to be about eighteen years old. She had a troubled look and eyes wet with tears.

All the women were seated on a bench; most of them were dressed in a simple white smock and a little jacket which permitted a general examination of the merchandise, as they said. The buyers examined them scrupulously and did not hesitate to make a detailed study of the physical qualities, to which the young girls made no resistance.

When they liked the appearance of a buyer, they did not hesitate to enumerate their talents: "Buy me, Monsieur, I am a good cook or good washerwoman; I have never been sick, I work well, you will see." Then the buyer would make them open their mouths and would count their teeth, as when one buys a horse, and they asked where they came from. Slaves from Virginia were highly esteemed as the best workers and the most docile.

The young girl whom we spoke about earlier did not want for buyers, because all heads turned toward her; the more friendliness she had in her smile, the more languor in her eyes, the more the price rose, but the poor girl had her eyes constantly lowered and full of tears.

On the other side were the men, robust, strong and well-muscled; young men of twelve to sixteen years and a few old men with white beards waited, seated on the floor. They were dressed in simple shorts and one could examine the formidable biceps of those who had been raised to work in the fields.

At eleven o’clock there were few buyers in the old house, but after having called everyone by means of a drum beaten throughout the neighborhood, the public arrived. In ten minutes the room was filled; we took places on a bench and immediately the sale began.

The auctioneer had a young black man about eighteen years old climb up on a large wooden table. The auctioneer began the enumeration of his physical and moral qualities; he vaunted his strength, his health, his courage in work and announced a starting price of a thousand piastres; the buyers drew near, felt his biceps, examined his eyes, counted the beatings of his heart, assured themselves that he did not have any marks on his body, then the bidding began. The auctioneer started to repeat the offers with such glibness that he pronounced the same words thirty times in less than two seconds. It was impossible to understand him unless one was accustomed to this manner of proceeding. In a few moments the bidding mounted to fourteen hundred piastres; he was awarded to an old gentleman who left, after having paid the price of the sale, with his black. They gave him a paper on which the name, age and description of the slave were written.

They next sold a black woman about thirty years old, whose age was uncertain because, as a black imported from the Congo, she did not have civil status. She was sold as an able cook for nine hundred piastres.

Several people asked that the
pretty girl of whom we have spoken—tall, well-developed, with black eyes that were soft as a gazelle’s—he put on sale. She climbed onto the table and looked for someone in the crowd; she stared at a handsome young man about twenty-two years old, richly dressed. The young girl never stopped looking at him and appeared very disturbed. Everyone turned around to look at the person whom she was staring at so obstinately, but the young man turned his head in order to conceal his intentions. The starting price was two thousand piastres. The young man raised his eyes to the auctioneer, who immediately cried, “Two thousand one hundred.” At the same time that an old man offered a raise of a hundred piastres, the young man showed two fingers, and the announcer said: “Two thousand four hundred.” “Two thousand five hundred,” said the old man. The young man looked at him defiantly.
and said aloud: "Three thousand piastres." In his turn the other buyer smiled with surprise and offered three thousand one hundred. "Three thousand one hundred," said the merchant in a tone of inquiry, turning toward the young man. "Three thousand five hundred," the latter replied.

"I give her to you, Monsieur. If my means had permitted, I would not have given in."

"No more bids?" said the auctioneer. "It is settled. Awarded to the gentleman," he said, motioning to the young man.

During all this time, the young girl, very upset, suppressed the beating of her heart, but as soon as she heard that she belonged to the young man, she jumped from the table crying out with joy and fell trembling against his chest. He caught her in his arms and gave her a long kiss.

"Forgive me, young man," said the old man, addressing himself to the happy owner. "If I had guessed, I would have spared you the anxiety which I have caused you. Why did I not suspect something?"

The sale continued, and we left, moved and indignant. That young girl, almost naked, had strongly impressed us; we understood the situation of the young Louisianan man, ready to sacrifice his fortune for the love of this beautiful child. I recalled my fears and my nights of insomnia at the time when I was not yet sure of Rachel's love.

Duval could not get over it. "It is monstrous," he said, "to auction off a poor girl, as beautiful as the day, to reduce her to the level of a piece of vile merchandise. What law! What barbarism! To sell a young person to the highest bidder because, they say, her grandfather was a colored man two generations ago: this alone would make me detest slavery."

Two days later, there was a performance at the Orleans Theater: we went to reserve a stage box. When we arrived, all the first balconies were occupied. We were charmed by the truly ravishing sight which the three rows of seats offered to our sight: superb women, with luxurious coiffures, bare shoulders, and statuesque forms; all waved colorful fans with white plumes, whose incessant motions were reflected to our eyes in a host of diamonds which shone with a thousand fires in the ears and on the throats of this dazzling group of Creole beauties.

As soon as Rachel took her place in one of the seats, all the lorgnettes fixed upon her. Everyone appeared puzzled, because in this city all the aristocracy know one another, and no one recognized us.

The great beauty of my beloved Rachel must have made a number of women jealous, because women are not always generous when another woman surpasses them in physical attainments.

What fascinated everyone was that Rachel had through force of habit kept in her manner of dress something of the Jewish style. Near us were heard exclamations of admiration.

When we left, the corridors were filled, everyone wanting to see the beautiful stranger at close hand; we were forced to walk slowly, so surrounded were we by the crowd. Finally, Duval had our carriage brought up and we left.

Every day we traveled through the city, which was far from being what it is today. The whole population spoke French. There were no poor people, money and bank notes were everywhere and in all hands, people paid without counting as they bought without bargaining. Fortunes were quickly made; if everyone was not rich, surely everyone lived well. This was the good time, the golden age of Louisiana.
The standard Israeli joke concerns an Israeli who is about to pick up a visitor to show him Israel. ‘Fine,’ says the visitor over the phone, ‘but what’ll we do in the afternoon?’ There is, of course, latent fear—for Israel’s vulnerable small size—operating under such comedy, but there is a very old strain of Jewish self-mockery at work, too. When Israel’s foremost humorist, Ephraim Kishon, told that joke in Lichtenstein, nobody laughed—not only not right away but not at all; Lichtenstein has no comparable history requiring comic protection, nor does it have a tradition of self-deflation.

The whole question of Jewish humor and also humor in general came to focus in Tel Aviv last year in two back-to-back conferences which I attended, one on Jewish humor and the other, the Fourth International Congress on Humor, on comedy at large. So, for a time, jokes and theories about national and international humor formed more than topical grace-notes to the local scene. For two weeks there were some high-powered people, mostly academicians, concentrated in Tel Aviv, especially for the International Congress. The Fourth, mind you. The First, Second, and Third International Conferences were held in Cardiff, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C. The Fifth, in Cork, Ireland, recently highlighted—but did not confine itself to—Irish humor, just as the Fourth focused on Jewish humor but expanded to broader matters. The Sixth will be held in Tempe, Arizona, in 1987, with emphasis on the effects of geography upon international humor. As it becomes annualized and institutionalized, the Congress is losing some of its earlier novelty, but it is gaining ground as a kind of Intellectual Fair, at which participants display their comic talents and wares as well as occasionally investigating their subject.

This schizoid nature of the Fourth Congress, at least, was evident right from the start, when its organizing chairman, Professor Avner Ziv, psychologist at Tel Aviv University, introduced the opening speaker, Israeli humorist Ephraim Kishon. For his own part, Professor Ziv was adamant about the serious motive of the Congress. If the essence of humor, he maintained, is to be funny about serious things, why couldn’t we be serious about funny things? The question, poised in the air over an expectant and good-natured audience, astonished them. There is no occasion, Professor Ziv went on wryly—and, it turned out, hopelessly—for jocularity in talking about humor, any more than there is for a cry of pain in a conference on the psychology of pain. Then, carried away by the momentum of the three preceding Congresses, Professor Ziv himself told a joke anyway, and the hall, audibly and frankly relieved, disregarded all he had quite earnestly said and applauded his introduction to the man they had really come to hear—Israel’s Mark Twain.

Mr. Kishon is certainly no slouch and was, in fact, himself almost worth the price.
of admission. (There was a registration fee for participants of $170.00, not outrageous by standards of modern scientific meetings, where fees twice as high are levied. That, of course, reminds me that there were a host of Levys at the Congress—but lead me not into temptation . . .) Kishon was a thoroughly affable and witty substitute for Art Buchwald, "the world's second-best humorist, who couldn't make it tonight." His repertoire of jokes, a gold mine for me and others as well, is prodigious, and he has originality and style of his own, too. An archetypal humorist, he deflated the proceedings, to begin with, in his description of a Congress—"a scientifically organized holiday"—and took instant liberties with Professor Ziv's and others' seriousness, especially having considerable fun with the many conference sections devoted to "definitions"; it was hard not to laugh at a group trying so diligently to find out what its field was.

A humorist is often merely a simple truth-teller, as Kishon illustrated perfectly.

His own favorite Israeli joke is about the man in the street who, when asked "Do you know where Hayarkon Street is?" answers "Of course!" and continues walking. Kishon locates another favorite joke on Tel Aviv's famous Dizengoff Street, where a man is kicked by the person behind. The man whirled about, but the kicker at once apologizes: "Excuse me! I thought you were my brother-in-law." The victim is only partially mollified. "But," he asks, "is that any way to treat a brother-in-law?" Whereupon the other replies "And who are you, a total stranger, to tell me how to treat my brother-in-law?" One recognizes the typical unceremoniousness and instant aggression, and also the double reversal of Jewish comedy. I have my own quintessential Israeli joke, which I'll tell later, but the Dizengoff joke, I concede, is pretty representative.

But Kishon is even better on his own than as a living anthology of acerbic jokes. The mileage he got out of the varying spellings of Israel on world maps (from the mere

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**Elephant Jokes**

Q. How do you stop an elephant from charging?
A. Take away his credit card.

Q. Why are elephants gray?
A. So you can tell them from bluebirds (blackbirds, redbirds).

Q. How can you tell if there's an elephant in the refrigerator?
A. The door won't close (or by the footprints in the butter).

Q. How do you make an elephant float?
A. With two scoops of ice cream, one elephant, and some root beer.

Q. How do you make an elephant fly?
A. Take a zipper about *this long*.

Q. How can you tell if there's an elephant in bed with you?
A. He has buttons on his pajamas *this big*. 
IS. to the full Israel lettered all the way from
the Golan Heights down and across the Si
nai, and then crimped back again, after the
cession to Egypt, to the most abbreviated
and declarative spelling—and country—in
the world) was first-rate comedy.

After Kishon’s opening performance
the Congress went mostly downhill, largely
as a result of clinical psychologists and other
social scientists, trying fatally to measure
things, and to ultra-pragmatists trying sol
emnly to introduce humor into the third
grade or into marriage counseling or, with
the latest post-Norman Cousins avidity, into
medical therapy. More power to them, but
they generally make for pretentious, sopor
ific meetings.

But there were some intelligent sec
tions. Professor Nelly Feuerhahn, of the Na
tional Center of Scientific Research in Paris,
broke through her own jargon in a finally
shrewd lecture on the way school children
transform the Red Riding Hood story into
happified comic versions—a more and more
pressing need, especially for girls, in a world
of accelerating rape (in France as well as the
United States), where the threat of the
“wolf” has become more than Freudian fan
tasy or metaphor. Professor Divora Gilula, a
historian at Hebrew University, covered po
litical humor, especially under totalitarian re
gimes, using imperial Rome for a wealth of
eamples. During discussion, an irrepressible
Scotswoman jumped up to ask about
some erudite point, “Then in Coriolanus Sha
kespeare was wrong?” To which Professor
Gilula, not averse to quick and deflative re
joinder, replied: “Nobody is wrong in his per
iod.”

From the other side of the ocean Pro
fessor Joseph Boskin, of Boston University,
analyzed joke fads, especially the elephant
jokes of the 1950s (related to the rise of the
super-state and to giantism in general), and
the light bulb jokes of the 1970s (their extra
sexual play on screwing and impotence bet
raying, at a deeper psychic level, America’s
deprecated energy resources and power). By all

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Light Bulb Jokes

Q. How many North Dakotans does it take to
screw in a light bulb?
A. Six—one to hold the bulb and five to keep
turning him around.

Q. How many guilt-ridden children does it take
to screw in a light bulb?
A. “For me, none,” says the Jewish mother, “I
can sit in the dark.”

Q. How many WASPS does it take to screw in a
light bulb?
A. Two—one to call the electrician, the other to
mix the martinis.

Q. How many Californians does it take to screw
in a light bulb?
A. Any number—one to do it, and the rest to
share in the experience.

Q. How many psychiatrists does it take to screw
in a light bulb?
A. Just one—but the bulb has really got to want
to change.
odds, after Israel’s Kishon, Professor Melvin Helitzer of Ohio University was the most effective performer *per se* at the Congress. A genuinely funny man, Helitzer promoted his theory that humor can be taught, and hawked his book on the subject, *Comedy: Techniques For Writers and Performers* (the cover of which displays Carl Reiner’s deft blurb, “Finally . . . we have long needed a book with this title”). Professor Helitzer was as steadily genial as he was glib. His confidence arose principally, he said, from the fact that he was statistically sure of any given audience, because twenty-five percent of the people never hear what you say, twenty-five percent maybe do hear, and fifty percent are indulging in sexual fantasies; thus, half of any given audience will leave having fully enjoyed themselves.

Professor Helitzer was also in charge of an entire section devoted to theories of humor, including the ruminations of a certain scholar-critic from the University of Montana, whose announced topic, “The Two Main Types of Jokes,” packed a room not only with academics but with professional and amateur writers, all eager to know the secrets of one-liners, greeting card gags, ghostwriting, quips, and scripts. The professor identified the “two main types” as literalism and reversalism: pushing the point as far as it will go, or turning it directly around. An example of literalism: “I didn’t drive my mother crazy—I flew her, it was faster.” An example of reversal: “Inside every old person is a young one, doing everything he can to stay there.” And both kinds appear in two famous misogynic jokes: Henny Youngman’s literalistic triumph, “Take my wife—please!” and Groucho Marx’s reply to the polite leave-taking guest who murmured, “I’d like to say goodbye to your wife”: “You’d like to say goodbye to my wife!” Another pair of examples does violence to proverbial wisdom. First, literalism: “You can go just so far in nostalgia—I remember shaved ice but can’t for the life of me remember what it looked like before, with a beard on.” Second, a reversal: “Ain’t nature grand! Maybe. But avoid the Bucolic Plague.” The lecture did have commercial application, and though the audience did not altogether follow the professor’s circuitous train of thought, it seemed to him that they liked the freight it delivered. There is nothing like the cash nexus to liven things up.

At the end of the Congress, Mr. Kishon was given a “Noble Prize for Humor.” The Congress was adjourned, and most of the far-flung participants and auditors flung themselves yet farther over the length and breadth of the country for another week or month of the Israeli experience, each to his chosen rounds.

In retrospect, it occurred to me that many Israeli jokes were jokes that could be lifted, as Professor Victor Raskin has shown (*Semantic Mechanisms of Humor*), out of interchangeable ethnic scripts that denigrate or vindicate a particular group. As in the light bulb jokes, plug in for “North Dakota” or “Poles” or any other category. But the “Jewish” joke on which Israeli humor mostly depends is distinctive in often turning inferiority to superiority, dullness into cunning, defeat into vindication, as in the following:

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**Comedy: Techniques For Writers and Performers**

Carl Reiner's blurb on the cover.

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**The Two Main Types of Jokes**

Professor Raskin's lecture on humor.

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**North Dakota**

A term used in the joke.

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**Poles**

Another term used in the joke.

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**Jewish**

A term used in the joke.
extravaganza: A hospital patient is offered a choice of two kinds of brains for his brain transplant. "We have Jewish brains," he is told, "at $5,000—and Polish (Ukrainian or Syrian) brains at $10,000." The patient asks in amazement, "How come the Polish brains are twice as much?" "Well," comes the answer, "the Polish brains are brand-new. They have never been used." This is largely updated—and scientized—Jewish humor, resistant, flexible, and historically rooted in ghetto self-vindication.

Many Israeli political jokes seem to me to be variants of anti-establishment jokes in regimes and countries as far apart as the Soviet Union and the United States. Insert the name Stalin for Pinkhas Sapir in the following joke during the Krushchev years or the name Nixon just after Watergate for an equivalent effect: Pinkhas Sapir's chauffeur-driven limousine runs over a dog which rushed under the wheels from the yard of a house. "Stop the car," says the minister to his driver, "go inside, apologize to the owners, and ask them what form of restitution they are willing to accept." The driver goes in and does not come back until an hour and a half later. "What happened?" fumes Sapir. "Did you forget that I was waiting? Didn't you know that I had an important appointment?" "I am terribly sorry, sir," says the driver. "There was nothing I could do. I went in and said, 'I am Pinkhas Sapir's driver. I ran over the dog!' And then they just wouldn't listen to anything else. They embraced me and kissed me, gave me wine and cookies, asked for my autograph, took pictures with me, and wouldn't let me go."

Which brings me, in conclusion, to my own choice for the quintessential Israeli joke. It also takes place at Tel Aviv, though slightly off shore. There a man is drowning, but a boat luckily draws near. "Can we help you?" shout the crew. "No," says the man. "I'm a Believer. The Lord of Hosts is above me." The boat goes off. The drowning man still struggles. Fortunately, a helicopter spies him. "We can lower a rope and rescue you!" they tell him. "No," he replies. "I'll make it! I'll be all right." The helicopter flies off, the man struggles a while longer—and drowns. Up in Heaven he greets God. "Where were You?" he asks. "I prayed, I believed in You, I waited—and I drowned." God answers, "Don't you come complaining to me! First I sent a boat. Then I sent a helicopter..."

Although the joke has since suffered a sea-change to Miami and Los Angeles, it is a bona fide Israeli joke, backed by Hebraic resonances: the personal and argumentative relation with God; the self-mockery of the individual Jew, even—or especially—in his optimistic mood; the skepticism directed at a presumably omnipotent and foreknowing deity. Why am I in the place I am, and Whose fault is it? are the old and continuing questions, in the bold comic manner that is an ancient heritage more potent than armaments.

Olive drab Israeli helicopters still patrol the skies all along the coast from Gaza to Acre—and not because some solitary bather may be drowning. Under their chuffing blades the populace swims and lives and derives whatever laughter it can in a qualified state of siege that nobody in Lichtenstein or anywhere else will ever quite fathom.
In today's perilous times, people everywhere must learn to interact with one another more effectively. While we may regard ourselves as citizens of different countries, technology binds us together as citizens of the world. How can we overcome the barriers of language and culture that stand in the way of concord and harmony?

Perhaps through the arts. Artistic expression has even greater potential for binding people into communities than religion. As educators in the arts, we must capitalize on this advantage and present our disciplines to society not only so that the disciplines themselves are improved, but so that they help to achieve the goals of international concord and harmony.

But first we must probe the essence of our own artistic disciplines. Unless we understand the human drives from which art is created and comprehend its impact on society, our efforts to use it to bring nations together will be haphazard.

There is a science of art and an art of science. But the roles of the arts and of the sciences differ greatly. Science by its nature seeks to discover and verify facts expressed quantitatively and related to other facts, regardless of the implication for human beings. Even though the scientist as a person often reacts as an emotional being, science itself is built on objectivity. The electrical forces in atoms, the interiors of stars, the distances of space—these are quantitative phenomena. As facts, they have no emotional or spiritual base. In science, the process of discovering and describing these facts and their relationships has meaning in itself. This is what science seeks—to uncover, verify, define, and, if possible, explain and predict.

But in all of us there are realities that go beyond logical explanation. Because we do not have precise words to describe them we use vague names such as "psyche" and "heart." Even though human beings have speculated about their souls or spirits ever since they could speak, these realities have never been adequately defined by science. Research into the chemical and electrical phenomena of the brain is only beginning to examine the processes we attribute to the psyche or soul; its nature remains unknown. Within these deep and complex aspects of the spirit, art has the capacity for binding human beings together in a way that goes beyond the language of science.

Of course, we can cite objective "facts" that make the practice of the arts possible: the physics of sound, the physical motion and shapes of dance, the materials of painting and sculpture. But in art these quantifiable facts are a means to an end. As glorious as the technical realization may be, the materials in a work of art do not sum up its meaning. Its meaning is a reality of expression that goes beyond facts and reaches into the spirits of those who perceive it.

By its very essence art transcends its individual parts. This transcendence, alive in the works and utterances of centuries of artists, explains why art, throughout the millennia, has been the strongest social bond known to humankind. During these same millennia, science-
has unfolded much more slowly, and up to our own time has not risen above its own facts in the way art has always done.

Within this generation, however, the practice of science has accelerated beyond imagination, uncovering "facts" that are inexplicable by available descriptive mechanisms. Theoretical physicists and astrophysicists today find themselves using metaphors borrowed from religion, along with exotic new terms such as "gluons," "leptons," "quarks," and "black holes." They find themselves moving into the realm of the theologian and the artist because current scientific structures are inadequate to explain observed or hypothesized phenomena. If, as seems probable, observed phenomena continue to elude traditional scientific description in this manner, the pursuits of science, religion, and art will again move in concert as they did in earlier civilizations.

Once we understand the power of the arts for good, how can we harness them to the noble purpose of international harmony? I suggest some prescriptions that are ultimately concerned not with practicing artists, art administrators, or educators, but with the recipients of the bounty of art. These people—and they are the vast majority in all nations—experience art or participate in it because the arts have a meaning for them beyond the immediate necessities of living. Many of them have expressive needs. The arts to which they respond are most often uncomplicated and direct in appeal, reflecting the joys and sorrows of universal human experience without theoretical and esthetic constraints.

Most school and university curricula in the arts are concerned with theoretical principles and past practice. This is as it should be. That which is valuable from the past must be preserved as the necessary basis for the art of the future—even though professional practice maintains artistic principles and techniques at the highest level. But the function of the arts in society goes beyond professional practice; the popular and the folk arts have little concern for theoretical principles. They are not separated into disciplines or codified into curricula for formal study. Nevertheless, educators can be influential in helping the folk and popular arts in their role as creators of community.

Prescription Number 1: Faculties from schools of the arts should identify themselves not only with their own disciplines but also with the arts that emerge broadly from the citizens of their communities. This is difficult for two reasons: 1) Professional art faculties must deal with literature and works that embody specific traditions and identifiable artistic styles. This material does not always bear directly upon the activity in the community. 2) The professional practice of art exists in a social and economic context that bears little relation to the art itself. For example, the behavior of concert hall audiences or of gallery patrons has more to do with social ritual than with the essence of great music, painting, or sculpture. Such established behavior patterns may be identified particularly with the economically secure strata of society which are somewhat separated from the egalitarian practice of art. It is these social strata, however, particularly in the United States, that historically have provided financial support for the schools in which many professional artists work. Understandably, the professionals (at least in the United States) cannot totally separate themselves from their source of support.

But elsewhere public funds have largely replaced private sources. This change will have great impact on the social function of art. While serious art should never be produced merely for a social purpose (it must have its own expressive communication), we must recognize its potential for bringing people together. Thus, by helping their own communities to foster the cause of the popular arts, faculty members will provide a valuable resource that can promote understanding and goodwill everywhere.

Prescription Number 2: Professionals should organize arts councils, municipal arts offices, arts service committees, arts festivals large and small, and arts service organizations to help promote and produce
arts for the citizenry. This type of town and city organizing and committee work can be effective. One summer in Cleveland when I was president of an arts council with funding from the federal and state governments, we brought together approximately 200 young people aged 14-16, provided them with elementary instruction in the use of color and in drawing, and helped them create murals on walls and on the sides of buildings in their neighborhoods. The work was beneficial to the young people and to the community.

Such joint efforts are appropriate for all of the arts, but especially music, painting, dance, and drama, and for all ages, not just young people. The positive effect on the community is lasting.

**Prescription Number 3:** Those who are prominent in the professional arts should, for the benefit of recognized community leaders (mayors and business men and women), document the economic benefits to the community that cultivates a flourishing professional, commercial, and citizen-involved art world. Studies have shown that the more successful the practices of the arts are in a given community, the more that community benefits economically from these practices. It helps to point this out to community leaders.

**Prescription Number 4:** Institutions should arrange faculty and student group exchange programs. This is common practice among colleges and universities both within and between nations, but has not developed in the fine and performing arts on the scale that it has in the disciplines of letters and sciences. The arts, because their expressive components transcend language, are especially well able to bring peoples of different nations closer through exchange programs.

These four prescriptions are not concerned with the essence of art: that must always be the responsibility of the artist. But art does not exist in a social vacuum. It is a method of communicating between human beings. The four prescriptions can serve as social catalysts to promulgate the broad spectrum of arts within and among our communities and nations. They can help us use the inherent communicative potential of all the arts to bring ourselves closer together.

*Dr. John A. Flower is Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs at Cleveland State University.*
David Evett

New Play House Not For Plays

To the editors:

I share Nancy McAfee's enthusiasm for the winsomely eclectic facade of Philip Johnson's additions to the Cleveland Play House (Number 16, Fall 1985, pp. 27-38), for the variety, spaciousness, and elegance of its lobbies and galleries, and for the ingenious and handsome way he has linked the splendid old Romanesque theater complex with the Sears building (which, lumpish as it may be, nevertheless gives the Play House production facilities unrivalled anywhere in the world, and an attractive dining and drinking club besides). And I think I know enough about art history to appreciate the rich historical matrix in which she has placed this spirited building.

I am also a theater-goer, however, and I think it important to insist that from a theater-goer's point of view, the most important single element in Johnson's plan, the new Bolton Theater, has serious disabilities. On strictly esthetic grounds, some people have found the sham balconies which give the theater its rococo feeling as silly as sham Tyrolean fronts on German restaurants. The high ceiling implies grandeur, from outside as well as inside; it also makes actors sweat vocally to move all that air. Its dry acoustics limit reverberation and hence insure verbal clarity, but they make even the best actors sound thin-voiced and musicals seem flat and dull. (The Ohio Chamber Orchestra has scheduled its performances in the older and infinitely brighter-sounding Drury after trying some Mozart in both halls.) But at least serious arguments can be produced on behalf of these features.

No such argument can be mounted in defense of the Bolton auditorium as a place for an audience to watch a play, however. The Bolton stage is at the same level as the Drury stage, so that the two can share the large slip-stage where entire sets can be assembled on trucks or fly-bars for rapid and easy installation. Unlike the Drury, however, the rear of the Bolton is at the level of the main lobbies. The lack of distinction in height between front and rear means that the rake of the hall is relatively slight. But this inadequate rake means that people shorter than 5'8" or so and not in the first two rows must stretch and twist to see around perfectly ordinary-sized people in front of them. To compensate for the bad sight lines, designers and actors must sometimes cope with the problems of a stiffly raked stage. Finally, the raised stage (to make up for the low rake in the auditorium) and its present relationship to the seats across a yawning orchestra pit create a chilly gap between audience and performer (not just the 'transition' McAfee praises, as though any clearly delineated proscenium arch would not accomplish as much) that only exceptional energies can overcome.

Excuses have been offered for all these problems. A more steeply raked auditorium (like that found in the Shaw Festival Theater in Niagara-on-the-Lake, for instance, a theater of the same size as the Bolton, also with a proscenium stage, used for a similar repertory) could only have been achieved by raising the back of the auditorium several more feet above the level of the lobby floor (thus requiring steps—of the kind that McAfee praises as a dramatic entrance to the Drury). That would have cost additional money and provision would have had to be made for handicapped access (though presumably that problem could have been solved early by including a lobby access near the stage)—and no doubt would have affected the treatment of the Bolton lobby. As for the acoustics and the daunting separation of audience from stage—
well, those, too, are design problems. The Bolton appears to have been built to house big shows—musicals and the like. Not only does it boast the orchestra pit, but it has added another proscenium stage to a complex where two already exist (that the Play House has not one single thrust stage out of three seems incredible). Yet the dry acoustics mean that the big shows it was built for will not sound very well.

In fact, the Bolton seems to be another case where an architect, or his patrons, or both, finally fail to consider the people who will actually use the building. "Artistic" ideas and financial constraints win out over the practical human requirements of both performers and spectators. No matter what else it may be, the Bolton is first of all a place in which to see and hear plays. If the audience has trouble both seeing and hearing, then it is not only not a great building—it's a failure.

David Evett

David Evett, an associate professor of English at Cleveland State University, is a theater-goer of great enthusiasm and long standing, as well as an experienced amateur actor, whose last role was the Hoopoe in Cleveland State University’s production of Conference of the Birds.
$1000 in prizes to be apportioned among the winners. Plus publication in issue #19 (Fall, 1986) of The Gamut

Mode or genre
Essay, fiction, or verse

Subject
Imagine that some specific change occurs in human beings or in some aspect of our environment, some time in the near future (the next 100 years); then trace the effects of this change upon human life. The change may be improbable or probable, and your treatment of it may be serious or humorous, realistic or fanciful; but the best will in some way provide an insight into human life now and in the future.

Examples
A force appears which neutralizes or distorts electromagnetic waves; or the sex urge disappears; or the mean temperature of the earth rises / drops significantly; or the secret of eternal life is discovered. You may use these or, preferably, invent your own.

Restrictions
3000 words or under; original; not previously published

Deadline
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Format
Typed or word-processed (on good quality printer); double-spaced; photocopies accepted. Illustrations encouraged (submit photocopy).

Entry fee
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One weekend... I caught some kind of bug, so asked my husband to find a light novel for me from the local library. I read about half... then threw the book on the floor, announcing to my cat that I could write as well. I couldn't, but what I could—and did—was to produce my first novel in three literally and metaphorically feverish days.

Susan Gorsky, quoted in "Stories of Love—For Women Only"

"During our peak seven years' involvement in the Vietnam War, more than 40,000 American soldiers were killed in action. During this same period, more than 50,000 American civilians were blown away with handguns... We have lost more American civilian lives to firearms than have been lost as military casualties... from the Revolution through the Vietnam conflict."

Deputy Coroner Lester Adelson in "Handguns and Criminal Violence"

"A French bon mot used in the nineteenth century—presumably without fear of female retribution—has it that 'translations are like women. If they're beautiful they are not faithful, and if they're faithful they are not beautiful.'"

Peter Salm in "Undoing Babel"

"The sale continued, and we left, moved and indignant. That young girl, almost naked, had strongly impressed us... Duval could not get over it. 'It is monstrous,' he said, 'to auction off a poor girl, as beautiful as the day, to reduce her to the level of a piece of merchandise. What law! What barbarism!... This alone would make me detest slavery.'"

from "A Voyage to New Orleans" by Dr. E. Berjot (1816–98) translated by Bethany S. Oberst