Summer 1990

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Cleveland State University

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Let's Celebrate!

It's our 10th anniversary of publication and we're having a party.
Please join us Saturday, June 16 at the Cleveland State University Art Building, 2301 Chester Avenue. You may park free of charge in CSU's Lot E or J between East 22nd and East 24th Street just north of Chester Avenue. The celebration begins at 2:00 p.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m.
Many writers and artists who have contributed to the publication over the years will be in attendance. On display will be works by the winning artists in our 10th Anniversary Contest. A panel discussion, presentation of contest awards and the readers' choice bonus award, refreshments, and a door prize will add to the occasion.
Plan now to attend. Admission is free.
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Editorials

A Fire in the Kitchen

A little more than ten years ago, Dr. John Flower (then provost at CSU), Professor Leonard Trawick and I (both members of the CSU English Department) met for lunch at the Holiday Inn across the street from the University (now Viking Hall) to discuss the founding of a new periodical. We had given our orders to the waitress and waited a long time, during which we agreed on the outlines of a plan, when the waitress returned with the information that she could not serve us lunch because the kitchen was on fire. Despite this sinister omen, the plan went into effect with hardly any alteration from the original, except that instead of a quarterly it became a triannual.

The idea of a periodical at CSU seemed absolutely natural to me, even requisite: the universities I knew about all had one or more. So why shouldn’t this university, which we imagined as moving forward in many different ways? Although I knew next to nothing about publishing a magazine—I had been involved in the editing and publishing of books—I knew that I had one asset to contribute that would make a difference, my colleague Leonard Trawick’s skill as an editor, which I knew from personal experience.

An advisory board was soon formed which appointed Leonard as Editor, permission was given to hire a half-time employee, and a small office was established in Rhodes Tower. This start-up phase was very time-consuming, even discouraging, well beyond anything contemplated by the founders. But the first issue duly came out in the fall of 1980, with a cover bearing the image of one of the Cuyahoga River bridges, in an optimistic printing of 2500 copies. Over the past ten years, the staff has grown to its present size of two half-time editors and three half-time employees. These include the Managing Editor, who insures that the editorial side is kept on schedule, the Circulation Manager, who keeps records, solicits subscriptions, and generally sees to the commercial side of the enterprise, and the Production Assistant, who jumps into the breach on either side whenever needed. In addition, we have had

THE COVER: Founding editor Leonard Trawick (now co-editor, on left) and co-founder Louis Milic (now editor) survey their work of a decade. Photo: Steve Zorc.

This issue has been made possible by funding from the George Gund Foundation and from the Ohio Arts Council.
the occasional assistance of student interns, who learn about the process of publishing a magazine by taking a hand in the details of the drudgery involved.

During this decade we have lived up to our name (Leonard's idea) by publishing on a truly extraordinary variety of subjects. I cannot easily think of anything important that we have left out. Our Anniversary Index will list the particulars. Ten years times 3 issues equals 30 issues, each with a cover to be decided on, ten articles, stories or other pieces to find and edit—some 3000 pages, everyone of which each of us has read at least five times, in a hopeless search for freedom from error. It has been arduous but in its own way rewarding.

At this point, I want to specify my gratitude to President John Flower, who immediately saw the propriety of the suggestion that CSU ought to have a magazine; his sympathetic and even enthusiastic support is something that every editor dreams of having. It is unnecessary to say that without his staunch backing (for there were skeptics), there would have been no Gamut.

Leonard, as I foresaw, turned out to be the ideal editor. Because of the demands of his work on the Poetry Center's publications, some five years ago he asked me to take over the editorship, but he has remained fully involved. To say that we have collaborated in a cordial way is not necessary. We have worked together on this project for ten years and for a decade before that on others. We are still on good terms.

Of our other colleagues, whom I thank corporately for their loyalty and assistance, I want to mention particularly Mary Grimm, who was with us in every way for half our ten years. She deserted us for full-time teaching, which she believed was her destiny. But before she left, she trained her younger sister to succeed her, a legacy that cannot bebettered.

However many more years The Gamut is allowed to go on, I have found it engrossing and educational. My best to all our supporters, well-wishers, our subscribers, especially those who have signed for a "lifetime."

A Place in the Ecosystem

If our bodies reflected our minds, we would be a nation of freaks—one person reduced to a gigantic ear, another to a huge hand or foot. We imagine that in order to succeed we must concentrate our energies in a single pursuit, allowing the rest of ourselves to wither away. But specialization is not the only path to success. William Butler Yeats believed that people grow intellectually by assuming new and different roles. So the dreamy fin-de-siècle poet got involved in politics and eventually became a senator in the first Irish parliament. He also continued to write better and better poetry until his death at the age of 74.

The great fear of ecologists is the diminution of the world's gene pool. Not that we know immediate practical uses for every obscure plant and fish in danger of extinction; but it becomes increasingly clear that the well-being of the human race itself somehow depends on this continued variety. In nutrition, psychology, and investment banking, experts all agree: diversity is good for us.

Louis Milic and I were thinking about variety a dozen or so years ago as we mulled over the possibility of starting a magazine at Cleveland State. We were struck by the rich resources of the Cleveland community in the arts, science, business, and technology—and also by the relative isolation in which the experts pursued their various specialties. We conceived of The Gamut as a sort of trading post for ideas and information, in which the experts would share their knowledge with a wide circle of readers, and in turn would learn about other disciplines. We wanted to draw on the intellectual resources of this region, but without being provincial: from the start, The Gamut's pages have been enriched by contributors beyond Ohio, and it has displayed the best of Cleveland to readers around the world. Lou Milic, The Gamut's prime mover, is a specialist in English literature of the eighteenth century; he is internationally recognized as a pioneer in the use of computers in the humanities and as an authority on rhetoric and style; he is a photographer, an amateur astronomer, a collector of engravings, a gardener, a connoisseur of wines, and a passionate admirer of...
cats. Who could be better qualified to preside over this eclectic journal?

If The Gamut has concentrated on any one subject more than another, it has been language. Our series of "Languages of the World" has included overviews of Navajo, Japanese, Eskimo, Gypsy, Arabic, and Swahili. Next issue: Basque. David Guralnik and others have contributed articles on dictionaries and word formation. Our pages have been hospitable to fiction and poetry and to articles about books. If this preoccupation needs justification, it lies in the fact that language is the common factor and vehicle of all knowledge.

The editors' concern with language naturally extends to the writing in Gamut articles themselves. Few pieces have reached print without at least some stylistic suggestions from us, and some have required extensive help. Most of our authors have been tolerant of our revisions (which we never incorporate, of course, without their approval); but such is the power of language that at least one friendship of many years' standing came to an abrupt end over half a dozen editorial changes.

The Gamut has yet to support itself entirely through subscriptions and sales, and Cleveland State has subsidized it faithfully. The editors and the modestly paid staff members have also subsidized it with dedication beyond the measure of a time clock. The Gamut has always been very much a homemade publication. Staff and editors alike read submissions, proof galleys, stuff envelopes, and lug cartons of magazines. Lou Milic manages the budget, worries about circulation, and takes photographs; I do page layouts and draw illustrations. CSU's Publications Office and its Composition and Printing Department have been consistently helpful. I would like to single out especially Marian Sachs for her help in the early years, and Amy Jenkins for her contributions to the magazine's design, especially the covers.

The Gamut's circulation hovers around a thousand. That's not very large, even considering that many copies go to libraries and so are seen by a number of readers. Why so much work for a comparatively small readership? Perhaps because those of us responsible for the magazine are teachers at heart. Our instinct is to impart ideas and information as well as we can, whenever we can, no matter if it is to a seminar of four instead of a television audience of millions. Teachers are sustained not by immediate, dramatic successes, but by the hope that they are planting intellectual seeds that will flourish in future years. This should of course also be the hope of every university, and we think The Gamut has helped justify the hope in CSU's case. The Gamut has a modest but distinct place in the ecosystem of publications, and we would like to think that Cleveland, and even the world, would be just a little poorer without it.

Leonard Travick

This Tenth Anniversary issue of The Gamut is dedicated to John A. Flower, whose moral and practical support has undergirded it from the start.
Terrorists are made, not born. Terrorists worldwide exhibit similarities which transcend national borders, ethnic groupings, and any of the other identifying tags which separate man from man. The similarity between terrorists, whatever their origin, is the basis of a world-wide network of terrorist groups, training camps in Libya and elsewhere, escape routes, safe houses, and the international transfer of money and arms. "Terrorism has become an international growth industry that can afford to pay excellent salaries in addition to bribes and payoffs," claimed a recent article in the *Chicago Tribune.* The world of international terrorism is a world-wide covert web joined by many obscure interconnections.

It has, for example, been alleged that the Japanese United Red Army members who carried out the shootings at the Tel Aviv airport in 1972 were trained in North Korea, equipped with funds in Germany and with arms in Italy, and received further training in Syria and Lebanon before their mission in Israel.

Terrorism has become, to paraphrase von Clausewitz, the continuation of war by other means. Attacks against the U.S. can be expected to continue and proliferate, because the United States is the most tempting target in the world. Furthermore, its wide-open democratic system makes the pursuit of covert activities relatively safe and easy. Among the thousands of legal and illegal aliens entering the U.S. each year are some "very serious international terrorists," according to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Near San Diego alone, border patrols have picked up illegal immigrants from 7 countries in Central America, 14 countries in Asia, 15 in Europe, 12 in South America, and 6 in the Middle East, as well as Indians, Caribbeans, and Africans.

The terror network has not been publicized to a great degree: media attention has tended to focus on the sensational...
aspects of each incident as it occurs. But there is a body of both terrorist and counter-terrorist theory and practice forming world-wide, and the variables of such incidents are becoming more predictable. This may help victims and authorities deal with them more effectively.

The term "terrorism" is oftentimes inaccurately used. Terror was originally described by revolutionary theorists as "an arm" or tactic of the revolutionary or "urban guerrilla." But indigenous guerrilla groups are unlikely to use large-scale random terror because they cannot afford to alienate the population around them. For one thing, their goal is eventual political legitimacy. For another, their safety depends on being able to vanish in the crowd: to become, in Mao's words, "a fish in the sea." The true guerrilla fighter's duty, in theory at least, is to attack and survive, not to die for the cause.

But the terrorist we so often see today is not this type of guerrilla fighter, whatever he may call himself, and he is subject to no such moderating influences. There are three types: the suicidal terrorist, such as the driver of the truck-bomb which exploded in the American Embassy in Beirut; the professional terrorist who, like a mercenary soldier, is a highly-trained killer for hire; and the psychotic or "cathartic" terrorist, a deviant personality drawn to violence for its own sake. The Middle East conflict has created a fertile breeding-ground for all three, which has led to a subtle alteration of the use of "terror" as an arm of the revolutionary: nowadays, guerrilla groups use—not terror—but terrorists. The PLO so used El Fatah until Abu Nidal, its leader, became such an international threat that the Yasser Arafat faction ousted him for "corruption and armed sedition." Abu Nidal and Arafat have since attempted to kill each other. In the meanwhile, Abu Nidal has become the most wanted terrorist in the world, and has undergone surgical alteration of his face and fingertips to escape detection.

Abu Nidal, and others, operate as generals in a covert army, selling their services to the highest bidder, planning and staffing the operation. Subordinates have seen active service, usually in the Middle East; but only the expendables are placed in the "front lines" of the actual terrorist incident.

Most terrorist incidents occur on the lowest levels of sophistication, but this is slowly changing. A pyramid chart devised by government advisers Bowman H. Miller and Charles A. Russell shows the probability of terrorist tactics, computed on the basis of difficulty of execution, actual frequency, and difficulty of adequate response.
Since most terrorist actions thus far have been relatively unsophisticated, one might assume that the upper levels of the pyramid are as yet inaccessible. Unfortunately, this is not the case. National disruption would be extremely easy to produce, and the fact is well known. Though "target hardening" (i.e., making major targets more difficult to attack) has been much debated, little has been accomplished. Opponents argue that target hardening does not justify its cost because terrorists can merely switch targets. Munitions have been hardened by means of scanners, vapor or plastic taggants on explosives, and complex security checks, but these measures would need to be internationally consistent to be effective. Yet effective they can be: Libyan grenades captured in Chad were proven by their taggants to be from the same batch as those used in the September '85 bombing of a Paris cafe; as those used in the October '85 hijacking of an EgyptAir's flight 648 to Malta; the December '85 Rome and Vienna airport massacres; and the April '86 attempted bombing of a U.S. officers club in Turkey. All were Soviet-made F1 grenades bought by Libya from Bulgaria in 1983.

The "choke-points"—the major electrical grids, computer systems, and oil-and-gas supply lines in the U.S.—are considered to be woefully unprotected. As Robert H. Kupperman, chairing a panel of experts at the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Georgetown University said in October, 1984: "There is no emergency apparatus vaguely capable of dealing with the extent of problems that can be caused by even small terrorist groups." Publicly available maps made the vulnerable choke-points easy to spot, he continued; and in his opinion, the American banking system was the most vulnerable target of all.

Another expert warns, "A security system at a licensed nuclear power plant could not prevent a takeover for sabotage by a small number—as few perhaps as two or three—of armed individuals." The weaponry available to sophisticated terrorists has far greater competence than the lowly submachine gun. PGM's (precision-guided missiles), for instance, became available on the open world market in 1980: the Russian Strela (SA-7) weighs only 23 pounds, and the American Redeye and Stinger weigh around thirty. Laser-guided antitank weapons and suitcase-sized rocket launcher systems
can be used against limousines, aircraft, transformer banks, trucks carrying radioactive wastes, and pipelines. Any of these weapons can be carried by one or two men, and the possibilities of their use are limited only by the terrorist's imagination and daring. Plastics, too, provide a growing menace: not only is C-4, a moldable explosive, the choice for blowing up aircraft, but the new German Glock 17, a plastic pistol, is also a top choice for skyjackers because, according to Wayne Hollister, director of Wayne Investigations and Security (Virginia and Texas): "You can easily evade security by breaking the gun down."

The coercive use of germ warfare, such as anthrax toxin or AIDS virus, is unlikely but not impossible. Since a few ounces of anthrax can work more human devastation than a nuclear bomb, it is not a threat likely to appeal to any sane man, no matter how ruthless. In the hands of a psychotic, the possibilities are unthinkable.

The increase in terrorism appears to be one result of the international development of weapons so lethal they can never be used. As scientists probe more deeply into issues such as "nuclear winter" and accidents like the Chernobyl nuclear-plant meltdown, the destructive potential of nuclear warfare becomes ever-clearer. As conflicts occur between nations, they must remain limited below the nuclear level. Limited wars are by nature "dirty wars," based on body count, limited range weapons, what Carlos Marighella dubbed "the war of nerves," chemical defoliants, subtle toxins, covert intelligence, subterfuge, terrorism, economic sanctions, and so forth. They are by nature unwinnable and unheroic, predes­tined to become wars of attrition which bleed materiel, troops, and funds from both sides until one side collapses.

As war has shrunk into this parody of itself, the usefulness of terror and surrogate warfare has increased—particularly for nations which do not, and can never hope to—have the most advanced weapons at any moment in time. And every advance in the materiel appropriate to small wars, such as the new American laser submachine gun, serves to increase the potential of the terrorist when, all too soon, it becomes available to him.

It is a sobering thought that the modern terrorist can transgress all laws, both domestic and international, and even cause the very subjects of international law, the nation states, to act contrary to another's laws and their own best interests. It is extraordinary yet shockingly true that a terrorist can singlehandedly, for a short while at least, hold entire nations for ransom. Modern-day terrorism is the War of the Flea, but modern technology has enlarged the potency of the flea's bite to titanically lethal proportions.

Given, then, the inevitability of future terrorist incidents, what models have been evolved for dealing with them?

There are four positive and four negative general principles to bear in mind.
1) PROVIDE ALTERNATIVES. Terrorism can never be accepted as a legitimate means to a political goal. But since it is commonly used to air political grievances, every effort should be made to defuse political grievances before they reach the level of ultimate violence. As Hannah Arendt wrote, "the loss of power becomes a temptation to substitute violence for power." Once a group, however small, becomes a bonafide terrorist organization, it is apt to attract covert support and become much more dangerous.

2) EVALUATE TFB. TFB (terrorism, fanaticism, blackmail) is a term first used in connection with the Israeli attack on Entebbe airport. It represents the cost of the terrorist action in terms of human suffering. The argument is that a certain amount of TFB must be accepted as the cost of the incident, just as one accepts other risks of living. Negotiation aims to minimize the TFB, but terrorists often find it to their advantage to escalate it, as did the Achille Lauro hijackers when they shot Leon Klinghoffer and tossed him and his wheelchair overboard. It is important to remember that counter-terror attacks can also escalate TFB, sometimes beyond a reasonable level.

3) HUMANIZE. Kidnap victims are statistically more apt to survive if they can make friends with their captors. When there are multiple victims, as in skyjackings and barricade/hostage situations, this possibility is considerably reduced. And the more sophisticated the terrorists, the more careful they are to avoid emotional involvement with their victims: blindfolds and masks are used to dehumanize as well as demoralize victims. The British Special Air Service has amply proven, however, the efficacy of humanizing, whenever possible, any terrorist situation, whether the sympathy created is between terrorist and victim or terrorist and negotiator.

4) SURPRISE. A more dangerous approach, which can sometimes prove successful, is the surprise pre-emptive attack, such as that at Entebbe Airport in 1976. The SAS has been called "brilliantly successful" with such attacks, and they now train the counterterror specialists of other nations, including Col. Charles Beckwith, head of the U.S. Army's Delta Team.

The Entebbe model (sometimes called "humanitarian intervention") is highly controversial, because it imperils the life of hostage as much as the terrorists. Furthermore, success is not only contingent on the attacker's speed, skill, and accuracy, but on the terrorist's reaction to the attack. In addition, such attacks can strain international relations, leading to the type of outrage expressed by Egypt after American jets attacked the plane carrying the Achille Lauro hijackers to Italy. One "Conclusion" was stressed by an international legal conference on terrorism:
Terrorism around the world. Above: Bogota, Colombia—a woman guerrilla with Mexican Ambassador Ricardo Galan, held hostage in 1981. Top left: Belfast, Northern Ireland—offices of a Protestant newspaper destroyed by blast that killed four. Middle left: Sydney, Australia—assassinat of Turkish consul-general claimed by “Justice Commander of Armenian Genocide.” Bottom left: Genoa, Italy—official of the Christian Democratic Party shot in legs by urban terrorists. Photos: UPI from the Cleveland Press files.
As it has previously, the Department of State should stress the *sui generis* nature of the incident at Entebbe and support generally the limitations that international law places on the use of force by states against other states in the name of combatting international terrorism. To this end, the State Department should stress the primary emphasis assigned by the U.N. Charter to avoiding the use of armed force and to settling disputes peacefully.\(^\text{15}\)

As terrorist incidents proliferate, there are some points which have proven to demand both caution and common-sense.

1) **DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE.** Obvious as this point may seem, experts warn of a pervasive tendency to "trivialize" such groups by labelling them as criminals or madmen, and by failing to give any credence to their stated motivations. For example, one writer stated that the Symbionese Liberation Army kidnapped Patty Hearst "with nothing more political in mind than a hatred of the rich."\(^\text{14}\) Appropriate response is unlikely when the opponent has been misperceived. Furthermore, assessment of terrorist groups should be an on-going process. While most terrorist groups begin with a limited repertoire and tend to repeat the same tactic (see chart, above), the rapidly growing pool of transnational terrorists places any type of technology within the reach of any group able to pay for it. Payment is oftentimes made in promises to a covert power which does the actual funding or supplying: the world of terrorism is not only one of threats, but of "favors." Terrorism expert Claire Sterling says that the "elaborate infra-structures, weaponry, microfilm library and archives, communications systems, etc. are a serious drain on terrorist groups."\(^\text{15}\) This financial demand is a major reason the "terror network" exists. Any group can acquire expertise on the very cutting edge of electronic, biochemical, or any other technology merely by hiring a good spy, or a covertly-trained expert, or both.

2) **DO NOT RULE OUT ALTERNATIVES.** Some states have adopted a categorical, "no-negotiations-with-terrorists" stance on the theory that it will discourage terrorist activities. This has not proven true; in fact, many would argue it encourages such activity just as violent retaliation may increase the violence of terrorists. Statistically speaking, negotiation has proven to be the most effective anti-terror technique, so it seems short-sighted to categorically rule it out. The terrorist's advantage lies in aggressively escalating the TFB until the adversary capitulates to his demands; the victim's best chance, however, lies in prolonging the negotiation. (As one writer points out, this is hard on the victim, making him the victim of both sides.) Public pressure to "solve" terrorist episodes is said to be the "Achilles heel" of democratic states. And in certain instances, negotiation may not be a viable alternative. At Entebbe, the Idi Amin
government's suspected collusion with the hijackers made a pre-emptive strike the only real alternative.

3) CO-ORDINATE SERVICES. There is a natural close relationship between the media and the terrorists, each of which profits by the other in spite of their opposing points of view. The role of the media vis-à-vis the forces of law and order is therefore extremely delicate. One task force identified the potential pitfalls of unsupervised media coverage of terrorist incidents as follows:

a) Terrorists might decide to use a press-member as an impromptu and unqualified go-between.
b) A reporter might play to terrorist ego in an attempt to "scoop" other reporters and thereby alter the course of events.
c) Press statements might conflict with or cast doubt on statements made by qualified negotiators.
d) The press might reveal tactical information.
e) The media might add to terrorist pressures and thus to hostage danger; some terrorists are dangerously unstable during the event.
f) Press coverage might encourage psychodrama, such as shooting hostages on-camera.
g) Press coverage might encourage copy-cat events.16

One point not mentioned by this task force but certainly of prime importance is the effect the media have on the morale or terror level of the general population. For this reason, cooperation between the media and counter-terror forces should take precedence over "freedom of the press" until the incident is successfully resolved.

4) DO NOT OVER-REACT. In the case of widespread, extremely frequent, or seriously disruptive terrorist activity, public demands for safety can lead to draconian counter-terror measures every bit as bad as the terror of the left. The central message of Carlos Marighella, whose "The Mini-manual of the Urban Guerrilla" is the terrorist Bible, was that revolutionaries should disrupt the state until it was seen as ineffectual. Then the outraged public would, in effect, overthrow its own state. But when the Tupamaros successfully followed this agenda in Uruguay, the new government turned out to be much more repressive than the original.

Terrorist incidents, upsetting as they are, have cost, so far, many fewer lives than war, famine, and acts of God. Terrorism's major risk to democracy, constantly reiterated by experts in the field, lies in its ability to provoke repression. To suppress terrorism totally would require a surveillance net so wide-spread and tightly woven that it would approximate that of a police-state. Many writers point out how useful "death squads" with covert government support have proven to be for suppressing terrorism in certain countries.17

Totalitarian governments, likewise, have little trouble with terrorists. But democratic states, to remain worthy of the name,
will have to settle for some uneasy compromise between ensuring the public safety and safeguarding the freedom of the individual.

As to pursuing terrorists outside the borders of the U.S., the wisest course would appear to be "Act, don't react!" Obviously, the same individuals may be the "heroes" of one country and the "criminals" of another. But retaliatory raids and counter-raids could easily turn surrogate warfare into the real thing. They violate existing treaties and the sovereign rights of states, and can be very dangerous to an undefended civilian population.

If preventing loss of life is the goal—and it must be—then the pursuit and punishment of transnational terrorists is a serious concern best addressed through international diplomatic channels. The failure of the United Nations to find some definition of the word "terrorist" acceptable to all its member nations suggests that international agreement on the proper punishment of terrorists is a long way off. Most terrorists never come to trial; but their life-expectancy is short because of the violence of their "profession."

The biggest challenge for Americans in these times of escalating terrorism is the terror itself. Americans have demonstrated an odd tendency to mass hysteria, as seen in the "Red Scare" of 1919, the McCarthy era trials, and the bomb-shelter frenzy after Sputnik was launched in 1957. Hysteria could give terrorists more power than they possess. The speed with which panic spreads through a population can outstrip reality altogether. As one writer cautioned after the attack on the Kaaba in Mecca triggered riots in Islamabad, thousands of miles away: "In these days of instant communication, facts are not important; what people believe is." The cheapest form of terror available today would be one shocking incident followed by a barrage of terrifying lies.

In every terrorist event, difficult decisions must be made swiftly which are, for the most part, irrevocable. Yet each incident is subtly different from any other. Although the terrorist mentality and rhetoric are strikingly similar around the world, differences of cause or culture may render a specific counter-terror tactic more or less likely to succeed. Panic obscures the ability to think and make intelligent assessments. It can literally cost lives in a terrorist incident.

Given the susceptibility of our highly heterogeneous population, it would seem reasonable to expect our government to take steps to minimize the power of terrorists to disrupt large areas and industries within our borders, even though it cannot guarantee the safety of every American overseas. But in our pursuit of nuclear supremacy and space hyper-technology, this relatively simple task has been overlooked. Our borders are easy to cross; grids, pipelines, and computer systems are wide open; and the public understanding of terrorism is so poor as to suggest that it might be
illogically vulnerable to any situation of large-scale terror. Our Civil Defense system would be of little help in such a case. It has not been fundamentally overhauled since World War II, and its last appropriation for supplies was in 1964. Its 1982 "update" suggested that citizens drive away from a city under nuclear attack. "Many motorists would undoubtedly find themselves snarled in traffic jams," it admitted, but, "Their Russian counterparts would be slogging around on foot," and furthermore, "The cars themselves could be used as fallout shelters, if reinforced with dirt." Even children, in the eighties, know better.

On March 6, 1985, the U.S. House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee heard a progress report from Ambassador Robert Oakley, director of the State Department’s newly formed counterterrorism and emergency planning office. Oakley’s report was called "alarming." He confessed to so much "internal confusion" and overlapping responsibilities with other agencies that Rep. Dan Mica (D.-Fla), chairman of the arms control subcommittee, exclaimed: "You came in here asking for $5 million, and this committee at the drop of a hat would give you $10 million for antiterrorist work.... But after hearing your presentation, we wouldn’t give you five cents." One year later, a Pentagon study concluded, "As a nation, we do not understand low-intensity conflict.... We respond without unity of effort, we execute our activities poorly, and we lack the ability to sustain operations."

With American counterterror in such a pitiable state, it should surprise no one that terrorism is an international growth industry.

Notes

3"Arrested Illegal Aliens Include Terrorists, U.S. Says," Chicago Tribune, Friday, October 11, 1985, Sec. 1, p. 16.
9Kupperman and Trent, pp. 52-57.
14Sterling, p. 8.
15Stohl, p. 10.
The Battle over Native American Remains

Science, piety, and politics

Daniel Hill

Anyone entering the administrative lobby of the North Dakota Heritage Center encounters, mounted against the far wall, a sign that looks like a large, wooden belt buckle. A second glance reveals the Historical Society’s motto: preservation, research, interpretation. Under those words appear the carved outlines of both a forthouse block and a wigwam, structures that reflect the state’s dual frontier legacy.

More recently, the confrontations that have taken place here in Bismarck have cast scientists, and not the U.S. cavalry, as the foe of Native Americans. Around the corner from that large wooden sign is the Heritage Center’s designated conference room. There for the past few years members of the State Historical Board have found themselves caught up in North Dakota’s own unprecedented version of the national controversy over whether skeletal parts and grave goods held by museums should be returned to Indian tribes for reburial.

Across America, as many as 600,000 specimens may be involved. To further the issue several pieces of federal legislation have already been introduced in Congress. The granddaddy of them was the Native American Museum Claims Commission Act (or “Bones Bill”) drafted by former Senator John Melcher, D-Montana, and now in the hands of Senator Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii. Sponsors of legislation actively pending include Senator John McCain, R-Arizona, and a trio of Representatives. Among them is Byron Dorgan, D-North Dakota, whose Indian Remains Reburial Act would require the Smithsonian to return upon written request tribal remains dated after 1500 A.D. Meanwhile, back in Dorgan’s home state the Assembly session completed this spring debated nearly half a dozen measures, most of them intimately tied to legal maneuvering over the Historical Board’s authority to relin-

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dispense to local Indian tribes the more than 26,000 items stored in the North Dakota Heritage Center. Now in summertime the Board is holding a special meeting to adopt proposed administrative rules. When given final approval, those rules will contradict the Historical Society's three-word motto by establishing the first case in which tribes have caused a state agency to release Indian remains for reinterment without scientific analysis.

The conference room walls hold the framed photographs of previous Board leaders, all of them white men—as is the current chair, Lawrence Loendorf, an anthropology professor at the University of North Dakota. Loendorf is among his peers. The Board's sole white female member sits in attendance, but there is as yet no sign of Pemina Yellow Bird. Loendorf's moustache twitches, and he has only just called the meeting into session when in walks the woman he must know was once quoted as denying the utility of anthropologists, because "We can go to the creator to find anything we need to know." Soon the definitions to be used in the Board's Administrative Code for the Deaccession and Disposal of Collections are argued, as I listen in, guided by my interviews and the research I've done in the Heritage Center and elsewhere. Nothing provokes more prolonged discussion than definition #4: "Associated Grave Goods." The opening worry centers around the adjective, "sacred," which brings into play the major issue in this entire feud—freedom of religion versus separation of church and state. The president of a local Heritage Council, Terry Del Bene, has characterized these events as "almost a replay of the Scopes Monkey Trial" of 1925, in which evolution was challenged; and I think of his remark, while awaiting Yellow Bird's response.

For her the question is whether the first amendment right to freedom of religion is being abridged. Yellow Bird informs the Board that the term "delineates what indigenous people
consider sacred." Grave goods aid the "journey" of ancestors, enabling their spirits to rest in peace. She speaks with authority, reminding me of testimony from public hearings held two years ago. A private citizen, the Executive Director of the North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission, Juanita Helphrey, had told the panel that non-Indian Heritage staff members lack "an inner spiritual quality inherent only to us who are descendants of those ancient ones." In addressing a later hearing, Jamestown College professor Dr. Timothy Bratton was probably familiar with Helphrey's comment. After noting that he belongs to numerous science associations, he then went on to refute what he called the "secret information" trick, saying: "We have testimony that the Amerindians have gone into the state museum and felt the hair rising on their arms and have had some kind of interaction with spiritual forces. This is an intuitive argument that is inadmissible in a scientific hearing because I could walk up here and say, well I went through the same exhibit today and I had an instinctual feeling that the bones were perfectly happy where they are."

Callous or not, Bratton's reverse argument expresses his concern that collection policies once determined by scientific and historical principles are now being shaped by religious beliefs in a manner that violates the constitutional separation of church and state. Nor does this exchange of views exhaust the issue of religion. Bratton is also on record as opposing the current plan (to turn the remains over to a spiritual leader designated by the Intertribal Reinterment Committee) because it will lead to a "tutti-frutti, mish-mash ceremony."

Behind his statement lies statistical evidence to support the claim that, while some Indians belong to the Native American Church, others remain faithful to a range of Christian denominations—all practicing different burial rituals. The notion of an invalid service is reinforced by Del Bene, who says, "If you're doing the moral argument, it makes no sense to send remains to the wrong address." He questions whether unidentified bones from what were once enemy tribes should
be buried together, a situation Bratton has compared to "a Reformation Protestant being reburied with Catholic rites or vice versa."

Tom Bullhead, a research specialist for the Standing Rock Reservation, responds to the denominational argument by noting: "That's colonialism. The government wanted to eliminate native religion." As to tribal identification, Helphrey concludes that it "makes no difference in a spiritual journey." Moreover, why should tribes be forced to prove affiliation, when the scientific community has failed to do so? And North Dakota's Lieutenant-Governor, Lloyd Omdahl, also supports an intertribal ceremony, for "If Indians are not concerned, then we shouldn't moralize as to what they're doing with their remains."

After a while, Yellow Bird agrees, for convenience's sake, to delete "sacred" from the definition of "Associated Grave Goods," but the Board is still concerned about the phrasing, "items known to have been interred with human skeletal remains." If there's a specter haunting the Board, then that specter is Dr. Bratton. In June of 1988 the Board reversed its vote of a month earlier and ruled in favor of reburial without even non-destructive analysis. The deaccession process was suspended, and soon 26 boxes of remains were sent to Standing Rock for reburial.

However, before a second group of remains could be turned over to the Intertribal Reinterment Committee for inhumation, the North Dakota Ethnic Preservation Council went to court. There a district judge granted the Council's spokesman, Dr. Bratton, a Writ of Prohibition that blocked any further deaccession until the Board adopted administrative rules clarifying its power to dispose of items in accordance with state law. Now one year later the fear is that Bratton might argue: how can the items be known to have been interred, without having been examined first?

Though "known" remains in place and definition #4 is adopted as amended, the Board has inevitably touched on the issue of analysis. Its definition is only indirectly debated—when an amendment is made to the deaccession process such that an Exit Inventory, with the consent of the Intertribal Reinterment Committee, may include "photography, replication measuring, and weighing of any associated grave good." Then I recall Del Bene complaining that Yellow Bird has engaged in a pattern of "deliberate misrepresentation" meant to obscure the conservational nature of archaeology. Indeed, her private testimony before the hearings panel characterized analysis as a process that "slices, dices, chops and grinds the bones of the deceased."

An example of the miscommunication between Native Americans and scientists was the episode concerning Sitting Bull's reputed skull. A year ago this past spring Bullhead
visited Colorado Springs to meet the widow of a Standing Rock Affairs officer who, in May of 1962, found a cranium he believed to be the former chief's and "tucked it under his elbow and took it home." Eventually, what Bullhead calls a "visual inspection" suggested that the skull was unlikely to have been Sitting Bull's. Del Bene's claim is that both the Exit Inventory and the visual process reflect what typically constitutes analysis.

On a larger scale, it's the very definition of archaeology that Del Bene fears has been narrowed, unfairly emphasizing bones—when in fact rocks are usually involved. Bullhead insists that the digging up of a white man is called grave robbing, while the digging up of an Indian is cloaked as science. Del Bene's opinion about reinterment after analysis is that the "whole thing has been played out in stereotypes." The business card that identifies him as an archaeologist jokingly includes the ghostbuster logo made famous by Bill Murray, but it appalls him that "if you're an archaeologist, you're viewed as a grave robber, a ghoul, and now also a racist."

Del Bene's last remark leads him to make an argument employed by Bratton, which is that the controversy is skewed because the analysis of remains is by no means limited to those of Indians. The bones of Pope Gregory VII and the founder of the Smithsonian have both been examined, he notes, as were many Civil War veterans and the soldiers who died with Custer at the Little Bighorn. These examples make no impression on Bullhead, who simply observes that the number of Indian skeletons held by museums is so disproportionately high as to support charges of institutional racism.

Only once during the Board meeting do tempers flare; that's when Yellow Bird says, "Let's call a spade a spade," in response to a proposal that she feels is meant to gut the administrative rules. Today tension and the renewed twitching of Loendorf's moustache quickly cease, but often the feud over Indian remains has been ugly—owing to problems like grave-robing rewarded by a black market on which bones and artifacts can bring in as much as $3,000 each. Del Bene claims to be repeating a rumor when he tells me that the earlier consignment of 26 boxes sent to Standing Rock may have been looted. Then he adds in disgust: "Anywhere else in the real world, you don't give bodies away on the promise they'll take care of them."

According to Bratton's testimony before the hearing panel, there is also the example of a Dr. Kneeburger, who found Indian artifacts in London collections following their release in Wisconsin. His conclusion: "If you're going to request that Indians carry out reinterment, you're going to have to watch those people like hawks because already people who have really had their self-interest in mind have abused this issue to, in effect, steal museums' collections."
nant Yellow Bird responds by terming the rumors of looting a "move of discredit," offensive to the Indians' "level of sanctity" regarding the dead. Somewhere in between those viewpoints is Lieutenant-Governor Omdahl. He favors direct reinterment, in part because there has never been "enough money appropriated for analysis," a situation not likely to change, since "most people don't see the value of researching those remains." However, he would draw the line at reburying grave goods—given the prospect of looting by interested parties of whatever race. Familiar with the cynical theory that politicians might seize the chance to save on research expenses because more of North Dakota's voters are Indians than scientists, he responds by redefining it as a matter of "what might be discovered, against Indians feeling like second class citizens."

The actual battle lines have often been less principled, and far nastier. Del Bene says that after he testified before the state legislature, Yellow Bird threatened the loss of his job, "a misdemeanor under state code," just as she has allegedly kept some Indians from speaking out against her position for fear of being labeled "Uncle Tom-Toms." He's worked for ten years on reservations and asserts that this is "the same way tribal politics operate, which is not the democratic process as we know it." Del Bene's comments are echoed—if not by the state's chief archaeologist, Signe Snortland, who insists that she cannot be quoted—then by Dr. Bratton, who found Yellow Bird's de facto chairing of the hearings panel a "travesty."

For her part, Helphrey alleges that "people" have visited the state budget office hoping to discredit Yellow Bird (now living in Madison, Wisconsin, where her husband is a graduate student) as a costly "non-resident" flown in for Board Meetings, when actually Helphrey hosts Yellow Bird in order to save on expenses. Also disliked is Snortland, for giving "misinformation" regarding the state's bone collection. Meanwhile, Bullhead remembers that it is Snortland's new husband, then the Bureau of Indian Affairs' regional archaeologist, who had made the initial arrangements for the "analysis" of Sitting Bull's skull, news of which was leaked during the past legislative session.

Ever since January of 1988, when Governor George Sinner and Omdahl sent a jointly signed letter to Board members urging them to return the bones, the political war has been even more hard-fought. For Yellow Bird that explains items like the news leak and the following "hoax": the belief of Snortland and others that among the 26 boxes sent to Standing Rock, there might have been the remains of a white buffalo hunter named William Luffsey, whose bones were supposedly discovered by government road workers in 1940. But when I visit his grave on a bluff overlooking Medora, I meet Ted Cornell, who says, "They're putting us on," and notes that the
sagebrush upon it has a stem so thick as to be roughly a
century old.

In the end, the Board votes 7-1 in favor of an administra-
tive code that calls for the reinterment, without further scient-
ific analysis, of every box of state-held Indian bones. This
decision seems very decisive, except that no one is sure what
will really take place. After the state attorney general approves
the code, the district judge who granted Bratton a Writ of
Prohibition must also review it in deciding whether state law
requires study of the remains. His ruling may not be decisive
either, for 40% of the affected Heritage Center Indian items
happen to be "on loan" from the federal government.

A provision within the code is named "Donor Consent,"
and it calls for the Historical Society to "endeavor to secure the
written consent of all living donors and federal custodians of
human skeletal remains and associated grave goods," though
if there should be no response within a month's time then the
items in question will be released for reinterment. That
scenario draws a laugh from federal employee Del Bene, who
mockingly asks: "Can you imagine the government respond-
ing in thirty days to anything!" As if to acknowledge his point,
some Board members openly wonder whether this provision
might violate federal law.

Del Bene's belief is that federal agencies, fearing for their
collections, might remove them from the Heritage Center for
safekeeping—ultimately turning it into "the biggest tractor
museum in the world." Furthermore, he envisions three situa-
tions in which the state could be successfully sued: first, if it is
proven that the Standing Rock burial involved looting;
second, if the Cheyenne or another tribe that formerly
occupied the region filed a lawsuit to recover their ancestors'
remains; or finally, if Luffsey's descendants in Wisconsin
should also go to court.

Those hazards drew a dismissive sigh from the reburial
committee's legal counsel, Kip Quale, who validates only the
second and says of it: "Should other tribes approach us, we
wouldn't deny them the opportunity to prove their case
through documentation," proof that wouldn't need to be con-
clusive, since "we're concerned primarily with getting the
bones back into the ground." But another obstacle to achieving
that goal may be the legal status of items given by private
donors. Yellow Bird becomes upset when she learns from the
Board's discussion that these donors might be able simply to
reclaim what they often found on their own property, a situa-
tion that causes her to ask: "How can anybody, by buying a
piece of land, control human remains?"

For a while, then, the Board debates whether it might be
able merely to offer to return the remains to donors—not
doing so, unless reburial is acceptable—frustrating Yellow
Bird, whose testimony before the hearing panel overrode legal
niceties in favor of oral traditions. She questions how it could be that "the pursuit of scientific knowledge became more important than the right to rest in peace?" Del Bene's response is that science creates a sense of posterity accessible to all and that he doesn't want "history to start in 1805," which is what he believes will happen should the Board pursue its present course of action.

The question of access to knowledge is still on my mind when, during the lunch break, Yellow Bird reassures a local TV-news camera crew that little of scientific value is being lost by reinterring the remains. Recited are the statistics supplied by Snortland, who is not available for comment; and I feel uneasy. No matter which side is "right" in this feud, when the interview is over and the crew's flood lights suddenly shut down, the Heritage Center's once well-lit administrative lobby now seems to me to be unnaturally dim.

Afterword

Last December, in sub-zero weather, representatives of the Intertribal Reinterment Committee packed the boxes of state-owned Indian bones into pickups and drove them away for reburial. Boxes of bones from private collections whose owners had failed to contact the Heritage Center within thirty days of notice were also removed, but not the boxes under Federal jurisdiction. The question of whether or not the Committee has domain regarding corpses or skeletal remains found since the new rules went into effect is still undecided.
"How Many Acres You Got Out There?"

Todd Lieber

In the summing-up session of a recent conference on midwestern literature that I attended, one of the panelists, a professor at the University of Iowa, pointed out that the conference's sense of what constitutes "midwestern" had been strongly influenced by small towns, family farms, and the values associated with them. He also pointed out that the decline of those institutions had been a pervasive theme in all our discussions. As we filed out of the room, I introduced myself to him, told him I'd appreciated his comments, and mentioned that I lived on a farm a few miles outside a small town.

"Is that so?" he replied. "How many acres you got out there?"

Twenty years ago when I first moved to Iowa, that question would have surprised me. It would have seemed as impertinent as, say, asking someone you've just met the square footage of his house. I've heard it often enough now—it's invariably the first question Iowans ask when they learn someone lives in the country—that it no longer surprises me, and I know that no offense is intended. But it still seems a curious (and uniquely midwestern) way to begin a conversation, and I'd like to think a bit about what it means.

At first, I assumed that it reflected a general American preoccupation with quantity, the belief that size in itself is an index of value: bigger means better. That may be. But over the years I've come to realize that something else, something more important, is also at stake. In Iowa, the terms "farm" and "farmer" are titles of respect, bolstered by a proud history. Because Iowans don't like to hear these words used frivolously, they tend to distinguish between "real" farmers and a class identified variously as "city farmers," "weekenders," "part-timers," or (in a phrase borrowed from the IRS) "hobby farmers."
These semi-impostors live, for the most part, on "acreages," not farms, and their distinguishing characteristic is that they do not depend on farming for a livelihood. The "real" farmer does, and for that, a certain minimal base of acres owned and/or operated is essential. Hence, the question about size is really a way of evaluating the legitimacy of the claim that my land is a "farm" and that I, myself, am a "farmer."

Someone who can answer the question with a figure like eight hundred or a thousand acres is clearly a farmer. He need say no more, and usually doesn't. I've noticed, however, that people who aren't sure if their farm size qualifies quickly add something like, "Our home place is just a hundred-and-twenty, but we farm six hundred and forty," or "We just have an eighty, but we have a confinement set-up and feed out about four thousand hogs a year." Indeed, in the informal census that takes place in these conversations, the follow-up questions are always "Got any livestock?" and, if so, "How many?"

When I began farming—part-time—I formed the habit of answering these questions apologetically. I would assure whomever I was talking to that I didn't presume to call myself a "real" farmer. There were a couple of reasons why I didn't consider myself to be one. First, of course, was size: my "sixty" was an "acreage," not a farm. But I also knew that with an off-farm income and a limited investment in land and equipment, I was able to avoid the enormous burden of debt that has become the economic earmark of "real" farming. Because I was free to that extent of economic pressures, I could avoid certain practices that full-time farmers told me were economically necessary but which I thought were ecologically unsound or that were simply distasteful to my imagination. The routine use of petro-chemicals on land or of growth stimulants in animals are two examples. I also had the luxury to do certain things that full-time farmers often can't afford to do: give my farrowing facilities a rest between groups of sows, rotate my crops with alfalfa, make decisions about doctoring my animals on something other than a strictly economic basis, and so forth.

And yet—for all that I appreciated the advantages of being a part-timer—farming, not my off-farm career, was my real love. I wanted to do it full-time, to be able to call myself a farmer without qualification. About 1981 I seriously considered taking the debt-financed route to "real" farming, and if a divorce and other personal factors hadn't intervened, I might have tried it. Looking back, I think it's safe to say I would have failed. The years since then have seen a dramatic decrease in the numbers of farmers—with, of course, a corresponding increase in the number of acres needed to make a living, the size of the machinery needed to work them, and the amount of capital needed to finance it all.
Not long ago, I stopped to see a friend who, in addition to operating the middle-sized farm that was his father's, owns a construction company. I wanted him to dig the reeds out of my pond with a backhoe. It was a slow Saturday morning, and one of his employees, whom I'll call Bob, was with him in the office. Bob is someone who, like me, would farm full-time if the economics of it were feasible. He's a good man with heavy equipment, but farming is his first love. They offered coffee, and I stayed a while to visit.

They were talking about a neighbor who had just bought a twelve-row planter equipped with a vacuum meter for precision seed-spacing at speeds up to twelve miles an hour and hydraulic controls that maintained a constant planting depth for each row on contours and over uneven terrain. Other planters could do that, but this one also had a "brain box." The operator programmed in the plant population and depth he wanted, and the planter's computer did the rest, electronically transmitting an account of exactly how many seeds it was planting where to a monitor in the cab of the tractor.

Bob said about his grandfather, "When Fred planted corn, he monitored it by getting off the tractor and digging around until he found some kernels. If he found a few in every foot or so, he figured it was working okay."

"I still do it that way," I said, laughing. Quickly, we figured out that our neighbor could cover forty acres in the time it took me, with my four-row equipment, to do about five.

We were all impressed with the man who had purchased this planter and by the capabilities of the machine itself. It's hard not to admire its technology, its power, its speed and size. Bob, for example, has spent his life around machinery and knows that making bigger and better equipment to do things faster and with less human labor is what it's all about. If he followed his own creative impulses, that's where they would lead. But this planter, which likely costs more than his grandfather's entire farm sold for, is also an apt symbol of agribusiness and of the economics that make it increasingly difficult for men like Bob to become farmers. Though many Americans, especially rural Americans, believe fiercely in both, in the long run the values represented in such machinery contradict the values embodied in small farms and small communities.

This contradiction points to a larger American paradox. The original ideal of American agriculture was Thomas Jefferson's image of the yeoman farmer, an independent entrepreneur whose freedom was based on his ownership of land and the means of production. Yet to this yeoman farmer, as to American business in other fields, success meant not merely working his land in a sustainable way, but expand-
ing—accumulating property, wealth, and power. Historically, that pursuit led to increasingly centralized ownership of land and to the concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands—in short, to diminished opportunity for new independent farmers. The same contraction occurred, of course, in most American industries. As long ago as the 1950s, C. Wright Mills noted that in most sectors of the economy, as opportunity shrank, the idea of success through independent entrepreneurship was replaced with the goal of upward movement through bureaucratic hierarchies. But in agriculture, where the Jeffersonian image of the family farm is so strong, that shift has not taken place. In his memoir, The Last Farmer, Howard Kohn describes how the pioneering entrepreneurial spirit of “self-sufficiency and grit” evolved through three prior generations of Michigan farmers: The first generation opened the forests and broke the sod; the next expanded the farm’s open space, advanced its production, and held on through the depression. “The pioneering thing for my father’s generation of farmers,” Kohn writes, “was to acquire more land and more technology so that their sons might inherit a potential corporation.” So it is that in the midwest we profess to value small farms, yet at the same time measure the success, and even the legitimacy, of a farm operation by its size.

However, this line of thought, in which farmers are defined in terms of economic realities and words like “livelihood” and “entrepreneurship,” overlooks another way in which farmers have, traditionally, been thought of: that is, as people who enter into a relationship with soil, plants, animals, and weather, people who understand natural processes, whose character in a sense is formed by those processes.
This way of thinking views farming as a way of life in which the subtle ecological and spiritual connections between the human and natural orders are acknowledged and valued; it carries with it words like "stewardship" and "husbandry."

When I think of farming a hundred or fifty or even twenty years ago, it seems quite possible that these two ways of thinking about farmers were consistent with one another: one could be an independent entrepreneur and remain close to the natural sources of his life and work. But in rural America today, they are pulling apart. Over and over we are told that "real" farming is a technically sophisticated, highly capitalized, complex business. Increasingly, to survive economically a farmer must adopt practices he knows are ecologically unsound and, sometimes, risk multiple unanticipated consequences.

An incident last spring (1989) in northwest Iowa is a case in point. Despite increased contamination of groundwater, the use of herbicides is routine in that area—even with giant machinery, acres are simply too large for timely cultivation to be a dependable method of weed control. In the previous summer’s drought, a widely used soybean herbicide, Scepter, did not break down in the soil as it ordinarily would, creating a threat of carryover damage to the next year’s corn. The manufacturer of Scepter, American Cyanamid, urged farmers to mix the chemical with moist soil by fall tillage, though that practice has long been discouraged in the interests of soil conservation, especially on bean ground. In fact, American Cyanamid more than "urged"—farmers were told that if they didn’t follow the recommendation, the company would take no responsibility for the effects of the product. The weather remained dry in spring, and when the rains finally came—in a deluge, as one might expect in Iowa in spring—tons of topsoil eroded into waterways such as the Little Sioux River, where tens of thousands of fish were suffocated by the silt in the water. A "natural disaster"? Perhaps, but one set up by a chain of poor farming practices that seemed economically necessary.

When land is viewed as a commodity to be manipulated for economic gain, and soil not as a living environment but merely as a medium for the interaction of plants and certain chemical elements and compounds; when decisions are made primarily according to the criteria of efficiency and profit; when the scale of agriculture is so large that farmers think in terms of figures rather than the particularity of certain fields and animals, something vital in man’s relationship to nature is lost. And when this happens, we encounter another variation of that American paradox I’ve mentioned: to be a "real" farmer in the business sense is, in the sense of stewardship, not to be a farmer at all.

This moves me to reconsider the status assigned to those weekenders, hobby farmers, and part-timers like myself,
whom earlier I spoke of as semi-impostors. There are a lot of us. In my part of Iowa, which is not the flat prairie north of Ames but the south-central hills, the majority of people who farm also have full-time off-farm jobs. Some are employed in agribusiness—they work at elevators or run feed stores or drive livestock trucks; others work in construction or as plumbers, electricians, bus drivers, salesmen, stockbrokers, lawyers, or, like myself, teachers. What we have in common, I think, is that we farm not primarily for income but because we treasure and value the connection to land and animals, because we want for ourselves and our families that very way of life we’re told farming is not.

Measured quantitatively—that is, by the percentage of total food and fiber we produce—our significance is small; but as people who preserve and pass on traditional rural values, we may be important indeed. It would be foolish to claim that all part-time farmers care about the values of land stewardship or that they farm in ways that are consistent with them. But given their motivations for farming and their relative protection against the economic pressures that, historically, have pressed farmers against the wall, the odds are better with them than with large-scale or corporate operations. And in this era of expanding agribusiness they represent the only viable option for the small or moderate scale, low technology farmer who historically has provided the economic base for small towns and who is such an important element in our sense of what is so essentially "midwestern." Furthermore, the small farmer who is not debt-vulnerable can make his own decisions about his land and farming practices, rather than having his policies determined by a lender. It might not be an overstatement to say that our small part-time farms and acreages represent little islands of economic freedom in a countryside that is more and more under centralized control.

I must admit that when I compare my equipment to twelve-row planters or thirty-six foot disks and hundred-plus horsepower tractors, I feel dwarfed, anachronistic, even a bit ridiculous. Yet I like knowing that my machinery and my land are nearly paid for. I’m glad I can farm in ways that make ecological sense, and I’m proud of the quality of my crops and livestock. And I’m no longer apologetic when I tell people that, counting some ground I rent from neighbors, I farm just about a hundred acres.
Wood Engravings

Eric May

Researchers involved in bird migration have developed a cage for indigo buntings with an ink-pad floor. When the birds are allowed to see the night sky they orient themselves, according to the season, in an appropriate direction relative to the constellations. The ink tracks left on the walls of the cage reveal the buntings' urgency and preference. A kind of longing for the Great Bear or the Southern Cross.

My prints are like that.

Eric May is an Associate Professor at Kent State University's School of Art. He received a B.S. in advertising design from the University of Cincinnati and an M.F.A. in printmaking from Indiana University. His work has been displayed in numerous exhibitions, and in 1983 he won an Ohio Arts Council Individual Artists Fellowship. About his work he says he is "trying to invent an individual mythology."

The judges for the visual art contest were: Michael S. Holihan (Cleveland Institute of Art), Marvin Jones (Cleveland State University Art Department), and Gene Kangas (Cleveland State University Art Department).


My influences are Byzantine icons, Joseph Cornell, Bettye Saar, and, of course, my teacher Alma Lesch. I work in an intuitive manner, arranging and rearranging objects. I choose materials as a painter would choose subject matter. The main focal point is usually an old photograph found at a flea market or antique shop. Other objects can be either natural or manufactured (not intended to be art materials). Some have symbolic meaning, such as keys, crystal, feathers, circles, and mirrors. Others are used purely as design elements. Each has a history or presence all its own, but it is their relationship to each other and to the past and present that is important.

Jacque Parsley received her B.F.A. from the Louisville School of Art, and her M.A. in creative arts this past spring from the University of Louisville. She is the gallery director of The Liberty Gallery in Louisville, Kentucky. "I assembled a collage exhibit in Liberty Gallery in 1983," she explains, "and later my own artwork, which had previously been fiber art, changed in the direction of collage/assemblage." Her work has been published in American Craft Magazine, Fiberarts Magazine, and Surface Design Journal.
Miss Burch. 1987. 16” x 12” x 2”. 
Madame Pivet. 1987. 12" x 12" x 3".
Wormsloe Gardens, 1987. 20” x 17” x 3”.
Special. 1988. 25" x 14" x 4".
As an artist, I have worked in various media, from painting to woodcuts to aquatint/etchings and others. I have spent a number of years with the aquatint/etching process, using only black and white and three gray tones. I was attracted to the aquatint process because of its textural qualities, its qualities of transparency, and its possibilities for creating great contrasts. The textural qualities symbolize the sensual experiencing of the environment; the transparent qualities symbolize what is real as opposed to the superficial; and the great contrasts symbolize the seeking of balance between the intellectual and the spiritual. As my work progressed, I created a vocabulary of forms which express aspects of our internal and external landscape. I present the landscape as still-life and still-life as landscape, an ambiguity of reference. My landscapes seek to express a desire to bring the inside and outside together. It is important to me not to lose the concept of landscape as a factor of spirituality, and I try not to be overwhelmed by the idea of destruction but to encourage the spirit to succeed in giving itself a visible shape. Much of my imagery has been architectural and often the triangle is used. This is a compelling form which pulls up vertically and at the same time seems to be strongly weighted down. There is tension in the point at the top and the edges which represents a process of change whereby two opposites are resolved in a higher form of truth. The forms of the moon are frequently used and represent the casting off of death and being reborn.
Passage XI. 18" x 24". 1985.
Passage XII. 19" x 24". 1985.
After Dinner Games II. 19” x 24”. 1985.
After Dinner Games IV. 22" x 24". 1985.
After Dinner Games V. 19" x 24". 1986.
Lure II. 19" x 24". 1987.
Shivering in the pre-dawn chill, she pulled her robe tight around her, the thin shaft of cold air reminding her that he had tunneled through the plaster again. Two months it had taken this time. His fingers were growing longer and stronger. Beyond the edge of the carpet she could feel the particles of broken plaster cracking beneath her bare feet. She could hear it, too, and the infinitesimal sound accentuated the blessed silence. Though she was cold and bone tired, she would not trade the peace of the moment for warmth or sleep; her ear was still tuned and her mind distracted, waiting for the signal that would end it.

She opened the door and went out into the yard, putting at least that much distance between her and the upstairs. Through the darkness she could see the pond, a bit of moonlight flickering off the surface. The cold morning dew squished between her frozen toes. She put her hands flat against the wire fence, then her face. Her left hand climbed the fence, rested on the bolt latch, slid it back, then forward, then back again, playing with the latch, not idly but with deep concentration. She stopped, leaving it open, and raised her eyes, staring for full seconds. She could feel the tears on her cheeks before she knew they were coming. To stifle the sobs in her throat she threw herself on the grass and buried her face in the wetness, pounding her fists into the soft earth. When she was spent, she rolled over onto her back and lay looking at the lightening sky. She was soaked through her robe, through her nightgown. When she got to her feet, she thought she could hear the crooning begin. She started back to the house, then, remembering, turned and locked the gate.

It was still quiet as she eased up the stairs, keeping to the right to minimize the squeaking of the wood. In the bedroom she removed her robe and slipped the wet nightgown off. Naked in the darkness, she could feel her body prickle with goose bumps. Then she heard the stirring from across the hall.
Not yet! She lurched across the room and climbed into bed, on George's side, trying to force room with her own body. He was too heavy to budge, and for a moment she lay perched precariously on half a hip bone.

"Geez," he said, "you're all wet."

"Just thinking of you, honey," she said.

"Yeah, yeah," he said, laughing awake.

This time she could hear the crooning begin, and to drown it out she sank beneath George's body and crooned her own song, trying to accompany the beat of his body and obliterate the sound of the song from the other room.

She waited in the pickup, watching them disappear into the school, George's back like a moving wall shielding her from the sight of him. She had forced George to go in. She could not face Mrs. Murray, this morning, or yesterday. She had not read Mrs. Murray's note, nor would she let George tell her what was in it. "I don't want to know," she'd said to him. "Consider me on vacation. You know what that is, you're a Union man. Two weeks, I'm taking. Two weeks off!! Don't tell me. You take care of it. What I don't see I don't want to know about."

George had taken her into his arms. She felt his power, like a huge motor idling within the bulk of him, and enraged her. It was so useless, and he as helpless and idiotic as the rhythmless tapping of his big hand against her shoulder.

"I'll take over for a while," he said, "you need a break."

From the pickup she watched the children assemble; clustering by twos and threes and more; talking, their voices singing in the wind that carried words she could comprehend. She closed her window, leaned across the seat and closed George's, trying to shut out the words. But still the voices came, undeterred by mere glass; names and songs and high pitched insults, happy and funny and cruel. Human sounds, unmistakably human.

Through the windshield like a picture on a TV screen she watched a tangle of children make a kaleidoscope on a giant jungle gym. Arms and legs and varicolored torsos wriggled and shifted like the parts of one beast and the ragged chorus of laughter was its voice. She wrenched her eyes away, focusing on a small boy in a red plaid shirt. He stalked a tall girl with a long dark pigtail that moved like the pendulum of a grandfather clock, back and forth across her back as she walked. The boy, slapping from underneath, knocked the girl's books out of her arms. The girl's voice cut through the glass:

"You... you LITTLE SHIT!"

She nodded her head.

She could see George smiling as he came out of the building, a piece of notebook paper in his hand. The building itself seemed to give George hope. It was an ordinary school for
ordinary children. If they let him stay in a room in a building for ordinary children, then there was hope, some officially sanctioned hope. She watched George pause in the doorway to look at the paper. She knew what it was, some ragged clutter of lines and shapes that Mrs. Murray made George believe was a drawing. Mrs. Murray was a magician, she whispered magic words in George's ear, "operant conditioning," "positive reinforcement," "mainstreaming." She stood him before George and shaped some word or two in careful full rounded tones, and drew from his throat one or two strangled sounds. "Words," Mrs. Murray declared and translated them, laying them before George like rabbits from some top hat. George stared at the paper, grinning like a surprised child. When he looked up toward the pickup, he looked pleased and pregnant with good news. She could see him framing the sentences; she could even hear them. Before he could reach her, she slid over into the driver's seat and drove off, watching the smile fade from his lips in the rear view mirror.

The road took her home against her will. While her mind struggled for a destination, the pickup dropped her between the twin birches that led into the driveway beside the house. Because the door couldn't open without her volition, she sat clenching the steering wheel. She was still sitting there ten minutes later when the cab pulled up to let George out. The ground seemed almost to shake as he moved to the pickup. When he yanked open the pickup door, she hissed at him, "Get away from me. Get away." He held the door open, foolish, his anger dissipating like air out of the unpinched mouthpiece of a balloon. She slammed the door shut again and hunched down over the steering wheel until he went away.

On his way to the house he stopped, hopped sideways to avoid something in his path, went on to the garage and came back with a small spade, half a dozen of the chickens following in his wake. He scooped it up on the shovel and carried it to the ragged patch of dirt beside the chicken coop and buried it. She half expected him to put up a marker. It was his patience that broke her heart and enraged her.

When he came back to the pickup, she opened the door and climbed out.

"Again," she said; "Even the dog's housebroken."

"He hasn't done it for a while," George said.

"Not since yesterday," she said, "...you should see the wash I've got."

He nodded.

She was still ironing past midnight. Her arms and neck ached from scrubbing floors and ceilings. George, unwilling to leave her, was asleep in the easy chair. The TV flashed shifting images of Johnny Carson and a parade of people selling things. She'd turned down the sound as soon as she saw
George doze. She took up her laundry basket and counted the remaining pieces. Noting left but underwear. She ironed it all. Once George told her how impressed the guys at the plant were that he had a wife who ironed his underwear. She ironed both of their underwear. A good wife was one who ironed her man’s underwear, and her children’s. As she neared the end of her task, she searched her mind for something more, furniture to move or walls, anything physical to tire her, or at least to make her bones ache. There was nothing like a good long-lasting hurt somewhere in her body. It turned her head inward to the throbbing place, to a pain she could endure, knowing its cessation was out there in the foreseeable future. She held up the last pair of small shorts, searching for brown stains, before she ironed it.

In the morning she had her pain, a wracking migraine that put her out of commission. She swallowed aspirin, suffered helplessly as she listened to George getting him ready for school. She was certain he would look a mess. George couldn’t tell play clothes from school clothes. Desperately, she tried to pull herself out of bed. He could not go out of the house without clean and ironed clothes. Though he would come home with them ripped or soiled with paint and mud and food and his own shit, he could not be allowed to leave until he looked right. Every morning she would let him go, washed and combed and ironed. She had to catch him before he got out of the house. By sheer effort of will she dragged herself out of the bed and hurried downstairs just in time to see the pickup turn out of the driveway. In his bedroom she saw his outfit she had laid out for the day, still folded neatly in a pile on the chair. She burst into tears.

She could feel the vibrations through her bed, and she lay there counting the thumps...five-six-seven...twenty-two....She felt the bed spring upwards as George jumped out. She lay still, listening.

"Okay, okay, okay," George said. Through the walls she saw George engulfing him, burying him against his huge frame, restraining him until the rage or whatever it was subsided. This time George stayed a long while after it was quiet. She lay waiting for him, her view of the next room obscured by the silence. She tried to sleep, but without George the bed was empty and lonely. When she could bear it no longer, she got out of bed and crossed the hall. Standing in the doorway she caught the silhouette of the large head bending down over the smaller. She could see the shadow of George’s lips pressing against the dark round shape. Inadvertently she coughed once, not loudly, and the small head came up violently and the shadow of George’s head snapped back.

"Ouch," he yelled.
When George came back to their bedroom, he was still rubbing under his eye.

"He really nailed me," George said. "I’m going to have a shiner."

"What were you doing so long?" she said.

"Holding him. I thought he was asleep. I like to hold him when he’s asleep. You ought to try it some time."

"I have," she said. "I’ve had my share of shinners, more than my share."

"I didn’t mean it that way," he said.

"Of course you didn’t," she said, "you just said it to make me feel good."

"Have it your way," he said wearily.

Grimly she brought it up again. "How long do we go on; how long, George?"

"I don’t want to hear about it," he said doggedly. "I don’t want to talk about it."

She lay awake in the darkness, her mind ticking like a clock.

It was too hard to love a saint. She’d married an ordinary guy, a big easygoing guy with a quick temper who loved a good time, and she’d ended up stuck with this sponge. How much could she take? Tossing and turning and unable to find any road into sleep, she swore she’d find out.

Somewhere near dawn chickens screamed in her sleep, but she shut them out and hunched deeper into her covers. The voice in her head that always drove her across the hall to get him ready for school nagged at her, but she turned it off. She was already exposed. Yesterday he had gone to school in the stained, torn blue jeans and the faded blue T-shirt that said, "Who? Ray! Hooray!" Let George get him ready again. Let George do it. Let George do everything. He’d made the decision. No, he’d decided there was no decision to be made. Coldly she made up her mind, and dropped off to sleep. When she awoke, the sun shone bright through the tiny crack above the shades. She hadn’t even heard them leave. Like a lady of leisure she went downstairs, made herself a cup of coffee, drank it, had another. Back upstairs she took a long bath, combed her hair, put on a clean shirt and a fresh pair of jeans and went out into the yard, carrying a copy of Better Homes and Gardens with her. She sat and read for a while, the spring sun warming her back. Then she walked over to the gate, slid back the bolt and went to stand at the edge of the pond. It was filling with water lilies, bright yellow flowers sitting on their wide floating green leaves.

On her way back to the house her eye caught the still white shape against the wall of the chicken coop. She went over to it. Its wrung neck flopped over her arm as she lifted it. When the dead neck touched her skin she flung it angrily.
toward the house. In the back of the coop she found two more dead ones. She remembered hearing the screaming chickens.

Last year, last week, the day before yesterday she would have been out the door before he could get near the chickens. She looked inside the coop. The rest were alive. She gathered the dead fowl and dropped them into the kitchen sink, debating whether to cook them for dinner or save them to show George. Seeing them in the sink, she decided to cook them, regretting having taken them from the yard. She should have left them where they lay; she should not have moved the corpses until George found them.

After filling a pot with water she realized she had no vegetables for a soup. The idea of going to the store suddenly seemed pleasurable. It seemed ages since she had talked to anyone, ages since she'd set foot in her Chevy. When George bought it for her, he'd promised they'd put a minimum of 10,000 miles a year on it. After two years the speedometer read 8,000 something. It was damn near brand new. Periodically George asked her why she never used it. As if he didn't know. She stayed home, monitoring the telephone until school was out.

When she pulled out of the dark garage into the bright sunlight, she saw the upholstery on the passenger's side. Near the door there was a hole nearly as big as a saucer, and the seat and floor in front of it was covered with flecks of yellow foam rubber. She slid under the steering wheel across the front seat, opened the passenger's door, and climbed out. Furiously she swept the debris off the seat with the edge of her hand. She stepped backwards, her foot landing squarely in something soft. She didn't even look. She knew what it was.

Before going to bed that night, after being certain that George was asleep, she went out into the yard and opened the latch on the gate that led to the pond.

When her head hit the pillow she dropped into an easy sleep from which she did not wake until the sky had already begun to lighten. She lay bolt awake waiting for fuller light and the sound of the song from across the hall. When she heard it she burrowed more deeply beneath her covers, and still more deeply when she heard the squeaking of the stairs.

"You still on vacation," George said, anger, not sleep, in his voice.

"You bet your sweet life," she said.

The cold air hit her back as George surged from the bed. She felt the vibrations set off by his weight on the stairs. The whole house seemed to be shaking. Without haste she got out of bed and went over to the window. It was full daylight and she could see the gate, nudged slightly open by a substantial breeze, and beyond it the yellow flowers floating on the pond.
She saw George burst out of the house and make straight for the open gate, saw him swing it shut and fix the latch in place; heard his voice, loud and frightened; "Ray, Ray!"

From her window she saw the small golden head appear from around the corner of the house. It bobbed un rhythmically as it moved across the field of her window pane, and she could hear the tuneless song spiraling up to her as the small shape disappeared into the heart of his father’s body.
He grabbed me from behind, pulled me into the shadows. My face was smothered in dirt, I ate clay tasted his flesh, beetles, cut by sharp stones, broken glass, blows I'm not sure. All of it striated by shadows. I couldn't hear what he murmured, threats the blurred voice as he said he knew me. I didn't know what I saw, only clammy dust and the absence of light.

Then I lived in the dimmed sensation of the dead world and kicked dirt clods into the river. The whittled light was cement-gray. I visited the dead in their sex-segregated wards but they ignored me or called me servant. The women were all suicides or slain. Haggard, hair-clawed, they jacketed themselves in their own arms for comfort or cover I was unsure which.

I put my mouth to the gap in the fence links and yelled to the men, "What do you regret?" They paused in the middle of a game, let the ball bounce off dwindling and then shrugged and regretted nothing.
My mother held my face in her hands, tilted me to the light, the air then was utterly transparent—that land had smudged me with shadow fragments marking under my eyes, slanting out my bones. Tell me, she said, did you accept anything from him? Did I?

Was he the man at the grocery who gave me seven red lozenges or the boy who kissed me and I kissed back one lip at a time after school or the man on the way home who spoke to me seven casual words?

I had thought those gifts were innocent. Now shade and I are knotted at the feet. I walk through my mother’s fields with the sun dousing my arms, looking at myself, my brown skin, the grass whisks my calves, and then the sun is straining to move higher in the sky but is pulled back down and I remember that I am his wife.
The Fall of Icarus

I looked up when Icarus came down—but who would notice?
People are always crashing.
My neighbor’s foot caught on the edge of a furrow as he plowed
even as Icarus tumbled headfirst down. He twisted his ankle
and tore up the ground with his hands.
When Icarus plunged down streaming,
my neighbor cursed the ants that confuse the dirt, the feet that are blind
in their shoes and are always blundering.
The white wax ran down his arms in rivers;
he was a drenched man, a ruined,
a steaming man—I watched him fall
and my neighbor turn his ankle in the field.
That day Icarus was the toast of all the taverns.
I told everyone about the red runnels
on his shoulders where the wax plowed away his skin. My old neighbor was there,
a cloth around his leg. We drank
a mug or two for Icarus who imagined he could look God in the eye, another mug
for Icarus and then one for God Himself—Here’s to God’s Eye which burned away the wings of Icarus!
God’s Eye! I felt wild thinking of it.
I went out to look at the sea, gilded with the last of the light that took down Icarus, bright as the annoyance in God’s Eye when He blazed away those wings.
I lost my head for a minute, dazzled by light and drinks to daring and scraped my knees when I took that tumble,
standing on tiptoe on the edge of the hill, imagining the cut valleys, the lean spoon of the isthmus and the shredded breezes in the sky—how it must have looked to Icarus as he spun down and God flicked me off my hillock just for imagining.
Everyone crashes down around here.
Passover

We are slaves, my husband said tonight.  
Save your compassion for your children.  
He marked the door with blood  
on the lintel and the side posts.  
The children reached to catch the drops  
that spotted the front stoop  
but he brushed them back into the house.  
The Angel of Death is coming,  
they whispered to me from their beds.  
Don’t worry, you’ll be safe, I told them.

Now everyone else is asleep.  
I stand near the shuttered windows  
and listen for the sound of death.  
Tomorrow we’ll be free, I tell myself,  
but death is easier than freedom to imagine.  
Stay inside, don’t try to watch, my husband said to me  
and I answered, Who made my eyes, but the Lord?

God told us to borrow from the gentiles  
jewels of silver, jewels of gold.  
My neighbor laughed as she rocked her baby  
and showed me her necklaces of boils, going down  
between her breasts, mostly healed now  
but the skin still dotted with scabs like little garnets.  
These are my jewels, she said. Her voice  
was a bowl with nothing in it.  
She and I used to wash clothes together  
before the dust grew legs and appetite,  
before the wind came with bugs in its teeth,  
before frogs and flies and hail, before darkness.  
I heard her crying when the Lord  
killed their crops and cattle  
and again when she and her children  
were imprisoned by darkness.  
I could hear them running their fingers  
through the black hair of darkness, their mouths  
muffled with darkness, her little boy  
murmuring to himself,  
Don’t be afraid, morning will come soon.
In our illuminated rooms my husband said,
Come away from the window. You won't see
anything by peering into blackness.
If you want to see something to make you sad,
look at my hands that work for nothing, my arms
that own nothing, my back that carries everything,
my legs that cannot go where my God calls me.
We have enough of our own sadness.

Some time tonight the Angel of Death will pass over us.
I will hear His wings seething
and the air chime and howl.
How can I keep myself from opening the window?
The dead leaves on the roof will rattle
and then clatter down the sides of the house.
If I open the shutters
just after the leaves have quieted,
I can see His face when he reaches down
and takes her little boy.

When He is gone the air will be smooth again
like the raked earth after weeding.
Laura is on her way home from school when she hears the rumble of a car coming slowly up the street behind her. Because she is an only child and small for fourteen, her father is protective; each morning as she goes out the door he warns her not to take chances. Drowsy and ready to be on her way, Laura doesn't bother to listen, but she carries his voice away with her. She hears it now, competing with the sound of the approaching car for her attention. When the car finally slides into view it's only an old white Chevrolet with a quivering hood and a young woman driver who looks Laura straight in the eye. Relieved, Laura stops to redistribute the weight of the backpack she has slung over one shoulder. She moves the clarinet case from her right hand to her left and walks on.

The clarinet is on loan from the band director. Laura’s instrument is the flute, but girls all over the school play the flute as well or better than she does. The band director was straight with her this afternoon. He said if she wants a chance at marching band, which she does, she’ll have to play the clarinet. Just a simple adjustment, he told her, no more difficult than making a new friend. He suggested that she take the clarinet home and "see if it speaks to her." She is almost sure it won’t, but part of her hopes she will lift the instrument from the case to her lips and play brilliantly on the spot. Mr. Andrews, the band director, has blonde hair and the most amazing blue eyes. She imagines them fixed on her while she plays for him, all surprise and admiration. She knows he’s wrong about making friends, though. Her best friend, Jenny, moved suddenly last August, and in the two months since school started, Laura has walked the halls pretty much alone.

The Chevrolet is idling down at the corner stop sign by the Methodist Church. The license plate hangs askew and flaps weakly against the fender when the car starts to move again. Laura thinks the Chevrolet may be as old as she is. Blue
black exhaust billows out as it turns the corner and disappears. The smoke hangs in the air, reminding Laura of magic tricks and Walt Disney movies. As a little girl, she loved *Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow White*. The Halloween she was nine, Laura dressed as Snow White. She remembers the costume her mother made with the white standup collar and blue capped sleeves. Before Laura went out trick or treating, her mother smoothed her hair into a Snow White pageboy and sprayed it stiff with lacquer. Her father took a picture of her standing on the porch, clasp a red apple in her hand. It's in the album. Laura came across it recently, but the snapshot might have been of any little girl. Her father stands so far back with his camera that all his photographs end up looking pretty much the same, tiny figures frozen smack in the middle of a much bigger picture. Tightening her grasp on the clarinet case, Laura watches the exhaust rise into the gray sky. Halloween is next week. Some houses already have carved pumpkins on their steps.

The sputtering resumes behind her, and she knows without turning that the Chevrolet is back again. She's about a block from home when the car makes a wide U-turn in the middle of the street and pulls over beside her, coming so close that the whitewalls scrape the curb. Laura takes a few more steps then stops and looks over at the car. The girl in the driver's seat is struggling with a gearshift on the steering wheel, and while Laura watches, she does something that fills the street with an ugly, grinding noise. Framed by the open window, her face looks young and a little lost, as though she's only recently gotten her driver's license and has strayed too far from home. Laura relaxes and gets ready to give directions. She has lived in this neighborhood most of her life and knows her way around.

"Hi," the driver says, smiling a little. Her red hair is a mass of long, coiled curls springing up around her head in every direction. When the breeze catches them, the curls seem to come alive, dancing about the girl's still face.

"Hi," Laura echoes in a small voice. She has never seen such a head of hair, and she can't decide whether it looks wonderful or terrible.

"Do you babysit?" the driver asks.

Laura nods. Babysitting is a recent enthusiasm. She's been sitting since early summer for the next door neighbor, a woman who already has two small children and is pregnant with a third. Laura was surprised the first time she visited her neighbor's house. She had always assumed everyone else lived the same sort of orderly existence she does, clean floors and dinner at six. Not so. Just last week Laura had to fish a toy boat out of the toilet before she could sit down. Her neighbor's closet doors are always wide open, and the children run in and out of all the rooms. At first, the disorder confused her,
but now she hardly notices it. What Laura remembers most about her visits next door is the thick feeling that rises in her throat when the three-year-old girl sits in her lap and combs through her hair.

"What about babies?" the driver asks in a strange voice, as though she is trying to discover something. For the first time, Laura looks into the driver's eyes. Large and brown, they're rimmed with red in a permanent sort of way, as though she's either been ill or sad for a long time.

"I love babies," Laura replies, realizing that it's true, that it must be true of all the girls her age, girls who have given up dolls but have yet to take up boys.

The driver doesn't look convinced. "Have you ever taken care of a baby?" she asks.

"Not yet," Laura admits, "but I have a neighbor who is pregnant, and I'm going to take care of her baby when it's born. She's giving me lessons." This last part is not true.

"Well, then," the driver goes on, sounding like some lawyer on television, "what do you do after you give a baby a bottle?" Her face is scrunched up, as though she were looking into the sun. Actually, the sky is overcast and wintry looking.

"You hold it up against your shoulder," Laura answers, raising the clarinet case to demonstrate. "And you pat its back until it burps." She pats the case and thinks of the clarinet, safe and snug inside.

"And if the baby cries?" the driver goes on, ignoring the case pressed against Laura's chest, rushing ahead as though this were a test with a time limit.

"What do you mean?" Laura asks.

"What if the baby cries?" the driver asks stubbornly. She glances at Laura and then looks away at something that has caught her interest in the car. Carefully, Laura lowers the case to the sidewalk, then straightens and folds her arms across her chest.

"You pick it up," she says. "You check the diaper, try a bottle, rock for a little while. Babies can't say what they want. You have to experiment."

The driver's face relaxes. "You're right," she says to Laura, nodding her head until the curls shift about her face. Her skin is pale, and Laura is reminded of those ancient statues, the ones that don't have arms but whose faces are still perfectly beautiful, even after hundreds and hundreds of years.

"Do you need a babysitter for this weekend?" Laura asks, making a list in her head of the things she has to do. There's the clarinet, of course, plus a history test to study for. And on Saturdays her mother insists on chores. She wants Laura to learn responsibility, which means redoing things her mother has already done, vacuuming a carpet that still shows signs of having been vacuumed the day before, mopping an already
spotless floor. "Do you know how late you’ll be? My mother is..."

"Would you like to see her?" the driver asks, looking down in her lap again. Suddenly, Laura realizes the girl is holding a baby, that she was driving with a baby in her lap. No wonder she was creeping down the street, Laura thinks.

Nodding, she shrugs the backpack further over her shoulder and walks quickly to the car window. Sure enough, the baby is nestled in the folds of the driver’s skirt. As Laura watches, the baby’s eyes open and then close again, the irises an inky blue, the gaze unfocused and wavering. Laura can’t remember ever seeing a baby this new, one with tightly curled fists and legs drawn up so that the tiny feet wave in the air like flowers. Except for the pink, quilted overalls and socks, except for the blue bruise in the center of her forehead, this baby might still be floating in her own quiet bubble. Laura leans closer and releases her breath. "She’s so beautiful," she hears herself say. Laura’s mother has a saying that all babies are sweet, but they aren’t all beautiful. She tells the story of how shocked she was when Laura was born, how no one had warned her that newborns don’t look like the babies in magazines, that their heads are misshapen and their skin is red and wrinkled. This baby’s skin is milky, and on her round head she has the fuzzy beginnings of red hair. "How old is she?" Laura asks.

"Six days," says the mother. "She was born about this time six days ago."

"It’s not my business," Laura says, "but shouldn’t she be in a car seat?"

"Babies are everyone’s business," the mother replies; then she grasps the baby under the arms and hoists her into the air. Even so, the baby’s legs stay firmly drawn. "I knew you were responsible," she says, turning her gaze to Laura. "I could tell by the way you carry your instrument. You wouldn’t drop her, not for the world."

Laura starts to say that the clarinet is not hers, but she doesn’t have time. The mother quickly kisses her baby, firm on the mouth, then holds her out the window. "Take her," she says. Laura hesitates, but she hates the way the baby is dangling so far from the ground, nothing under her but the cement curb. Reaching out, she feels the quilted overalls, then the tiny rib cage, shrinking and expanding beneath her fingers. For an instant, she has hold of one of the mother’s hands, too. It’s warm, warmer even than the baby, and quivering. With a little groan, the mother pulls free, shrinking back into the car. "Hold her close," she tells Laura.

Obedient, Laura tries doing with the baby what she did with the clarinet case and is surprised to feel the baby nestling against her, head on her shoulder, breath warming her neck. She realizes that she’s been chilly standing there, that winter is
coming on fast. "Her name is Nicole," says the driver, and Laura is repeating the name in a squeaky voice when she hears the grinding of gears and the boom of the old engine taking off. The white Chevrolet pulls away with a squeal, fast, as though the driver were getting onto the expressway.

"Hey, wait," Laura cries, but it's no good. The car has disappeared, leaving Laura and the baby in a cloud of smoke. The smell of burning oil fills the street, and Laura thinks it can't be healthy for a baby to breathe such fumes. Relaxing her grip a little, she nudges the baby's face into her collar before moving back to the sidewalk and the black clarinet case. She studies the case for a few seconds then lets the backpack slide down her arm until it drops to the pavement beside the case. Her things look odd lying there, as though Laura has run away or been abducted and, in her rush, has left everything behind. She knows what her father would say: She's taking chances with her belongings; anyone could come along and steal them. She hesitates, then begins down the sidewalk with the baby. It's all right, she tells herself. Her father can't expect her to carry home the whole world at once.
Creating a New Magazine

Interview with Alexander Kaplen, editor and founder of Wigwag

Wigwag is a monthly magazine that presents "reporting, humor, fiction, political columns, commentary on the arts, and visual delights." Its first issue (October) was published in September, 1989. Subscriptions are $19.95 for one year (ten issues).

GAMUT: Why did you want to start your own magazine?
KAPLEN: I guess the main reason we wanted to start Wigwag was because there wasn't a magazine like it on the newsstands, and I wanted to see such a magazine—a magazine that talked about life around the country, not only in New York and Los Angeles. And a magazine that told stories. Storytelling seemed to be out of vogue for some reason. And also a magazine that was not necessarily or insistently snide, cynical.

GAMUT: How did you get the idea?
KAPLEN: I was in law school at the time. When you're in law school, sometimes your mind wanders. It seemed to me especially after having worked in a law firm for a little while between terms, that it wasn't the kind of life I wanted for myself, to be a hired gun. Or even to spend my life in litigation, fighting people, which is what one does as a litigator. So I decided that what I really wanted to do was continue to do magazine work. I had done some between college and law school. I worked at The New Yorker and had a number of friends there who were willing to go in with me, and to take a shot. To work for no money, for a while, or very cheaply, after their other job at the end of the day. We created the magazine. We came together on this project in the fall of 1987, and started working seriously on it in October. And it took us about six months to come out with a prototype issue. In February of 1987, when I really felt serious about the idea, I found somebody who gave us seed money to do a prototype issue, based on the ideas I had in mind at that point. We came out with this issue in May of 1988. We printed about 5000 copies to do newsstand tests around the country, to see if the idea would fly. And to find out if people wanted to subscribe, we put a subscription card inside. We had such a remarkable
reception. The magazine sold out very quickly, and 18% of the people returned subscription cards.

GAMUT: That’s really wonderful.

KAPLEN: It’s extraordinary. Obviously, it doesn’t happen in direct mailing. But it did happen when we put that on the newsstand. And, we figured, it was such a small sampling, it could very well be misleading, but we wanted to go ahead with it. We found people who would back us throughout the summer and fall of 1988. We hired a publisher in December of 1988, and we came out with the first of our monthly issues in September of 1989, the October issue. [Wigwag received $3,000,000 in start-up capital. They anticipate reaching their breakeven point in a couple of years.]

GAMUT: Could you describe your ideal Wigwag reader?

KAPLEN: There isn’t one, I guess. There are a lot of them. There are people who I think are interested in knowing what’s going on around the country, who think of all the richness that life has to offer, and aren’t jaded or cynical all the time. They may have their moments—we all do, but that isn’t necessarily how they approach life. Because of that, they have this wide-ranging curiosity about things. Not only about things that are usually reported on in the press—about famous people, celebrities—but also about a whole range of topics: clothes and animals, and wildlife, and politics, all kinds of people and places that they’ve never heard of before but wonder what life is like there. I think of myself as the ideal Wigwag reader in that sense, I guess. Because I really do make the magazine each month for me. Nothing goes in the magazine that I wouldn’t want to read. That’s what’s great about doing it, that I get to sit down with a magazine that I really want to read and look at.

One of the reasons we started Wigwag was because, when I was in law school, I couldn’t come up with a paper very quickly. As soon as I was sort of stumped on how to write something, I’d take a car ride. And I got to know Connecticut very well, because of that. I’d just take my car out and drive. And it was always interesting to me how people lived in these different towns. Not only towns—farm-lands, and there are old factory towns, old mill towns, big cities. And then there are very fancy suburbs in the western part of the state, like Greenwich. I just wanted to know how people live in different parts of the country. How are they like me? How are they different? And I think readers of Wigwag approach “Letters from Home” in that way. They’re curious about how people go about their lives in different parts of the country. In that sense, the magazine is about everyday life. It’s about the way we—the rest of us, the people who aren’t talked about in People magazine—lead our lives.
GAMUT: Is that why you seem to avoid celebrity and television coverage?
KAPLEN: We avoid them because they’re covered elsewhere. And I think people are a little tired of them at this point. There doesn’t seem to be a place where other kinds of people are mentioned or talked about. This is not in any sense a doctrinaire magazine. It’s a magazine that wants to give readers a good time, to entertain them, and to inform them. Another thing about the magazine is that there are a lot of different voices in the magazine, a lot of different kinds of writers. And that’s important to us—not to have a house style. There’s Sousa Jamba, who writes our "Letter from Springfield" column, who has a very different voice, say, from Chip Hannay, who writes from Dripping Springs, Texas. Or from Susan Moritz, who writes our "Great Outdoors" column. Or Ted Hoagland or Sven Birkerts, who’ve written our book reviews. All very, very different voices, ranging from the most formal and elegant to the most casual writers around. And also regional voices. Although I think regionality is disappearing. At one point, it may have been honest, but somehow, it seems that regionality now is more of an affectation than anything else.
GAMUT: Do you really think so?
KAPLEN: In writing, in a voice. That’s what I mean. Whether we live in Alabama or New York City or Oregon, we tend to read many of the same things. Magazines are national, books are national. Unfortunately now newspapers, which were the last holdouts, are national. It’s the chains. And even so, for a long time, people in the newspapers picked the AP and UPI reports. So as we grow up and are influenced by writers, I think we’re influenced by writers from all over the country.
GAMUT: Who came up with the name "Wigwag"? Was that you?
KAPLEN: Yes. We wanted a name that did two things: one, that it reflected what we were about, a sense of where they are, where they fit in. In fact, the first idea for a name I had, although we were never going to use it as a name, but as a starting-point, was "A Sense of Where You Are," which is always the subhead. It’s actually the name of John McPhee’s book on Bill Bradley. It was Bradley’s great talent on a basketball court, and subsequently in life—always knowing instinctively where he was, without having to look. He just knew where he was and where he fit in. It seemed to me that that’s what a lot of people I knew were looking for: where did they fit in? So, we thought of a lot of names that meant "signals." I thought of "Atlas," which I thought was an extremely good name, but none of my editors liked it. They thought it meant flat-footed. They’re usually right. And so "Wigwag," which means to signal—it’s a railroad term and a mariner’s term—fit. And it also filled our second criterion.
And that was that the name should not be formal-sounding or pompous, that it should immediately identify us as a magazine that doesn’t take itself so seriously. The "serious" magazines seemed increasingly "serious." And the "trivial" magazines—meaning magazines about celebrity living—seemed increasingly "trivial." There didn’t seem to be something that said that you can be serious and entertaining at the same time. I guess the name suggests fun, silliness even.

GAMUT: One of the things that I picked up from reading the other interviews and articles written about your magazine was that Wigwag is like home. And I wondered if you were trying to redefine what the national conception of "home" is.

KAPLEN: I don’t think we’d have very much luck redefining anything. It would be too big a task for us. All that we can do is try in some way to reflect what’s already going on, which is very difficult in itself. My sense is that, obviously, home has changed. And one of the dangers in identifying yourself with the theme of home is that people immediately peg you as a home-spun magazine, meaning traditional. And we’re not, in that sense. I think that our writers see home in all sorts of ways. It’s really, whenever people get together and make a commitment to be with one another, that’s home. Or stay in a place long enough to put down roots, or to feel as if they’re part of the community. That’s home, too. And so, for instance, we had an article in this month’s issue, in the March issue, about gay and lesbian teenagers. It didn’t say anything definitively, but what it said was that gay people make homes for themselves as well as straight people do. We are not saying that the only families that are worth attention are traditional, two-parent families. There’s different conceptions of what communities are, also. Not only homes, but communities. And people who live in big cities sometimes think of their town as a neighborhood, if they can. Sometimes they don’t feel a sense of community at all. And we’re trying to talk about that, also—the sense that people may feel alienated from their community. They feel that they don’t have anything to do with their town.

GAMUT: The "Letters from Home" section seems to be the backbone of your magazine.

KAPLEN: Yes, definitely.

GAMUT: How did you select your correspondents, and how many of them are there?

KAPLEN: It’s a group of revolving writers with new people in every issue. We asked writers that we’ve respected, and either we’d known from reading in their books or in magazines, but we tried not to use people who were identified with other magazines. We went after book writers. We read back issues of Best Essays in America, and the Best Short Stories in America, the O. Henry Awards, you know. We really tried to look for the best writers around, the best reporters. We used a lot of
fiction writers. Clearly, they write nonfiction for us, but we thought that being observant, having a voice and an instinctive view of the world, is the most important thing that we can ask our writers to do. We found that we’d compiled a pretty interesting group. And that they represented different areas of the country well. Now, we just continue to look for people whom we read in newspapers or magazines or, particularly, from books.

GAMUT: Obviously, everything is not written by your staff. Are your columns and features, though, written by staff members only?

KAPLEN: Pretty much everything in the magazine, except for the feature and the fiction, is written by people who have an ongoing relationship with the magazine. We’re starting to gather a large group of reporters who I can call and talk to about ideas, as opposed to having to start from scratch every month. But our fiction is submitted to us by people, by writers, by agents. [Pay scale for writers is competitive with other national magazines.]

GAMUT: So you do accept over the transom submissions?

KAPLEN: Oh, absolutely. And we’re looking for writers all the time for the “Letters from Home” over the transom, as well. I guess our hope and our goal is to find writers who are new, not necessarily young, but who haven’t become well-known. And to have them work with us and to nurture them and have them develop at Wigwag, so that our readers feel a proprietary interest in the writers and feel that they may have discovered them in some way. It helps create a distinctive identity for our magazine, that we don’t have writers who are writing for all the other magazines, or for any other magazine in most cases.

GAMUT: What is your working structure?

KAPLEN: We have a business department. We have advertising representatives who go out and sell ads for us. Some of them work in-house and some are reps around the country—Los Angeles, Detroit, New England, and Chicago. We have a publisher who manages that, who manages the circulation of the magazine both on newsstands and from subscriptions, which most of our readership comes from.

GAMUT: From subscriptions?

KAPLEN: Yeah. We have about 65,000 subscribers. And about 50,000 who get it on the newsstand. As far as the editorial staff goes, there’s Nancy Holyoke, our Managing Editor, and we have four department editors, a fact-checking department. We have a copy editor’s department.

GAMUT: Who would make decisions on content?

KAPLEN: Anyone can come up with anything. I would have to pass on it. I’d have to like it. And people around the office always come up with ideas. If we proceed with the idea, they sometimes come up with the writers to write it. And also the
writers are asked. There have been a couple of features so far that have come from writers. "Letters from Home"—the ideas are almost always from our writers, not ever from us. What do we do about Dripping Springs, Texas? Chip Hannay's there, or Terry McMillan in Tucson. We don't know what's going on there. They're our eyes there, our ears. Our columnists, up front or in the back of the book, come up with ideas most of the time.

GAMUT: How many people have a hand in copy editing? Is that something that you do very heavily?

KAPLEN: We don't really rewrite articles. It's just not helpful. It's better to say no and reject a piece. Sometimes a writer will hand in a first draft that needs work, and we give a very heavy proof back to the writer and ask the writer to work on it more. But it's always a collaboration if we think the piece is unsatisfactory. We never just write it for them. That wouldn't be what we want in a magazine. Because that way leads to a uniform voice for the magazine. We have a house style, as all magazines do. By the house style I'm talking about punctuation, I'm talking about what numbers are spelled out, which are enumerated, not about the way a sentence should be phrased, other than for clarity, for grammar, for syntax.

GAMUT: When I first started this assignment, I asked our graphic designer to look at your magazine. She was terribly impressed. And it seemed to me not that you were going out of your way to look different, but that you did look so different from other magazines on the newsstand. She pointed out a number of things that you were doing that were very unusual. Like the February flip-book.

KAPLEN: I'm not quite sure that that came off exactly.

GAMUT: Well, I looked for it in my March copy and I noticed there wasn't one, unless you moved it.

KAPLEN: The March issue—we were serious. That's one thing we like to do in the magazine. They won't have a
consistent tone from issue to issue. Some issues will be lighter than others, and sillier, and some will be more serious, cover more serious topics. The look of the magazine is very important to us. We asked Paul Davis, the designer, a wonderful illustrator and a wonderful designer. He does wonderful posters and paintings. We were very lucky, not only that he wanted to come and work with us, but also that he shared our ideas about the look of the magazine, the goals of the magazine. I went to Paul in November of 1987 to talk about the magazine with him, to ask him if he'd be interested. And I was very nervous when I went, because he was famous. And I thought of every possibility he wouldn't do it. But he couldn't have been more interested. I think what attracted him to the magazine was our idea of creating something that didn't look as if it had come off the assembly-line, was handmade. And that it would be bright and fun and lively. It's beautiful, in many cases.

It seems to me that so-called "serious" magazines thought that one couldn't mix beauty and brains. That a magazine couldn't be smart and fun to look at, and attractive. So we wanted to say that's nonsense. Also, since the magazine was about home in many ways, we wanted it to look homey, as if it had been done, as I said, by hand.

GAMUT: You seem to put a lot of emphasis on visual things like the timeline and the family trees. It seemed like you were going out of your way to be visually appealing.

KAPLEN: Well, my feeling was, again, that just as there are a lot of different kinds of voices for writers, there are a lot of different ways to tell a story. Why shouldn't we think of ways that depart from just text? Why shouldn't we think of charts and graphs and maps and family trees and timelines and things that also tell the story? The magazine is really a magazine of stories, that was foremost in our mind, telling stories.

We wanted the magazine to have different layers. And we wanted certain articles in there that would take a couple of hours to read, that you could sort of sit in the chair at home, curl up into your couch, and read them. Or read them, say, on a long train ride or plane ride. Then there are certain things we wanted people to be able to read just over lunch. Say twenty minutes, at the lunch counter. And then other things that could be read in the space of two minutes. You just pick it up and put it down. Or thirty seconds, even. Because I feel that people would become more involved with a magazine they thought would be used at various times of the day or of the week.

GAMUT: Some of the feature pieces you've had—Mr. Rogers, and stuttering, and Marilyn Quayle's spiritual advice—what kind of criterion do you have for a good centerpiece?

KAPLEN: Oh, any story that's interesting, and hasn't been told already. For instance, in the March feature, we have a
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piece about Ernie Chambers, who's a black state senator from Nebraska—the only black member of the Nebraska unicameral. And he's an unreconstructed radical. I mean, he came out of the radical movements of the late 60s, very much influenced by Malcolm X, who also came from Omaha. And he hasn't changed his tune at all. He's still very angry, very suspicious of whites, particularly white politicians. He's not what we now think of as a successful model for black politicians. He's a person who is well-known in one part of the country, the state of Nebraska, one of the most famous or second most famous politicians in Nebraska. He has been for twenty years, but nobody else knows who he is. I think that's our most important criterion, that a story hasn't been told before. The other thing that's equally important is that it touches people. The Mr. Rogers piece—Mr. Rogers [of public television's "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood"] had never consented to a profile before. It's the first long piece, and the first in-depth piece about him that had come out. And I think that, in itself, is interesting. Here's a man who's very famous, and this is the first time. I don't think that people had really heard about Marilyn Quayle meeting Colonel Thieme [an evangelical minister].

GAMUT: It was certainly news to me.

KAPLEN: It came out in the fall of '88. There was talk about it. But no one could reach him, and he wouldn't talk and the Quayles wouldn't talk. So again, this is the first time he consented to an interview. We have a piece that's coming out in our April issue, was just shipped last night, about B. Altman & Co.—that's a department store in New York—which went out of business. Everyone else had looked at the story from this angle: the store had become an anachronism, an old ladies' store, and it had died a natural death. We found out, in fact, that it died an unnatural death. It had been murdered by greedy and incompetent managers who took it over just as it had already made a comeback, and that it was taken over by an Australian developer. Again, the idea is to tell people things they don't know. What's the point of doing another piece about Cher?

GAMUT: How well do you feel you're succeeding in circulation and distribution across the country? Are you fairly evenly distributed? In heavy clusters?

KAPLEN: There are clusters. Basically, because of the way distributors work, you have to start out in clusters, in major cities. By major cities, I mean cities with a population of say, over 250,000. The network is increasing.

GAMUT: By subscription?

KAPLEN: We do direct mailing. Set aside a couple months where we send letters to people seeing if they're interested. It's hard.

GAMUT: Oh, I know.
KAPLEN: Gosh, I never imagined it would be this hard.
GAMUT: You send out an enormous volume, and you can only expect a small return.
KAPLEN: That’s right. There’s something that, two years ago, I thought was ridiculous. As recently as a year ago, I thought the whole direct mail system was ridiculous. But in many ways it’s the best method to reach people.
GAMUT: Do you have any out-of-the-country interest?
KAPLEN: We do. We’re distributed in London. And Tokyo. A large American population there.
GAMUT: Do you have any plans for getting rid of some features or adding more wacky presentations?
KAPLEN: Yeah. I’d honestly rather wait and surprise our readers. But there are definitely plans to put new things in.
GAMUT: Do you have a commitment to continue publishing fiction and poetry?
KAPLEN: Oh, no question. Fiction is very important to the magazine. Very important. And so is poetry. We will always publish fiction, and we’ll always publish a bed-time story. Bed-time stories are very important to us—to be able to have kids share the magazine.
GAMUT: That’s what I was thinking was most novel, an acknowledgement that the adult person reading this magazine had a relationship with a child. Usually, unless it’s a recipe sort of magazine, there isn’t that understanding.
KAPLEN: Our publisher, Sam Schulman, likes to say that this magazine is for a whole person, rather than just a part of a person. Like a tennis magazine is meant to be for the tennis-playing part of the person. Forbes would simply be for the business-man part of that person. But what we try to do is to reach all parts. There’s danger in that, obviously. But it’s an ambition worth trying. Obviously, a large number of our readers have young kids. And again, obviously, it fits in with this idea of the whole community.
GAMUT: I have two final questions. The first is: What do you want Wigwag to do to the reader? How should we be affected by reading your magazine?
KAPLEN: I guess any way you like, really. I think Wigwag would be a success if our readers just felt something. You know, that they felt something. The magazine isn’t cerebral, but emotional. And I hope that our readers would laugh, or feel touched. That’s what I hope for. Obviously, I want to inform them. But more important is to touch them in some way. I also want readers to look at the magazine and be able to recognize certain parts of themselves in it. For instance, the map has been pretty successful, at least judging by the number of submissions we have been getting—four or five every day. I think that readers look at it and see that even the most seemingly random lives have a sense of closure, or at least an order. And that, in some ways, I think, is reassuring to people. Not that we want the magazine to be reassuring,
throughout. We want it to provoke people, to make them angry, and make them question things. But at least feel something. Too much in our lives—too many things we read and see—simply want to numb us, to make us stop feeling, to lull us. And I don’t want that.

GAMUT: When I was reading the media literature about Wigwag, it was described as “old-fashioned” in the good sense, and “just plain folks.” This didn’t seem to me to be really accurate. It seemed to me that your aim was to feel comfortable to the reader, to be literate and to be catholic in the sense that you are conscious of the larger world, and to have a sense of humor about life.

KAPLEN: I think that’s right. We try to be catholic in our tastes and interests, no question. “Old-fashioned”—that’s strange. I don’t know. I mean, it’s old-fashioned in the sense that the people who are the editors here are people, and they bring with them all the things they’ve learned and been a part of over their lives. You know, that includes a lot of the past, so naturally they bring that with them. “Old-fashioned”—I don’t know.

I never get an interview like this. You’re questioning, and you’re thinking about the magazine, and you’ve read it. You’re not trying to peg it in some five-word slot. And that’s a rare treat for me. But I think that people who do that try to think of it in easily recognizable terms. And I think it is old-fashioned in the sense that we are coming back to storytelling. We’re not talking about celebrities so much. Magazines used to talk about all kinds of people. That’s what we’re doing. It’s old-fashioned maybe even in its look, the way it looks rich and lush. But it’s not old-fashioned, I think, in its view of the world, because I don’t think of myself as particularly old-fashioned. I’m 30 years old, and I think I’m as much a part of 1990 as anybody else is.
Where Are Cleveland's Bookstores?

M. C. Pastoret

You may have felt this yourself: for a city the size of Cleveland, there aren't very many bookstores. According to the figures published by the American Booksellers Association (ABA), Cleveland has less than one bookstore per 10,000 households, .88 to be exact. With total book sales of 30.2 million dollars in 1987 and a population of about 700,000, each household spent an average of $42.40 in bookstores. Columbus, with a comparable population, has nearly one and a half bookstores per 10,000 households (1.32); they spent an average of $86.89, and their total purchases reached 43.7 million dollars.

Those numbers are surprising. How can a city with a cultural reputation that includes a great orchestra and a great art museum be indifferent to books and bookstores?

I took the problem to Cleveland's booksellers, who surprised me by not being surprised. They suggested good reasons for those numbers, reasons that have more to do with the city's demography and economy than its cultural literacy.

Thriving book markets are found in cities with large numbers of people whose lives and work involve books as a matter of course—students, teachers, civil servants, professionals. Densely populated urban neighborhoods also draw bookstores. In Cleveland, the urban neighborhoods have eroded away, and the population consists largely of people who do not work with papers and books. Books are a discretionary purchase, and the first thing to come between a reader and a book is the cover price. It is important to remember, too, that the city's readers are served by excellent library systems throughout the area.

What the numbers cannot tell us is what kind of book town this is—the better question for placing our bookstores within the context of the city's cultural life.

For one thing, independent bookselling survived in Cleveland in the 1980s. Not every city can say that. The major
chains, Waldenbooks and B. Dalton, began the decade with 1,000 stores nationwide between them, and ended it with double the number. They perfected the business of mass-merchandising books, and killed off quite a few independents in the process. For those that survived, rising rents and payrolls cut into profits.

Faced with those conditions, booksellers around the country learned to become sharper business people—or they disappeared. Cleveland claims a number who learned the business.

Joan Hulbert of Booksellers is one. Her three stores are built around the recognition that there are two parts to the book market. "There's the part that goes on and on," she says, describing the customer for whom books are as necessary as food and clothing, and who buys them steadily throughout the year. "The other book market is hard to figure out, it's the more volatile part. It ebbs and flows in relation to how magazines and mass-market paperbacks are doing. It's the same part that runs into the store at Christmas."

Ms. Hulbert courts the steady market by emphasizing the strength of her stores' backlist—those books that remain in print and continue to be of interest and importance over the years. Books as different as Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*, Cold Sassy Tree by Olive Ann Burns, and Kay
Thompson’s *Eloise* may all be found on the backlist. She chooses her locations by keeping in mind that bookselling relies “on a certain amount of affluence mixed with a certain amount of inclination.” Her newest store, which opened last year in Rocky River, fills a need on the West Side for a large independent to complement the area’s small bookstores (such as Turn of the Page). Her aim is creating a social milieu as well as a bookstore. She provides amenities that encourage meeting and chatting—live music and the coffee bar at the Pavilion store, the beautiful design of the Rocky River store. Even the Shaker Square store sits next to an Arabica coffee shop.

At Under Cover Books in the Van Aken shopping center, Joel Turner says “the emphasis of the chains will always be on what they have rather than what they can get.” His edge is the fine art of getting books that aren’t on the shelves: “We like special orders.” He believes in building relationships with customers: “We are closer to our clientele and know them better. Our strength is that we know two-thirds of the people who come in. We order books for people who don’t know the books exist yet. Good bookselling requires a middleman—someone who knows the publishers and the customers.”

As if that weren’t a full-time job in itself, Mr. Turner devotes much time and energy to such business issues as lobbying for net pricing of books, which would allow retailers to set their own prices for new trade books according to their costs of doing business. He’s committed to improving the profitability of the business by pressing for such changes.

Nowhere in Cleveland is the idea of a neighborhood bookstore better realized than in Appletree Books, at the top of Cedar Hill. Wesley Williams of Publix Book Mart says, “It may be the best-run bookstore in the city. He knows his customers and he meets their needs.”

“He” is the reflective and articulate Bill Rubin, the guiding spirit of Appletree. “We’re a family-oriented store and can serve all the members of the family—sometimes at Christmas they’ll all come in here together, shopping for each other.” His customers are the students, professors, and others of the university community in the Cedar Hill area. Even when they grow up and go on to other things, they still come back to their neighborhood bookstore. One man who moved to St. Louis still calls to order books: “Whatever he looked for in a bookstore he found in us,” says Mr. Rubin.

The bookseller-customer relationship can be very delicate in such a place. As Audrie Rubin says, “We’re often the first to know about changes in people’s lives because of the books they buy.” Mr. Rubin adds, “We’ve known about more divorces before the spouses did—babies, too. Tact is very important.”
"We can't compete on inventory and we can't compete on space, but in a shop like this we can stock our books very selectively and know customers will walk out with what they're looking for." One of Mr. Rubin's talents is helping people figure out what they are looking for. With an M.L.S. degree and eight years of library experience, he's sensitive to the fact that "customers often need help. People can wander in, not see what they're looking for, and wander back out of any bookstore, or library, for that matter." This is a man who has found his place in the community and fills it with uncommon grace and intelligence.

While all of these suburban stores—and the many more I have not described—are important to book life here, many Clevelanders think that the center of bookselling should be downtown, if anywhere. And while that may not be quite the case these days, things are looking up.

Publix Book Mart, for example, is a survivor. Now in its fifth incarnation, Publix is a name that has long meant bookselling in Cleveland. Granted, it is a different place from the Publix many of us knew in the days when Robert and Ann Levine owned it. The "old" Publix boasted an inventory of unsurpassed dimensions, a capable staff, and a clientele of great loyalty. Although the dimension has retracted, we should credit Wesley Williams and Nina Bailey for keeping the name and the store in the city.

Mr. Williams bought Publix from the Levines in 1978 when it was on Huron Road. That building closed in 1984, and Publix disappeared for two years. The store re-opened on East 14th Street, its inventory rebuilt from scratch. With some 50 to 60,000 books—all of which is about half the number of volumes of the old store—Nina Bailey calls it "a very manageable-sized store."

More than half of the operation now is in used and rare books, "the most interesting aspect of the business to me," Mr. Williams says. "There's a trick to it—you have to buy right." And there's the excitement of acquisition, such as the 2,700 volumes he bought from a large private collection in Chicago last year.

That mix of old and new gives Publix the patina—and yes, the smell—of a "real" bookstore. "There's an image of what a 'real' bookstore is," he says. "A little bit of mustiness and disorder. Old books convey the warmth of a bookstore, the feeling of a Dickensian place with character, and characters." While the chains may be successful merchandisers, "bookstores are too personal to be mass-merchandised. A book isn't a thing, it's a carrier of ideas. Customers come to us when their needs can't be met by new-book dealers."

Ms. Bailey says, "We'll carry only five copies of the new Stephen King, but we will have two copies of an obscure title you won't find down the street. We feel that's our niche—the
mid-list and low-list books." In spite of the ABA data, "my feeling is that this is a good book city," says Mr. Williams.

Across downtown, at the bottom of West Sixth and Lakeside Avenue, you'll find Bank Street Bookshop. Joella Burgoon, who formerly owned Shaker Square Bookshop, opened the store in 1988. She chose her location for the development going on in the warehouse district and for the planned mix of residential and commercial uses. "This is going to be a neighborhood," she states with confidence, "and I'm prepared for it to take time." She looks forward to becoming the neighborhood bookstore for people who live and work downtown. She, too, knows that "people just love to hang out in bookstores," and has designed accordingly, with comfortable benches, good lighting, and well-placed shelves. "Personal interchange" is important to her; so she makes an effort to recall what her customers have read and what they like.

Ms. Burgoon is disturbed by the ease with which some Clevelanders give up on their bookstores. "Are you buying books from good bookstores?" she asks. Her challenge is addressed to the people who go to New York to buy the books they could easily find or order here. She, too, is building a solid backlist; among other areas, she is trying to broaden and refine her poetry section and include more works by Latin American authors.

Mary Lou Ferris is the owner of The Book Merchant on Euclid Avenue near East 12th (she also has a suburban store in Eastgate). The Book Merchant offers all new books at a discount, and you can often find bargains on the remainder tables. But the store is perhaps most notable for the presence of Dennis Milota, who began his career with the Levines at Publix in 1972. "I don't think I'd care to sell too many other things," he says. "I love to share my love of reading—matching books and people." As a matchmaker, he has few peers. He is both knowledgeable and reflective, with good instincts and a good memory.

Used and rare bookstores are vital to the life of a good book town, for books long outlive their usefulness as new merchandise. Here Cleveland suffered a great loss in the 1980s with the closing of Kay's Bookstore on Prospect Avenue, a truly old-fashioned place crammed with treasures and presided over by eccentrics. Yet even with that loss, we are not bereft.

Old Erie Street Bookstore on East Ninth Street only looks as though it's been there for forty years. Mark Stueve opened it in 1980, and presides over some 15,000 volumes on the shelves (with another 20 to 25,000 in storage). This store offers the deep pleasures of revisiting your history as a reader: seeing titles you read and loved years ago, reminding yourself of your changing tastes and curiosities. And it holds the temptation of things you mean to read one day.
Mr. Stueve likes the challenge of his business: "It's fun to learn about the books—the ultimate ongoing degree—endless graduate school." Next to the satisfaction of enjoying how he earns his living, the "neat thing is to help a customer build a collection around a certain subject."

John Zubal, whom Stueve calls a "good detective," got into the business by "having too many books of my own and no place to put them." His store on West 25th Street houses an extraordinary collection of scholarly out-of-print books and monographs in the humanities and social sciences. In books, that means some one million pieces, and in periodicals, five million, all stored in two buildings.

His business is nearly all mail order, and he has an international market for his periodical collections. Only one percent of his sales originates in Ohio. He says being a detective (actually a prophet) means "knowing when to put things away." He offered as an example *The Birds of Ohio* by Bruce J. Peterjohn, a 1989 release "that has the potential to become a modern rarity. I do like to think of things in the long haul and hold books for the future." He recently created his own auction firm suited to the needs and schedules of collectors in this area.

Cleveland is well-represented in the rare book market by Peter Keisogloff Rare Books Inc. Though Mr. Keisogloff himself—now in his nineties—lives in near-seclusion in Mentor, he continues to influence a dealership that now holds an international reputation among antiquarian dealers. Day-to-day operations are overseen by Paul Csank and his son, Aaron, together with manager David Brixius. Most of their business is conducted at auction in New York, or through their catalogues, but their discreet, elegant little shop in the Arcade is well worth a visit. That's where you can find a first English edition of Joyce's *Ulysses*, or examples of the unusual, beautiful, and weird in contemporary bookbinding.

There are many other fine bookstores well worth exploring in Cleveland, each with its own strengths, abilities, character. There are also the women and men who make such places possible: not just the owners, but the managers and booksellers, people who are usually worth a lot more than their salaries and willing to work for less. It is somehow in the nature of the retail book business that its hardest workers are the least well-rewarded. As Samuel Johnson said, "the booksellers are generous, liberal-minded men" and women.

As a book town, Cleveland is underrated. While it has been an even better book town, and could be again, perhaps readers here need to spend more time in their bookstores. If bookselling is an art, so is book buying. It takes a little work to discover which stores provide the particular combination of stock and service one desires.
As a book market, Cleveland is looking up. Downtown will be important again. As Nina Bailey says, "I'm 90% confident in the growth of downtown Cleveland. There's a definite resurgence of downtown as a destination for shopping." She and Wesley Williams are watching development on Playhouse Square with great interest. Joan Hulbert wants a downtown location; she is waiting "to see where downtown is, though, before making my plans."

The chains see potential here, too. Doubleday will open a store in the new Tower City complex this fall. Modeled on old-line independents, Doubleday stores have a reputation for offering an extensive selection of new titles. Waldenbooks placed one of its upscale Brentano's stores (no relation to Kroch's and Brentano's of Chicago) in the Galleria in 1987. Its sales topped one million dollars in the 1989 fiscal year, easily meeting the company's goals for this location.

The Denver-based book wholesaler, Gordon's, will open a warehouse in Cleveland this summer. Bookstores here will be able to get their orders within 24-36 hours at lower freight cost.

The next decade will perhaps make this a good book town again.

Note

1 The book market data in this article come from figures prepared by William S. Lofquist of the United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (December 15, 1989), and published by the American Booksellers Association.
University Presses
Stuart A. Kollar

Just for a moment, try to imagine what it might have been like to study in medieval Oxford or Cambridge during the year 1450. If you see yourself squinting over piles of scholarly publications, save your eyes. Gutenberg has just begun to work with movable type in Mainz, Germany, and printing technology will not cross the Channel for decades. In the meantime, books are rare and valuable properties, produced one at a time by scriveners who copy them out by hand. Your university owns a collection of only a few hundred, and these do not circulate.

As a consequence, your education comes largely by ear. You learn by attending lectures and listening while scholars read aloud, pausing at key passages to elaborate. If you manage to borrow a manuscript from a stationer, you don't study it so much as make your own copy, pursuing the ambition of Chaucer's Clerk, who dreamed he might someday

have at his beddes head
Twenty bokes, clad in black or reed.1

It is too bad we can't transport this hopeful scholar into the late twentieth century. Today's American college teacher owns a personal collection of books averaging about 600 volumes and often reaching into the thousands.2 The libraries of established universities have holdings that number in the millions. Many of these books are monographs: learned treatises devoted to specialized fields. They warn casual readers away with titles like Blackfoot Musical Thought, Marsden Hartley in Bavaria, and The Whilton Dispute: 1264–1380. Such writings are fascinating and important to small numbers of scholars but superfluous to everyone else. Their world-wide distribution is often limited to a few hundred copies. They rarely make money for their publishers.

Indeed, it is safe to say that had the production and distribution of the works cited above depended on profit-seeking commercial enterprise, none would have progressed beyond manuscript stage. Fortunately, almost since the first printers arrived in England from the continent, such scholarly writings have been preserved as books through an unlikely but flourishing form of publishing known as the university press.
University presses aren’t established for profit, but to help fulfill the expectations of those who think along the lines of Chaucer’s clerk. They produce titles like Blackfoot Musical Thought in spite of monetary considerations rather than because of them, pursuing an operating policy that former Harvard University Press director Thomas J. Wilson once described as “publication of the maximum number of good books this side of bankruptcy.”

This willingness to gamble for a good cause has never been more important than now, when mainstream publishers are obsessed with blockbusters and can commit only token resources to books of intellectual depth. University presses have engaged in increasing amounts of trade publishing to take up the slack, offering titles through bookstores and focusing on markets all but abandoned by the conglomerates. "Trade publishing isn’t even an issue among university presses any more," says Kenneth Arnold, director of the Rutgers University Press and a strong advocate of this strategy. "I used to disagree publicly about it with some of my colleagues, but now there are few who aren’t doing it. The approach is just working too well."

Popular or “trade” publishing by universities is by no means a new idea. It became standard practice at Oxford and Cambridge as a remedy for early financial difficulties. These two certainly rank among the oldest printing and publishing houses in the English-speaking world. Oxford dates its origins from 1478 (some say 1468), when it authorized a transplanted Cologne printer named Theodoric Rood to produce a commentary on the Apostles’ Creed attributed to St. Jerome, but the university’s press suspended operations at least twice during the next 100 years. Cambridge claims the distinction of being the longest uninterrupted book-publishing enterprise; its press has been running continuously since 1584 despite strenuous early opposition from London and apathetic periods during which it served as little more than an outlet for the writings of its own faculty.

A key instrument enabling these universities to pursue bookmaking came from Henry VIII, who in 1534 granted to Cambridge a Letters Patent, licensing the chancellor, masters, and scholars to appoint “stationers and printers or sellers of books residing in the university” (Black, 24). This document established for Cambridge (and later for Oxford) the right to publish outside the jurisdiction of censors and jealous London printers who coveted monopolies for producing Bibles, prayer books, catechisms, psalters, ABCs, and other sixteenth-century bestsellers. The Letters Patent came into play for Cambridge officials in 1583, when they appointed a printer named Thomas Thomas as their first journeyman. Before Thomas could arrange to move his equipment from London, Bishop
John Aylmer impounded it. In a letter to the chancellor, Aylmer explained that his untiring efforts to protect the kingdom from sedition and heresy had uncovered "one presse and furniture which is saide to belong to one THOMAS a man (as I heare) utterlie ignoraunte in printinge, and pretendinge that he entendedth to be the printer for the Universitie of Cambridge. This was stayed..." (Black, 39).

Aylmer's interference was only temporary; he soon yielded to the authority of the Letters Patent and released the equipment. Thomas proceeded to Cambridge and produced six books during 1584. Though he would remain in residence for just five years, he printed some 20 books for the university, including Ovid's *Fables*, Peter Ramus's *Dialecticae* (an important text), and his own Latin dictionary. Continuing protests from London could not prevent publication in 1591 of the first Cambridge Bible, a version preferred among Puritan readers for two decades. And still the presses were only coming up to speed. Between 1631 and 1634, university printer Thomas Buck produced 12,000 copies of *Aesop's Fables*, 18,000 of *Pueriles Sententiae*, 3,000 of Ovid's *Epistles*, and 1,560 almanacs, among numerous other titles. During the same general period, the Cambridge press offered first editions of such important works as George Herbert's *The Temple* (1633), Richard Crashaw's *Epigrammatum Sacrorum Liber* (1634), John Donne's *Sermons* (posthumously, 1634), and prose and poetry from John Milton, Isaac Newton, and John Dryden.

In 1697, Master of Trinity College Richard Bentley, the greatest classical scholar of his time and the man who uncovered the forged letters of Phalaris, persuaded his colleagues to invest funds in a fully equipped university printing house. The following year, the institution organized the Curators of the Press, a committee of 37 members that determined which books should be printed and how much they should sell for, among other matters.

Like most university presses that would follow, Cambridge initially lost money: more than £3,000 during its first fifty years. Even John Baskerville's beautiful folio Bible proved a commercial failure in 1763. But over time, an emphasis on Bibles and other books appealing to wide readership helped put the press on solid financial footing. By 1840, Cambridge was annually publishing 195,000 Bibles, 243,000 New Testaments, and 55,000 Prayer Books, realizing the initial fears of the sixteenth-century London monopolists.

In the meantime, the press at Oxford also acknowledged the popular taste, supplementing such distinguished works as Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* and Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* with Bibles and almanacs. Two separate wings of its building even became known as the "learned side" and the "Bible side." Its editors undertook one of the most ambitious
publishing projects in history during 1857, when Richard Chenevix Trench, Dean of Westminster, initiated plans for compiling the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The work was finally completed more than 70 years later, with initial copies presented to King George and Calvin Coolidge, leaders of the largest English-speaking countries.

The first American university press opened at Cornell in 1869, established as a journalism workshop and low-cost printing service. Though it closed in 1884, new presses surfaced in 1890 at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Chicago. Columbia followed suit in 1893, and by 1920 fourteen institutions had entered the publishing field.

As part of an extensive report issued in 1949 under the auspices of the Association of American University Presses (AAUP), Chester Kerr found that the group's 35 members had produced more than 16,000 titles, with Chicago, Harvard, and Columbia among the leaders. During 1948, they accounted for 8 percent of the total number of titles published and 1.5 percent of the bound books sold in the U.S. Over half of the organizations Kerr reviewed ran deficits. Their directors expressed concern over rapidly rising production costs, inadequate financing, and relationships with host universities characterized by vague lines of authority and uncertain policies for development.

Despite these problems, Kerr's overall tone was buoyant and congratulatory, emphasizing the critical distinction between commercial publishers, who were looking for books that would sell, and institutional publishers, who produced books that would endure. In a much shorter, follow-up report published 20 years later, Kerr described the period 1949-69 as a golden era. AAUP membership had nearly doubled, from 35 to 69. "American university presses have matured," he wrote. "To eagerness has been added substance. To energy, balance. To inclination, experience."

But he could not foresee the lean years ahead. During the 70s and 80s, printing production costs continued to rise while research libraries, always prime targets for the presses' direct-mail sales efforts, entered a period of financial famine. In 1979, a report issued through the Johns Hopkins University Press found scholarly publishing still growing (74 presses) but approaching "critical" condition, still producing 8 percent of new book titles in the U.S. but now accounting for only 1.2 percent of industry sales, a decline of 20 percent in market share since Kerr's 1949 study. Remarking that presses often lacked basic systems for financial planning and analysis, researchers found operating deficits among the smaller operations running as high as 75 percent of net sales. The average deficit for all stood at 11 percent, with only a few of the largest able to balance their budgets.
While university officials expressed concern over this situation, few presses actually disappeared during these years. Northern Ohio readers may recall that Case Western University closed its press in 1973, citing explosive production costs, a threatening institutional deficit, and press leadership that could provide no plan to stabilize its financial condition. Others continued to survive in fiscal peril, their position summarized as follows:

The predicament of university presses is a strange one. They have satisfied their major constituencies—the authors, the readers, and the university administrators—but for most of them the goals of financial security are as elusive as ever. To a large extent, their difficulties arise from pressures outside of their control: the increasing number of publishers and the number of book titles being published, the higher costs that must be passed along in the form of increased prices, the leveling off of college enrollments, and constraints on university budgets, particularly library budgets.  

Given this cluster of excuses, press directors might have continued as the purists of the publishing world, producing scholarship and a few books of regional interest, and losing money. But some were not content with this role. Kenneth Arnold of Rutgers was among the first to draw attention to its shortcomings. The following appeared under his byline in The Chronicle of Higher Education on July 29, 1987:  

University presses have...been timid editorially. They have been content to publish monographs, often minimally revised dissertations or research reports, in sufficient quantity to keep the ship afloat. Although there are signs of change, the presses continue to depend heavily on committees and others to tell them what to do and what kinds of work to publish....We are truly part of the university personnel system and too often publish books whose primary reason for being is the author’s academic advancement, not the advancement of knowledge.... Our complicity in the tenure game is one of the main reasons that university-press books do not sell. Many of them are not meant to.

Since so many of our books are written in unreadable prose by scholars for scholars, university presses also fail to assume any responsibility for students. They have not asked themselves whether and in what way they are obligated to identify and meet the needs of students.

In general, university presses have...published for their “narrowest constituency,” scholars in the subdisciplines and libraries at the largest or richest institutions....To appeal to a broader market, they will have to publish books that are intended to be read, not merely consulted.

"In that article I was encouraging accessibility," Arnold explains. "For a long time, university presses have been expected to publish works of scholarship, mostly for scholars. A lot of libraries bought those, and scholars bought those. But as library funds dried up and spiraling production costs forced scholars to buy fewer books, we needed to recognize that we should be developing new markets."
For Arnold and others, this meant moving toward trade publication—books offered for sale in stores rather than merely through direct-mail appeals to libraries and scholars. Of course, retail sales require more low-cost books in paperback, rather than the durable hardcover bindings appropriate for libraries. "Right now, in terms of dollars, half of our sales are in paperbacks," Arnold says. "Next year, I expect that figure to be 60 or 70 percent. Some markets simply prefer it this way. For example, if a book is in women's studies, it's going to be paper. If it's a subject that might be used as a text, it's going to be paper. That's the market. On the other hand, if we see a book we think will get major reviews, we might do it in cloth with a low price—say $19.95. At the same time, we can print a paperback edition, gather it, and hold it until the time comes to put it out."

Another trade-publishing enthusiast, Malcolm L. Call, director of the University of Georgia Press, says he moved in this direction to help fill a gap left by conservative trade houses. "When I came into this position six years ago, I felt we were playing it kind of safe, and we had the resources to expand. Like many state university presses, we had a tradition of doing good regional books. But we were aware that the centers of literary publishing had been backing away from high-risk manuscripts. We'd been doing a work of fiction each year through the Flannery O'Connor Award, and we were being inundated with manuscripts. Our initial idea was to double this and start publishing two fiction titles a year. That worked, so we decided to double our poetry output as well. We also accidented into the American Writing Program's award for creative nonfiction when I arranged with them for first refusal rights. We've gotten some splendid books out of that."

Call says Georgia published its first original novel, Line of the Sun, last spring after the manuscript had circulated through the Eastern trade houses. "It got rave reviews from editors, but they didn't consider it publishable. It treated a Puerto Rican topic, and they felt there weren't enough Puerto Rican readers out there to make it worthwhile."

With 25 of his 78 new titles during 1989 aimed at trade bookstores, Call cautions that this end of the business is exciting but not always enriching. "It costs more to publish a trade book. The retailer and wholesaler need their bites, and the price has to be reasonable. You can't sell a $45 novel."

Promoting a university press offering at retail can test one's resources, according to Doug Armato, marketing manager at the Johns Hopkins University Press and former colleague of Malcolm Call's at Georgia. "Our promotional budgets are nowhere near what the trade houses have," he says. "Comparing us to them is like comparing The Nation to Time or Newsweek. For example, we recently published an ex-
cellent trade book called Beyond Cholesterol. Our promotional budget was $30,000. For a less serious title on the same subject, Harper & Row might have a budget of $1 million. Though we don't ignore big retailers like Walden and B. Dalton, we tend to focus on independent shops. They've survived the impact of the chains, and they appeal to people who really love books."

Armato's sales force consists of 13 people, most of whom are not employees. "We have our own person in the East, but we're represented by Indiana's staff in the Midwest. In the West we use brokers who specialize in representing university presses."

Trying to determine which of the press's 140 annual titles deserve trade treatment involves Armato in many aspects of production operations. "I'm responsible for recommending the print run and prices for every book we do, so I read an awful lot of manuscripts. The director, editor-in-chief, production manager, managing editor, and I meet to discuss each title and determine how it fits into our list. We're currently working on a book about bladder control, which is a very hard subject to talk about. To make it tasteful and appealing for the bookstores, we have to consider every angle right down to the size of the type. Coming up with a title often takes longer than anything else. The authors in this case wanted to call the book Looking Out for Number One. We decided on Staying Dry. I think we looked at title ideas for three weeks before we came up with Beyond Cholesterol."

Large presses like Hopkins generally manage to produce standard reference works, series, and texts that sell steadily over many years. Best-sellers at Hopkins include Mendelian Inheritance in Man, a genetic reference work now going into its sixth edition, and The Johns Hopkins Atlas of Human Functional Anatomy. Also popular are two fully assembled skeletons, an 18-incher for medical students and one of 35 inches for chiropractors and sports medicine programs.

Included in reference works are books about publishing or composing. Among writers and editors, there is no more highly regarded example of this genre than The Chicago Manual of Style. Originally published in 1906 and now in its 13th edition, it sells 18,000 copies per year. Yet even these statistics fail to place it among the top ten at the University of Chicago Press. The number one title, Kate L. Turabian's Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, has sold well over 4 million copies since 1937, and the paperback still moves at a brisk 150,000 copies per year. 14

"We now have 4,000 titles in print," says Chicago director Morris Philipson. 15 "Each year we publish about 150 new hardcover books and 100 new paperbacks, as well as some 40 journals. We have a small program in poetry—two or three
volumes a year—and we’ve begun republishing fiction that is no longer issued elsewhere."

The University of Chicago Press is the largest in the country, with a staff of more than 200 working on journals, books, and production. Philipson says the book division’s 66 people includes 10 full-time acquisitions editors (he and an assistant director also scout for manuscripts) and 12 full-time copy editors. Before the press agrees to publish a written work, the manuscript must be approved by acquisitions editors, appointed readers who are experts in the subject being treated, and a 14-member board composed of Chicago faculty members, the university president, and the provost.

Philipson’s qualifications to run this complex enterprise include experience at Random House, where he directed publication of Sartre’s works. But many of his peers at other schools have moved into the field from academic backgrounds, sometimes learning the ropes through an interest in scholarly journals. So it was with John Hubbell, director of the press at Kent State University.

"I came to Kent in 1968 as a member of the history faculty, and I retain the rank of professor," he says. "Through my work as editor of a quarterly journal called Civil War History, I established an informal relationship with the Press. When my predecessor retired in 1985, the university decided I might be a good director. Now I’m finishing five years, which just astounds me."

In contrast to the hundreds-strong staff at Chicago, Kent’s operation has nine people, including Hubbell, to handle the acquisition, editing, design, production, and marketing of twenty new titles per year. "We have various ways of finding new manuscripts. I often ask friends in departments such as history or English to put in a good word for me at conferences. And if you develop a good reputation for your books, people seek you out. We rarely get an entire manuscript over the transom in the classic sense, but many authors send us query letters beginning, 'Would you be interested in...?' If I think it’s worth a look, I call right away and ask to see it."

While Hubbell describes his field with enthusiasm, he is skeptical about the prospects of creating a university press at a school that doesn’t already have one. "I wouldn’t recommend it. A press is very costly to start. I visited Cleveland State University a few years ago to advise some administrators and faculty about the possibility of establishing a press there. One of the deans was very interested at first. But when I began to talk about the costs, I could see a veil go over her eyes."

One viable alternative to excessive costs can be found at Dartmouth College, base institution for the University Press of New England (UPNE). Established twenty years ago, UPNE is a consortium sponsored by ten area schools including Brandeis, Brown, Clark, Dartmouth, Tufts, Wesleyan, and the
universities of Connecticut, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. With a professional staff of 15, UPNE publishes nearly 50 titles annually, about half coming from member schools.

"We work much as other presses do," explains director and current AAUP president Thomas L. McFarland. "Publishing decisions need to be made by the editors here, in conjunction with a committee composed of one faculty member from each of our sponsor institutions. These schools subsidize us in two ways. First, they pay for books that carry their imprint. And second, they share our additional operating costs equally. There are other consortiums in Colorado, Kansas, Florida, and elsewhere, but we're unique in that we cross state boundaries and include both public and private institutions."7

McFarland says his potential annual sales rose from $1 million to $1.7 million last fall when Wesleyan College decided to merge its distinguished but deficit-ridden press into UPNE. The publisher of three Pulitzer Prize works and a National Book Award, Wesleyan had made its mark with poetry and stylish prose, publishing such authors as James Dickey, Annie Dillard, and Noel Perrin. Its former director, who had come to the college from a trade publishing background, decided on this literary emphasis in spite of campus critics who argued that she was forsaking scholarly work.17

John G. Ryden, director of Yale University Press and a member of a committee that recommended Wesleyan's move to UPNE, says the problem was rooted in overemphasizing the trade approach without a strong backlist of steady sellers. "I have no doubts about the ability of university presses to publish for the trade, provided they do it well, can afford to take the risks, and keep it in balance," he says. "But I do have doubts about the way it was done at Wesleyan. University presses have to be careful not to be lured off course by the appeal of the trade book. They have to avoid taking on the risks inherent in this kind of publishing unless they have the financial base to survive the downs and the resources to take advantage of the ups."19

A former editor at Harper & Row, Ryden notes that many successful New York houses seek to balance their trade departments with more stable operations such as educational publishing.

This same principle applies to university presses. At Yale, we've been publishing a portion of our titles for the trade for many years—probably since the 1930s. Something like 15 to 20 percent of our new hardcovers are trade discounted.19 As our list has grown, the number of trade books has grown, too. But the relative percentage hasn't. At Wesleyan, the mix was untenable. They were publishing books of considerable merit. But they didn't have a solid base of titles that sold steadily and regularly. Consequently, they couldn't afford to give the discounts they were giving, and the college couldn't continue to absorb the difference. They paid the price.
For the foreseeable future, accurately calculating "the price" and determining how to meet it will continue to be a fundamental concern for all university presses.

Notes


4Telephone interview with Kenneth Arnold, 16 February 1990.


8Kerr, 1949, 42.


10The National Enquiry, 81.

11Telephone interview with Malcolm Call, 15 February 1990.

12Telephone interview with Doug Armato, 21 February 1990.

13"Least-Sellers and Landmarks," The University of Chicago Magazine (Summer 1984).

14Telephone interview with Morris Philipson, 22 February 1990.


16Telephone interview with Thomas McFarland, 27 February 1990.


18Telephone interview with John G. Ryden, 19 March 1990.

19The usual discount from list price for university press books is 20 percent, the trade discount is 40 percent.
A House Divided

Some notes on the publishing of academic journals

Bruce A. Beatie

"The scholarly journal," said Lauren H. Seiler recently, "is one of the foundations of the academy." That is doubtless true but, as we shall see, the foundation is a mite shaky today. Since the root of the word "academy" comes from the Indo-European verb meaning "to divide" and the place that gave its name to Plato's Academy is founded on an act of betrayal,¹ that shakiness may not be so surprising. Once the exclusive domain of quiet scholars (from Greek skhole, "leisure devoted to learning," and an Indo-European verb meaning "to hold"), academic publishing is today a realm riven by conflicts as fiercely fought, though with mostly verbal weapons, as those in the Middle East.

In what follows, we shall look at one of the major battle fronts in academic publishing: the scholarly journal. Since the academic world is notorious for washing its dirty linen in public, those journals are where we find the problems academic publishing faces today most clearly documented. We shall look at two major problem areas: the costs of publication, and the gatekeeping function. The nature of those problems,² however, can be seen clearly only within the context of the wider realm within which the publishing of scholarly journals exists.

To begin with the broadest context: academic publishing, though it doubtless weighs little in the minds of most Americans and is only a small part of the total universe of the communications media, has become a massive and complex enterprise.³

One tends automatically to think of the "university press" as the core of "academic publishing." But a 1972 study of Scholarly Reprint Publishing in the United States, itself only one aspect of the phenomenon, lists nearly 300 publishers, most of which are commercial rather than university-related.

The university presses themselves know they are only part of a larger whole. In 1973 the directors of a number of
university presses initiated, through the National Endowment for the Humanities, a study of "the increasingly serious problems with which scholarly publishers were faced" that became a "National Enquiry into Scholarly Communication." The 1979 report of that inquiry considers it in three phases: scholarly journals, scholarly books and presses, and research libraries. The same division is apparent in the massive study by Machlup and Leeson: their first volume (301 pages) is devoted to book publishing, the second (338 pages) to journals, and the third (201 pages) to libraries. The fourth volume adds, however, another category, bibliographic services.

Both studies were completed too early to take account of the most important new aspect of academic publishing: the impact of the computer and of mass storage devices like the laser disk, and the resulting potential for "electronic publishing." What followed on these studies is summarized in Writings on Scholarly Communication. An Annotated Bibliography of Books and Articles on Publishing, Libraries, Scholarly Research, and Related Issues (1988). It was published by the Office of Scholarly Communication and Technology of the American Council of Learned Societies; the fact that the ACLS established this office in the Fall of 1984 documents a growing concern with the problems of the field.

To see what is happening right now, however, one needs to turn to media like The Chronicle of Higher Education, the weekly newspaper of academia: its articles over the last two years provide a remarkable summary of current problems and concerns. The index to the first twenty volumes of Scholarly Publishing (a "meta-journal" that publishes scholarly research on published scholarly research) shows some of the longer-term changes in the field. The subjects most frequently discussed in its first 15 volumes were publishing policies and editing and editorial decisions. In the last five volumes, however, the subjects most frequently discussed were the problems of authors, journals, and computer applications.

These changes in current concerns show clearly not only the growing importance of electronic media, but also of the fact, documented in the titles of the National Enquiry and the Machlup-Leeson studies and of Writings on Scholarly Communication, that "academic publishing" is an act of "scholarly communication." It involves, that is to say, not only the message itself (the content of scholarly articles), but the media (the publications, in whatever forms), the originators (the scholars who have something to communicate), and an audience (those toward whom the communications are directed). The term publish (from Latin publicare "to make public") implies a very general audience, but in many people's perception, scholars constitute their own audience: they communicate with each other, and the more general public only occasionally overhears what they have to say.
Even in earlier eras of academic publishing, the wider public was often deeply involved, as the publication and reception of Darwin's *Origin of Species* made clear. And in an era of electronic media and public funding of research and publication, the involvement of the general public is again growing. Not only does it "overhear" what scholars say to each other, it has come to anticipate and influence what they say: Senator Proxmire's long-standing "Golden Fleece" awards and the more recent controversy over "cold fusion" furnish only two examples.

An aspect of academic publishing which the former senator overlooked, but which weighs heavily in current journalism, is the proliferation and the constantly rising cost of scholarly journals. But before turning to that and other problems of academic periodicals today, it may be useful to get some idea of the extent of the field we're dealing with. One place to look is *Magazine Industry Market Place: The Directory of American Periodical Publishing*. Its 1984 issue listed some 2200 different journals: some 700 classified as "Consumer" journals, another 700 as "Trade." The category "Journal (Scholarly, Research)" lists some 375 journals, and the "Associations" category about 350, about half of which are also scholarly publications. "Scholarly" journals would therefore make up about 25% of the total of American periodical publishing.

"Scholarly publishing" is, however, an international phenomenon, and a better idea of the quantity of scholarly journals can be gotten from the *MLA Directory of Periodicals*, which sets out to be a comprehensive "Guide to Journals and Series in Languages and Literatures." Its 1988-1989 issue lists 3,146 different "journals and series" in this narrow field (language and literature other than classical) published worldwide. Since the *Magazine Industry Market Place* lists only about 25 journals in this field, there may be as many as 70,000 "scholarly journals" in all possible fields (25 : 3150 :: 550 : 69,300).

If even half of that number represents reality, then the one problem of academic journals, the controversy over rising costs, is at least partly explained. The subscription costs of academic journals, especially of those in the natural sciences, have in the last two decades risen at a rate often ten times the rate of inflation. The problem illuminates the (sometimes incestuous) overlap between two of the poles of the act of scholarly communication: the *originators* (professors who conduct and publish their research) and one part of the *audience* (professors who read that published research). As originators, professors can easily ignore the rise in costs; the practice of subsidizing publication costs in the natural sciences by charging "page costs" back to authors should make them aware of the problem, but these costs are usually paid by the universities, not by the individuals. As audience they can also, sometimes,
ignore it: the journals they read are published by their professional associations, and the subscription cost is hidden in their membership fees.

But when professors-as-audience go to the library to look for articles in journals they don't subscribe to, they are confronted with the problem in its sharpest form. Twenty years ago, at most colleges and universities, the libraries' acquisitions budget went about two-thirds for books and one-third for "serials" (subscriptions to journals and to monographs published as regular series). Now the balance has become inverted; most libraries have had to begin cutting back drastically on subscriptions, and faculty members are protesting. At the University of Michigan, the acuteness of the problem is illustrated by the title of a slide presentation made by the library to the faculty of the College of Literature, Science and the Arts: Discrimination, Devaluation, Exploitation—The Library and Campus Dilemma. Many journals charge a higher subscription rate to libraries than to individuals, and by discriminating against libraries in their pricing, this presentation argued, publishers were devaluing and thereby exploiting the libraries' acquisitions budgets.

This conflict within the "audience" sector has led to an often acrimonious fight between academic libraries (another part of the "audience") and some academic publishers. For the radical increase in journal prices has not been "across the board." In 1988 Jan Willem Dijkstra published an article discussing "factors in setting prices of scientific journals" (a "meta-article") which demonstrated that the rate of subscription-price increases varies drastically from publisher to publisher, that only a few (named) publishers account for the major proportion of the overall increase, and that there was no discernible relationship between actual production costs and journal subscription prices. The article gave good ammunition to concerned libraries, and one publisher (Gordon and Breach Science Publishers) has filed a lawsuit against Dijkstra. A "house divided" indeed.

Another area in which the publishing of academic journals appears divided against itself can be defined by the title of Dale Spender's 1981 article, "The Gatekeepers: A Feminist Critique of Academic Publishing." Spender's concern was the under-representation of women and especially of feminist-oriented women in the ranks of published authors, but her term "gatekeepers" has far wider implications. The notion "publish or perish" has long been a truism of academic life, often complained about but usually functioning, either de facto or de jure; at most colleges and universities today, "publication in refereed journals" weighs heavily as a criterion for salary increases and promotions. The "referees" of scholarly journals are therefore the gatekeepers, not simply of access to the journals' pages, but of professional success.
In this the professorial cadre again enters into multiple phases of the act of scholarly communication: they are not simply the originators, but also themselves the referees—and to the extent that they serve as peer reviewers of colleagues' petitions for promotion and/or salary increases, they are again their own audience. While this "wearing of multiple hats" is probably inevitable, it can obviously lead to biases and failures of objective evaluation well beyond the sort of thing discussed by Dale Spender.

In the hope of eliminating biases against women and younger scholars and the favoring of well-known scholars, the journal of the Modern Language Association of America, *PMLA*, some years ago instituted the policy of "blind submissions": articles under consideration go to outside referees without any information concerning the author. When critic Stanley Fish published a polemical article entitled "No Bias, No Merit: The Case Against Blind Submissions" in the 1988 *PMLA*, he aroused more controversy than any other issue in the journal's history. His point was that scholarly articles are, as noted earlier, acts of communication; and the identity of the originator is often, if not always, as important as the content of the message. His critics, arguing on behalf of younger scholars and women, insisted that, too often, the identity of an important critic outweighs the substance (or lack of it) of the article submitted.

That the referees and/or the editors are in fact gatekeepers is made clear by one datum included in every entry in the *MLA Directory of Periodicals*: the "rejection rate," the percentage of articles submitted to each journal that are not published in it. Shelby Hunt noted concerning the *Journal of Marketing* (circulation 16,000) that its rejection rate of 80-85% left it "emphatically positioned as a scholarly journal." But a survey of the referees of library journals made in 1988 by Stuart Glogoff suggests that much of the refereeing is done in something of a vacuum that has nothing to do with blind submissions: half of the referees responding said they had no guideline criteria from the journals' editors, and therefore, though they were routinely asked to recommend for or against publication, they were quite unsure as to whether they were recommending the best articles for publication. 9

Yet the function of referees and editors as gatekeepers goes beyond deciding who publishes and who perishes, beyond the narrow question of feminist and younger-scholar representation, and reaches into the realms of scientific truth and fraud, issues that concern not simply the limited audience of the professoriate, but the much wider audience of the general public whose taxes and tuition payments are the main source of funding for most scholarly journals and the research they publish.
The recent widespread publicity given to the (presumably) failed experiment in "cold fusion," to the Harvard physiologist who faked the results of experiments on mice, and to other similar cases, lays bare both the importance and the failure of the gatekeeper function. Margaret L. Silbar, in a recent article in *Analog Science Fiction/Science Fact*, discussed not only the "cold fusion" case, but a number of other instances of "scientific diversions"—instances where "science... takes off in the wrong direction." She concludes that these "diversions" are caused by a number of "sins of science": flawed assumptions, pride, the ostrich effect, the democratization of science, publicity seeking, greed, and fame—all of them sins which the review process is supposed to, but sometimes doesn't, prevent or arrest.

In the same definitely non-scholarly journal, nearly three years ago, appeared a story by Joe Fischetti, "The I of the Beholder," whose theme lay precisely in the problem of scholarly communication (and whose central action was the presentation of a scholarly paper at a conference!—much of the paper in fact presented as direct speech). The point of the paper, and of the story, was in a way the inverse of Stanley Fish's, namely that, in scholarly as well as general communication, "a message from a source had to be tailored to the expectations of its receiver." If the truth value of many kinds of scholarly communications is too high, the woman presenting the paper in the story argued, the audience simply will not believe it—"the message oughtn't to be certain in any direction, since no one really knows the answers yet."

The point was made even more sharply, and less favorably to academics, by C. S. Lewis in his 1945 fantasy novel, *That Hideous Strength*. When a British don, discussing academic communication with the KGB-like female head of security for a burgeoning organization called N. I. C. E. (National Institute of Coordinated Experiments), argues that "educated people" can't be misled by what they read, she responds:

> Why, you fool, it's the educated reader who *can* be gulled. All our difficulty comes with the others. When did you meet a workman who believes the papers? He takes it for granted that they're all propaganda and skips the leading articles. ... But the educated public, the people who read the highbrow weeklies, don't need conditioning. They're all right already. They'll believe anything.

Scholarly communication, whether through the medium of a journal, a conference paper, or a book, is after all an exercise in trust: for the act of communication to take place at all, we must as originators make assumptions about our audience, as audience we must make assumptions about the originators, and both must have faith in the medium as providing a channel in which "noise" (the non-meaningful content of any message) is minimized. In the current situation, where distrust
and even hostility are apparent not only between originators, media, and audience, but where serious conflicts exist between subgroups within each communal entity participating in scholarly communication, we would seem to have indeed a house divided that cannot stand. The more general recent comments about the parlous state of the humanities by Lynn Cheney (chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities) and others, and about higher education as a whole by the likes of E. D. Hirsch and Allan Bloom might, in fact, suggest that the publication of scholarly journals is simply one small rickety room within a much larger House of Usher.

Some of those involved, however, find "cause for guarded optimism," and I would suggest that one of the principal sources of optimism lies in the impact of electronic media on the field. Thus far, the principal impact of the "computer revolution" upon the field seems to lie in the use of word-processors both to enhance the publishing productivity of professors, and to ease the editing of journals. It would be interesting to compare the number of manuscript submissions with the increase in scholarly journals and with the number of personal computers in service.

More important in our context is the impact of computers on improving access to the scholarly research published in journals. The creation of indexes providing access to the information published in books has a long, long tradition, in which library catalogues served the initial role and remain, for most practicing scholars, the most immediate means of access.

The library catalogue itself has, as most people are now aware, "gone electronic," though that process is not without conflicts of its own. The Cleveland Public Library, the Cuyahoga County Library, and the Cleveland State University Library, for example, all have electronic catalogues, but each uses a different format and a different "user interface," so that the systems and the data they contain are not mutually compatible. Nor are any of them compatible with the "metadata," the 21-million-record Online Computer Library Center's (OCLC) centralized electronic catalogue of nearly 10,000 member academic libraries. The OCLC, "the world's largest electronic bibliographic data base," which grew out of a local effort, the Ohio College Libraries System, has only recently begun to offer (at considerable expense to users) searching by subject.

While the number of scholarly journals may not be as large as the number of scholarly books, the number of separate articles in scholarly journals increases geometrically year by year, and access to them was a problem even in the early years of scholarly communication. Individual journals began publishing indexes to their own pages early in this century, and the compilation and publication of indexes to jour-
nal articles in particular fields followed shortly after. The MLA International Bibliography has long been a model in this area, and it has recently made available its complete database since 1981 electronically, not only on-line, but on CD-ROM ("Compact Disk/Read-Only Memory), that application of laserdisc technology to computer mass storage that has also made possible the electronic editions of The Oxford English Dictionary and Shakespeare’s plays.

Even where such field-related indexes are not available on-line or on CD-ROM, the computer has made possible a proliferation of indexes that could scarcely have been imagined two decades ago. Perhaps one of the oddest is The Arts and Humanities Citation Index and its congener for the Social and Natural sciences, in which scholars who publish can find out (within limits) which other scholars have read (or at least cited) their own work—information that is most useful to the "gatekeeping" function of scholarly journals, allowing scholars to make stronger cases for salary increases and promotion on the basis of their work’s importance to others in the field.

Perhaps the most exciting and/or promising possibility, however, is what Daniel Eisenberg has called "The Electronic Journal" which "exists only in electronic media, not on paper." He continues:

While no such full-fledged journal has yet been created, the technology is arriving, and experiments are under way. Such a journal will become as familiar as the railroad finally became. The forces that will cause the demise of the paper magazine along with the paper newspaper and the paper letter are growing.

This extension of the electronic bulletin boards that so delight teenagers will make possible, Eisenberg believes, a whole new type of scholarly communication in which the medium of transmission no longer requires the elaborate business of publication and indexing, and where the time span separating the originator and the audience, now often measured in years, might be reduced to days or even minutes. Moreover, it makes possible a situation where the communication need no longer be only one way: members of the audience can not only react directly and immediately but, to the extent that an author/scholar solicits such feedback, can in fact contribute directly to the act of communication. Eisenberg himself raises, only to dismiss them, some of the problems inherent in this development; though others like Lauren Seiler are less sanguine about the ease with which the problems of "the electronic journal" can be solved, the potential remains great.

Marshall McLuhan, years ago, suggested that television would produce a "global village." It has not yet done so, though the rapidly changing political situation in eastern Europe may bring us closer to it. But the computer and the potential of "electronic publishing" could in fact make the
academic world a sort of global village, a house composed of so many discrete individuals in constant contact (and perhaps conflict) that the major problems and divisions discussed above would be no longer relevant.

Notes

1Helen of Sparta, whose face was later to launch a thousand ships and burn the topless towers of Ilion, was already a charmer as a child, and so the Athenian hero Theseus abducted her. When her brothers came with an army to rescue her, an Athenian named Akademos revealed the place she was hidden and earned such honor from the Lacedaemonians that his neighborhood was named Akademia and was always spared in the Lacedaemonians' later attacks on Athens.

2S. Hanna’s The Gypsy Scholar: A Writer’s Comic Search for a Publisher (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1987) provides a delightful view of these problems from an author’s viewpoint.

3The most complete study of the phenomenon, Information through the Printed Word: The Dissemination of Scholarly, Scientific, and Intellectual Knowledge (4 vols. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1978-1980), runs to 1150 pages and is, as Richard Johnson recently noted (“Machlup and the Information Age,” Scholarly Publishing 18, July 1987, pp. 271-276), the penultimate product of over two decades of research that had begun with Machlup’s 1962 The Production and Dissemination of Knowledge in the United States and that was to conclude with a ten-volume study whose publication, begun in 1980, was interrupted by Machlup’s death in 1983.


5Here are titles and dates, in chronological order: "Plan for Scholars to Review Peers’ Academic Software" (February 17, 1988); "U.S. Research Libraries Search for Ways to Combat Spiraling Subscription Costs of Scholarly Journals" (June 8, 1988); “Too Many Reviews of Scholarly Books are Puffy, Nasty, or Poorly Written" (July 20, 1988); “The Publication Requirement Should Not Be Based Solely on ‘Refereed’ Journals” (October 19, 1988); “Scholar Who Submitted Bogus Article to Journals May Be Disciplined” (November 2, 1988); “Concerns about Fraud, Editorial Bias Prompt Scrutiny of Journal Practices” (February 15, 1989); “Appeals Court Rules Journals May Maintain Reviewers’ Anonymity” (March 29, 1989); “To Meet the Crisis in Journal Costs, Universities Must Reassert Their Role in Scholarly Publishing” (April 12, 1989); “Research Libraries Mount Campaign to Combat Escalation of Journal Prices” (May 24, 1989); “Technology, New Attitudes Called Threats to Publishing” (June 14, 1989); “An Embarrassed Historian Seeks to Halt Distribution of German Edition of Book” (September 6, 1989); “How Scholarly Communication Should Work in the 21st Century” (October 18, 1989); “Critics Say Publisher’s Suit Inhibits Inquiries into Rising Journal Costs” (October 25, 1989); “Scholars Now Can Search the World’s Largest Electronic Bibliographic Data Base by Subject” (March 21, 1990).

6Now in its twenty-first year, this journal is the extension of an in-house journal of the University of Toronto Press begun in 1959. Here are the subjects most frequently discussed, according to the index (the figures show number of articles on a subject listed in the index for volumes 1-15 + the number in the index for volumes 16-20): Policy, Publishing (69+14), Authors, Writing, and Publication (38+26), Editing and Editorial Decisions (46+16), Marketing and Distribution (47+12), Journals (37+19), Computer Applications (32+19), List-Building (34+3), Manuscript Editing (37+4), North America, Scholarly Publishing in (24+15), Asia, Scholarly publishing in (21+11), Institutional Relations (29+2=31).

See Jan Willem Dijkstra, "Factors in Setting Prices of Scientific Journals," *Book Research Quarterly*, 4 (Summer 1988), pp. 19-25. The suit charges that, by identifying specific publishers, Dijkstra was both libelous (Gordon and Breach claim the figures can be interpreted differently) and engaged in illegal restraint of trade. Most commentators assume the suit is without merit, brought mainly for its nuisance and threat value.

Reviewing the Gatekeepers: A Survey of Referees of Library Journals," *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 39 (November 1988), p. 400. The sense of working in a vacuum went further. Most reviewers felt their comments should be returned to submitting authors, and only one in four knew what was the fate of the manuscripts they had reviewed.


**Further Reading**


Stanley Fish, "No Bias, No Merit: The Case Against Blind Submissions," *PMLA* 103 (October 1988), pp. 739-748.


Stanley Fish, "No Bias, No Merit: The Case Against Blind Submissions," *PMLA* 103 (October 1988), pp. 739-748.


Small Presses

The essential Babel of voices

Leonard Trawick

In what we like to imagine as the good old days, the big publishing houses, mostly in New York and Boston, often seem to have been benevolent patrons of literature, each with its stable of authors and its skillful editors who worked with them to perfect each manuscript. Maxwell Perkins at Scribners judiciously culled and refined the works of Thomas Wolfe, Fitzgerald, and Hemingway. Often the eponymous publishers themselves—Alfred Knopf was an example—took a personal interest in the search for and development of authors.

Whether or not such concern for good literature once existed in commercial publishing, it certainly no longer does. If a book doesn’t look like a quick moneymaker, worth risking printing and publicity budgets both in six figures, it is not likely to be picked up. The commercial publishers still handle a few established novelists and poets to keep up appearances; but the unknown writer, however talented, who gets a break from a big publisher is rare indeed. There are still fine editors at the large houses, but they lead lives of quiet desperation. In fact a new award sponsored by the Pushcart Press each year honors—and publishes—a book nominated by an editor whose own company won’t publish it.

Scribners is now a subsidiary of MacMillan, Inc., whose holdings also include Atheneum, Collier, Who’s Who, and Gump’s Department Stores. David McKay, once an important publisher of classical works, was bought by Longman, which was bought by Pearson, Inc., which also owns Viking-Penguin, not to mention Reed Tool Co. and Lignum Oil Company. Simon & Schuster and Allyn & Bacon are owned by Gulf & Western, Inc., along with Paramount Pictures, Madison Square Garden, and various insurance and loan companies. So it goes. The larger the conglomerate, the smaller the likelihood that any criterion except profit will enter into the selection of the commodity, whether it be tools, movies, or novels. Since the best works of literature break new ground and provide insights too radical to be appreciated at first by
the general public, they are, almost by definition, not "commercial"—at least not at first, not until they become "classics." And of course it is hard to predict which of the difficult new works by unknown writers will do that. One thing is certain, though—those that are never published will not.

Meanwhile probably more good writers are writing in the United States than ever before, and a few people are still out there wanting to read them. Where would a young Wolfe, a Fitzgerald, or a Hemingway get his start now? Probably not with a big publisher; possibly with one of the university presses, though these publish relatively few works of fiction or poetry; very likely with one of the thousands of small presses in this country and around the world, most of which have sprung up just within the past few decades.

A small press is one whose proprietor is more interested in making books than money—or at least a lot of money. These presses generally have a small staff (sometimes one or two people), a small list of titles (one to five a year), small printings (under two thousand copies), and small promotional budgets; the capital outlay is small, and the profits, if any, are small. To be sure, the proprietor must have some financial acumen to survive, and may even make a modest living from the press; but clearly she or he must be motivated by something besides a desire for wealth. The few who do go into publishing to make a killing would do better at the race track.

Many small presses specialize in a particular subject, such as poetry, ecology, feminist literature, or the occult. Some go in for fine printing, some print and even bind their own books, but the majority job out the typesetting and presswork and devote their efforts to finding and editing manuscripts and distributing the finished copies. The explosive growth of small presses within the past 25 years has been made possible by the advent of inexpensive high-quality photo-offset printing processes. Anyone today can have 500 copies of a nice-looking 100-page paperback book printed for under $3,000.

A number of publishers considered "small presses" operate out of universities, but these should not be confused with "university presses," which are more ambitious and elaborate organizations. Small presses at universities begin as the enterprise of a few dedicated students or faculty members and eventually find a niche in the protecting bosom of their mother institution. Some, indeed, receive support from the university or its official press. But the majority of small presses scrape along on their often meager sales, donations, and grants.

Founded in 1968, the International Association of Independent Publishers, with headquarters in San Francisco, has, according to Executive Director Richard Morris, 1,400 dues-paying members (annual membership costs $50). Although the association does not attempt to define "independent publisher," most of its members fit the usual definition of
small-press publishers, and this is the constituency it serves. The
association puts out a substantial newsletter, COSMEP (acronym for
the original name of the organization, Committee of Small Press
Editors and Publishers) and holds an annual conference (this September
in San Francisco, next year in Boston, and the year after in Chicago).
Its services include organizing workshops on such topics as desktop
publishing and marketing; mounting publishers’ displays at library and
booksellers’ meetings; providing group insurance, discounts, advice,
and leadership on public issues.

One can get a bird’s-eye view of the small press phenomenon by
looking at The International Directory of Little Magazines and Small
Presses, edited by Len Fulton and published by Dustbooks (itself a
small press specializing in small-press bibliography). The Wall Street
Journal calls this annual publication “the Bible of the business.”
Although the Directory distinguishes “little magazines” as a separate
category, these publications are usually included under the
rubric of “small press.” In fact, many small book publishers
also issue magazines, or even began as magazine publishers.

Much like the small press, the “little magazine” is one with a
specialized clientele and a circulation of under a couple of
thousand, and it is almost certainly published more for love
than for money.

The most recent Dustbooks Directory (number 25) contains
about 4,800 entries, somewhat more than half of them
magazines. For Ohio it lists 73 little magazines (including The
Gamut) and 55 other small presses; 5 are listed under both
categories—e.g., Pig Iron and Pig Iron Press, Pudding Magazine
and Pudding House Publications. Not unexpectedly, California
has the largest number of entries—over 900. Although the
Directory is called “international,” 85 percent of its listings are
in the United States, with England, Canada, and Australia
making up most of the rest.

Small presses, like rock bands, seem to inspire imaginative
names, from Pinchgut Press and Abattoir Editions to Always
Jukin’ and Sheer Joy! Press. Hist’ry Myst’ry House, Runaway
Spoon Press, Placebo Press, Oddo Publications, Frozen Waf-
bles/Shattered Sidewalk, Out-of-Kontrol Data Korporation,
CACADADADA Press Ltd., and Black & White & Read All Over
Publications are only a few of the dandies listed by
Dustbooks. There are presses named Bottom Dog, Raw Dog,
Laughing Dog, Laughing Bear, Graywolf, Hippopotamus,
Warthog, Green Horse, Goldfish, Mosquito, Mockingbird, and
Minor Heron, not to mention Cat’s Pajamas.

Dustbooks lists over 300 subject categories, from abstracts,
acupuncture, Adirondacks, and advertising to writers, Wyoming,
yoga, and zen, but the two largest are poetry and fiction. Evi-
dently literature, while not commercially attractive, is still con-
sidered important by many who are willing to venture their
money and energy in its behalf. In fact, most of the major poets and fiction writers active today appeared first in small-press publications, and many continue to do so. The situation is not new. Even in the good old days, a writer—especially one exploring new techniques and ideas—had to get started in a little magazine or small-press publication. Sally Dennison, in [Alternative] Literary Publishing (University of Iowa Press, 1984—the square brackets are part of her title), points out that early major works by Ezra Pound (A Lume Spento), T. S. Eliot (Prufrock and The Waste Land), Virginia Woolf (Jacob’s Room), James Joyce (Ulysses), Anaïs Nin (Under a Glass Bell), and Vladimir Nabokov (Lolita), to mention only a few, were first issued by small presses.

Dennison notes that publication by a small press is sometimes belittled as hardly better than having one’s book printed by a vanity press. On the contrary, she says, small-press editors are often more independent in their selections than the acquisitions editors of commercial presses, who are not without their own personal connections with agents and writers. Writers who frankly turn to self-publication belong to a long and honorable tradition, that produced Washington Irving’s Sketchbook, Whitman’s Leaves of Grass, Thoreau’s Walden, Twain’s Huckleberry Finn, and works by Poe, Shelley, and William Blake (who in his lifetime managed to sell 48 copies of Songs of Innocence, his best-selling title).

In 1973 in Yonkers, New York, Bill Henderson founded, on a shoestring, the Pushcart Press and issued The Publish-It-Yourself Handbook, which itself became a best-seller and contributed to the proliferation of small presses in this country. In 1977 Henderson published the first volume of The Pushcart Prize: Best of the Small Presses, which now annually selects and reprints the year’s best stories, essays, and poems from small-press publications. The original editorial board for The Pushcart Prize included Anaïs Nin, Buckminster Fuller, Daniel Halpern, Gordon Lish, Ishmael Reed, Joyce Carol Oates, and Ralph Ellison. Today inclusion in this anthology is a high honor for any writer.

Freedom of speech depends on protection not only from government suppression, but also from the economic exclusion of different, unpopular voices and views. The seer, the original artist—the genius of any sort—is always in the minority, will never be a best seller. But woe to the society that silences this minority, because from it come the new insights necessary for growth and life itself. The Babel of voices now issuing from small presses in almost every city in America is perhaps a reason for cautious optimism. Some of these voices may be saying just what we need to hear.
Micropress is a convenient label for small circulation, inexpensively produced, often irregularly published magazines and chapbooks that usually favor experimental and avant-garde forms of writing. These publications, for the most part, have little or no advertising support, little or no outside funding, and they are read mainly by an audience of fellow writers.

Micropress is related to a more inclusive group of publications, sometimes known as "fanzines" or "zines," that cover areas of special interest neglected by commercial publishers, and are distributed through a network of interested persons by word of mouth and trading. The inclusive review of 'zines, Factsheet Five, is published quarterly by Mike Gunderloy and is now in its eighth year. Each issue contains approximately 50 pages of one-paragraph reviews of publications, giving contact addresses and prices for each, as well as columns and longer reviews of particular topics.

The majority of 'zines cover various forms of non-commercial music, those that do not attract the support of major advertisers. These include traditional folk and ethnic musics, early music, music using non-Western scales, instruments and techniques, contemporary experimental, improvised, electronic, and avant-garde musics, early and obscure forms of rock'n'roll, blues and jazz, hardcore, "trash" punk, thrash metal, and feminist music. 'Zines also cover radical cultural and political experimentation of all kinds; there are "alternative news" publications, publications for vegetarians and organic farmers, environmentalists, and dozens of other special interest groups. Allied forms of publishing include the smaller independent record and cassette labels and "mail art," the postal exchange network among primarily conceptual artists. Increasingly, computer networks are used to communicate and to publish as well. And college radio is, if its original diversity of programming is taken as the standard, the broadcast equivalent of the 'zine.

"I'm a former punk rocker and music writer who began publishing personally written experimental fiction in micropress about the time there began to be such a thing. I'm also interested in the Central European notion of 'civil society,' as an anti-political, unofficial continuation of an older culture, grounded in the relations between persons, under (and just out of reach of) a bureaucratic overlay. It seems there is much in micropress activities that could be compared to [this]." Ms. Pressler has a B.A. and an M.A. in philosophy from Cleveland State University and her M.F.A. in fiction from Brooklyn College.

For more on mail art, see Joel Lipman, "No Pricetags, No Rejections, No Returns," The Gamut 19 (Fall 1986), 80-93.
The first such publications were written by and for science fiction fans, who called them "fanzines." Special interest groups in music imitated the style; Mark Perry’s Sniffin’ Glue, which grew out of and was devoted to the early London punk scene, set the classic format for the punk fanzine: raw collages, inspired by William S. Burroughs’s and Brion Gysin’s cut-up techniques; disconcerting Situationist-influenced content; stark black-and-white photocopied reproduction; hand-printed or typewritten text; street-level language; and an air of extreme, distanced, edgy and apocalyptically erotic violence. Maximum Rock’n’Roll, devoted to thrash, hardcore, and related musics, is the best known descendant of Sniffin’ Glue; its circulation stands at 15,000, although it is almost never referred to by mainstream rock critics. Its staples are in-depth local "scene reports," written by participants, plus regular columnists who can be both satiric and analytical.

Punk and experimental writers who wrote for or read punk fanzines began, about 1980, to publish their own writing in 'zine form. The lineage begins, for this writer, with Denise Dee and Michael Kaniecki, two Pittsburgh natives living in San Francisco, who began Lobster Tendencies in 1980. The magazine ceased publication after several years, and was followed by related projects, including Denise Dee's very similar magazine, Closest Penguins. Though basically literary, Lobster Tendencies, like much of the micropress that followed, did not publish much poetry. Characteristically, micropress publishes prose, usually experimental in form, imagistic, subjective, colloquially written, and in the first person. It also publishes collages and concrete poetry, song lyrics, and a miscellany including reviews of diners, brief accounts of jobs held by readers, essays on shopping-mall architecture, manifestoes, diatribes, and parodies of almost anything, but it rarely publishes recognizable poetry.

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Breakfast Without Meat #10 ($1.25 from 1927 Haight St. #186, San Francisco, CA 94117): A pamphlet that doesn't take anything seriously, least of all itself. Tom Jones record reviews, interview with Pete Townshend, Gobo's record reviews (he hates everything) and reviews of books on Big Rock Stars. A good break from reading far too many socially-conscious zines. And remember, "Friends don't let friends type drunk".

Buddha Hoodist Punk Zen Detective (25¢ & SASE from Carrie, 833 1/3 N. Formosa, Hollywood, CA 90046). Collector's item minicomic with script by Shane Williams and art by Carrie. Buddha is an interesting guy with spiked hair, a strange appetite, and a completely disjointed way of solving his cases. One of those characters who only wanders in once, and it's just as well. Hey, try it -- what can you lose for a quarter?
Micropress did not really grow out of the experimental small presses and poetry activities of the late 50s and early 60s. At some point, those who had participated or been influenced by this poetry began to work in micropress, and, as well, micropress writers began to try poetry. But the characteristic micropress style really had its beginnings in the music fanzine. And even now, micropress writers are more likely to participate in one or more of the allied 'zine fields (especially music making or reviewing) than they are to publish their writing in small press or commercial magazines. Characteristically, the micropress network spreads horizontally, into related networks; it does not ascend vertically into the "legitimate" literary world.

The network has, however, increasingly pulled in small presses like Generator, edited by Cleveland area poet John Byrum, which publishes work deriving from the work of experimental 60s poets, but which can be comfortably reviewed in Factsheet Five. There are, as well, genre-straddling presses like John M. Bennett’s Luna Bisonte Prods (Columbus, Ohio), Liz Was’s and Miekal And’s Xeroxial Endarchy (Madison, Wisconsin), and Luigi-Bob Drake’s Burning Press (Cleveland, Ohio) that continue earlier experimental poetry traditions but are influenced by punk and its descendants. Most of these presses have been in operation for ten or more years; their catalogues feature a long list of writers, musicians, and concrete poets from many countries; they are included in many university collections; yet their concerns as well as their methods seem to set them off from most small presses, and link them with micropress. In some ways, then, the boundaries between small press and micropress are blurring. When I last spoke with John Byrum, it was his opinion, in fact, that the distinction had collapsed, for two reasons.

First, the low-cost printing and distribution methods of micropress publishers, including desktop publishing, photocopier reproduction, and direct-mail subscription sales, make good budgetary sense for anyone publishing for a small audience (and this would include, perhaps regretfully, most poets as well as most academics). In fact, many of them are in common use already among small press and academic publishers; the others, no doubt, soon will be.

Second, micropress publishing and distribution methods assure relative financial independence for writers and publishers. This in turn assures relative freedom from censorship, pressure, and control according to Joan Clinefelter, who teaches a course at Indiana University on avant-garde publications as vehicles of political and cultural radicalism. Clinefelter’s class begins with Expressionist and Futurist publications, moves on to Berlin Dada activities during the Weimar Republic period, then finishes with the contemporary U.S. and micropress. She notes that micropress, like earlier forms of avant-garde publication, allows radical artists to evade both

Extensive collections of small press and micropress publications are maintained at the New York Public Library, the Museum of Modern Art, Brown University, Harvard University, the University of Wisconsin, Ohio University, and SUNY Buffalo. The Cleveland State University Library’s Hazel Collister Hutchison Contemporary Poetry Collection includes about 500 small press and micropress titles.

Micropress material is often gratuitously violent, pervasively erotic—like the comic strip "The Young and the Frustrated" (© 1985 by Luna Ticks) from Lowlife 8.
governmental censorship—whether direct or indirect—and the need to make their art or writing commercially acceptable. Clinefelter thinks the recent controversies involving overt censorship of "obscene" and "unpatriotic" art did mainstream artists and writers something of a service, by waking them up to the existence of a great deal of tacit self-censorship that had been going on long before Jesse Helms attacked the National Endowment for the Arts.

Micropress methods make it possible to defend internally generated standards against such external pressure. If, as seems to be the case, such pressure begins to be felt as inappropriate or constraining, not only in the avant-garde but in the broader academic and arts communities, then there is reason for the mainstream to begin making common cause with the avant-garde, for their opponents may not understand the difference between them.

If a distinction can still be maintained between small press and micropress, it is in the resistance of micropress to the benign, but thoughtless pluralism that assimilates it to "just another SIG" (the computer networks' slang for a special interest group). A list of the writers important to the micropress group supports this view.

J.G. Ballard, Jorge Luis Borges, Charles Bukowski, the "cyberpunk" science fiction writers including Philip K. Dick, and of course, William S. Burroughs (more than the other Beat writers, although Jack Kerouac has been a strong influence on many), the Surrealist, Constructivist, Futurist and Dada writers and collagists, the Situationists, and, to a lesser extent, the Oulipo school of experimental writers have all had an impact on micropress; increasingly, so have ethnic and working-class writers and postwar Central European writers.

These writers usually have two tendencies in common. First, the use of fantastic imagery, violent or erotic situations, irrational or distorted psychological viewpoints, dreamlike plots (or no plot at all), and experimental prose. Second, they have (with exceptions, Borges being obviously one) a commitment to political and cultural radicalism. In this, to some extent, they join hands with earlier radical small press experimentation, such as that of Cleveland's d.a. levy. But unlike much 60s experimentation ("peace, love, and acid"), micropress tends towards the difficult, the irreconcilable, the gratuitously violent, perversely erotic, and extreme. In short, it is "punk," descended from a tradition of earlier, similarly extreme, avant-gardes.

This definition would cause some dispute within the micropress community. Not all micropress writers live, or write, on the edge; in fact, following the usual contrarian strategies of the avant-garde, there is periodically, in micropress, a cult of the gratuitously normal. But, in general, micropress, like the avant-gardes of the earlier part of the century, has tended to take the extreme as its territory, and to

Oulipo: abbreviation of the Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle (Workshop for Potential Literature), formed in 1960 as a subcommittee of the Collège de Pataphysique, though quickly dropping "official" affiliation with the group. Members included Raymond Queneau, Italo Calvino, Georges Perec and Harry Mathews; Marcel Duchamp and Claude Levi-Strauss were correspondents. The Oulipo was not a "writers' workshop" in the usual contemporary sense, but a group devoted to elaborating formal rules for "potential literature." Members, employing combinatorial and mathematical rules (several were experts in mathematics or linguistics), elaborated methods that deliberately created obstacles for their writing, and then sought to solve or evade these difficulties with as great a show of virtuosity as possible.
defend the high ground within it. As an irreconcilable, fantastic, and potentially dangerous extreme, it marks out an area which cannot be assimilated. Moreover, its methods of distribution help it avoid the other danger to which avant-gardes are subject: that of becoming merely a fantasy theater in which conventional but voyeuristic spectators can see their forbidden desires enacted. It elaborates a world that has no purpose beyond itself and that requires next to no money to keep going. It continues, internationally, regardless of external judgments; it is nearly invisible to controls at home. Mainstream writers, with a new awareness of similar dangers to themselves, might well envy such freedom.

**Some Nearby Micropress Publishers**

- **Artcrimes**
  - P.O. Box 14457
  - Cleveland OH 44114-0457

- **Whitewall of Sound**
  - c/o Jim Clinefelter
  - P.O. Box 7606
  - Akron OH 44306

- **Burning Press (Taproot)**
  - P.O. Box 18817
  - Cleveland Hts. OH 44118

- **Xexoxial Endarchy**
  - 1341 Williamson St.
  - Madison WI 53703

- **Factsheet Five**
  - c/o Mike Gunderloy
  - 6 Arizona Ave.
  - Rensselaer NY 12144-4502

- **SLF/SWAN**
  - 2062 E. 115th
  - Cleveland OH 44106

- **Lost & Found Times**
  - c/o Luna Bisonte Prods
  - 137 Leland Ave.
  - Columbus OH 43214

- **Jim Lang**
  - P.O. Box 110171
  - Cleveland OH 44111

- **TBS Publications**
  - 5414 Columbus Ave.
  - Sandusky OH 44870
From Silent Fires and Border, Texas-Mexico

Selections from two photo projects

Jeffrey Silverthorne

I am interested in borders, both internal and external: how far I am willing to go with an idea, and how far I can go before I am stopped. I do not think of my work as being on any edge, because the outside is made up of the inside. Even though the outside may be a little harder and crustier than the inside.

Silent Fires, 1982-84, was motivated by the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. It is not a literal depiction of the myth, nor does it deal with the emotional content, which is love found, love lost, and the subsequent search for meaning with a sense of place and belonging. There are other aspects of the myth which I do not concern myself with, such as self-betrayal. Although it is personal, I do not consider it strictly autobiographical.

Border, Texas-Mexico was begun in 1985 and as recently as January I was working there. Most of the work was done between Del Rio-Ciudad Acuna and Brownsville-Matamoros, which is the southern part of the Texas border. In 1986 I received an N.E.A. grant and was able to spend a month and a half there, driving 5,000 miles. The whole border, El Paso to Brownsville, is about 1000 miles long.

Silent Fires was worked in two studios. The first was a room about 8' by 12' with two windows and a light. The second was about 30' by 40' with four 4' by 8' windows and two skylights. I liked the first one better. This series was a turning point for me technically. To me 35 mm. has always been the most difficult camera to work with. Difficult because it is seemingly so easy, so easy to take for granted. Before 1982 I had been using mostly a large view camera. Getting tired of carrying it and all the hardware, I figured that in 20 to

Jeffrey Silverthorne received an M.A. in teaching and an M.F.A. from the Rhode Island School of Design. He has worked as a teacher and a freelance photographer, and has received grants from the Massachusetts Artists Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. He has had one-man shows in a dozen galleries in the United States, as well as at the Ufficio Dell' Arte in Paris, France. He is currently a visiting assistant professor of art, teaching photography and 2-D design, at Cleveland State University. (Photo by Lynn Foster.)
40 years when I couldn't carry it anyway I would have to use a smaller camera, so why not start now? For *Silent Fires* the camera was on a tripod most of the time, so I was using it but not working the tool for what it could do in relation to my ideas and the subject matter. I use both a single lens reflex (Canon F1) and a rangefinder camera (Leica M6). There is a very real flexibility to a 35 mm. camera, a real flow of blood back and forth. This is not to be romantic or sentimental, this is to realize it must be there, like the dirt underneath your fingernails. With *Border*, much of the work has been done in color. I wanted the pictures in color, not pictures about color. Neither black and white nor color is accurate to how the eye sees. I am not concerned with that kind of accuracy or truth. *Silent Fires* was taken on Technical Pan (ASA 40), developed in Neo-Fin Blau and printed on Agfa Portriga Rapid 111, #3.

I am interested in being vulnerable. Not as a position of weakness but as one with the confidence to test and push boundaries. The good question is almost always stronger than the good answer. So since I am looking, and I need to look somewhere, there are, in reality, only two places to look: in life or in death, and maybe they are not entirely different from one another. Death is part of life, but life, always life, is my business.

During 1972-74 I photographed in a state morgue. Thinking I would do a documentary, I soon realized I had no desire to distance myself. So I started making pictures, sort of portraits, though I do not know if the portraits portrayed anything specific about the person beyond a likeness of the body. The looking was not for them, I was looking for my parents, for myself. The portraits were not of them, they were of me. *Silent Fires* and *Border, Texas-Mexico* come from the morgue work and are two sides of the same body, and they ask the same questions: what do you want and how much are you willing to work to get it?
Above: *Silent Fires*: Brother and Sister. 1982-84.
Left: *Silent Fires*: The Angel and the Offering. 1982-84.
Silent Fires: Oracle. 1982-84.
No Half Measures

Christoph von Dohnányi, Music Director of the Cleveland Orchestra, interviewed by Heinz Josef Herbort for Die Zeit (Hamburg), 8 September, 1989. Translated for The Gamut by Klaus-Peter Hinze

DIE ZEIT: Five years in Cleveland! What do you feel when you return to Germany, especially to the musical world?
VON DOHNÁNYI: When I come back to Germany at first I feel something new, but not for long. It begins with the language and leads up to the relationship between people, and the way one tries to solve problems. Take the situation of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the way they solve problems there, whether with new members, with the new manager, or the music director. When Leonard Bernstein, so I was told, left the New York Philharmonic, he told them, "You don't care about me, and I don't care about you any more—let's divorce." I don't know if this is true, but it would be an American way of solving problems. In Germany it would create bitterness.

DIE ZEIT: Would directing the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra be a position you would be interested in?
VON DOHNÁNYI: Probably not. I don't see a solution, when on the one hand the music director is responsible for whatever happens in the evening—but is not given sole charge of program planning.

DIE ZEIT: Could the lack of such authority really keep you from accepting the Berlin Philharmonic position?
VON DOHNÁNYI: In Berlin they can get someone who will agree to a situation in which everything is available for negotiation. Personally I could also accept such working conditions, but I believe that it is preferable to have one person deciding matters. In Cleveland, for example—I have known this orchestra for eight years now—there hasn't been any situation, indeed not one, where there has been the slightest sign of a conflict. To be sure, I discuss everything
important with the members of the orchestra, but they do not want to make decisions. They say: "You have the responsibility." Really friendly and agreeable terms with an orchestra are possible only if one person makes the decisions.

DIE ZEIT: When you went to Cleveland, did you know that those would be the working conditions which, to say the least, are a bit different from those in Hamburg?

VON DOHNÁNYI: There was a very special situation in Hamburg, because they had two managers—and that is particularly complicated. When I wasn’t satisfied with something at the Opera, it probably concerned the music. I knew what I wanted, and I also knew that our essential goal was to make clean and beautiful music. But how can you have good string sound when a different group plays every night? A string quartet cannot employ a different viola or second violin each evening. It wouldn’t be an ensemble any more. That was our problem then. Secondly, when you have two managers and one tells you, "It’s good as it is" and the other one says "we should change this," there is inevitable conflict and it causes, I admit it quite frankly, considerable irritation. When what I live and work for very, very hard is in danger, I can also get aggressive.

DIE ZEIT: Five years ago you went to Cleveland, with great expectations. Did these expectations come true, or were they even surpassed?

VON DOHNÁNYI: I believe that my expectations were surpassed in almost all respects, because coming from Europe I simply could not realize conditions in the musical world in America. I had had the position of musical director in Luebeck, Kassel, Frankfurt, and Hamburg. But to be a musical director where management provides all necessary support—such an experience I had never had in Germany. In this respect the results, human relationships and artistic work conditions over there, are simply much better than I imagined.

DIE ZEIT: But the administrative experience was probably not the only reason why you were so positively surprised in Cleveland?

VON DOHNÁNYI: Cleveland is really not well-known to people in Germany. There is a first class medical clinic in Cleveland, a first class museum, a fabulous music college and of course this first-rate orchestra. The Cleveland Orchestra has always been a secret, something known to insiders. But every musician knew that it was something special.

Like all of us, I was of course a great admirer of George Szell. When we were young, he had a way to make music which pointed to the future. Today, in retrospect, I realize that Szell was also a child of his time, and was essentially a late romantic. Yet as well, an incredibly intense and completely devoted musician, who deserved our respect.
Then came the time with Lorin Maazel, an eminent specialist but one who brought with him a totally different taste; he taught the orchestra a great deal about reading music, which the members really didn’t have before. But I believe no very close relationship developed between him and the individual musicians.

When I arrived I thought I could continue where Szell had left off. I worked hard to explain to the orchestra that depending on the conductor’s beating time does not produce the best sound.

To me this is a very important matter: I grew up in Berlin with Furtwängler, I experienced Karajan, met other great conductors abroad and profited from them. These people were not accustomed to beating time carefully or observing barlines to simplify the technical demands.

I just saw a television program with Toscanini, who said at one point, "Don’t watch my baton, I don’t know what it does. Listen to each other." To me this seems very important. The Cleveland Orchestra was, perhaps under Lorin Maazel, but also under Szell, a bit too dependent on time beating. Perhaps the sound has changed again somewhat. I say to the orchestra, "I can give you all the pizzicati, but I would rather risk not playing together than creating a precision which is square." They understand this, and now they listen carefully, and almost always succeed.

DIE ZEIT: Let’s come back to your expectations. You must have had some disappointments.

VON DOHNÁNYI: Yes. But it was not, for example, the disappointment of having somebody interfere. There has never been a sponsor who said: "Why must you play Schönberg's Pelleas und Melisande, I'd really prefer Rachmaninoff." This has never happened. That kind of thing I experienced from the board members of the Hamburg State Opera.

But there is a great pressure for achievement. Let’s take our last European tour; twenty concerts in twenty-five days; and always we attempt to give our best. This brings us close to our physical limits. And the extensive program we have; that you have to manage this with only a few rehearsals—not quite as few as the Berliners, who have three, we have at least four—that indeed produces stress.

DIE ZEIT: And what causes this stress?

VON DOHNÁNYI: The stress is essentially determined by the enormous pressure to produce income; since all additional funds have to come from private sources. When we have a budget of 25 million dollars, and we make approximately 19 million ourselves, we need almost 6 million more. Six million dollars is about twelve million marks, which we have to beg from private people. The government contributes about 500,000 dollars, but they are mainly earmarked for the upkeep
of the buildings, and similar purposes, and all the rest must come from our sponsors.

DIE ZEIT: How many concerts does the orchestra have to deliver under such pressure?

VON DOHNÁNYI: Altogether we play eight or nine times a week.

DIE ZEIT: No German orchestra would accept such a schedule?

VON DOHNÁNYI: They wouldn’t even be permitted to do so under their union contract, it would be their upper limit. So they do relatively fewer. In America, in Cleveland, the upper margin is totally used up. You have to rehearse, for example, Busoni in the morning and play Bruckner at the evening concert; the next morning they rehearse Mahler and perform Stravinsky in the evening. This imposes great pressure, when one isn’t only rehearsing mechanically, but trying to understand the music in its larger context. The pressure ultimately comes from the economic structure.

DIE ZEIT: But couldn’t you say: this is too much for me; I must invite some guest conductors to share the burden.

VON DOHNÁNYI: It doesn’t work. Especially in these (American) cities the people want to see their own music director. Half of the subscription concerts I have to direct myself.

DIE ZEIT: As the musical director in Cleveland, how many concerts do you have to direct yourself?

VON DOHNÁNYI: At a minimum I have twelve sets of three evenings of subscription concerts, and two weeks of summer festival at Blossom Music Center; finally, many recordings. As a matter of fact we are at the limit of what can or should be attempted.

DIE ZEIT: What does that mean as far as the repertory is concerned?
VON DOHNÁNYI: I estimate that we study between 45 and 50 different works on the average per year.

DIE ZEIT: Five months in Cleveland—that means there is quite some time left for other engagements.

VON DOHNÁNYI: There are so many beautiful things one simply cannot do. Recently we were in Strasbourg; I really don't know the city. It was hard to find three hours for myself to see a little of it. In a profession in which you have to entertain others, it is hard to entertain yourself. We always have to be available when others want to have a good time.

Some time ago I read in your paper an interview with the pianist Friedrich Gulda. There was a lot of bitterness in it of course, and many half-truths—but also some truths. He is sitting in a much narrower cage than we, but the fact that we are sitting in a cage, that probably nowadays one can't even become known in an artistic profession if one isn't willing to go into this cage, this is indeed a reality. You have to make this decision, and you never know if it was right.

DIE ZEIT: Wasn't your brother as the Lord Mayor of Hamburg in the same situation?

VON DOHNÁNYI: In all societies of today, in the structure of all countries of the world, the people in top positions are compelled to make a sacrifice of their time.

DIE ZEIT: Does the overall positive fulfillment of your expectations as far as Cleveland goes also have purely musical reasons?

VON DOHNÁNYI: Something advantageous is still the fact that European music, indeed the music we are most concerned with, is of major importance over there. A conversation I had in Vienna with a musical authority who said, "Spare us this Brahms piece, it is awful," would not be possible in America because there they have a deep respect for Brahms, for Mozart, for Beethoven. Here in Europe we know that there also is less good Brahms, less good Mozart.

DIE ZEIT: Idolatry of genius then is greater over there?

VON DOHNÁNYI: Yes. Very great, deep respect. That gives us—all the musicians coming from here—the possibility to show the audiences where to find the really great works. That is even a duty.

For example I put on The Magic Flute for the first time at Blossom. I wanted to know whether it is possible to make good theater with a first class orchestra, and with a well prepared team of singers and technically creative apparatus in a house which isn't even an established opera house. And I insisted that we put on a Magic Flute in ten days, which wasn't worse than many, many other Magic Flutes that took eight to ten weeks.

There were 16,000 people who saw our two performances. I doubt if more than ten percent knew The Magic Flute, or had ever seen it. This is not missionary work, for the Americans are incredibly well trained through recordings. Yet they've
never seen the works and some have never heard them. Karl Amadeus Hartmann is unknown, Rudi Stephan is unknown, Reger is almost unknown, Busoni's piano concerto is almost unknown.

**DIE ZEIT:** On the other hand, Eliott Carter is as good as unknown here.

**VON DOHNÁNYI:** That's correct. For a Christmas concert I asked myself, what do they expect from me? I chose the G-minor symphony by Mozart, then "Equatorial" by Varese, and after the break, "The Warsaw Survivors" and "Peace on Earth," a capella, by Schönberg, then repeated the "Survivors" and in the end Beethoven's "Leonore No. 3 Overture." That was certainly not what they expected in a Christmas concert. But never in my life have I seen so many tears or so much emotion among the people who listened to us. Because they were touched. There is no saturation in this respect. And there is an audience that wants to hear new works, that is looking for access to known as well as unknown music.

I draw the conclusion from my own experience that here in Europe and also over there we have an audience we have underestimated by far, and that we could get into a much closer contact and a real dialogue with the people.

**DIE ZEIT:** You just said that the audience over there was less saturated. That means you consider the audience in Europe, especially in Germany, saturated.

**VON DOHNÁNYI:** We are saturated in the sense one is saturated when living in the Palatinate and thinks there is only Palatinate cuisine. Why don't you go into the concert hall here and ask the people if they know Sibelius's Seventh?...

**DIE ZEIT:** How guilty of this are those who are responsible for the musical scene? Is this a vicious circle? When only the music from 1730 to 1930 is performed, how can people demand something else so that their other demands can be satisfied?

**VON DOHNÁNYI:** ...When you can convince the people that you are working for their satisfaction in what they already know, you can be certain that these listeners will also soon say, "When he gives us a Dvořák we like, then we must at least attend when he brings Webern." That has worked quite well for us. This way we could intersperse people like Stephe Reich, Charles Ives, and Carl Ruggles. We told the Americans: You must at least know your own composers. As a result we felt a small falling-off in attendance, about five percent. We accepted this loss and said, even if we lose a few more, we shall have quite a different audience. And the success proved we were right. During the most riskily programmed season we sold the most tickets.

**DIE ZEIT:** What advice can you give your colleagues in this country?

**VON DOHNÁNYI:** In a publicly subsidized situation the director must see to it that in exchange for the freedom of
choosing the program, the income requirements are met....The American system, total privatization, I really do not consider ideal, because you have to put up a fight for the out-of-the-ordinary. But I am certainly not for total state control of initiative and risk, as exists here.

DIE ZEIT: That means whatever sells need not be subsidized, but only what otherwise has no chance of being performed should be supported.

VON DOHNÁNYI: Right. And it also means that those in charge of the great institutions, from the Berlin Philharmonic to Salzburg to Paris, have a great responsibility, especially in their Festivals, to really further new music.

DIE ZEIT: A high income requirement on the one hand, an even higher performance achievement on the other—are the American unions strong enough to raise objections?

VON DOHNÁNYI: No, I wouldn't say that. The American unions are very strong and time restrictions are even stricter than in Germany. But I believe that with good preparation and knowledge of the full situation you can still plan far ahead. There have always been limitations, and I see no reason why musicians should not enjoy security in a society which is generally safe through social legislation. But I think that many difficulties arise [here in Germany] because conditions which are defined by union contracts are often not met. For example, when musicians attend only four out of twelve rehearsals, because they claim that everyone in the orchestra must have a chance to rehearse—then the situation becomes critical. The contract is interpreted in a one-sided way. Of course, we are aware that by contract the working session is limited to one hour and fifteen minutes; after that there must be a break. But 75 minutes is a lot of time with well prepared and trained and correctly placed people. A union contract should impose obligations on both sides.

Over there this is quite different; rehearsal conditions are kept very strictly, almost by the second. Sometimes that can be a bother. But also there is total fulfillment of duties. The American union is even involved in the financial side. That means that when we make a recording, the union will get nine percent. They won't tolerate a musician who spoils their recording because he or she was not prepared. Therefore, the first person to say "Someone had better talk to the musician" is probably not the music director but the union man....

Much time is wasted in European opera houses by theater directors who are not well prepared, who have no clear idea of what they are going to do but are rather trying things out and making experiments....

In a publicly run enterprise, that is, one that belongs to the taxpayers, you are not permitted to limit yourself to three productions per year if theatrical demands [for a greater number of productions] get into conflict with the music. I believe that the chance to achieve one good production out of three is
much smaller than one good production out of ten. Therefore
we experience many fiascos in these houses.
DIE ZEIT: What can we learn from America in this respect?
VON DOHNÁNYI: In a money-oriented era such as ours, the
musician has the opportunity to earn extra money through
work that may not be in his orchestra's interest; that is to say,
this situation exactly endangers what we most care about. My
musicians, however, don't have a chance to moonlight at the
opera house. But they play chamber music, they teach—and
they make music in the orchestra. In other words, they always
play together.

And there is something else, something I find too seldom
in European orchestras, which also have to stand their ground
in an open market economy: the pride in the orchestra you
belong to. A Cleveland musician wants to be proud of his or-
chestra, and a Boston musician of his orchestra. The Berliners
probably have this kind of pride, the Viennese probably have
it, they have to assert themselves, they have to be good, be-
cause they have to prove their economic viability. But what of
the others? You simply can't go half way. [It's not enough,
when] the economy determines the way, and you simply have
to make the best records you can and hope they will be in
demand. There is no room for half measures. A little bit of
stiffly frozen capitalism mixed with social security can only
produce bad results.
DIE ZEIT: That is quite an elitist standpoint—which after all
has a bad name, hasn't it? Is there time to go over the question
of elitism in classical music again and again?
VON DOHNÁNYI: No, really not. I consider it an extremely
elitist achievement to send a satellite to Venus, yet nobody
ever discusses whether it is elitist. Excluding elitism would
mean ordering mankind to stand still. Elitism has moved the
world forward. I do not believe in any democracy which
doesn't accept elitism as a necessity for man's progress. Marx
was an elitist, Freud was an elitist, Thomas Mann was an
elitist—how can any society afford to do without elitism, and
not go bankrupt? ■

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Moving to a different location, however desirable, always entails some stress; moving to a different country, where people speak a different language, can be even more stressful; and if a person is moved to a foreign land suddenly and by force, the experience can be downright traumatic. Such a person would not be able to communicate other than by a rudimentary sign language, and his only hope would be that his hosts would respond favorably. His sense of identity would be altered. He would try to understand what others were saying to him and, if he were alert, he would begin to guess which spoken sounds were associated with objects, that is, nouns, and later on, which sounds indicated actions. If he stayed in this culture without having any chance to speak his native language regularly and without getting proper instruction, he would eventually adopt a limited, fragmented version of the host language which would enable him at least to get along. This version of the language would be classified as a pidgin. Because most people lose the full ability to acquire languages easily by their early teens, such a person would probably never fully master the new, host language.

Let's assume that this person realizes that the new country will be his permanent home and that he associates primarily with others who have found themselves in a similar situation. He and other pidgin speakers marry and have children. Will the children also be pidgin speakers? No. The children, in speaking to their parents while exposed to the dominant language of the country, will develop a language similar to the dominant one, yet retaining an identity of its own. The language that the children will speak—and their children as well unless they are formally instructed in the
dominant language at a very early age—will be a Creole, a fully developed language in its own right, resembling, but not identical to, the host language. Linguistic studies have shown that this phenomenon has occurred repeatedly in virtually all parts of the world.

The Africans who were abducted, sold into slavery, and shipped to the Caribbean Islands originally spoke many different languages. The dominant language in the Caribbean, for the most part, was that of the slave traders and masters, and this was usually English. Aside from the horrors of slavery itself, these Africans must have experienced severe language trauma; they became pidgin speakers. Successive generations spoke what we call English Creole, that is, a language that has retained some African intonations and syntax but that has a predominantly English vocabulary.

This Creole is still current in the English-speaking Caribbean—the Virgin Islands, St. Kitts, Nevis, Anguilla, Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad, St. Lucia, Antigua, Grenada, etc.—and its use as a literary language has a long history, though usually an oral one. In the islands owned or managed by the British, Creole speech was often denigrated, as was French Creole and Dutch Creole in the islands occupied by those nations. The tendency persists to this day. The feeling remains, among many, that any departure from the Queen's English must be inferior. It is only recently that Creole "orature," stories told in the speaker's native tongue, has been getting the attention that literature deserves. Written literature in Creole is a relatively new phenomenon, though Claude McKay, a Jamaican policeman, published two books of poetry in Creole in 1912. McKay's poem "Fetchin Water," for example, captures the rhythms and everyday concerns of early twentieth-century Jamaica and gives voice to a subtlety that indicates that all is not what it seems:

Watch how dem tours' like fe look
Out pon me little daughter
Wheneber fe her tu'n to cook
or fetch a pan of water
De sight look gay
Dat is one way
But I can tell you say,
Nuff rock 'tone in de sea, yet none
But those pon lan' know 'bouten sun.

["Nuff rock . . . sun" is a Jamaican proverb: "Only those who have experienced it can know about hardship"] (Paula Burnett, ed. The Penguin Book of Caribbean Verse in English, 1986, 142, 402). The poem goes on to present several different ways that children try to get out of work.

From these early beginnings that artistically capture aspects of West Indian life, the use of Creole as a literary language has taken on strong philosophical and political overtones, as Edward Kamau Brathwaite points out in his book History of the Voice (London, 1984). The literary uses of Creole
are intimately related to the oral tradition which Brathwaite sees as the basis of an emerging "nation language." He argues, "Nation language . . . is the submerged area of that dialect which is much more closely allied to the African aspect of experience in the Caribbean. It may be in English: but often it is in English which is like a howl, or a shout, or a machine gun or the wind or a wave. It is also like the blues" (p. 13). He goes on to elaborate: "The poetry, the culture itself, exists not in a dictionary but in the tradition of the spoken word. It is based as much on sound as it is on song. That is to say, the noise it makes is part of the meaning" (p. 17).

Creole has been used extensively also in prose fiction, most often in dialogue, as is evident in practically all West Indian novelists. Newspapers, too, run regular columns of written Creole where the authors usually give voice to West Indian proverbs as they comment on current events.

As a poet and a professor, I am naturally interested in how language conveys not only meaning, but also the truth of experience, the vitality of imagination, and the beauty of its form and sound in the art itself. Very early on, while teaching at the University of the Virgin Islands, I noticed that even though my students spoke a standard Caribbean English and wrote, basically, in standard American English, when they were excitedly talking among themselves, they spoke Creole, which often sounded quite poetic to me. And I noticed that Creole expressions often conveyed more poignantly and precisely their ideas or feelings than did standard American. When I began using poems written in Creole in my classes, however, students complained that Creole poems were too hard to read and that the language itself was broken English, and by implication, an English that needed to be corrected. Fortunately, this predisposition on their part was short-lived. When the students themselves began writing poems in Creole, I found that they could pay much more attention to poetic elements like image and line length. Indeed, when writing in their own native Creole, they were actually able to become aware, much more readily than in standard literary English, of the poetic effects that these elements can produce. Many students found that they could express their thoughts and feelings most exactly in Creole. Standard American or standard British was for them actually a poor second choice.

My own experience taught me that expression of oneself in one's mother tongue is vital to finding a self-identity and a continuity of understanding. My grandparents were Polish immigrants and spoke Polish and a kind of pidgin English. And after they died, Polish was hardly spoken at home. I felt I had lost a part of my self by losing the language. And even at a young age, I bitterly resented the widespread admonitions from adults that I had to speak English "good," and not sound like a "dumb hunky." I was able to identify with some of the
pressures my students felt from the established community's insistence on speaking "good" English.

I found a similar conflict in my Vietnamese foster son Chuong, who, though he learned to speak English fluently, never felt fully at ease with his adopted American self. Sometimes he would speak to us rapidly in English and then slip into Vietnamese and back again into English, not realizing that he had switched codes. I remembered my relatives doing this regularly with English and Polish; indeed, most people with recent ethnic backgrounds could cite similar experiences.

Though I was convinced of the value of literature in Creole, I approached teaching it cautiously, and for a year read as much West Indian literature as I could. I was fortunate to have lengthy, regular conversations on this matter with the linguists Vincent O. Cooper and Gilbert Sprauve, who not only clarified certain nuances of the language but gave me relevant material. Cooper himself had been writing poems in Creole off and on for the past fifteen years. His short poem, "Doin you own Ting?" (Cooper, Parris, Lisowski, *Three Islands*, 1987) was a good springboard to discussion with my students:

**DOIN YOU OWN TING?**
An de Nebis driver say to de visito
"Sir, dis is de school
Weh de petit-negre and dem a tun fool."
"Hey, Chauffer?" de tourist beeped in
"Do you speak English?"
De chauffeur look roun, kind a puzzled like,
"Me no bin a England, Bo."

(Nebis" = Nevis, an island in the Caribbean.) This short poem points to the communication problems that occur frequently in the islands; it is clear that the visitor and the driver see English differently.

After having read what I felt was a sufficient amount of this literature, I formally introduced in my creative writing class a two-week unit in the writing of poetry in Creole. First I tried to ground the students thoroughly in the basics of poetry writing, and had them write, discuss, and revise several poems on themes like childhood, alienation, fantasy, dreams. What I found was that the students immediately focused on important life events as subject matter for their Creole expressions. Carole Brown wrote about her brother in a poem titled "He Call Heself Man" and was able to express her concern/bitterness/disgust/resolution in the images and rhythms of her native tongue:

He ain ga no job
Yet he call heself man;
 Nobady cyaan tell he
 Wha' to do.

He drap out a school
Befo' de nint' grade;
 Try to rule de principal
 An' de teacha dem too.
He cyaan read a book
Yet he lookin' woman;
He seepin' all a dem
He kno'.

He call heself man
Since he gro' beard;
But a few hair on de chin
Don' mek 'im so.

With a little effort, any reader can understand what the poem says, but the real delight comes from hearing the poem read well. The distinctive Creole features—the use of the plural suffix to indicate plurality ("teacha dem," meaning teachers), the widespread use of the third person nominative pronoun for all cases ("heself"), and the use of the negation "cyaan" meaning "can't"—should provide no significant obstacle to appreciation. Perhaps the only stumbling block would be understanding the word "seepin": "seep" is a derogatory, sexual sound directed toward a girl or a woman by West Indian boys and men; the spelling here is an approximation of the sound. The poem ends with an admonition, that in itself is a resolution with its bit of West Indian folk wisdom.

Another student, Barbara Callwood, explored a level of intimacy in her poem "Dey Music Gawn," which she first tried to write in standard American. The straight English version was flat, and, according to her, didn't tell the emotional truth of the situation. Her third revision got it right:

DEY MUSIC GAWN
When he leave
He only take a few tings:
Da way he had
O'sayin' meh name sometime
Da change it to ah bluesy jazz note
Like when a sax man
Blow from deep inside heself
An'mek meh heart
Start jumpin' beat
An' wata bus from meh eye.
An' dey way
He use to hold me in bed—
Arm an' leg all twis' up wid mine,
Dey way rollin' bass note
Does weave dey way
All roun' an' between
Dey tenor pan sweetness
Of ah poundin' calypso melody.
Da ting we had togeda
Was red hot an' smood
Pulsin steel pan hot
An' syrupy saxaphone smood.
No. He'n take much wid he
When he leave.
He jus' take de sweet passion.
He take all de music
An' gawn.

The Creole images permitted Barbara to add a clarity and vitality that she could not achieve in standard American. Take for example the lines, "An' mek meh heart/Start jumpin' beat." How would we say that in America? My heart started pounding? A poor cliché, as would be any variation of that. "Start jumpin' beat" not only continues the extended metaphor of music in the poem, but also evokes the calypso-filled carnival celebration in which the "jam band rule." A typical refrain from a calypso during that time was "jump, jump, higha, higha, jump, jump, jump . . . ."

The following line, "An' wata bus from meh eye," continues the beat. The water bursts from the eye, like a watermain breaking, indicating the suddenness and overpowering nature of the feeling. The image would be the same in standard English, but it derives additional force and immediacy when expressed in the poet's own idiom. The poem is sustained by musical metaphors, not only of the saxophone but also of the "pan," i.e., the steel drum, the most common musical instrument in the Caribbean. Of course, the end of the poem, with the understatement that is so typical of West Indian culture, effectively concludes the music metaphor, "He take all de music/ An' gawn." The short last line brings the reader up with a feeling of unfulfillment. Both of these poems are personal, bound up in a particular culture. They could not be expressed so well in standard American—not because American is intrinsically less rich, but because these particular experiences are naturally linked to the images and rhythms of Caribbean Creole, and so that particular language expresses them more vividly and precisely, with the right overtones and resonances for these particular personas.

A third student, Sharon Freeman, used Creole to convey an impression of West Indian life. Her poem "Sounds o' de Fish Markit" employs several voices to make a social comment:

SOUNDS O' DE FISH MARKIT
Ah hear de shell blo'
De fish boat comin' een
"Tante Teresa, bring yuh bag
De fish boat comin' een
Bring yuh money
Bring yuh knife, Tante!
De fish boat comin' een."
We hurry ta de bay
Join de waitin' group
"Lawd, ah hope dem haw' grouper."
"Mae Chile, so long we aint
Seen a scale o' fish."
"Buh dese fellas aint go' bring
De fish from de boat?"
.
.
.
"Mamie de fish comin'!" de lil
Boy giggle behin' he han'.
"Whey? Buh dis lil boy could lie!"
A y'ung American turist address de
Friendliest face.
"Hi there, is it going to rain tomorrow?"
"Ah cyaan help yuh mister; buh why dem
Don' bring een de fish?"
.
.
.
The sounds of the fish market certainly indicate a lively
place, but notice that virtually the only place where standard
English is used indicates not only an intrusion but an ig­
norance. Although the tourist is answered and dismissed, his
presence marks a distinction between the two cultures.

A major problem for my students at first was how to spell
words or expressions so that the sound was accurate and so
that the rhythm effectively conveyed the images and the senti­
ments they wished. On every island the pronunciation is a lit­
tle different, and we could have decided to spell each word
phonetically, as the particular speaker pronounced it. Instead
we opted for a pan-Caribbean spelling, using conventional
forms already in widespread use. For example, we used the
Jamaican "cyaaan" for "can't," even though one student insisted
that she pronounced the word "keyan." Of course such stand­
ardization is normal practice in written languages: the same
English word with a single accepted spelling may be
pronounced quite differently in Yorkshire, Iowa, and
Alabama.

Literary Creole of course often involves more than the
written word. Author and performer Louise Bennett has
pioneered an aspect of it which is actually performance
poetry. Her comic-satiric verse is often augmented by her sing­
ing of traditional folk poems in different keys. Her body move­
ment might even be construed as dance. She applies the oral
tradition to contemporary phenomena and perspectives. For
example, in "Colonization in Reverse," Bennett takes a
humorous approach to a form of "brain drain" that many
Caribbean nations experience:

Wat a joyful new, Miss Mattie
I feel me heart gwine burs
Jamaican people colonizin
Englan in reverse.

She goes on to speculate how this, indeed, will alter the
nature of English culture:
Wat a devilment a Englan
Dem face war an brave de worse,
But me wonderin how dem gwine stan
Colonizin in reverse.

(qtd. from Burnett, 32, 33)

Caribbean Creole can be as rich a language as standard English or French; and, even though its full flavor can be achieved only when it is spoken or read aloud, its use by native speakers on the written page adds a vitality and authenticity available in no other form of expression. In art we explore the depths of ourselves and our relations with our fellow human beings; the poet's voice must resonate not only through his literary craft but also through his natural language and that of his community.
Manga! The Great Japanese Comic Book Invasion

Lee A. Makela

Read any good comic books lately? Maybe not, but perhaps you should.

Cultural commentators have noted the growing importance on the American scene of what often are called "graphic novels," forms of fiction presented in visual form, contemporary "comic books." Long popular in Europe and other parts of the world, the graphic novel has begun to appear among the colorful displays at local comic book outlets and on bookstore shelves throughout the United States.

Most reports on the emergence of the graphic novel as literature have been directed towards the European influence exerted on the American market by such artists as Moebius, the great French visual storyteller. Aside from brief mentions of the Japanese manga ("comic book") as a secondary illustration of the graphic novel phenomenon at work in the international community, very little has been said about the Japanese impact on the American literary scene. Yet you might well be surprised, if you do stop in to browse at the corner comic book emporium, to find that even here the Japanese have made their mark.

It is not enough that Japanese automobiles abound on our streets and highways or that every living room glows with the light reflected from a Japanese television set connected to a Japanese video tape recorder; but now even the sacred precincts of Superman, Katy Keene, and Pogo have been invaded by our Pacific neighbors. The interest of some Japanese in exporting this popular literary form and of a few American publishers looking for additional material to feed the appetites of local comic book and graphic novel fans have combined to make possible the invasion of the United States by the Japanese manga.
Indeed the range of Japanese manga already available in the United States in translation mirrors remarkably well the variety of manga found on the Japanese market. There are series aimed at young female audiences, at the "sex-and-violence" crowd, at science fiction buffs, at those attracted to historical samurai epics and at readers interested in war stories or humor.

In Japan, manga are (as the historian of Japan Peter Duus tells us) "a powerful medium for entertainment, for the transmission of knowledge, and for the diffusion of values." The arrival of this Japanese influence in the United States is equally noteworthy for the impact it might well have on us, on our ideas and interests. One might, in fact, argue that we ignore this latest publishing phenomenon only at our peril!

The earliest modern comic strip appeared in Japan at the turn of the century in Jiji shinpo, the nation's first popular newspaper. In this multi-panel strip for adults entitled Tagosaku and Mokube Sightseeing in Tokyo the artist Kitazawa Rakuten followed the humorous misadventures of two country bumpkins discovering the delights and perils of modern Tokyo. Like other early manga, Kitazawa's strips were extremely episodic, akin to many of the contemporary comics familiar to Western newspaper readers today.

The Japanese comic book industry itself took root some twenty years later. In 1924, one daily strip so captured the fancy of its readers that it spawned Japan's first comic book fad. After its initial appearance in the Hochi newspaper, the series, Easy-going Daddy, was reissued in booklet form. Soon thereafter, wind-up dolls immortalized its major characters and towels appeared emblazoned with the likeness of the strip's hero. Eventually dramatized versions made their debuts on radio and in film. A new form of popular entertainment for adults had been launched; and a new publishing industry was quickly organized to exploit it, an industry destined to thrive in the decades ahead.

More extended comics—some twenty pages or so in length—began to appear in Japan during the 1930s, the majority still aimed at an adult audience; after World War II, more and more manga treated a full story line in a single volume. Amidst the poverty of post-war Japan, many of these illustrated storybooks, known as "red books" from the color of the ink used on the cover, appeared printed in black-and-white on cheap pulp paper; and avid readers frequently borrowed the latest copies from neighborhood lending libraries for a few yen. The number of fans increased as the Japanese, eager for cheap entertainment during those difficult years, were grateful to find that manga filled these needs quite inexpensively.

In 1947 a major innovation took place which served to launch the modern manga phenomenon in Japan: Tezuka Osamu, the "god of comics," began to incorporate cinematic
techniques into his drawings. Today Japanese comic artists employ a wide ranging visual language, originally introduced by Tezuka: such innovations as the use of closeups, varied viewing angles, stop-frame techniques, and visual sound effects helped Tezuka and others "create action sequences that often seem to leap out of the panel and off the page." More and more readers were drawn to manga as a result of these revolutionary changes in visual presentation. Manga soon began to appear weekly or monthly and increasingly drew loyal audiences of consumers who faithfully awaited the appearance of each new installment in their favorite continuing sagas. A few series begun during these years in the late 1950s have continued publishing, the longest running some seventy-eight semi-annual volumes.

Within Japanese popular culture, manga might best be seen as examples of the overarching visual orientation of Japanese culture as a whole. Modern manga, in fact, on many levels resemble illustrations accompanying classical literary "tales" such as Genji monogatari (The Tale of Genji) or the chapter-by-chapter visual presentations common to traditional Japanese scroll paintings. From the very beginnings of Japanese history, the communication and appreciation of visual information and aesthetics have always ranked high among the Japanese. Manga merely extend that influence into the modern world within the context of popular culture.

The popularity of animated films and television shows in contemporary Japan fits into this same cultural orientation, reflecting not so much the impact of new media on the Japanese sensibility as the "modernization" of traditional
visual values within the society as a whole. The average Japanese has always appreciated the skillful retelling of an action-packed narrative whether on the stage, in narrative picture scrolls or in traditional illustrated storybooks; the emergence in more modern times of manga, like the advent of film and television, has simply extended the available media through which such stories might be recounted.

The extent of the contemporary "manga boom" in Japan, which began in the 1960s, is obvious in the fact that manga now account for 30% of all literature published in Japan. Of 5.5 billion magazines and books sold in Japan during 1987, 34.5% were manga. If pocket-sized "comics" are included in the total, nearly two billion manga are currently purchased annually by Japanese consumers. The Japanese continue, it would seem, to read as voraciously as ever, only now everyone reads manga.

Furthermore, today many young Japanese aspire to become comic book artists. Several thousand comic strip artists are already actively at work in Japan today. "The most successful are rich and famous, often as well-known as pop singers or pop journalists. They appear on television panel shows, their views on public issues are solicited, and their habits are grist for magazine and television feature stories." Major literary prizes are awarded to the best among them.

What is being read by all these contemporary visually-oriented readers? And who are they? Many of the comics that appear weekly, stacked high in front of local book and magazine shops, feature several continuing stories emphasizing sado-masochistic violence, blood and gore. These appeal to the majority of manga readers, characteristically young men between the ages of nineteen and twenty-four. "A survey among university students asked 'What magazines do you read regularly?' Of the top ten, seven were manga. The remaining three were information magazines."

Manga readership, however, extends far beyond this core group, though it remains largely an adult phenomenon; young women and men in their thirties are also apt today to be avid manga fans. Many read gekiga, dramatic picture stories, which first began to appear in the 1950s as publishers matured together with their audiences and moved to provide them with more adult-oriented subject matter.

As Peter Duus has written, in Japan at least, it is "no longer possible to dismiss the comic strip as kid stuff." Today's manga feature "nihilistic samurai swordsmen, wartime soldiers, high school gangs, kamikaze pilots, harried office workers, gangsters and yakuza [organized crime figures], occult superheroes, champion mah-jongg players, and so on, and so on, and so on." From sports comics for adolescent boys to "young girls' comics" full of romanticized eroticism, there exists something for everyone in Japan's contemporary comic book world.
For more serious readers, the "graphic novel" form of the *manga* has taken primacy of place. Among these, fantasy, science fiction, and historical romances rank highest in terms of preferred subject matter. Social relevance and commentary have also made an appearance in contemporary *manga*. Beneath the surface in today's Japanese comic book one often encounters a critique of modern social ills or a plea for "a kinder, gentler world." *Benkyo manga,* "study comics," and *jitsuma manga,* "practical comics," too, have appeared in recent years. Even educational subject matter and explanations of investment strategies, it would seem, have become subject matter best approached in visual and easily digestible form through comic book presentations.

Recently one of these latter "practical comics," *Japan, Inc.*, has been translated into English. It attempts an introduction to modern Japanese economics and recent economic history through a detailed exploration of the daily activities of employees of Mitsutomo Trading Company as they face such issues as trade friction with the United States, the appreciation of the *yen*, and the adjustment of domestic markets in Japan to new consumer tastes.

The faint ridiculousness of all this has not been lost on Japan's foremost novelist, Kobo Abe. In his most recent novel, *The Ark Sakura*, one of his characters expounds at length Darwin's theory of evolution—which, he admits, without much apology, he has (obviously) only encountered in *manga* form.

Back when I was with the gangsters, I happened to read Darwin's theory of evolution. In comic book form—but still, it changed my whole view of life. *Yazuka* pride themselves on living dangerously, but you know, if their fights are real, so are everybody else's... Basically, everyone who's alive is fit... It's just evolutionary theory.

Most contemporary *manga*, however, are far less serious, far less intense. One of the most endearing and enduring of *manga* in today's Japan is Miyazaki Hayao's multivolume series *Laputa*. A young girl named Shita floats to earth in a trance and is discovered by Pazu, a boy whose father works in an industrial setting on some fantastic planet somewhere in time. Shita soon awakes and a series of adventures ensues, full of action and visual complexity, involving organic-appearing flying machines, robots, the evil Dora, and a cast of hundreds. The series has currently reached its fourth annual volume, and portions have already appeared in an animated film version. The film, currently available on video as well as in both disk and tape formats, in turn has inspired a full color paperback version of the story to date, again published in four volumes.

Another successful Miyazaki series, *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*, has gone a step further, making its debut in English...
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(as well as appearing already in collection form and as a film and video in Japan). The initial fifty-six page installment, the first of seven monthly issues covering Part One in the extended multiyear series, made its appearance in American comic book stores during January 1989. As translated from the original version published in Japan by Tokuma Shoten, *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind* is being issued in the United States by Viz Comics.

Like most *manga*, Miyazaki’s artwork in *Nausicaä* is presented in black-and-white pen and ink drawings. In the Japanese original, the story reads from right to left and from what we think of as the back of the book to the front. Taking this cultural idiosyncrasy into account, the English language translation reverses the original drawings and reorders the pages for Western tastes. None of the complexity of Miyazaki’s vision is lost in the process.

*Nausicaä*, the young heroine of this Miyazaki series, lives far in the future amid the ruins of our contemporary industrialized world in the Valley of Wind, a kingdom of some five hundred souls at the edge of the Sea of Corruption, protected from its poisonous miasma only by prevailing ocean breezes. A dedicated and talented biologist, she is at home in the world of fungi and giant bugs which surrounds her secluded homeland. As the daughter of the chieftain and her

Above: Giant flying worms attack an aircraft in *Nausicaä of the Valley of Wind*.

Below: *Nausicaä* faces a giant insect.
father's only surviving child, she stands to inherit the kingdom upon his death and already has begun to assume leadership responsibilities.

In a recent article on the inspiration for his heroine, Miyazaki recounts his early fascination with an entry in the Japanese translation of Bernard Evslin's small dictionary on Greek mythology. The story in Evslin's dictionary tells of the fate of a Phaeacian princess named Nausicaa who nursed Odysseus back to health after he had drifted ashore on her small Aegean island. She was described as beautiful and fanciful, quick on her feet, and more interested in playing the harp and singing than in the attentions of her suitors or the pursuit of earthly pleasures. In Miyazaki's mind's eye, the Phaeacian Nausicaa eventually merged with the figure of an aristocratic Japanese princess known as "the princess that loved insects." "She was regarded as an eccentric," writes the artist, "because even after reaching a marriageable age, she still loved to play in the fields and would be enchanted by the transformation of a pupa into a butterfly." Obviously, Miyazaki's creation hardly fits the stereotypical perception of Japanese femininity.

The plot of *Nausicaa of the Valley of Wind* revolves around a series of battlefield encounters and insect invasions against which Nausicaa seeks to defend her kingdom. The story is beautifully drawn, fascinating in its conceptualization of what the future might hold, full of drama and humor, exciting and action-filled. It has obviously gained a large readership in its English language version just as it has among the Japanese: the second set of monthly issues in the series began publication in September 1989.

Previously, non-Japanese came to appreciate the Japanese comic book phenomenon largely as a result of direct exposure in Japan; other Asians also have been exposed through translations appearing in their native languages and widely sold.

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throughout East and Southeast Asia. Although some manga were translated into English as early as the 1970s, the circulation of these early efforts was limited, perhaps because the translations were undertaken and the distribution managed by book publishers rather than comic book publishing houses. Moreover, the era of the graphic novel was not yet at hand, and as a result these early efforts appear not to have generated much interest.

*Barefoot Gen* by Nakazawa Keiji was an unfortunate victim of this premature encounter with the modern Japanese manga in translation. Recently reissued in a new paperback edition, this visual novel tells the haunting story of the author’s wartime experiences living in and around Hiroshima; the story culminates in the dropping of the first atomic bomb but is more a condemnation of injustice, militarism, and the war itself than an attempt to judge the appropriateness of that action.\(^{15}\)

Americans have most often come to a knowledge of manga primarily via television animation, an arena itself increasingly dominated by Japanese imports. *Atom Boy* was the first to garner attention through this medium, principally as a result of the appearance of a syndicated children’s television series based on the original manga. This route into the American consciousness, unfortunately, has collided with the notion, commonplace in the United States, that comic books are kid stuff and not to be taken seriously as adult reading matter.

The rich source of subject matter waiting to be tapped in Japan, however, could not be ignored forever. In early 1988 American comic book publishers attempted for the first time to bring manga to the American market directly. Viz Comics/Eclipse International began then to issue three distinctly different series of translated manga, each seemingly testing reader acceptance of the subject matter and treatment.

One early Viz manga, the work of Kaoru Shintani, recounted the adventures of the Flying Aces of Area 88 and dealt with a young Japanese mercenary pilot, Shin Kazama, under contract, along with a motley crew of other pilots, to the fictional West Asian state of Asran. These indentured pilots were, as the cover of the fifth biweekly issue put it, "Flying Fiends—Living like Devils; Dying like Devils; Mercenary Beasts in Unending War." The artwork found in *Area 88* showered loving attention on detailed drawings of the planes these pilots flew while the unwavering storyline, interspersed with on-the-ground intrigues, essentially sought to engage the "flying fiends" in one lavishly drawn sortie after another against the enemy. Another Viz series, *Mai: the Psychic Girl*, on the other hand, attempted to find its audience among those drawn to the story of a young woman with telekinetic powers as she sought happiness and understanding in an unfeeling world. The first eleven episodes of this series, with art by
Ikegami Ryoichi and story by Kudo Kazuya, have recently appeared in collected form.

The third series launched by Viz Comics/Eclipse International in early 1988 was Sanpei Shirato's *Kamui*, a saga detailing the adventures of a *ninjya* teenager on the run from his one-time masters, a complex and lengthy tale set amid the rural towns and fishing villages of traditional Japan. Shirato's concern with the preservation of the past and his ecological interests are apparent in every frame of this elaborate and well-drawn *manga*.

Another early entry in the American marketplace was *Lone Wolf and Cub*, a monthly *samurai* saga filled with endless sword battles and violent sexual encounters leavened only by the father-son relationship evoked as the hero assumes responsibility for his baby son following his wife's untimely death. The Japanese version of *Lone Wolf and Cub* was among the most popular *manga* ever published in Japan during the years of its original publication; its violent themes belie an undergirding concern with historical authenticity that captured and held the interest of millions.

Among other recent series are *Appleseed*, a saga of contemporary life, and *Pineapple Army, Justy, and Grey*, three additional series from Viz Comics. More are in the works and will appear in the near future in comic book stores across the nation as the wave of Japanese influence continues to wash over the American comic book scene.

Among all these recent entries, one especially deserves attention. *Akira*, drawn by Otomo Katsuhiro, represents what the future of the Japanese comic book invasion might bring into view for the American reading public. *Akira* is a publishing phenomenon in Japan, where it has taken the *manga* market by storm since it first began to appear in 1984. The fifth and final annual volume has yet to appear; however, already the visualized novel has twice won the Hugo Prize awarded Japan's annual best science fiction literary work. An animated film based on the earliest volumes opened in July 1988 and was released in video in early December 1988. A sound track album has appeared; numerous posters have been printed; special editions have examined the animation process involved in the production of the film. *Akira* has become perhaps the best known *manga* ever published in Japan. Last July it was impossible to find copies of the annual anthology editions anywhere in Japan.

And now *Akira* has come to the United States. Moreover, in an American publishing first, the English language edition is being issued in color, with the colorization under the direct supervision of Otomo himself. The monthly series is now more than a year old (and already the first six issues of the English language color edition have appeared as boxed sets in
Japan) with several years' worth of monthly installments yet to come.

Like many manga written serially, *Akira* begins slowly with some early faltering steps. However, an examination of the fourth volume in the Japanese edition indicates just how complex the final story has become in the hands of an author dedicated to expanding and enlarging the original concepts incorporated in the earliest volumes of the saga.

The scene for this science-fiction account of future Japanese life is set in Neo-Tokyo in the year 2019, a generation after the devastating impact of the atomic bombing of the original city during the Third World War and one year before the staging of the Olympic Games on the site of the atom bomb crater. The central character in the novel is Kaneda, leader of an urban motorcycle gang; and the plot centers on his relationship with Tetsuo, another gang member mysteriously transformed into a menacing “super-being” after an encounter with Number 26, a wraith-like apparition with telekinetic powers. Other characters include a hulking military commander, the leader of an underground political organization, a scientist working for the government, the female leader of a Buddhist religious cult and several other child-like atom bomb radiation casualties also with telekinetic abilities.

At first the *Akira* plot centers on violent encounters between Kaneda’s gang and its rivals, a gang known as the Clowns; there are also numerous run-ins involving the paramilitary force headed by the military commander. Tetsuo’s mysterious powers work havoc as well. The action continues fiercely as Kaneda becomes involved with Kay, a member of the underground organization intent on discovering the source of Akira’s mysterious power. As the story progresses, however, political intrigue and social issues begin to dominate as Otomo develops a complex web of intertwined destinies.

The work is intensely visual, graphically complex, and wonderfully realized. *Akira* may well represent the coming of age of the Japanese comic book invasion and the full realization of the power of the graphic novel as a literary format. As it has taken Japan by storm, in time its influence in the English-speaking world may become important as part of an increased awareness of the power of visual storytelling.

We as Americans often are aware of our influence on other cultures. Indeed Western “cultural imperialism” has long been intensely scrutinized and debated as the entire world examines the positive and negative effects of “Americanization.”

Little attention, however, is focused on the reverse phenomenon, situations in which our culture is subject to the impact of foreign influences, especially when those influences emanate from the East. How many of us, for example, acknow-
ledge the debt of contemporary architecture to Japanese prototypes or the influence exerted on French impressionist art by Japanese woodblock prints?

Some attention has been paid to the impact of Japanese animated cartoons on the values and attitudes of American children who watch Saturday morning cartoons. The Japanese manga invasion, occurring as it does on the level of popular culture, also has the potential to capture our attention, perhaps even our minds, if we let it.

In the process we may learn something about contemporary Japanese attitudes and values as well.

Notes

3Schodt, Manga! Manga! pp. 48-49.
4Duus, p. 4.
5Duus, p. 4; Schodt, Manga! Manga!, pp. 62-66.
6Duus, p. 5.
8Duus, p. 2.
9Duus, p. 3.
11Yomiuri shimbun as quoted in Tokyo Journal (vol. 8, no. 7), October 1988, p. 83.
12Duus, p. 6.
13Duus, p. 6.
18Whaley, Annala Marie; Ben Whaley, and Edmund Kaminski, “I Think I’m Turning Japanese: Theory Z Meets Saturday Morning Cartoons” as cited in On Campus (Cleveland State University), February 16, 1987.
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