

Summer 1988

# The Gamut: A Journal of Ideas and Information, No. 24, Summer 1988

Cleveland State University

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# THE GAMUT



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# THE GAMUT PRIZE IN SHORT FICTION

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The four winning entries will be published in *The Gamut* in 1989.

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Entry should be a short story between 1000 and 5000 words long. Entries must be original, previously unpublished, and not under consideration elsewhere. Each entry should be typed (or printed in near letter quality), with a dark ribbon, double spaced. Clear photocopies are acceptable. Pages should be numbered, with author's name or short title on each sheet. A cover sheet should include the title, number of words, and author's name, address, phone number, and social security number.

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## JUDGES

The competition will be judged by **Lee K. Abbott** and the editorial committee of *The Gamut*. Winning entries will be announced on or before November 30, 1988.

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## Editorial

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### *The Darkling Plain*

... We are here as on a darkling plain  
 Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight.  
 Where ignorant armies clash by night.

—Matthew Arnold

Just twenty years ago, in the spring of 1968, I suddenly understood the French Revolution. Or, more precisely, I came to understand the relation between the historical record of that turbulent era and what must have been the experience of those in the middle of it. I was teaching at Columbia University in New York. For various reasons—the university administration's high-handed treatment of Black residents of the neighborhood, its insensitivity to student needs, its support of the Vietnam war, and the beautiful spring weather—groups of students occupied several university buildings, including the administration building where they camped out in the president's office. It was particularly troubling to the faculty that most of our best students were in the buildings. Classes were cancelled. People milled about outside swapping rumors and organizing groups for and against other groups. The faculty held endless emergency meetings discussing what to do. The air was charged with millennial visions and fears of imminent violence. No one knew what was going on.

One night word got around that the administration was calling in the city police to storm the building. Kids were going to get hurt. The faculty decided to circle the building with linked arms in the hope that the police would for some reason respect this symbolic barrier of intellect. I linked arms with a white-haired classics professor and somebody

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from philosophy wearing thick bifocals. Twenty or thirty yards off, a couple of dozen plainclothesmen, all looking like defensive linemen from the Jets, began moving purposefully toward us. They went through our line as if we were a string of paperdolls. A young French teacher was knocked down and his head spouted blood. Later that night my office mate, a British chap with radical-looking hair, was chased down Broadway by a uniformed policeman who laid about his head and shoulders with a night stick.

The next morning I looked in the *New York Times* to read all about these stirring events. On one of the inside pages a story reported that the students had been removed from the building. Nothing about the faculty's heroic stand! Nothing about the French teacher's bloodied head! Nor did I ever see an account of the events of that night that had much resemblance to my own experience.

If published accounts of such a small affair, which took place over a few days within one city block, could differ so completely from events I witnessed, how much more impossible it must be for anyone—least of all those immediately involved—to get a true picture of an event like the French Revolution, infinitely more complex and covering many years and thousands of square miles. I wonder that every historian doesn't immediately jump out of the nearest window.

Aldous Huxley asserts that the mind innately knows everything, and that the real function of the human brain is to limit knowledge to manageable proportions. There is something to this view, even if one does not accept its mystical implications. It is said that our society is moving from an age of technology to an age of information, and that we are suffering from an information explosion. Actually there is not much more raw information in existence now than there has ever been: the same number of atoms are spinning around producing the same number of leaves, clouds, grains of sand, and living creatures—more than our minds can ever hope to comprehend. But we do have more *recorded* information. More people are dipping into the vast reservoir of phenomena and selecting samples to notice and call to other people's attention. And more journalists and historians are sifting through these primary records and selecting what seems to *them* important, so that they can abstract, summarize, and put it into perspective. It is like the food chain, the end being newscasts, journals, histories, and encyclopedias, which feed on sources at one or more removes from the raw phenomena.

The key word at every stage of the information chain is "selection": what distinguishes a good scientist or writer is the ability to seize from a welter of details the few significant ones that reveal an underlying pattern—the clue

by which the epidemiologist links the different instances of a disease, or the gesture by which the novelist can convey a whole personality.

Intelligent selection is always an active process. The observer must bring to the myriad of confused phenomena an organizing hypothesis or world view, like a magnet rummaging through the haystack for the needle. If we don't like the organizing principle, we call it a bias. Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* complained that the reason books always make women look bad is that men wrote them—a point which recent feminist historians echo. When I listen to the morning news on WCLV, I wonder why the newscaster has decided that, among all the interesting things happening in the world, half of them are reports of corporate profits. Historians of the past seemed to think that the important things to record were battles and the reigns of kings. Yet how welcome to us are private accounts of everyday details like those in Samuel Pepys's diary, or the graffiti of Roman soldiers that give us a glimpse into the common life of another age.

Historians are limited by the principles of selection—or biases—reflected in the materials they have to work with. As John Grabowski comments in this issue (in his article about the new *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*), those who do not leave records are not likely to enter history. While the new Cleveland

encyclopedia makes an intrepid attempt to cast its net wider than the political chronicles of earlier generations, it is still, perhaps inevitably, weighted toward institutions, businesses, and the concerns of the rich, who keep better records than the poor. Nevertheless, though it falls short of perfection, the encyclopedia is an ambitious and valuable accomplishment which deserves our gratitude.

Without knowledge of past and present events, of the workings of society and human nature—in short, without history—all actions must be as ill-founded and ineffectual as mine were that night twenty years ago on the Columbia University campus. In a complex world, the best of guides can be little better than a candle in the night. Still, the broader our sources of knowledge—the more points of view we are able to take into account as we try to find our way through the maze of information confronting us—the more likely we are to make intelligent decisions and to achieve better lives for ourselves and others. To claim such vast benefits for the Cleveland encyclopedia might seem excessive, yet it does in fact contribute to our understanding of our community, how it came to be as it is, and what it may become. It casts its bit of illumination on our darkling plain. ■

Leonard Trawick

# Presiding Over Anarchy

Stuart A. Kollar

In 1975, near the middle of a ten-year term as president of Case Western Reserve University, Louis A. Toepfer compared the experience to "driving a skidding auto."<sup>1</sup> Retiring Cleveland State University President Walter B. Waetjen recently summarized his fifteen years of leadership by saying it has been like "presiding over anarchy."<sup>2</sup> After four years as president of the University of Akron, William V. Muse calls his job "clearly one of the most challenging and difficult in our society."<sup>3</sup>

Research assures us that college chief executives work very hard. A study completed in 1987 by search consultants Heidrich and Struggles finds presidents devoting an average of sixty-seven hours per week to official duties.<sup>4</sup> This verifies earlier data assembled by Michael D. Cohen and James C. March, whose book, *Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College Presidency*, was prepared for the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education in 1972. "By every report," they write, "the job is physically and emotionally exhausting. There is not enough time. There are too many people to see. There are too many things to do."<sup>5</sup>

From the sound of it, presidents must be virtually carrying American higher education on their backs. Yet, Cohen and March's analysis of exactly what "things" presidents expend their energies on gives us an entirely different impression. It reveals the presidency as a vague job lacking clear objectives or priorities. Charging through daily calendars filled with hectic but often unproductive appointments, incumbents call to mind Gilbert and Sullivan's House of Lords, who "do nothing in particular and do it very well."<sup>6</sup>

Cohen and March regard the presidency as an illusion. "The college president is an executive who does not know exactly what he should be doing and does not have much confidence that he can do anything important anyway" (C & M 151). Basing this surprising conclusion on close study of forty-two presidents at work, the researchers determine through inductive analysis what Walter Waetjen has learned from direct experience: "The American college or university is a prototypic organized anarchy . . . Its goals are vague or in dispute. Its technology is familiar but not understood. Its major participants wander in and out of the organization" (C & M 3).



*Stuart Kollar has spent a lot of time in universities—as a student at Ohio University (B.S. in journalism) and Cleveland State University (M.A. in English), and as Director of Publications, first at Case Western Reserve University, and now at Cleveland State University. During these years he has noticed that university presidents don't remain very long in their jobs. His interest was piqued when he realized that "even though they are treated like royalty by those closest to them, they are vulnerable to a great deal of criticism from faculty, students, and the public at large." Unsure exactly what a president's duties were or how the executive office came into being, he began this article as a way of finding out.*



In particular, they discover that the decentralized nature of university decision making renders the president's job more symbolic than significant. "The latent absurdity of being the executive leader of an organization that does not know what it is doing haunts the presidential role. That sense of absurdity is somewhat ameliorated by a pattern of attention that reinforces a feeling of reality for their role. This means a busy schedule, the press of work, the frequent reminders of the fact that one is president" (C & M 150).

Thus, an average of 75% of a president's work day is spent in the reassuring company of others, 40% with groups of two more. Presidents "make themselves available to a large number of people whose primary claim is simply that they want to see the 'president' . . . . Similarly, presidents preside over otherwise largely pointless meetings, for the process of presiding involves a subtle reassertion of primacy" (C & M 151).

The presidents themselves cannot be expected to agree with this analysis, and, for the most part, they do not. "God!" Waetjen exclaims. "If I thought all this had been symbolic, I'd slit my throat."

Yet Waetjen is the first to admit that ceremonial duties constitute a substantial part of the job. He says these sometimes even dictate the manner in which presidents take their meals. "By this I mean going to all kinds of breakfasts, lunches, cocktail parties, and dinners. I remember telling one of my former students that in order to be a university president you need the wisdom of Solomon, the stamina of a Greek athlete, the patience of Job, and the stomach of a goat."

In his book *Presidents, Professors, and Trustees*, W.H. Cowley explains that he resigned the presidency of Hamilton College when it became clear that he was regarded as nothing but an "educaterer" on duty to be trivialized with housekeeping matters. "Most of the time, [presidents] ought, figuratively if not literally, to have nothing on their desks but their feet and nothing on their minds but the basic problems of the enterprise and plans for resolving them . . . . I resigned my college presidency when I discovered that no one in my institution had any such conception of the presidency. Everyone expected me to be involved in the details of the institution, to see them whenever they wanted to be seen, to attend innumerable committee meetings, to introduce every visiting speaker, to greet every returning alumnus, and, to boot, to entertain all faculty members and their spouses at lunch or dinner at least once a year" (C 66).

Noting that college chief executives are saddled with an educational product that defies measurement and a staff of tenured professors who defy management, Cowley asserts that presidents "cannot command. They must reason, negotiate, persuade—and these in turn are time-consuming activities" (C 65).

In American universities, presidents are directly responsible not to the faculty, but to lay governing boards that hire and evaluate them. "Obviously," says Muse, "the most important aspect of the job is satisfying the board." But according to Cohen and March, duties prescribed by this body show "no clear core of objectives that presidents should pursue and, consequently, no clear set of attributes that will assure



success . . . . There are many things that the president should do or be, but none that most presidents, or most any other group, see as taking clear priority" (C & M 57). Unreasonable demands on presidents are generally not alleviated by submissive administrative subordinates, who "accept the dogma that the president is overworked and misworked," but are "not prepared to act in terms of such a dogma" (C & M 151).

Harold L. Enarson, former president of Cleveland State University and Ohio State University, says the job has gotten tougher since the student unrest of the late 1960s. "We lost civility on campus during the '60s, and I don't think it has ever come back entirely. Budgetary pressures are now endemic. The states are expected to do more and more with fewer dollars. As a result, governors and legislators have become very concerned about what goes on in state colleges and universities. And the public is showing discontent with the abilities of our graduates. These pressures all come to bear on the president, who becomes a target for every group that wants to change things."

Thus universities have had to attract leaders who qualify as superheroes, capable of fighting battles on all fronts while accepting salaries that amount to a fraction of those commanded by chief executive officers in commercial enterprises. "I often talk to corporate CEOs who are making four or five times as much money," Muse says. "And I have to regard their jobs as a piece of cake compared to mine."

According to Cleveland State University's faculty/staff newspaper, *On Campus*, the selection committee currently seeking Waetjen's successor is hoping to find a true leader who is personable, visionary, skilled in communication, sensitive to the needs of all students, successful in promoting equal opportunity and affirmative action, committed to academic excellence, bent on bringing in private funds, attuned to the importance of community involvement, and challenged by diversity.<sup>8</sup> To this list, board chairman Henry J. Goodman adds political acumen and significant fiscal experience.

"If we get anybody who can meet all these qualifications, we'll be very fortunate," he says.<sup>9</sup>

It can come as no surprise that presidents often fall short of expectations. Indeed, long and difficult search procedures involving consultants, faculty, and board members are yielding men and women whose tenure in office currently averages only seven years.<sup>10</sup> And seven of ten resigning chief executives cite problems with board policy as their principal reason for leaving.<sup>11</sup>

Waetjen explains that part of every president's role involves enlightening trustees as to the nature and mission of higher education. "They're chosen as a lay board. Almost instantly that means the very purpose of the university, which is academic, is the thing they understand least. What they understand best are financial matters and construction details. So there can be an emphasis on these rather than on the academic side. Every president bangs very hard at keeping the mission of the university before them. I'm not being critical of trustees, but there's a great deal of tradition related to academia that they don't always understand."



Walter B. Waetjen  
Cleveland State University

Scholars have long blamed outside governors for problems related to the presidency. Thorstein Veblen complained in 1918 that business leaders dominating boards tended to choose presidents who were not qualified to lead a university. "The new incumbents are selected primarily with a view to give the direction of academic policy and administration more of a businesslike character. The choice may not always fall on a competent businessman, but that is not due to its inclining too far to the side of scholarship. It is not an easy matter even for the most astute body of businessmen to select a candidate who shall measure up to their standard of businesslike efficiency in a field of activity that has substantially nothing in common with that business traffic in which their preconceptions of efficiency have been formed."<sup>12</sup>

Veblen was especially critical of public institutions, which had been established "by politicians looking for popular acclaim, rather than by men of scholarly or scientific insight." Their management, he asserted, "has not infrequently been entrusted to political masters of intrigue, with scant academic qualifications."<sup>13</sup>

His suggestion? "As seen from the point of higher learning, the academic executive and all his works are anathema, and should be discontinued by the simple expedient of wiping him off the slate; and . . . the governing board, in so far as it presumes to exercise any other than vacantly perfunctory duties, has the same value and should with advantage be lost in the same shuffle."<sup>14</sup>

Of course, nothing of the sort can or should happen. Colleges need lay boards and overworked executive leaders because professors cannot or will not sacrifice personal, educational, and research interests for those of the organization. History has shown that universities run poorly when left in the hands of their faculties. W.H. Cowley has studied this matter in depth: "Perhaps one of the most persistent myths prevailing in American higher education insists that a golden age once existed wherein professors operated their own institutions in some sort of 'free republic of scholars.' Those who so believe assert that European universities of an earlier time permitted professors to manage their own affairs unchecked by external controls. Just when the so-called golden age may have occurred is not clear, but those who hark back to it most likely refer to the universities of western Europe, especially during medieval times, or to the German universities of the nineteenth century" (C 9).

Of the medieval universities Cowley treats two prominent twelfth-century examples: the University of Bologna and the University of Paris. The former, he says, was actually controlled by students who hired their teachers, while the latter "derived its authority from Rome, and therefore was subject to the popes" (C 23).

For faculty who admire from afar the management style of nineteenth-century German institutions, Cowley explains that in all matters except curricula they were run by curators, appointed by the Ministry of Education and serving "at the pleasure of the minister." He draws attention to the following from former Stanford University President David Starr Jordan:



*William V. Muse*  
*University of Akron*

The severe limitations bounding German education are shown in the subordination of the university to the *Kultur* system of which it is a part. Once at Stanford, discussing university organization, I touched on the apparent anomaly that in America, the land of democracy, a university head has autocratic powers, while in Germany, the fountain head of autocracy, the Rector—as they style him—is chosen by his fellows and has practically no authority, whatever slight control he does exercise being delegated by his colleagues. These remarks of mine came somehow to the notice of Dr. Rudolf Virchow, the distinguished physiologist. Later, to one of my audience, Dr. H. Rushton Fairclough, then at work at the University of Berlin, Virchow said, "You tell Dr. Jordan that I think he is mistaken. No greater autocracy exists in education anywhere than in the Prussian universities. But arbitrary power is vested in the Minister of Public Instruction, not in the Rector, who is mainly an honorary figure. Each professor is regarded as an agent of the government."<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps no more damaging example of the insufficiency of faculty management exists than that of Oxford, which operated as a "republic of scholars" from the mid-seventeenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries. Among many documented damnations of the university during this period, we have an eighteenth-century periodical (four issues) devoted to nothing but its shortcomings. In *Terrae-Filius* (1726), former student Nicholas Amhurst used hyperbole (we hope) to portray his professors at St. John's College as drones who had been given their positions "as pensions and sinecures. I have known a profligate debauchee chosen professor of moral philosophy; and a fellow, who never look'd upon the stars soberly in his life, professor of astronomy: we have had history professors, who never read anything to qualify them for it, but *Ibm Thumb*, *Jack the Gyant-Killer*, *Don Bellianis of Greece*, and such-like valuable records."<sup>16</sup>

Edward Gibbon scornfully dismissed his brief experience at Oxford (1752-53) as a complete waste of time. "To the University of Oxford I acknowledge no obligation, and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son, as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother. I spent fourteen months at Magdalen College: they proved the fourteen months the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life . . . . Our curiosity may enquire what number of professors has been instituted at Oxford . . . by whom are they appointed . . . what is the form, what the substance of their lessons? But all these questions are silenced by one short and singular answer. That, in the University of Oxford, the greater part of the public professors have for these many years given up altogether even the pretence of teaching."<sup>17</sup>

Oxford historian Charles Edward Mallet confirms that during the eighteenth century, educational activities at Oxford colleges were largely conducted by tutors who rose to responsibility through a vacuum left by faculty leaders. He considers many of the college heads "below mediocrity. At Balliol Dr. Baron made way for a successor no more distinguished than himself, and Dr. Leigh, who secured the Mastership in 1726, was known chiefly as a high and reactionary Tory . . . . At



Harold L. Enarson  
Cleveland State University  
Ohio State University

Brasenose Dr. Meare was latterly insane," while Dr. Delaune at St. John's "may have had some more lovable qualities to excuse his very obvious shortcomings."<sup>18</sup>

Another British republic of scholars, Cambridge, was disgraced by its faculty in a like manner. By the middle of the nineteenth century both universities had devolved to a state so abysmal that the government appointed royal commissions to recommend reforms.

These two institutions are important to us because their colleges helped provide administrative models upon which American higher education was established. Cowley elaborates: "Each Oxford and Cambridge college is an autonomous corporation with an administrative organization completely independent of university authority. The American college presidency had its genesis in the headship of these colleges and, therefore, its origins lie in the thirteenth century" (C 49).

The first American college administrator to be called "president" was Henry Dunster, appointed at Harvard on August 27, 1640. Dunster's predecessor had actually been designated "master," but had so damaged the title through incompetence and dishonesty that it vanished from the institution with him. Early U.S. college presidents were responsible to lay boards of governors—typically composed of churchmen and public officials—and engaged in responsibilities that included raising money, conducting correspondence, teaching, preaching, recruiting new students, and handling discipline. Even in the eighteenth century they considered themselves overworked; Yale President Ezra Stiles wrote in 1777, "the Diadem of a President is a Crown of Thorns" (C 53).

During the past one hundred fifty years some colleges have tried to operate without presidents (Virginia, 1825-1904; Michigan, 1837-52), but they did not thrive. On the contrary, the creation of great universities is often credited to titanic leaders whose administrations extended over decades. In 1871 James Burrill Angell came to the University of Michigan and for thirty-eight years led it to primacy among state institutions. Daniel Coit Gilman built Johns Hopkins into a pioneering research university during a quarter century beginning in 1876. Charles W. Eliot, who began his forty-year reign at Harvard in 1869, by 1900 had transformed it from a "backward looking college to a comprehensive university" (C 60). Harvard's tradition of strong presidents actually dates from John Kirkland's administration in 1810. Until then, Cowley says, Yale had actually surpassed Harvard in size and general esteem. But in 1817 Yale adopted an administration based upon the concept of a weak presidency, and at this point "began to lose leadership to Harvard" (C 56).

Presidential administrative styles varied. Eliot was noted for his fairness. "Disagreement he was so used to, that complete agreement would have made him suspect something wrong; and he looked on no man as a personal rival, much less as an enemy. Even the professors who opposed him most frequently and bitterly in faculty meetings were quickly promoted; and in his successive 'house-cleanings' of the Faculty . . . it was apt to be the 'yes-men' who left."<sup>19</sup>



*The Rev. Thomas P. O'Malley  
John Carroll University*

On the other hand, a historian has described Dartmouth President Eleazar Wheelock in these terms: "His conception of an effective form of government for his undertaking was an autocracy, with himself in the role of a kindly but absolute despot. He regarded his subordinates as properly subject to his unquestioned authority. When opposed by them, even in matters of relative unimportance, his feelings rose almost to the point of vindictiveness. With entire honesty, he regarded those who opposed him as guilty of a dereliction of the moral law."<sup>20</sup>

Nicholas Murray Butler, who led Columbia University from 1902 to 1945, has asserted that the U.S. had "no universities whatever" to compare with those of Europe until after the turn of the century.<sup>21</sup> Like every respectable scholar of his era, Butler studied in Germany, and his description of registration procedures at the University of Berlin reveals the full control faculty members exercised over their classes. "In order to be officially permitted to attend a course of lectures it was necessary to seek out the given professor in his private consultation-room and to secure his signature in the *Anmeldungs-Buch*. On request, he would assign a specific seat in the lecture hall, particularly if the student were a foreigner and anxious to be placed where he could hear clearly."<sup>22</sup>

Almost from the beginning, presidents have found little time for scholarship after taking office. The most effective were inclined toward public relations, sharing a "resolute aspiration to build not just colleges but, rather, great universities equal to those of Europe and especially of front-running Germany . . . . In the best sense, they became social prophets; and by skillful public speaking, lucid writing, and adroit statesmanship, they persuaded their associates and the general public to share and finance their visions" (C 61).

According to former president of the University of California Clark Kerr, persuasion remains a most important art for presidents today. He believes the time for monarchs in higher education passed as universities reverted to the British model of "government by consent."<sup>23</sup> This means presidents can initiate policy only after they have persuaded many others to support them. Thus, says Waetjen, the need for meetings.

"One of the key roles of the presidency is consensus building. Meetings aren't all bad, because they're part of this process. Even an anarchy can have objectives, but they must be developed cooperatively, not handed down from Mount Olympus."

The president's persuasive role is by no means confined to internal matters. For example, Muse welcomes community relations and fund raising as an important responsibility. And the Rev. Thomas P. O'Malley, who recently stepped down as president of John Carroll University, attributes his successful administration to a clear understanding between himself and the trustees about where his priorities would lie. "As long as the academic enterprise is in good shape, fund-raising is probably the most important thing a president can do," he says. "When I came eight years ago I told the board I was interested in being downtown a lot, and I have been. Asking people for money can be both terrifying and exhilarating. It's a little easier if you can get evangelical about it."<sup>24</sup>



The Rev. Michael J. Lavelle  
John Carroll University

On June 1, O'Malley left the presidency, succeeded by the school's current executive and administrative vice president, the Rev. Michael J. Lavelle. While Lavelle looks forward to continuing the "Mr. Outside" role established by his predecessor, he is wary of the dangers in overcommitting. More than once during recent months, he and O'Malley have been surprised to find each other representing their institution at the same social affair. "One of the great temptations is to let others set your calendar for you," he says. "Instead of saying, 'Let me think about it,' you have a tendency to put it in the book. Later you realize that it wasn't the smart thing to do."<sup>25</sup>

S. Frederick Starr, president of Oberlin College, insists that his calendar not be preempted by too many symbolic public appearances. "No one who has wanted to meet with me in five years has been denied the opportunity to do so," he says. "But I spend little time in ritualistic activities and even less time kissing babies. I expect to be judged in the long run on the progress of Oberlin College during my presidency, not on how high I score on the Mr. Chips meter."<sup>26</sup>

Starr reserves part of his schedule for "grazing around the college" as well as scholarship. "I suspect I'm probably out of key with other presidents in that I continue my academic career," he says. "I still write a fair amount."

Indeed, few presidents find time to write or teach with any regularity. "Put together a proper course, with all the preparation that it needs?" asks O'Malley. "Impossible."

Again his successor is on the same track. "I was chair of the economics department here in 1975, and I love teaching," Lavelle says. "But I felt that I could make a more significant contribution to the institution as an administrator, even though this wasn't as much fun. While I've offered courses as a vice-president, I don't intend to as president. I could probably teach basic economics half asleep. But I have a compulsion to prepare anew every time I go in, and the emotional pressure would simply be too great."

How, then, do presidents stay in touch with the work of students and faculty? Starr occasionally eats lunch in dormitories and drops into professors' offices to chat about their interests. Muse notes that his son, daughter, and wife—all Akron students—keep him posted about what is happening in their classrooms. In addition, his office is right next door to the student center. "I'm in and out of there once or twice a day."

O'Malley, too, says that a convenient office location enabled him to feel the pulse of things. "Architecture sometimes has a lot to do with the way you behave. Some larger schools put their presidents in towers, but I was right here on the main floor of the administration building. Tons of people passed by, and that was wonderful. I often worked with my door open, with the result that people walked right in. Undergraduates and everybody else."

Like others, O'Malley says his arrival in the president's office was not the result of long-term planning. "I was a small mouse trying to be a rat, which is the definition of a department chair. Eventually I became a college dean, and it was then that I began to think I might as well see if I could become that mysterious 'they' who seemed to do all those interesting things."



S. Frederick Starr  
Oberlin College

Agnar Pytte, president of Case Western Reserve University since July 1987, believes experience as a faculty member is important for office holders, but not necessarily good training for the job. "I think what makes the presidency difficult for many people is that their previous experience is not directly related to it. My background as a teacher and scientist helps me in my relationships with students and faculty, but it is not entirely relevant to what I do as president." Pytte didn't really think about being president until a few years ago, when he was provost of Dartmouth College. "I knew a lot of presidents then, and I guess I figured, 'If they can do it, I can do it.'"<sup>27</sup>

Starr says he had actually turned down a number of presidential possibilities before his current job attracted him. "I came to Oberlin because it's a wonderful school with a rich past. And I happen to have close family connections in this area. I live two blocks from my grandfather's house. As a girl, my grandmother played in my backyard."

Muse feels that twelve years as a dean and two as academic vice chancellor of the Texas A&M University system gave him a reasonably good understanding of what the position would entail. "But none of that really prepares you for the pace and the range of things that happen. For example, shortly before Christmas we were able to close on a three-million dollar gift from Firestone. On that day I was ecstatic. I would have told you I had the best job in the world. But the next minute you pick up the phone and you're being assailed by an irate student, parent, or alum. You have to be able to handle both extremes."

Lavelle recalls that he first thought about becoming a president during the mid-70s, when he was dean of John Carroll's School of Business. After leaving the university to serve as head of the Detroit Province of the Society of Jesus, he returned as academic vice-president under O'Malley. "I told Tom I'd give him four years, and after that I'd be looking for a presidency in the Jesuit system. When he announced his resignation last year I put my name in for the job here, as well as for two others that were available. If I'd been offered all three, I would have wanted to remain at John Carroll."

Lavelle was screened by a search committee composed of four trustees and three faculty members. "After sorting through all the credentials and references that had been submitted, they narrowed the pool down to five of us, who were invited for initial interviews. They had a set of thirty to sixty questions that they asked every candidate. Then they took each of us out to supper to see that we used the right knife and fork, and that sort of thing."

Three candidates were asked to return for second interviews before Lavelle was finally selected. "I presume I was first on the list," he says.

Having his successor right across the hall has been no problem for O'Malley. "I'm satisfied that the university won't have to spend time schooling someone completely new. When I came in eight years ago I met my predecessor only briefly. We had a conversation of about an hour, and that was it."



*Agnar Pytte  
Case Western  
Reserve University*



O'Malley says he resisted the urge to involve himself in the selection process. "I tried as hard as I could to stay out of it. On occasion it was tempting, but I participated only when they asked me a direct question."

This is similar to the position adopted by Waetjen during the ongoing search for his successor. While he has remained disengaged, he is candid about the qualities he would seek in a university leader. "I personally think it's extremely important for a president to have faculty rank—to have done teaching and research—to have been there. But the most essential single quality is the value system the individual possesses. You've got to make sure you find a person who holds the academic enterprise very highly, because this characteristic is going to influence every decision that's made. It's not just management, as it were."

After he leaves CSU in July, Waetjen will spend a year as a visiting scholar at Cambridge University. Then he will teach part-time in the educational psychology Ph.D. program at the University of Maryland, where he has studied, been a faculty member, and served as executive vice-president.

O'Malley plans to teach in Nigeria for at least a year before seeking another job. "I wanted a sabbatical that would be stimulating. What interests me about Africa is that it's a theater for all sorts of religious developments. Christianity is having new experiences there. My decision to leave is simply a matter of wanting to put my hand elsewhere for a while. It's kind of mad, really. But I've been thinking about it for a long time, now, and I feel pretty good about it."

From all indications, O'Malley is leaving his university in excellent shape. He says his board is happy with him, and he with it. "Boards require a great deal of attention, which presidents can't always give them. But our relationship is good and getting better. Fund raising and admissions are going well. They're pleased with themselves."

According to Harold Enarson, one way to reduce the trustees' sometimes overbearing authority over the presidency is to provide assistance in evaluating incumbents. For example, he spends part of his time as a consultant to various boards, assessing presidents by soliciting opinions from a broad constituency.

"The presidential search process is exhaustive," he explains. "Almost everybody is consulted—as they should be. Presidents should be evaluated in the same manner. Otherwise the board is free to exercise great power without checking with those who helped in the selection."

In spite of the burdens and frustrations of the job, Enarson says his presidencies at CSU and OSU were "interesting," "exhilarating," even "fun." "The college presidency has always been difficult. It isn't for a person who wants safety. But I still think it's one of the best jobs in America." ■



President O'Malley in his accessible, walk-in office.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Kamm's Corner, interviewer Herb Kamm, WVIZ-TV, 11 September 1975.

<sup>2</sup>Personal interview with Walter Waetjen, 21 December 1987.

<sup>3</sup>Telephone interview with William Muse, 11 January 1988.

<sup>4</sup>Deirdre Carmody, "Turnover Speeds Search for College Presidents," *New York Times*, 10 February 1988, sec. Y, p. 16, cols. 4-6.

<sup>5</sup>Michael D. Cohen and James G. March, *Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President* (n.p.: McGraw Hill/Carnegie Foundation, 1974), 125 (hereafter cited parenthetically as C & M).

<sup>6</sup>For this comparison I am indebted to W.H. Cowley, who uses it in *Presidents, Professors, and Trustees* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980), 69 (hereafter cited parenthetically as C).

<sup>7</sup>Telephone interview with Harold Enarson, 30 March 1988.

<sup>8</sup>Ellen Brown, "The Search Is On For The Perfect University Leader," *On Campus*, 16 November 1987, p. 1, cols. 3-4.

<sup>9</sup>Telephone interview with Henry Goodman, 24 January 1988.

<sup>10</sup>Carmody, 17.

<sup>11</sup>R. Huddleston, C. Kowalski, and J.P. Cangemi, "Life Is Not So Easy at the Top: The College President," *Psychology* 21, nos. 3/4 (1984):A 31-4.

<sup>12</sup>Thorstein Veblen, *The Higher Learning in America: A Memorandum on the Conduct of Universities by Business Men* (1918; reprint, New York: Hill and Wang, 1965), 60.

<sup>13</sup>Veblen, 31.

<sup>14</sup>Veblen, 209.

<sup>15</sup>David Starr Jordan, *The Days of a Man*, vol. 1 (New York: World Book Company, 1922), 85-6.

<sup>16</sup>Nicholas Amhurst, *Terrae-Filius, or The Secret History of the University of Oxford in Several Essays* (1726; reprint, Micro Opaque, Lost Cause Press) 1: 52.

<sup>17</sup>Edward Gibbon, *Memoirs of My Life*, ed. Georges A. Bonnard (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969), 48-50.

<sup>18</sup>Charles Edward Mallet, *A History of the University of Oxford*, vol. 3 (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968), 55-6.

<sup>19</sup>Samuel Eliot Morison, *Three Centuries of Harvard* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965) 361.

<sup>20</sup>L.B. Richardson, as quoted in Cowley on p. 57.

<sup>21</sup>Nicholas Murray Butler, *Across the Busy Years*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1935), 111.

<sup>22</sup>Butler, 121.

<sup>23</sup>Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), 29-36.

<sup>24</sup>Personal interview with the Rev. Thomas O'Malley, 12 February 1988.

<sup>25</sup>Personal interview with the Rev. Michael Lavelle, 12 February 1988.

<sup>26</sup>Telephone interview with Frederick Starr, 15 January 1988.

<sup>27</sup>Telephone interview with Agnar Pytte, 13 January 1988.



# Light Verse: In Matthew Arnold's Shadow

Robert Wallace

In 1867, in the preface to his anthology *Lyra Elegantiarum*, an English poet named Frederick Locker-Lampson coined the term "light verse." He described it as "another kind of poetry . . . which, in its more restricted form, has somewhat the same relation to the poetry of lofty imagination and deep feeling, that the Dresden China Shepherds and Shepherdesses of the last century bear to the sculpture of Donatello and Michael Angelo." Locker-Lampson meant the term as praise, and his definition of it set narrow limits: elegance, decorum, technical deftness, sentiment that "never surges into passion," humor that "never overflows into boisterous merriment." "Gay, frolic verse for idle hours," he said.

The term stuck. Attractively suggesting, along with brightness, both nimbleness (light-footed) and good cheer (light-hearted), it displaced rival terms like *vers de société*, and easily came to include all sorts of qualities and kinds that Locker-Lampson would have excluded: anything witty, humorous, comic, ingenious, occasional, satirical, parodying, nonsensical, or so forth. Though purists still use it in something not far from Locker-Lampson's original sense—generally, witty and sophisticated verse—the term seems irremediably baggy and critically useless. Editors have stretched it to include everything from John Dryden's long political satire "Absalom and Achitophel" (1681), to "Casey at the Bat," "The Cremation of Sam Magee," and the lyrics of Cole Porter. W.H. Auden, editing *The Oxford Book of Light Verse* (1938), tried unsuccessfully to make the term cover folk poetry, ballads, and any poem about ordinary experience in ordinary language. (The confusing result was, in the edition of Oscar Williams's *Little Treasury of Modern Poetry* current about 1950, the inclusion in a section of light verse of poems like Delmore Schwartz's "The Heavy Bear Who Goes With Me" and Auden's own "Musée des Beaux Arts.") It is also presumably Auden's legacy that the editors of *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (1965) describe a puzzling category of "serious light verse," which they trace from Horace, Catullus, Ovid, and Propertius to the



Robert Wallace, born in Springfield, Missouri, earned a B.A. at Harvard University and an M.A. at Cambridge University in England. He teaches English at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland and runs Bits Press, an independent "small press." He has published several books of poetry, the latest being *Girlfriends and Wives* (Carnegie-Mellon Press, 1984); *The Common Summer* will appear in Fall, 1988. He believes, with William Carlos Williams, that "If it ain't a pleasure it ain't a poem." He keeps this dictum in mind when acting as editor of *Light Year*, the biennial collection of light verse, along with "the dulce of Horace's *utile et dulce*, and Frost's saying that a poem "begins in delight and ends in wisdom."

light side of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. "Serious l.v.," they say, "flourishes so richly today that one is tempted to see it as the characteristic expression of the modern temper.")

Kingsley Amis, editing *The New Oxford Book of English Light Verse* (1978), tries to keep faith with the narrowest view of light verse. He excludes Alexander Pope, whose satire he finds ill-natured. He sets aside nonsense verse, allowing only a few of Edward Lear's limericks "with reluctance." And he holds his nose at free verse, insisting that light verse must scan and rhyme.

Clearly, over here, such narrowness won't do. An American purist would have to deal with Ogden Nash's irrepressible couplets—

Once there was a man named Mr. Peachey and he  
lived on Park Avenue and played the harp and  
was an eligible bachelor but his social life was  
hapless,  
And he thought at first it was because his parents  
came from Indianapless.

—and with E.E. Cummings's antic *double-entendres* like this one about starting a Model-T Ford:

She being Brand  
-new; and you  
know consequently a  
little stiff i was  
careful of her and (having  
thoroughly oiled the universal  
joint tested my gas felt of  
her radiator made sure her springs were O.  
K.) i went right to it flooded-the-carburetor cranked  
her  
up . . .

What would a purist do with Don Marquis's poems about archy & mehitabel, or with Anon.'s "The Frog":

What a wonderful bird the frog are!  
When he stand he sit almost;  
When he hop he fly almost.  
He ain't got no sense hardly;  
He ain't got no tail hardly either.  
When he sit, he sit on what he ain't got almost.

John Updike's in-passing definition (in the Foreword to the 1982 re-issue of his first book, *The Carpentered Hen*, 1958)—"playfulness and formality and mundane perception"—is nearly tolerant enough, since formality may include free verse that isn't merely prose sliced haphazardly into lines.

Every try at definition, though, brings exceptions and difficulties like yellow jackets to a picnic. Updike's "playfulness" doesn't quite suffice, for instance, for the indignation in these lines from Swift's lampoon, "A Satirical Elegy on the Death of a Late Famous General":



Behold his funeral appears,  
 Nor widow's sighs, nor orphan's tears,  
 Wont at such times each heart to pierce,  
 Attend the progress of his hearse.  
 But what of that, his friends may say,  
 He had those honours in his day.  
 True to his profit and his pride,  
 He made them weep before he died.

The problem in trying to limit the term light verse comes down, practically, to the question of where to put whatever poems we might exclude. The result would be logic-chopping and the enforcement of taste, and we would soon be overwhelmed with categories like "Good-natured Satire" (in), "Ill-natured Satire" (out), and no doubt "Parlor Limericks" (in) and "Street Limericks" (crass, and therefore out). There are enough questions in distinguishing light verse, at its upward boundary, from poetry, without adding difficulties by trying snobbishly to protect it from below or from the side.

We may enjoy Amis's anthology without accepting his doctrine, which is self-defeating. It has to be the case that every age will be witty and funny in its own terms, literary and otherwise, employing and embellishing its own favorite genres, techniques, biases. We should expect, ideally, interplay between its poetry in light and its poetry in serious modes. Technical developments in the serious will influence techniques in the light. That is why Amis's rejection of free verse seems so reactionary: it tries to preclude light verse's own natural evolution, and so to fix it at an arbitrary point in time.

Something similar happens in Updike's Foreword to *The Carpentered Hen*. In it, he is saying his farewell to light verse, which he calls a "dying art." Light verse as practiced by Franklin P. Adams and Arthur Guiterman, and then by E.B. White, Phyllis McGinley, Morris Bishop, and (we understand) himself, he says, "can now be seen as a form of Georgian poetry" (the well-crafted but sometimes anemic style dominant in the years just before World War I). That "as practiced by" almost saves his point, and his list of practitioners notably omits Ogden Nash. But he plainly equates this kind of light verse with light verse, period, and there is no sign that light verse might survive in the practice of other poets. Elsewhere, in an interview, he is quoted as saying, "Light verse died when it no longer seemed even the littlest bit wonderful to make two words rhyme. At about the same time, dancers in the movies stopped going up and down stairs in white tie and tails. We had switched our allegiance from agility to energy."

There are two difficulties with this. One is with the apparent assumption that all metered light verse is somehow Georgian (and so passé)—a judgment that seems at once to foreclose the future and to be needlessly modest. The other difficulty, of course, is with the diffidence toward other practices, other (at least potential) kinds of light verse—in free verse, for instance, or (if not of agility) of "energy." For it seemed to me when I first read Updike's Foreword in September 1982, as long as anyone took pleasure in turning a good verse *and* could be amused, titillated, or struck by this or that absurdity of the human condition—that is, as long as there could be laughter—there would be light verse.



There is a hidden knot in understanding the nature and situation of light verse, and it appears in Updike's assertion that light verse is "dying" or has "died." The same confusion underlies Brad Leithauser's gracefully elegaic essay in *The New York Times Book Review* (June 7, 1987) where light verse is variously characterized as in decline, disappeared, dead, and extinct. (One might yet, Leithauser noted comfortingly, if one visits the "park reserved for . . . abandoned genres," hear these "creatures of such rare sweetness" singing still.) It is a hard knot to untangle because it involves two assumptions about the history of light verse which are mutually exclusive but which are often, I think, held simultaneously. In part, the difference is between the pure and the open-ended interpretations of the term.

In saying that light verse is dying or dead, Updike is assuming that it is a kind of verse that arose around the middle of the nineteenth century—in W.M. Praed, in Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, and C.S. Calverley—and that flourished in the twentieth-century American (and English) poets of the light verse tradition. It is self-defined, limited in scope, and so capable of exhaustion and extinction. That is essentially a purist view.

On the other hand, light verse is a much more inclusive kind of poetry—witty, funny—which always existed, but without a name, among the various genres and according to the taste and practices of the times. Historically, there have always been light as well as heavy, funny as well as serious poems. Laughter in all its voices—amused, charming, frolicking, uproarious, naughty, bitter, and so on—naturally found its place in poetry, but without any definition. Lyrics were often whimsical or bawdy as well as soulful. Epigrams were often funny, but often serious. Satire, similarly, could be savage, deft or intellectual, even charming. And so on. In *this* sense, though its sub-kinds may come and go, light verse is a larger and inevitably continuing tradition or genre.

Updike also, at least approximately, holds this view. "Light verse," he says, "did not need to exist as long as its qualities of playfulness and formality and mundane perception were present in the high verse of Donne and Marvell, Dryden and Pope." We may safely add that these qualities occurred not only in "high" poems like Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" (which is one of the most at once broadly witty and deeply passionate poems in the language), but also separately, in middling or low verse—in poems that could hardly be called "high," like Thomas Campion's slyly bawdy "It Fell on a Summer's Day," Herrick's "Upon Julia's Clothes," or Donne's corny

I am unable, yonder beggar cries,  
To stand, or move; if he say true, he lies.

In this sense, of course, light verse may flourish and decline, evolve in differing ways, but can not be said to become extinct.

Between these senses of light verse we have no choice, I think, but to accept the larger, open-ended one. What governs is not Locker-Lampson's agreeable distinction. He wrote and liked light verse. For him it was, albeit a lesser, yet at least "another kind of poetry." What governs is a distinction made

by another Victorian, Matthew Arnold, who without mentioning light verse cast a huge and gloomy shadow over it and, I will argue, over poetry as well.

In 1880, in "The Study of Poetry," Arnold predicted "an immense future for poetry" because, in effect, it would come to replace religion and philosophy. As creeds and dogmas dissolve, "more and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us." Poetry must, therefore, be reckoned "as capable of higher uses, and called to higher destinies, than those which in general men have assigned to it hitherto."

Arnold's single criterion was "high poetic truth and seriousness." By the light of this vague lamp Arnold concluded that Chaucer's poetry, though it has "largeness, freedom, shrewdness, benignity," lacks "high seriousness" and that, therefore, Chaucer "is not one of the great classics." Arnold arrived at an even more astonishing result when he considered Dryden and Pope: "Though they may write in verse, though they may in a certain sense be masters of the art of versification, Dryden and Pope are not classics of our poetry, they are classics of our prose!"

Henceforward, "poetry" was to be lofty and uplifting. The rest—the poetry of the everyday and of course the poetry of laughter—were exiled from the literary canon. At a stroke, light verse (in any sense, narrow or wide) was swept aside. The word "verse" became also a way of condescending, and "light" began to bear its other meanings of triviality and frivolousness.

Although Arnold's program for poetry (and the immense future for it that he predicted) never came to pass, the term "poetry" nonetheless keeps the elevation he claimed for it. I will return to this point, but for the moment it is sufficient to say that T.S. Eliot and the elitist critics of the twentieth century, standing on Arnold's shoulders and so with heads higher in the fog, translated Arnold's spiritual high seriousness into intellectual high seriousness. The effect is that "light verse" is defined downwards, from above, by its relation to—or, more exactly, *by its exclusion from*—"poetry." In the glacial history of poetry this is a major shift, and seems (for now) as inescapable as it was inexorable. The consequence of this shift may be observed in the fact that not a line of Ogden Nash (or of Dorothy Parker, Don Marquis, Richard Armour, *aut alia*) disturbs the cobwebby solemnity of the 1456 pages of that big, limp brick, *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry* (1973). Nor will you find any of them in Richard Ellmann's *The New Oxford Book of American Verse* (1978).

Updike is entirely correct in arguing that "with the onset of Romanticism an alternative convention emerged" in Praed and the others. Light verse must be seen as a response, a persisting counter-formulation, to an elevation of the role of poetry that occurred generally in Romanticism. Arnold's "high seriousness" was not an idiosyncratic gesture, but a summing up of an attitude about poetry that had been gathering for the better part of a century at least. Indeed, we should see this elevation or "high seriousness" as a culmination or completion of the process that Eliot identifies as the crucial "dissociation of sensibility" that set in in the seventeenth century. It is, Eliot remarks, "something which happened to the mind of England



between the time of Donne or Lord Herbert of Cherbury and the time of Tennyson and Browning" (not merely between the times of Donne and Dryden). The expulsion of light verse from poetry was clearly a part of the dissociation Eliot describes.

The logic of this thumbnail history should lead to the eventual *re-integration* of light verse into the whole of poetry. The term, as well as the need for a separate tradition, should disappear, and the witty, funny, ingenious, and so on, be once again simply among the many voices of poetry. One sign of this result would be the re-emergence of "light" in the work of mainstream poets. And this has occurred to a degree in the poetry of Modernism—unabashedly among the poems of Cummings and Auden. I think also of Pound's comic epigrams like "The Bath Tub":

As a bathtub lined with white porcelain,  
When the hot water gives out or goes tepid,  
So is the slow cooling of our chivalrous passion,  
O my much praised but-not-altogether-satisfactory  
lady.

I think of Eliot's "Aunt Helen," or his "Lines . . .,"

How unpleasant to meet Mr. Eliot!  
With his features of clerical cut,  
And his brow so grim  
And his mouth so prim  
And his conversation, so nicely  
Restricted to What Precisely  
And If and Perhaps and But.

And of course we must not forget that Eliot wrote *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*. Frost's drolleries, like "Departmental" or "A Considerable Speck," are well known, as are Wallace Stevens's leg-pullings: "Bantams in Pine Woods," "The Worms at Heaven's Gate," "So-and-So Reclining on Her Couch." (It is amusing to see scholars laboriously struggle over the Paul Klee-like "A Rabbit as King of the Ghosts" without showing the least awareness that it is a delicious joke.) I think also of Marianne Moore's many whimsical pieces like "To a Steam-Roller"; of John Crowe Ransom's "Here Lies a Lady,"





"Captain Carpenter," or "Survey of Literature"; and of William Carlos Williams's "Danse Russe," "Smell!" or "This is Just to Say":

I have eaten  
the plums  
that were in  
the icebox  
and which  
you were probably  
saving  
for breakfast  
Forgive me  
they were delicious  
so sweet  
and so cold

These are merely instances.

But, although poets in our century have been unselfconscious about being funny or offhand as well as serious, no real re-integration has followed. The situation of light verse is perilous, and the distinction between it and poetry has, if anything, hardened.

The damage done by this fissure remained invisible or unrecognized, and perhaps was little enough, as long as light verse kept going a lively tradition of its own. In the work of Nash, Parker, Marquis, Armour, and of Arthur Guiterman, Samuel Hoffenstein, Morris Bishop, David McCord, E.B. White, Phyllis McGinley, Margaret Fishback, William Jay Smith, William Cole, John Updike and George Starbuck, light verse did just that. Good anthologies, like Oscar Williams's *The Silver Treasury of Light Verse* (1957), kept readers up to date.

That tradition, however, began to weaken or disintegrate mysteriously in the 1960's. In Updike's 1982 Foreword, he reports that he noticed, "around the time of John Kennedy's assassination, that the market for comic, topical rhymes was slowly drying up, and my inspiration docilely dried up with it . . . . I write no light verse now." The major non-event signaling (or starting) that disintegration was *The New Yorker's* choosing to use light verse no longer. (Inexplicably, as it continued and continues to print prose humor and its famous cartoons.) Light verse seemed to shrink to a music of one note—tight quatrains with punny titles, about dieting, baldness, and such, as in the "Pepper and Salt" column in *The Wall Street Journal*. Three substantial anthologies at the end of the 1970s might have suggested an upturn: Amis's *The New Oxford Book of English Light Verse* (1978), William Harmon's *The Oxford Book of American Light Verse* (1979), and Gavin Ewart's *The Penguin Book of Light Verse* (1980). But, like Russell Baker's recent *The Norton Book of Light Verse* (1986), all three are primarily recyclings (and revaluations) of older, familiar stuff. Only nineteen of the 528 pages in *The Oxford Book of American Light Verse* belong to poets born since 1929—that is, poets still under fifty years old when the anthology appeared. A further, random measure of the doldrums into which light verse has drifted is the fact that Mordecai Richler's *The Best of Modern Humor* (1983) contained nary a line of verse, even by Nash.<sup>1</sup>



To stay for a moment on the practical side: for me, Updike's Foreword sounded the alarm. What was missing, I thought, was a flagship—a publication to do what Franklin P. Adams's column "The Conning Tower" and *The New Yorker* had done once upon a time. I happen to run a small press, so, mindful of A.J. Liebling's axiom that "The freedom of the press is reserved to the man who owns one," I decided to edit and publish *Light Year*, the annual (now biennial) of light verse & funny poems. In October 1983 Bits Press launched *Light Year '84*. Word spread, poems poured in—now some 8,000 per year. In August 1988, with our fifth volume, *Sometime the Cow Kick Your Head: Light Year '88/9*, we will have in print some 1150 pages of new light verse and funny poems by 439 poets.<sup>2</sup>

*Light Year* has demonstrated that light poetry is being written in quantity, though it has yet to prove that there is a correspondingly large audience—or, more precisely, that a small press can reach that potential audience.

My tacit aim with *Light Year* has been to plump for the reintegration of light verse into poetry: hence the clumsy formula "light verse & funny poems." On practical grounds, as I have suggested, the distinction between light verse and poetry has little, if any, critical worth. If we allow poems to speak for themselves, no one will have difficulty perceiving the difference (and the difference in value) between one that begins "I never saw a purple cow" and one that begins "Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit / Of that forbidden tree . . . ." We might call the following light verse, though I don't see that we are much wiser for choosing that term:

An aged rector named Fiddle  
Refused an honorary degree.  
Said he, "Bad enough being Fiddle,  
Without being Fiddle D.D."

—Robert Phillips, *Light Year '87*

Similarly with this "River Rhyme":

It was floodtime on the Seine:  
Flotsam, jetsam, garbage, then  
Five cats clinging to a plank—  
Un, deux, trois cats sank!

—William Cole, *Light Year '86*

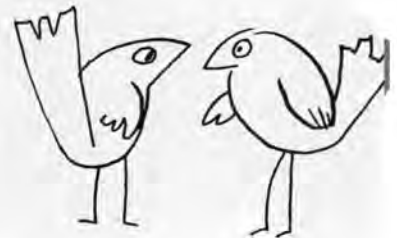
But what about this one?

#### True Love

True love sticks around for more than a season,  
Behaves less like a bluebird, more like a pigeon.

—Wade Newman, *Light Year '87*

It's small (light weight) and amusing (light of touch), but in replacing the seasonal (expected) bluebird with the truer (unexpected) pigeon, it points a genuinely moving irony, which illuminates a little our views of love and marriage. For a reader of a certain literary bent, it may recall the pigeons' "ambiguous undulations" in the lovely last stanza of Stevens's "Sunday Morning." I am reminded that Stevens chose *pigeons* for his symbol—and realize that he must have done so, mindful of their not always admirable habits, in order to salt the



landscape of his gorgeous finale with a touch of ordinary reality. Again, I am reminded of Stevens's other pigeons, the "fluttering things," in that great comic poem about middle-aged sexuality, "Le Monocle de Mon Oncle"—which ranks with Chaucer's *Wife of Bath's Prologue*, Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, Pope's "The Rape of the Lock," Frost's "Home Burial," and Williams's "Paterson: Episode 17" as major works about sex and love. One can only laugh and weep at once at Stevens's lovers:

Our bloom is gone. We are the fruit thereof.  
 Two golden gourds distended on our vines,  
 Into the autumn weather, splashed with frost,  
 Distorted by hale fatness, turned grotesque.  
 We hang like warty squashes, streaked and rayed,  
 The laughing sky will see the two of us  
 Washed into rinds by rotting winter rains.

I have persisted thus absurdly in discussing Wade Newman's couplet (and I should add a comment on the nicely uncomfortable rhyming on unaccented syllables) because my doing so shows a poem in light verse being read just as we read a serious poem. (Stevens's comic image, we may note, is also elegantly serious.)

Or how about Katharyn Machan Aal's "Hazel Tells Laverne":

last night  
 im cleanin out my  
 howard johnsons ladies room  
 when all of a sudden  
 up pops this frog  
 musta come from the sewer  
 swimmin aroun and tryin ta  
 climb up the sida the bowl  
 so i goes to flushm down  
 but sohelpmegod he starts talkin  
 bout a golden ball  
 an how i can be a princess  
 me a princess  
 well my mouth drops  
 all the way to the floor  
 an he says  
 kiss me just kiss me  
 once on the nose  
 well i screams  
 ya little green pervert  
 an i hitsm with my mop  
 an has to flush  
 the toilet down three times  
 me  
 a princess

—*Light Year '85*

The subject is whimsical, the tone playful. But the theme—opportunity missed—is more than just funny and is touchingly exemplified. I see no reason to exclude Hazel from at least a small corner in the ironic gallery that includes Browning's nasty duke (in "My Last Duchess") and Eliot's pasty Prufrock. Or to exclude her from light verse, as the rhyme-and-meter purists would do.



Consider "Poetics" by Howard Nemerov, which divides exactly between light and serious:

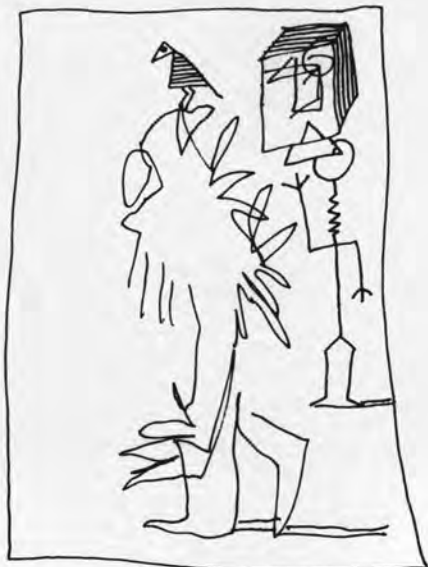
You know the old story Ann Landers tells  
About the housewife in her basement doing the  
wash?  
She's wearing her nightie, and she thinks, "Well hell,  
I might's well put this in as well," and then  
Being dripped on by a leaky pipe puts on  
Her son's football helmet; whereupon  
The meter reader happens to walk through  
And "Lady," he gravely says, "I sure hope your team  
wins."

A story many times told in many ways,  
The set of random accidents redeemed  
By one more accident, as though chaos  
Were the order that was before creation came.  
That is the way things happen in the world:  
A joke, a disappointment satisfied,  
As we walk through doing our daily round,  
Reading the meter, making things add up.

—Light Year '84

Light verse? Poetry?

In short, the line between the two—like the Victorian distinction that raises the question—seems so muddily and wavy and unclear, that we will do well to trust common sense and ignore it. The happy difficulty is that, though humor may be just playful, it also often has real, nourishing human truth. In an age that respects dreams and the subconscious, moreover, it seems temerity to assert as fact that even poems like Gelett Burgess's "The Purple Cow," Carroll's "Jabberwocky," Dr. Johnson's "I put my hat upon my head,"<sup>3</sup> or "An Aged Rector Named Fiddle" have no meaning or import.



The classification of light verse, downward, by its exclusion from poetry, persists as an expression of critical high seriousness. If Arnold's program for spiritual high seriousness in poetry miscarried, his program for critical or intellectual high seriousness did not—and casts, therefore, a darker shadow. In "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (1864), Arnold asserted that though "the critical power" may be of lower rank than "the creative power," the critical must nonetheless precede and guide the creative. The critical power discovers and analyzes "the best ideas," and "we may lay it down as certain that in modern literature no manifestation of the creative power not working with these can be very important or fruitful." The creative is merely "a work of synthesis and exposition, not of analysis and discovery"—that is, "of dealing divinely with these ideas, presenting them in the most effective and attractive combinations,—making beautiful works with them, in short." He adds: "Life and the world being in modern times very complex things, the creation of a modern poet, to be worth much, implies a great critical effort behind it."

We are but a step from Eliot's assertion, in "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921):

We can only say that it appears likely that poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*. Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results. The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect, in order to force, to dislocate if necessary, language into his meaning.

This intellectualization of poetry implied for Arnold "a small circle" who are not content with "inadequate ideas," as for Eliot it implied a vanguard, "an *elite*, with the main, and more passive body of readers not lagging more than a generation behind."

And so we were launched on our Age of Criticism—and of the critical intimidation of the common reader. Poems worth their salt are difficult, requiring a priesthood of professors to explicate and re-explicate. Easy poems are discovered also to be difficult, and so Frost is belatedly admitted to the canon. But of course light verse isn't on the map. Not only does the funny offend critical high seriousness, but it also happens to be (must be, of its nature) immediately comprehensible.

As to critical high seriousness, we might have expected Arnold's "immense future for poetry" to come to pass. Over the last forty years New Critical practice—by which every poem must be exhaustively searched for ambiguity, symbolism and hidden meaning—has become dogma in the schools. Hardly a kid in America hasn't been exposed to it. Moreover, at the same time, creative writing has boomed; where there was only a sprinkling, now literally thousands of poets are in college classrooms (and teaching more than creative writing too). Moreover, again, fueled by funding from NEA and state arts councils, poetry readings have become commonplace, Poets-in-the-Schools programs have burgeoned, and a thousand journals and small presses flourish.

All this has been a monumental, unprecedented enterprise—and it has not worked.



Poetry's audience shrinks, almost (it seems) in inverse proportion to the increase in the number of poets. The general reader has vanished. Trade publishers have largely abandoned poetry to subsidized presses. The National Book Award in Poetry was dropped. *The Los Angeles Times* stopped reviewing poetry. And every year tens of thousands of English majors, many of whom in fact enjoyed courses in poetry, pour forth from the colleges—never to touch the stuff again. So much for the texts where every poem comes with its cans-to-a-dog's-tail of study questions. So much for even our best classes—in which the hidden lesson is always that a poem never means what you thought it did when you read it the night before. And so much, too, for what's left when light verse is removed: heavy verse, or dark (or obscure) verse.

We have come to a moment when we must confirm Eliot's speculation at the end of "The Frontiers of Criticism" (1956): "These last thirty years have been, I think, a brilliant period of literary criticism in both Britain and America. It may even come to seem, in retrospect, too brilliant. Who knows?"

In going forward from the present, we need to remember that genuine literary experience always begins in unselfconscious joy: C.S. Lewis's boy reading *Treasure Island* under the bed sheets with a flashlight, or a kid out in Missouri who is puzzled by Keats but thinks Ogden Nash is neat. As Williams puts his American English on it: "If it ain't a pleasure it ain't a poem."

In the present dismal situation of poetry, I don't want to seem to claim too much for what we have called light verse. Yet it puts the pleasure upfront, and its cheer and hi-jinks offer, to the general reader, a natural bridge into more serious and important kinds. Never more than now has poetry needed all of its voices, especially the light, or needed to resist the strangling blandishments of critical high—higher, and highest—seriousness.

Grown accustomed to the dark shadow cast by Matthew Arnold, few noticed a remarkable event that occurred in August 1987. Shel Silverstein's *A Light in the Attic* logged its 180th week on *The New York Times Book Review's* hardcover chart—the all-time, record bestseller in the history of the list. Clearly, there is, across America, an army of kids who read light verse because they like it. In their many thousands, they buy it. They are and have been pouring up through and out of the schools, and if we can find ways to avoid turning them off, to attract them onward, there may be after all an immense future for poetry. ■

*Drawing credits: Neal Crosbie in Light Year '84: pp. 17, 21, 25, 28; Gary Adamson in Light Year '85: pp. 18, 22, 23, 27; Leonard Trawick in Light Year '86: pp. 20, 26; Jeanne Meinke in Light Year '87: p. 24.*



## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The situation of light verse in the United Kingdom seems healthier than here, although there have been reverses. The revamping of *Punch* eliminated it as a flagship, but competitions and major journals like *The Spectator*, *The New Statesman*, *The Observer*, *The Times Literary Supplement*—and the B.B.C.—continue to give light verse a place. In poets like Sir John Betjeman and Philip Larkin, light verse has been near, if not in, the main stream of contemporary poetry. Like Auden, Gavin Ewart has moved easily between light and

serious (see *The Gavin Ewart Show: Selected Poems 1939-1985*, Bits Press, 1986). There are also a number of notable young poets like Kit Wright and Wendy Cope who are building reputations primarily in light verse. Cope's first book *Making Cocoa for Kingsley Amis*, was published in 1986 by Faber and Faber. Nothing comparable could occur in the States.

<sup>2</sup>The poets in *Light Year* include many with distinguished reputations for "serious" poetry: Richard Wilbur, Robert Francis, William Stafford, Louis Simpson, Howard Moss, Roy Blount Jr., J.V. Cunningham, Richard Armour, John Ciardi, May Swenson, X.J. Kennedy, Donald Hall, Marge Piercy, E.B. White, Anthony Hecht, Tom Disch, Linda Pastan, George Starbuck, Ray Bradbury, Peter De Vries, Reed Whittemore, W.D. Snodgrass, Gavin Ewart, Daniel Hoffman, Felicia Lamport, William Matthews, Willard Espy—and of course John Updike.

<sup>3</sup>In the 1950s Donald Hall, in a send-up of Dr. Johnson's famous quatrain, added a stanza and titled the pair "A Second Stanza for Dr. Johnson." In 1985 Louis Phillips took up the challenge with "A 3rd Stanza . . .," and in 1986 X.J. Kennedy with "A 4th Stanza . . ." In *Light Year '88/9*, this poem—two centuries in composition—will stand this way:

**A 5th Stanza for Dr. Johnson, Donald Hall,  
Louis Phillips, & X.J. Kennedy**

I put my hat upon my head  
And walk'd into the Strand,  
And there I met another man  
Whose hat was in his hand.  
The only trouble with the man  
Whom I had met was that  
As he walked swinging both his arms,  
His head was in his hat.  
Of course the head within the hat  
Belonged to my friend Otis,  
But I, since I am quite polite,  
Pretended not to notice.  
Yet as I strolled the hat-filled Strand  
It struck me—strange to tell—  
That every head was swinging loose  
And so swung mine as well.  
And happily for all concerned,  
No ladies were about:  
Imagine! If those hats were doffed,  
Those heads would all roll out!

—C.L. Grove



Sculpture by Bruce Metcalf

## Sculpture that Laughs and Cries at the Same Time

"If there was a single analogy that applied to all my work," says sculptor Bruce Metcalf, "it would be the necessity (as Bruce Springsteen put it) to 'laugh and cry in a single sound.' My generation was raised with the insights of existentialism and the Theater of the Absurd: we were all suspicious of gods and authorities. But at the same time we wished to celebrate life and to deny the emptiness of nihilism. When we felt like we were standing on the edge of the abyss, we knew pain, but we also knew the joy that comes from a life well lived. I can deny neither outlook."

Metcalf's sculptures shown in the following pages grew out of his work in jewelry. "I started as an artist when I was a senior at Syracuse University," he explains. "I transferred into jewelry as a last-ditch effort at finding something relevant before dropping out for good. The discipline fit me perfectly. The small size, the rigorous craft, and the possibility of making whimsical artwork all satisfied me greatly. It felt like I had found a home."

A native of Amherst, Massachusetts, Metcalf received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Syracuse University in 1972 and an MFA from the Tyler School of Art in 1977. He is now a professor of art at Kent State University, where he teaches and writes on jewelry, metalsmithing, and the field of craft in general.

"I am endlessly fascinated by small objects," he says, "by the seductive appeal of miniatures, but also by the narrative capacity and the distinctness from everyday experience that small things embody. A scale model stands halfway between the real and the imaginary. Unlike the object itself, its miniature becomes a receptacle for imaginative projection; an observer is invited to associate and meditate."

The works shown here, Metcalf points out, "are all fairly straightforward metalsmithing. Technically, they are related to teapots and metal boxes and traditional jewelry. But I avoid traditional forms and instead use shapes that suit my narratives, like pointed bodies, sticks, and weird hairdos. Also, the

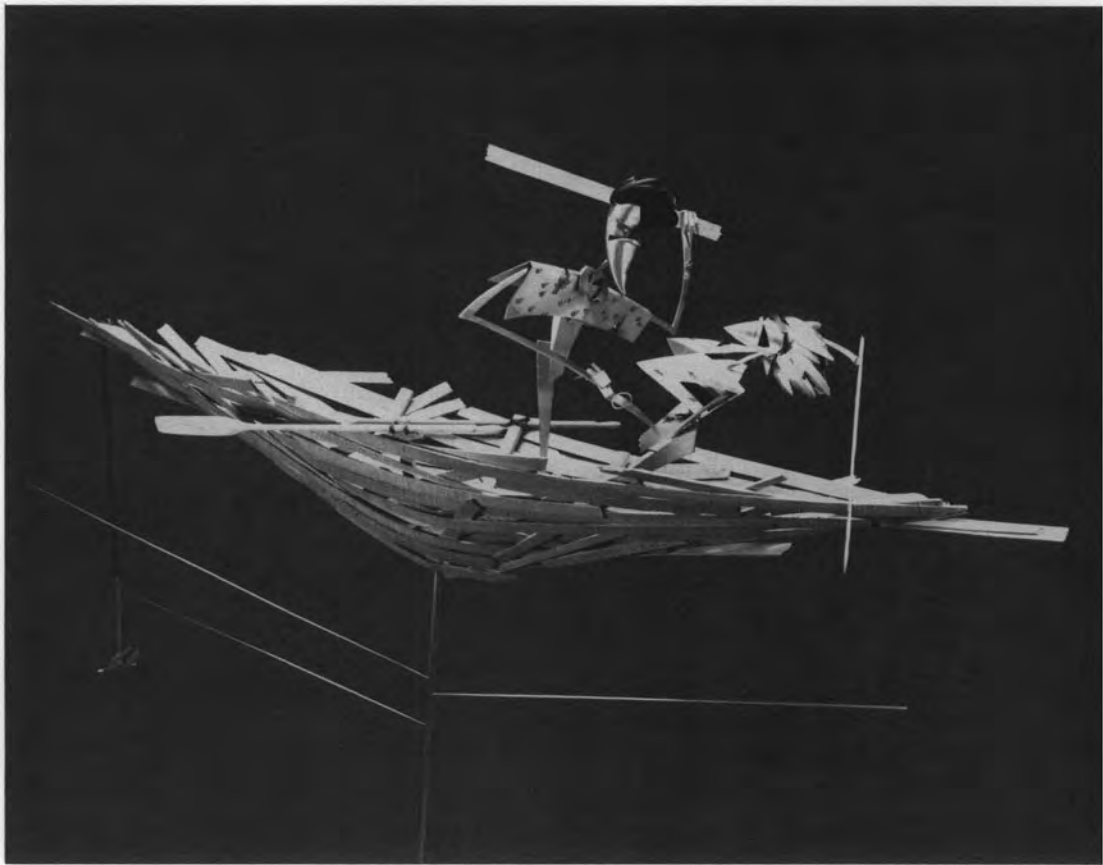


*Bruce Metcalf*



metal is generally painted. So, while the connection to Paul Revere and Benvenuto Cellini is present, it is hidden to the casual observer.

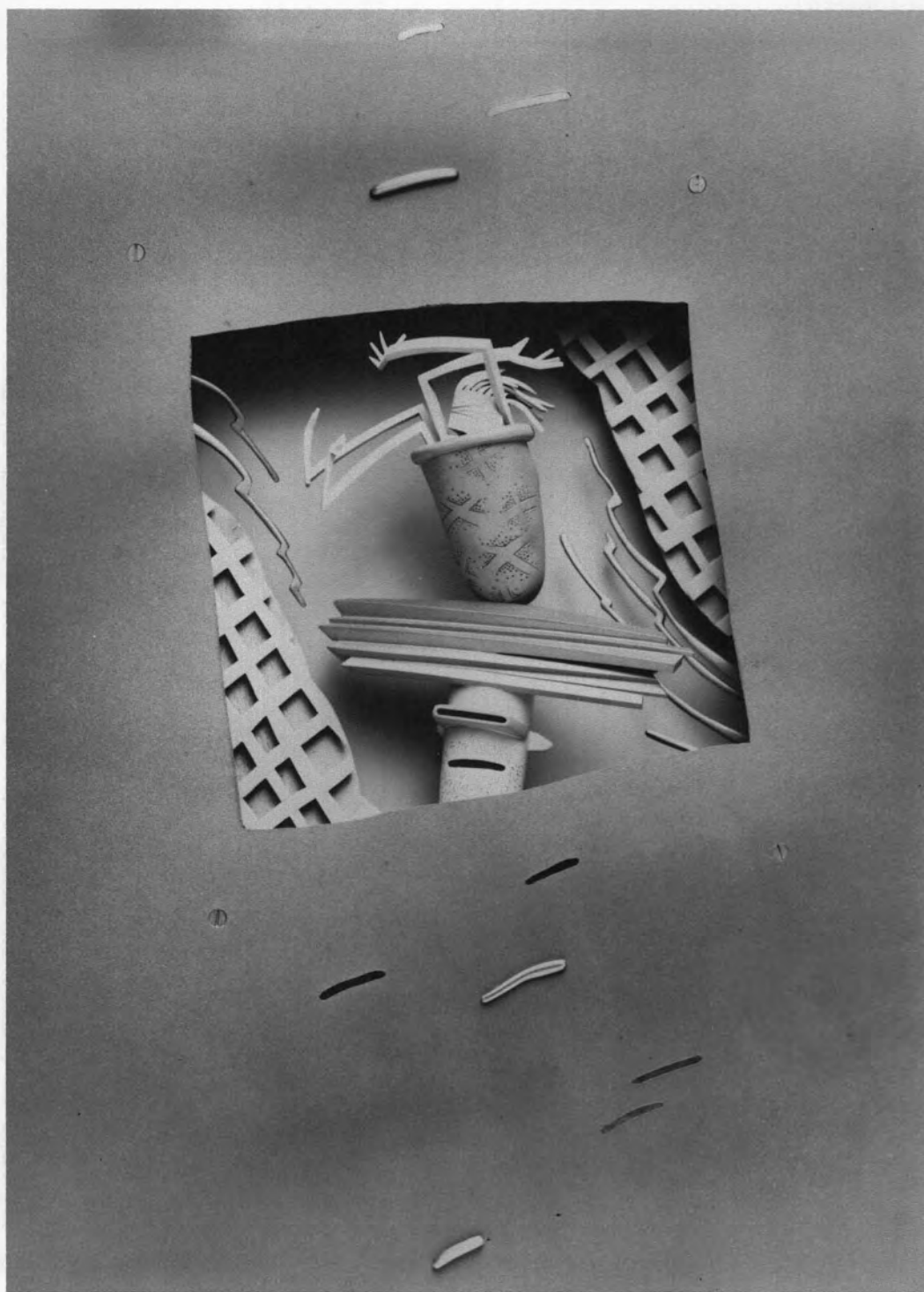
"Much of this work is about pain. There are knives, there are people stuffed in baskets and slammed in doors. But simultaneously, each narrative is cast in a whimsical light. The ridiculous is paired with the horrendous, and each balances the other." ■



Fighting in a Fragile Vessel. 1985. Height: 34".



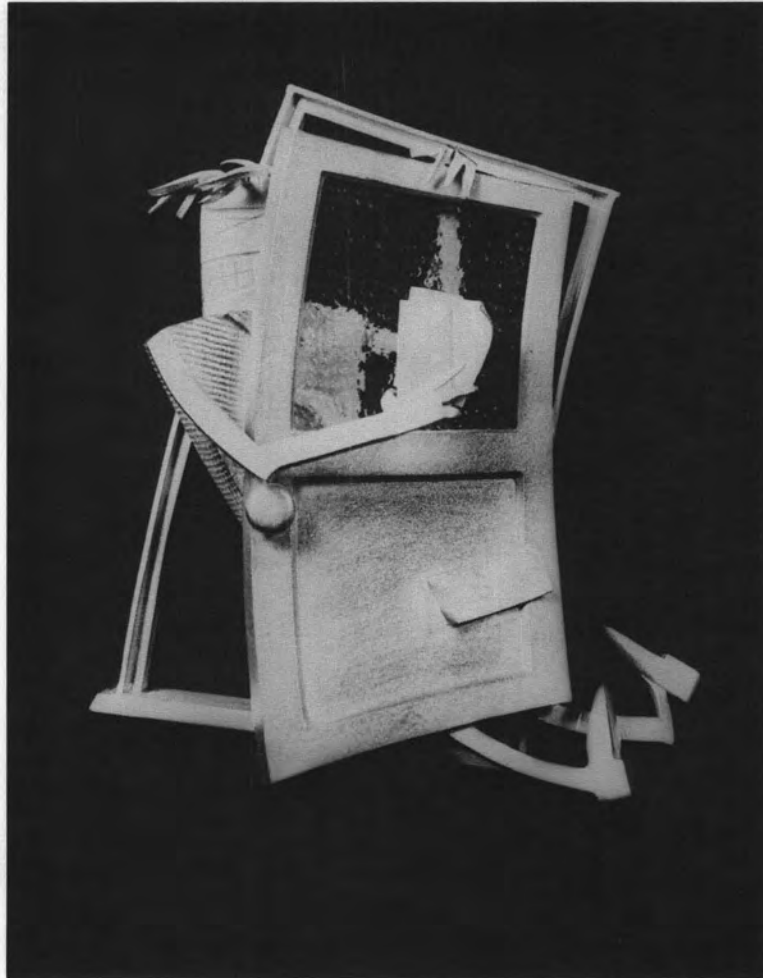
Nice Shirt, But His Head's in a Strange Place. 1985. Height: 14".



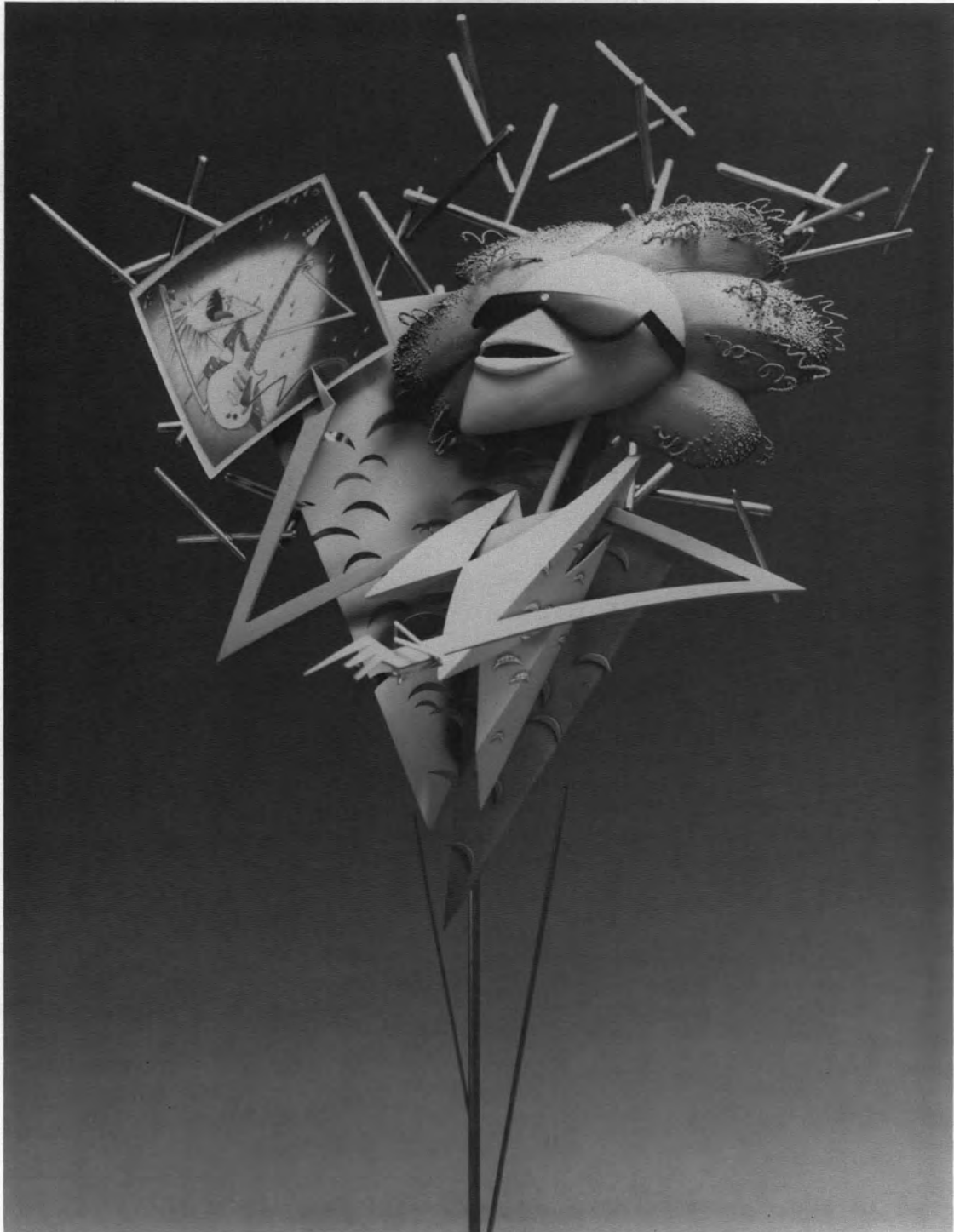
Man in a Sack. 1985. 11" × 9".



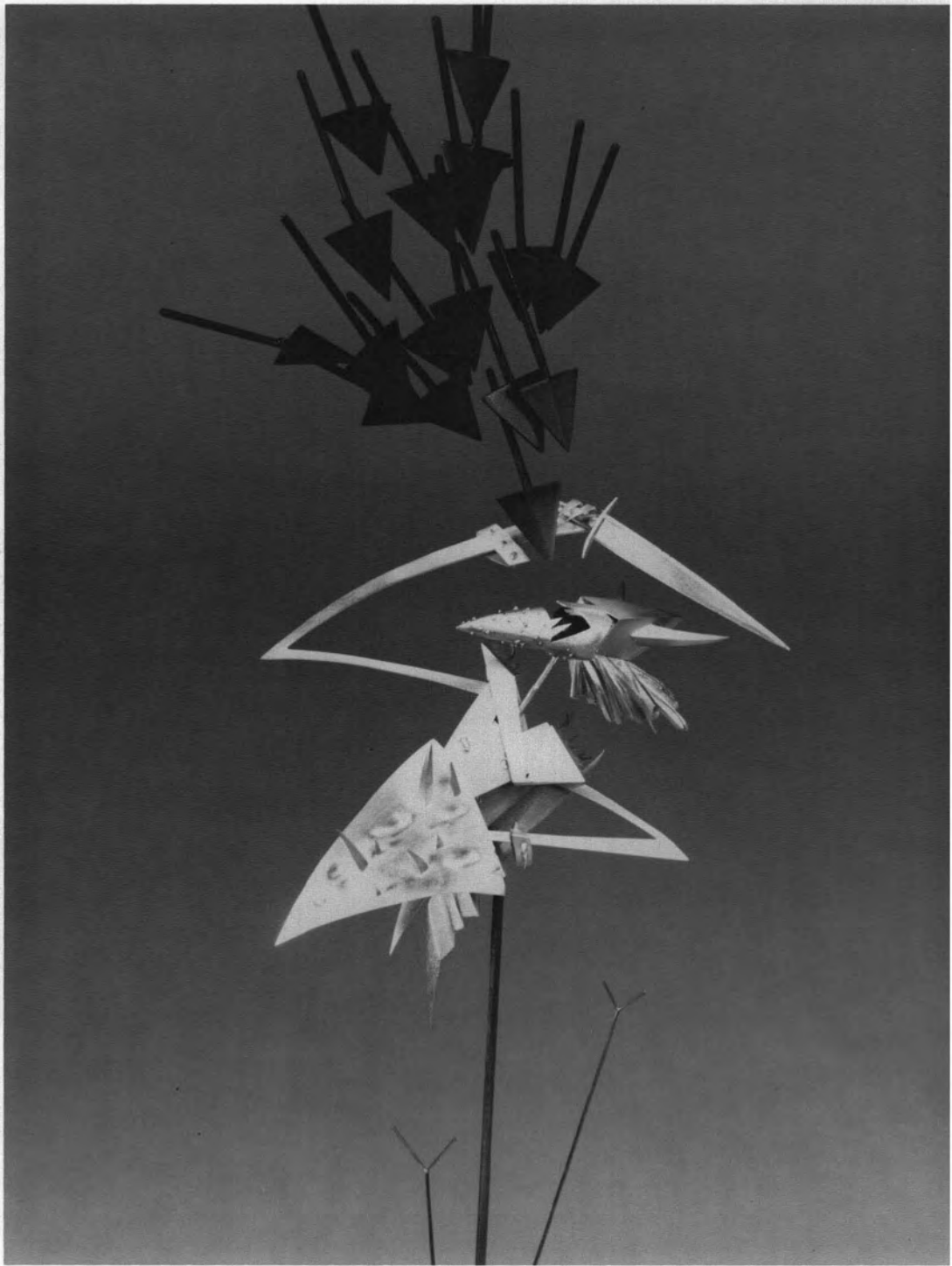
Worry Boy. 1986. 11" × 8-1/2".



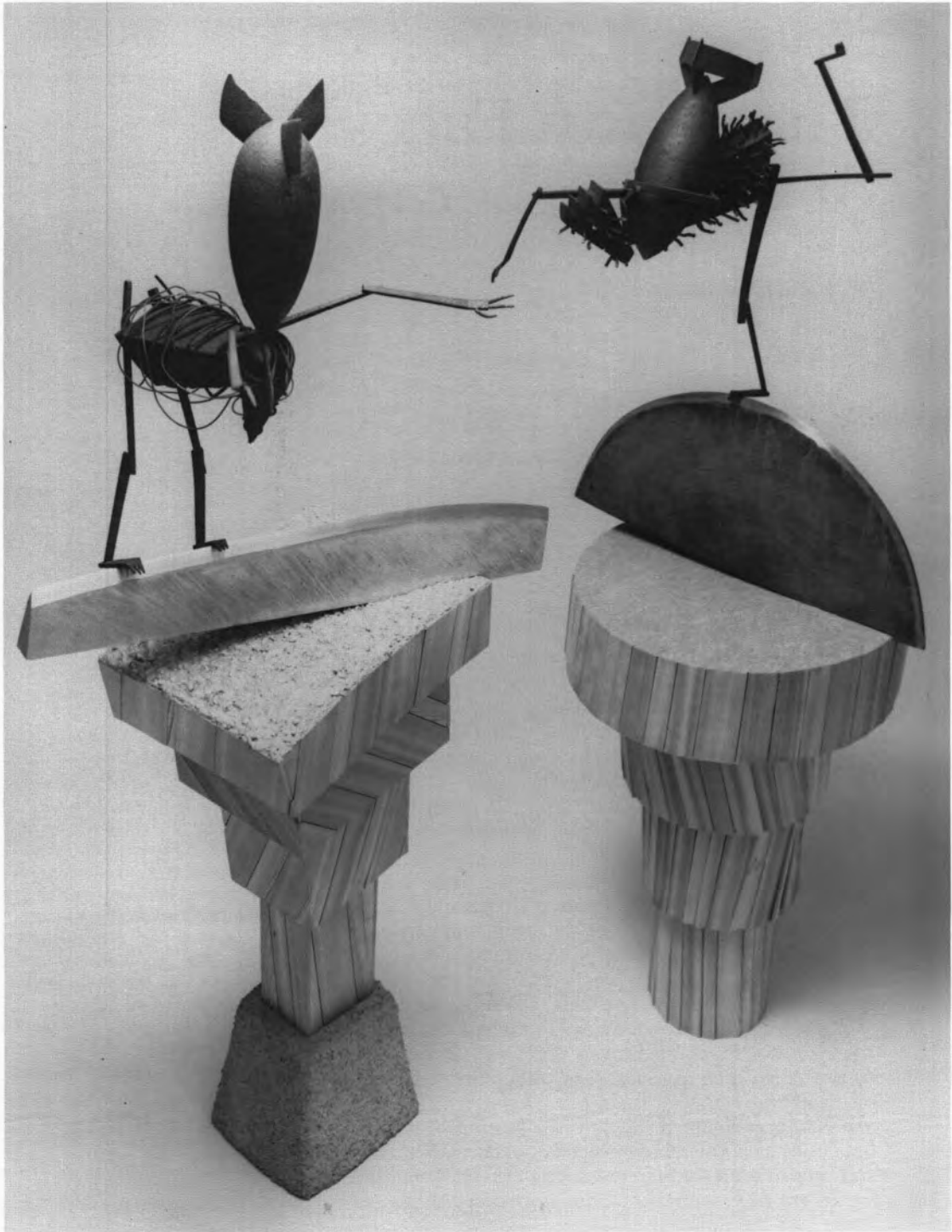
That Door Shuts Both Ways. Pin. 1986. 2-3/4" × 3-1/2".



He Killed Himself, She Mentioned Proudly. 1984. Height: 38".



Warrior Under a Cloud of Knives. 1984. Height: 30".



Maquettes for 2 Monuments to an Anxious Age. 1986. Height: approx. 48" each.



# The Many Faces of Psychotherapy

Stephen Slane

When a friend asked me, a social psychologist, to recommend a therapist for her teenage daughter, I was at a loss. My friend's question went to the heart of a growing dilemma in clinical psychology. It would be hard to find a more confused professional field than psychotherapy. Both the source and the symptom of this confusion lie in the tremendous diversity of approaches and kinds of practitioners in the field. There are clinical and counseling psychologists who typically have Ph.D.s; there are psychiatrists, who are M.D.s; there are social workers, a plethora of counselors (including guidance and substance abuse counselors); there are teachers and friends. Any time these people give advice to another individual about a problem it could be defined as psychotherapy. So one of the questions my friend and I were confronting was who would be an appropriate psychotherapist.

In addition to the different kinds of *therapists* there are also hundreds of different *schools of therapy*, each offering a particular model for understanding the psychological functioning of the human being, and each professing a different approach to manipulating a person's psychological functioning.

Psychotherapy also differs as a function of the type of problem it is designed to solve. A tremendous variety of problems are addressed by psychotherapy, ranging from difficulties in deciding on goals for one's life, through particular problems such as drug and alcohol abuse, to more serious disorders such as psychosis. Psychotherapy is also useful in dealing with family problems such as divorce, or difficulties with a child. Since psychotherapy is what takes place between a therapist and one or more clients, it involves the same processes and dynamics as other relationships between individuals. More and more psychologists are coming to realize that these processes are an essential component, perhaps *the* essential component, of therapy.

My advice to my friend was consistent with my social psychological orientation. Since my view is that therapy is based primarily in a meaningful relationship between two people, I referred her to a therapist I knew and respected. And knowing the two people involved—my friend and the therapist to whom I had referred—I expected that a relationship based on trust, support, and warmth would evolve. I knew there



*Stephen Slane grew up in Bliss, a small town in Idaho with a population of ninety-one; there were eleven students in his high school graduating class. In the relatively larger world of Cleveland, Ohio, he is an associate professor and interim chairman of the department of psychology at Cleveland State University. "The question of choosing between therapists is a direct extension of my academic training in social and personality psychology. I have long felt that clinicians underestimate the significance of social processes in psychotherapy with the result that they often misattribute the causes of change." Slane was educated at Idaho State University (B.A. and M.S.) and the University of Nebraska (Ph.D.).*

would be meaningful communication generated within that relationship, and I expected that problems would be explored in such a way that my friend would benefit.

But most people do not have a reliable adviser when faced with problems which might require the help of a psychotherapist. The variety of choices they face appears inexhaustible. To begin sorting out the problem, one might group psychotherapies in three major categories according to their centrality in the field—that is, how respectable they are, and how many followers they have in the field. Thus, therapy can be divided into the major schools, the non-traditional therapies, and the borderline approaches, which are not always even recognized as psychotherapy.

### Major Schools of Psychotherapy<sup>1</sup>

Estimates vary, but most professionals would probably agree that there are between four and twelve major schools of psychotherapy. Educated people are familiar with many of them. The following six are best known:

**Psychoanalysis.** Freud's historic system was the first organized and complete approach to psychotherapy. According to Freud, mental illness results when psychic energy is trapped by unconscious conflict. The goal of psychoanalysis is to uncover and resolve the conflict thereby releasing psychic energy to be used more constructively. The psychoanalyst spends most of his or her time listening to the free flow of ideas from the patient, only occasionally interjecting an interpretation or asking a question. The approach relies heavily on understanding the symbolic meaning of material obtained through free association and dreams. The long process of psychoanalysis, often taking years, is best understood as "self-education." The patient comes to understand the sources and dynamics of the interplay of forces within his or her psyche.

**Client-centered therapy.** Carl Rogers developed client-centered therapy in the 1950s. Rogers' assumption is that psychological growth is a process of the progressive unfolding and expression of the inherent potential of the person. This growth occurs optimally in a supportive and nurturing environment. When the environment is threatening, the person begins to distort reality and to restrict experience to a smaller portion of the world. Client-centered therapy recreates an optimum, supportive, nonevaluative environment, thus allowing once again for the emergence of potential.

**Gestalt therapy.** Gestalt therapy is most often associated with Fritz Perls. Like psychoanalysis, it focuses on motives, goals, and conflicts. But unlike psychoanalysis it deals with problems as they are manifested in the present, rather than in the person's past. The Gestalt therapist concentrates on the verbal and nonverbal behavior of the patient during the session. At times during the typical session the patient will express contradictory messages, for example by claiming to be anxious while smiling. The Gestalt therapist attacks this "fakery" in an attempt to force the person to recognize and eliminate these conflicting messages. The goals of Gestalt therapy are insight and awareness of current functioning.



**Behavior therapy.** Founded largely on the work of B.F. Skinner, behavior therapy is widely practiced, especially in educational settings. According to behavioral therapies mental illness is defined as maladaptive behavior which occurs because it gains the person rewards. That is, illness is learned and therefore can be unlearned or modified by the same principles of reward which were instrumental in its development. The goal of therapy is to change behavior by the judicious applications of rewards. Thus, the therapist attempts to discover and eliminate those aspects of the environment which reward the maladaptive behavior and to use reward to promote the development of more "healthy" behaviors. In recent years increasing attention has been given to the role of cognition or conscious understanding in mediating the behavior change. Thus, today behavior therapy is often referred to as cognitive behavior therapy.

**Rational emotive therapy.** Albert Ellis bases his rational emotive therapy on the assumption that emotional problems and difficulties in living are caused by irrational beliefs. If people could think more rationally, they would not be experiencing difficulties. For example, a patient might assert "I am worthless because no one likes me." This is, of course, irrational: a person's worth is clearly not determined by whether he or she is liked. The therapy involves challenging irrational beliefs and helping the patient to develop rational ones, often through prescribed "homework" experiences.

**Group therapy.** A variety of group therapies are widely practiced. Some of these therapies are simply extensions of individual therapy to the group context (e.g., Rogerian therapy). Others are more specifically or uniquely fitted to the group setting (e.g., Berne's transactional analysis). Group therapies generally make one or both of the following assumptions. First, psychological difficulty is often based in interpersonal conflict, ineptitude, or misunderstanding; therapy, therefore, must treat the person *and* the relationship. Second, therapy can benefit from the evaluation and support provided by peers.

## Non-traditional Psychotherapies

On the fringe of therapy there are hundreds of approaches which express very specific views of the human being (much narrower than in the major schools) and which attempt to employ that view in a particular therapy. These therapies can be called innovative because in most instances they represent breaks with the major schools of therapy, unique elaborations of treatment techniques, or entirely new approaches. Some therapies in this group, while not widely supported or practiced by professionals, are nevertheless viewed as legitimate. Other therapies in this group are generally viewed as odd, unconventional, or even as quackery.

Membership in each group is determined by a host of mostly subjective factors—the prevailing academic culture, the stature of the inventor, the gadgetry employed, and so on. Rarely is there scientific evidence available for any of these therapies. Beyond that, there is no psychotherapeutic equivalent of the Food and Drug Administration to review and

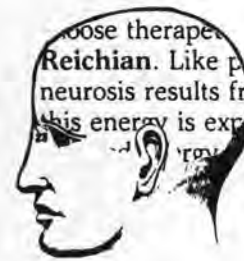
approve the various therapies before they are put into practice. The upshot is that there is ample room for charlatanism. National organizations (e.g., the American Psychological Association) recommend standards for training and licensing therapists but licensing is governed by state law. This procedure helps control the quality of the therapist but does nothing to control the type of therapy employed. The therapist is free to choose therapeutic approaches as he or she sees fit.

**Reichian.** Like psychoanalysis, Reichian therapy assumes that neurosis results from blocked libidinal expression. However, this energy is expressed on seven planes from head to pelvis. Blocked energy is expressed in problems of posture and in rigidity called "body armorings." Using body contact and massage, the therapist attempts to loosen the body area to promote the free flow of energy (termed Orgone). The therapy is often practiced with the patient nude, and has been widely criticized for equating mental health with frequent and intense orgasms.

**Primal.** In primal therapy, according to Janov, the patient is understood as having had experiences in childhood which frustrated a basic need. These experiences produce a lasting conflict for the person. When the conflict becomes conscious the person experiences primal pain. Thus, neurotic symptoms are attempts by the patient to avoid primal pain. In therapy, the patient is induced to relive the early hurtful experiences (primal scenes), often resulting in an intense emotional reaction (primal scream). This direct experience of pain allows the patient to recognize the early conflict in awareness and to deal with it in an adult fashion rather than to continue to cope in an immature, neurotic way.

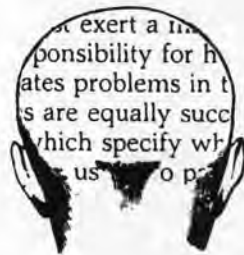
**Psychoimagination.** Psychoimagination therapies are a group of approaches which emphasize the visualization of images as the primary technique for producing change. It is assumed that cognition and behavior are balanced and interactive processes. Changing one can change the other. Thus, patients having difficulty with shyness may first be asked to visualize a variety of situations in which they meet and interact with strangers.

**Placebo.** Jefferson Fish purposely chose the ironic title of placebo therapy for his approach in order to convey the notion that the important elements of therapy are those which are unrelated to the specific orientation of the therapist. Placebo therapy is based on the assumption that psychotherapy is basically a process of social influence. Therapeutic change is seen as largely the result of a change in the patient's belief, regardless of what causes the change. The therapeutic model is whatever metaphor or language system is used to understand the experiences of the patient and the recommendations of the therapist. The actual theoretical orientation and substance of therapy is irrelevant so long as the patient believes in the change. The important point is that the patient should believe that he or she, not the therapist, is the source of the change. According to Fish, placebo therapy is a kind of "spiritual judo in which the therapist uses the power of the patient's own faith to free him to have a therapeutic 'conversion' experience."



**Provocative.** Provocative psychotherapy assumes that people change in response to challenge, that patients are not fragile, and that careful expressions of "therapeutic hate and joyful sadism" can be beneficial. For example, the therapist might confront the patient with "You look stupid, dress stupid, and act stupid." The goal is to provoke the patient in such a way that his or her inner strengths and resources are called forth. Thus, the patient might respond "I am not stupid! How dare you describe me that way?"

**Z-process attachment.** Z-process therapy, developed by Robert Zaslow, is used mostly with schizophrenic adults and autistic children. It is based on the assumption that autism and schizophrenia are a form of avoidance. The therapy involves the therapist and several friends of the patient holding him or her firmly by arms, legs, and body. The patient, who is helpless to move, typically becomes enraged, thus establishing contact. Once contact is established, other, more standard, procedures are used to enhance the interpersonal behavior of the patient.



## Borderline Psychotherapies

Religion, mysticism, body therapies, and a variety of alternative experiences make up this category. Though these are typically not thought of as psychotherapies, one of their functions is to promote psychological well-being. They are likely to lack the theoretical or research support characteristic of the more traditional therapies. They are often not performed by psychologists and the participants may be unaware of the psychological effects. Thus, these are techniques and experiences which may function therapeutically but have no basis in psychological theory, and which are not usually called psychotherapy.

**Crystals.** The use of crystals as a therapeutic device has gained a great deal of notoriety recently. The quartz crystal (and only quartz crystals are considered legitimate) is assumed to channel energy from the environment to the person holding it. Crystals are energizing, and they may also be placed on portions of the body to facilitate healing. Each period of history seems to bring forward a favored healing device. In the 1970s it was "pyramid power." Prior to that the orgone box was popular. And much earlier it was copper bracelets, amulets, and the like.

**Massage.** Massage is often used with psychotherapeutic intent. Its effects fall into two broad categories. First, it relaxes the patient; reduction of physical tension tends to reduce anxiety and heighten mood. Second, psychological problems and conflicts are assumed to be expressed in tensions in certain bodily regions. Massage of these areas serves to release the bodily tension and thereby resolve the psychological difficulty.

**Religious conversion.** It is unusual to view religion as related to psychotherapy, yet the two experiences share the important elements of belief and belief change. A goal of psychotherapy is to change the client's attitudes or beliefs—for example, that they are stupid, unworthy of love, doomed to fail, etc. Various religious institutions are similarly involved in shaping the beliefs of their followers. To the extent that a person's beliefs are changed as a function of religious commitment (e.g., life is worth living) religion can be viewed as having a therapeutic effect or tendency.

**Alcoholics Anonymous.** There are hundreds of peer self-help groups which share the goal of improving psychological adjustment. By far the most popular, best known, and most effective of these groups is Alcoholics Anonymous. AA stresses the mutual support of members who share a common problem. The program consists of twelve steps—beginning with an admission that one is a helpless alcoholic and culminating with carrying the message to other alcoholics. AA can be viewed as providing an opportunity to stop drinking, to receive social support for doing so, and to engage in constructive social activity.



## Psychotherapeutic effectiveness<sup>2</sup>

The question is how to choose. That is, what could be and should be the basis for choice of a psychotherapy? Probably the most important criterion of choice should be efficacy. But how do we assess it? Until about a decade ago, research in psychotherapeutic effectiveness was limited. What little research was available focused primarily on the major systems. And it usually did not directly address the question whether one psychotherapy was better than another. In recent years a substantial body of research on psychotherapeutic effectiveness has indicated beyond question that psychotherapy is effective, by nearly any criterion used to assess psycho-

logical improvement. But the further interesting—and maddening—conclusion is that different therapies do not seem to work differentially. One therapy seems to be as good as any other. It seems a paradox that therapies with very different, even opposite, approaches seem to work equally well. For example, in behavior modification, the therapist may actively control reinforcement contingencies to elicit certain behaviors from the patient. Conversely, the Rogerian approach asserts that the therapist must exert a minimum of control. The client must assume responsibility for his or her own change. This circumstance creates problems in training therapists. If therapeutic approaches are equally successful, it is difficult to develop programs which specify what therapeutic skills clinicians need in order to be useful to patients.

There seem to be several explanations for the circumstances that all psychotherapies are equally effective. We may assume that the individual personality is a system which can be viewed from different perspectives. When that system is stimulated in any of its parts, the stimulation to change will "ripple" throughout the entire personality system. It makes little difference where the initial probe comes from. Thus, the intensely emotional (abreactive) insight occasionally experienced in psychoanalysis and the awareness (at a more cognitive level) generated in psychoimagination therapy may both lead to improvement in the individual's understanding of his or her problem and subsequently to improved psychological functioning. But these two approaches arrive at this effect from two very different starting points.

Although psychotherapies are based on very different philosophies, using very different techniques, there are a number of elements common to nearly all of them. For example, therapies almost always involve an important and involving social relationship between client and therapist. Whether or not this relationship is a warm and supportive one as in Rogerian and Z-process therapy, or a more authoritative and directive one as in rational emotive therapy and in religious experience, there is nonetheless such involvement generated in that relationship that the client pays a great deal of attention to the interaction and is gratified by the feedback and support obtained from the therapist. The therapist assumes the roles of a friend, a model, and an authority, and his or her words carry great weight.

This involvement leads to the possibility of persuasion. Psychopathology is to some extent based on the existence of inappropriate attitude or belief in the patient. A therapist directly or indirectly tries to persuade the client that these attitudes are incorrect and that other attitudes are more appropriate. For example, a good deal of general anxiety is often due to a person's feeling of unworthiness. By treating the client as a worthy, interesting human being, the therapist often reverses the individual's attitude about himself/herself. Or, as in the case of provocative therapy, he or she enables patients to focus on their own latent attitudes (e.g., "I really am worthy").

Psychotherapy, from whatever perspective, involves cognitive restructuring, that is, a testing and changing of understanding. As Freud argued, psychotherapy is fundamentally education. Most therapies require clients to think differently, to take a different perspective, to assume a different view of their problems, such that they may develop a very different understanding of themselves and their problems and thereby change them. They may come to see, for example, that their difficulty in getting along with people is based to some extent on their view of other people as inferior or hostile. Because their own negative attitude about others makes them hostile, once they have accepted that view they can change their behavior toward others and produce friendlier behavior from the people around them.

It should be pointed out, however, that mere knowledge of a problem is often not sufficient to remedy it. For example, a claustrophobic is usually well aware of the problem, and what must be done (e.g., start riding elevators again), and even the cause (his little brother once locked him in the closet), but remain uncured. To be effective, the knowledge must be coupled with a motivation to change, the skill to change, social support, and a willingness to change in small steps. But whatever the difficulties of change through understanding, change *without* it is even more difficult.

Therapists also mediate between the client and society or the client and his life situation. Therapy can be viewed as a sort of time out. The client comes to therapy from a particular life situation which may be very difficult. Therapy is, if not an overtly supportive situation, at least a benign situation, one in which the usual risks have been suspended. In this context it is possible for the client to explore feelings, perceptions, or behaviors and to receive from the therapist comments about their appropriateness, their legitimacy, or their meaning, without fear of the ostracism that might have been experienced if these explorations had occurred in the real world. In addition, clinicians may specify, encourage, or suggest alternative behaviors to lead the individual to function better in the life setting, which in turn, produces further adaptive change.

Finally, there are so-called placebo effects. A placebo is an inert substance or treatment. Thus, to speak of the effect of a placebo is a paradox. Yet psychologists recognize that if the patient believes a particular treatment will be effective, it often is. This effect has both a direct and an indirect cause. Directly, the belief itself may cause change. Indirectly, any changes from other sources may be mistakenly attributed to the treatment. We know from research that placebos operate most effectively in situations where the patient is uncertain about the underlying cause of their feelings or of the syndrome, and where the treatment is experimental or uncertain. When clients come to therapy they undoubtedly bring a variety of expectations about change. They expect to get better, to change, and everything in the setting is designed to encourage that view—the authority of the therapist, the trappings of the office, the formal instructions given by the therapist. Thus, simply the act of going to therapy may convince the client that





he/she is getting better. The belief in improvement may be sufficient to create that improvement. In addition, any change for the better which may actually be due to another cause (e.g., a good night's rest) is often interpreted as being due to the therapy.

Some or all of these characteristics exist in the therapies discussed, and probably account for the generalized effectiveness of psychotherapy. These conclusions about psychotherapy could be viewed as either good or bad. On the negative side, one could suggest that existing therapies are built on lies. They do not work in the way or for the reasons specified by the therapist, whose effectiveness is due to the dynamics inherent in the therapy context.

On the positive side there are two important elements. First, therapy does work. Second, this analysis is part of a broader view of the human circumstance which views all human activity as being both the product but also the producer of psychological change. The individual in selecting experiences is exposing him or herself to change. Thus, the individual is an active participant in constructing his or her personality. Therapy is one of the many contexts designed specifically and intensively to promote change. Ultimately the individual is responsible for choosing (or *not* choosing) a therapy which fits his or her goals, interests, and temperament.

And so my advice to my friend comes down to this: although any therapy is likely to be useful, the important element is the match between the therapist and client. Of course the client must be willing to change to another therapist if the match is imperfect. The client is mistaken to assume that since the therapist is knowledgeable, the original choice must be valid even though the therapy is not successful. The process of therapy is so utterly dependent on the relationship between client and therapist that ultimately clients must be willing to judge the quality of that relationship and make their own therapeutic choice. ■

*Holly Glanville and Sandra Brandt contributed information regarding current practices and also helped shape and develop the orientation of the paper.*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>This summary is indebted to R.J. Corsini, *Current Psychotherapies* (Itasca IL: R.E. Peacock, 1984).

<sup>2</sup>For a further treatment of this topic, see *American Psychologist*, Special Issue: Psychotherapy Research, 41 (1986).

# 1.2 Million Words About Cleveland

John J. Grabowski

Even the most casual browser in a book store or library cannot help but notice the proliferation of "encyclopedias" lining the shelves, ranging in scope from sports to railroads to cooking. In an age of information, trivia, and scholarly specialization, the encyclopedic format is being used in ways that would undoubtedly be beyond the wildest dreams of Denis Diderot, editor of the great French *Encyclopedie* in the eighteenth century. Old standards such as *Britannica* and *World Book* have now assumed the status of revered ancestor.

Yet, until the publication, in the fall of 1987, of the *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, there was no comprehensive encyclopedia devoted to a single American city. The idea of producing such an urban encyclopedia eight years ago seemed—and to many still seems—unusual. I remember, when, on a hiking trip in Italy in 1985, I explained my occupation to my British and American companions: few lifted an eyebrow when I said I was manuscripts curator for the Western Reserve Historical Society, but a mixture of curiosity and incredulity—especially among the Americans—greeted my explanation that I was managing editor of an encyclopedia devoted to Cleveland. Why would one want to create an encyclopedic history of a city, especially one with the oft-buffed reputation of Cleveland? Given the deadlines, stacks of articles, and sometimes upset writers awaiting my return, the question deserved a deep pondering on the trail between Siena and Rome. The answer to this question and to self-doubts about my involvement was always the same. Cleveland's past represents an important, but sadly neglected, model for the study of the evolution of the modern American city, and the encyclopedic approach is the only means of beginning to achieve comprehensive treatment of this complex subject.

Those answers had first been given in 1980 when Professor David D. Van Tassel of Case Western Reserve University's history department discussed the matter of a new history of Cleveland with Homer Wadsworth, then director of the Cleveland Foundation. Wadsworth was concerned that the last comprehensive history of the city, William Ganson Rose's *Cleveland: The Making of a City*, was out of date. Published in 1950,



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the volume traced local history only to the city's Sesquicentennial in 1946. The immediate problem was whether anyone would be willing to produce a new narrative history of Cleveland.

Inquiries by David Van Tassel led to the conclusion that no would-be Renaissance man or woman could be found to undertake the task singlehanded. Indeed, a person of unusually broad abilities would have been necessary, since the bounds of urban history had grown far beyond their previous limits of great men and politics. Any new general history of Cleveland would have to consider the impact of business, labor unions, sports, ethnic groups, architecture, infrastructure, and a variety of other factors in the city's growth and development. It was not surprising that no brave soul stepped forward.

Yet, as Van Tassel knew, there were great numbers of scholars and amateurs each of whom knew something about some aspect of the city's past. Even in 1980, area bookstores had shelves of local histories dealing with topics such as architecture, the Van Sweringen real estate empire, streetcars, and the city's ethnic groups. Furthermore, during the 1960s and 1970s, a good number of dissertations and masters theses had been completed at universities around Cleveland that explored additional aspects of local history. An encyclopedic format that would use the skills of these numerous experts seemed the only reasonable way to approach the problem. The Cleveland Foundation provided a planning grant in 1980 as an initial impetus.

It was in the planning and subsequent writing of the volume that the complexities of the seemingly simple encyclopedia format became evident. These following seven years would at times test both the patience and presumed wisdom of the *Encyclopedia* staff. Our initial task was to identify people with particular areas of expertise and to enlist their advice and aid in the project. Within several months, over 250 people were identified, contacted, and invited to serve as advisors to the fledgling project. These advisors were initially identified when they attended, by general invitation, one of several "kickoff" cocktail parties which also did wonders to whet their appetites for the work ahead. They subsequently came to form more than twenty "task forces," each concerned with a particular subject, ranging from architecture to women's history. Each unit was then asked to suggest potential topics in their area and, in some cases, to prepare sample entries.

The outcome of this original foray was not quite what we had expected. Only 400 topics were suggested. They ranged in scope from treatments of entire subject areas such as transportation to suggestions for simpler sketches of noted individuals and organizations. Two things were apparent: we needed more topics, particularly ones relating to the city's post-World-War-II history; and we needed a more solid definition of the scope and intent of the volume. The former issue resulted in a second request to the task forces for the names of additional possible topics. An additional 300 entries were suggested, but this still seemed far too few.



The criteria for inclusion of specific articles proved hard to pin down, and throughout the project would always remain rather amorphous. Basically, histories of institutions or events, and biographies of individuals would be considered for inclusion if they were important to or representative of a particular aspect of the city's history. The selection of individuals presented the thorniest issue. People born in Cuyahoga County but who came to prominence elsewhere were not to be included unless the region provided the basis for their future fame. And, generally, biographies would be included only for people deceased at the time of publication. Initially, we decided on three categories of exceptions: living ex-mayors (only one of Cleveland's post-World-War-II chief executives, Thomas Burke, is dead, so a good piece of local history would be lost without their inclusion); sports figures enshrined in halls of fame; and notable figures who were in their eighties or nineties—these latter often referred to as grand old ladies and grand old men. Eventually, even these exceptions were dropped when advocates for other noted living personalities began to suggest their inclusion. This presented us with a potential Pandora's box of selection problems without historical perspective. The decision to omit all living individuals proved wise. We were still left with the nagging problem of the mayors, which was finally solved by including a sketch on the "Mayoral Administration" of Cleveland's former, but still living, mayors. Had we not hit upon this solution, a good portion of recent history would have been left out of the completed book.

Despite the attractive aspects of an A to Z encyclopedia, its fragmented topical format did present one major challenge. This was the strong need for a chronological history which would provide readers with a quick review of the city's evolution and thus help place the articles into a general historical context. We therefore decided to preface the volume with such a short history. At first we planned to organize the history decade by decade, as Rose had done, but as writing began, the ahistorical basis of decennial division became apparent, and the "mini-history" (a "mere" 40,000 words) was divided into more logical historical or topical chapters.

The general outlines for the encyclopedia were set by mid-1981. The next step was to flesh out the topic list. We needed to identify more than 2,000 possible additional articles and then to begin writing. The topic list was rounded out by the editors' review of existing histories of the city, and inspection of New Year's Day editions of Cleveland newspapers from 1946 to the present (which presented convenient synopses of major events during the preceding year) and additional quizzing of task-force members. This raised the number of potential topics to over 4,000, which further review reduced to the planned 3,000. The new list of topics led to new problems. Whereas we had originally felt that much of the writing could be done by volunteers, we now had a rather esoteric list of topics, many of which would have little appeal for volunteer writers. Many topics, indeed, were obscure and would require extensive professional research. For example, we would have had a surfeit of writers for entries such as the Van Sweringen brothers or the Cleveland Indians, but none for people such as ethnic newspaper publisher Tihamer Kohanyi or the Cuyahoga

County Colonization Society (a part of the local anti-slavery movement). While volunteers did continue to play an important part in the project, it was apparent that contractual writers would have to be engaged and a staff of professional researcher/writers hired. Calculations of the cost of a professionally-produced volume amounted to the staggering sum of \$600,000. The coming years would therefore not only be devoted to producing text, but to raising funds. From 1981 on, the *Encyclopedia* became not only an unparalleled pursuit of local scholarship, but a major fund-raising project.

Ideally, we hoped to receive all of the necessary funding at one time so a complete staff could be assembled and begin working as a unit. Given the sum needed, the National Endowment for the Humanities seemed the best potential source. We submitted two proposals but, despite excellent comments from the NEH reviewers, neither was approved. The NEH felt that the project was both too parochial and too expensive. At this point, in 1981-82, the project was at low ebb and the editorial staff worked voluntarily while funding was sought from local foundations, families, and corporations. This effort was led by James Conway, Associate Vice President for Endowment Development at CWRU, and directed by a committee composed of Ralph Besse, Robert Ginn, Robert Gries, Betty Del Duca, and Edward Worthington. They conducted a persistent drive over a two-year period and raised the necessary funds from over sixty sources. This local support eventually proved to be the key to unlocking a smaller level of NEH support. To everyone associated with the project, its most amazing aspect will always be the support given by local



businesses and foundations. The product they supported did not have the glamor of major cultural endeavors such as dance or opera, nor did it have the immediacy of donations for charitable purposes. Yet, each donor seemed to realize the role that history could play in helping the city understand itself and the potential utility of the *Encyclopedia* in promoting that process. Of even greater significance was the fact that most of the local donors did not request editorial oversight of either the volume or entries pertinent to their own operations.

As funding became available, we hired full- and part-time staff and began to contract with outside writers. All activity was centered at the Mather House offices of CWRU's history

*The author (left), with researcher/writer James Shelley, project coordinator Mary Stavish, and editor David Van Tassel.*

department under the auspices of which the project was directed. By 1985, the project had three full-time researcher/writers in addition to the project director and managing editor (both of whom worked part-time on the project), project coordinator, several part-time staff writers, and a plethora of contractual agents as well as a core of loyal volunteers. Eventually, over 250 people would write for the *Encyclopedia*. The coordination of their efforts was perhaps the greatest challenge to the project. The key to the record keeping was the work of the coordinating editor, Mary Stavish, who kept track of assignments, deadlines, the position of entries in the editing system, and the provision of payment. Within a three-year period (1983-86) over 2,500 articles were assigned, written, edited, and often rewritten and reedited. The chaos would have been considerable had it not been for Mary's skills and the availability of modern technology in the form of the word processor.

The word processor was so important to the project that no one associated with the *Encyclopedia* can now imagine its being written without that tool. Upon receipt, all acceptable articles were edited on the author's hard copy and then entered on the word processor. This task alone was enormous: over 1,400,000 words were entered. At a constant rate of sixty words per minute, this task would occupy nearly four hundred hours of staff time. This master diskette copy then served as the basis for all further factual and copy editing. Over fifty diskettes were finally sent to the compositor, who transferred their contents to the master computer tape used to set the book's type.

The word processor also helped the staff conquer one largely unexpected problem—time. When work on the *Encyclopedia* began, we knew we would have to work quickly because many of the entries would fall out of date with the passage of time—the longer we took to complete the volume, the more likely things were to change. Unfortunately, the inability to secure full funding at the outset, and setbacks such as the closing of the Western Reserve Historical Society library (perhaps our major research resource) for its move to a new building in 1984, placed the project more than a year behind schedule. The flexibility of the diskette copy became invaluable as banks merged, the Federal government vacillated on the Republic-J & L Steel merger, and corporate names changed to suit the vagaries of public relations. Our article on the *Cleveland Press* was received while that newspaper was still being published, and it had to be rewritten when the *Press* folded. We did not, alas, catch everything—as anyone looking up Stouffers' Tower City Plaza will realize when they find the hotel listed under Stouffers' Inn on the Square.

Even with word processors, editing the articles was an enormous challenge. Given the number of writers, it was a Herculean task to try to create a uniform style. The employment of full-time writers who produced large numbers of entries did eventually assist stylistic consistency. As entries were received, we checked each for the presence of certain types of basic information (birth and death dates, location, etc.) and if this basic information was not present, sent the piece back to the writer or gave it to a member of the staff for reworking. As the book came closer to completion, and stan-

dards for style and content were altered or more firmly established, our staff rewrote some general entries as many as three or four times. Our most formidable task was cutting the articles down to size. Despite clear, written instructions to the writers, most exceeded their assigned limit. The inability of writers to adhere to limits seemed understandable when we edited the articles. In many cases cuts could not be made without sacrificing valuable or interesting information. Thus, many articles were left longer than specified and we never achieved the average 250-word general entry that we expected. This editorial permissiveness—the project director has characterized his managing editor as a “softy”—has, we feel, made for a more interesting and readable volume, but it did have troublesome consequences as the book went to press.

The staff alone routinely edited the general entries. However, each of the interpretive pieces received further scrutiny, being reviewed, as well, by an editorial committee composed of three members of the CWRU history department, Michael Altschul, Michael Grossberg, and Carl Ubbelohde. This was done because the pieces were considered as the scholarly backbone of the volume and needed more detailed scholarly scrutiny. The essays were commissioned nationally and, as interpretive essays, could, if warranted, include judgmental statements. They are therefore far different from the usual factual encyclopedic entry. As such they, along with the mini-history, are the only signed entries in the volume. Given this review process, the final format of the interpretive essays sometimes reflects a good deal of give and take between the author, the staff editors, and the editorial committee members. They, more than any other aspect of the work, will serve as the *Encyclopedia's* academic calling card.

As the *Encyclopedia* was being produced, the staff became more aware not only of the enormity of the project, but of its consequences for the city and for scholarship. We knew, of course, that we were embarking on a new means of portraying urban history: only the *London Encyclopedia*, published in 1983, preceded the *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* as a modern urban encyclopedia—New York City and Indianapolis are now working on theirs, using Cleveland's as their model. More important, we knew that the facts contained in the volume would be considered as gospel by most of its readers. Our mistakes would “make history” (a sign over our word processor station warned typists of this). We therefore entered the work with a commitment toward the creation of a comprehensive, accurate work.

But accuracy was more easily imagined than achieved. During the research our writers found large quantities of conflicting information. In one instance, two anniversary histories and a citation in *Rose* gave three different founding dates for the League of Women Voters. In other instances the proper corporate name form for agencies eluded researchers. Even corporate letterheads contained minor variants (such as an ampersand versus “and”). The pursuit of accuracy was frustrating and questions could often be resolved only if original minutebooks or similar primary sources could be located among the collections of manuscripts repositories such as the Western Reserve Historical Society. Often researchers had recourse only to newspaper clipping files or to indexed news-



paper articles. Our reliance on such sources was unsettling but necessary, particularly when researching topics of more recent vintage where archival material had not yet been deposited or when no anniversary histories had yet been produced. We knew that newspaper clippings could be a source of inaccuracies. In some clipping files researchers would find a mistake made in an early story perpetuated in all succeeding stories on that topic as reporter after reporter relied on the clipping morgue for his or her source.

Even more frustrating—and most illuminating in terms of understanding the processes of history—was our inability to find any relevant information about individuals or agencies suggested as possible entries. Memories of greatness turned out to be poor substitutes for the preservation of hard fact. Put more succinctly, individuals or organizations who do not leave papers or records are not likely to enter history. As the project went on, the topic list remained fluid as entries impossible to research or those that proved to be of minor consequence were deleted and others added. In a final attempt to insure accuracy, over two-thirds of the general entries were eventually “veracity checked” by two part-time employees who had had no hand in their creation. They laboriously checked the sources used by the original authors and then, if possible, checked the article against different sources. As the veracity checkers did their work we all became aware of problems caused by careless input on the word processor and of the nuances of meaning created by sentence structure. Despite this attention, we had to concede that mistakes would enter the volume and therefore placed our hopes on correcting them in succeeding editions.

The concept of being comprehensive also acquired a new shade of meaning as the project progressed. Obviously, 3,000 articles could not cover every aspect of the city’s history. We therefore began increasingly to view the entries as being representative of aspects of local development. More important, we began to view the volume as a means of bringing local history together by virtue of the alphabetical juxtaposition of articles, this often making for strange historical bedfellows. The completed book thus brings the researcher with narrow interests into contact with a broad variety of topics. One can, for instance, open the book to almost any page and find a piece representative of the city’s black or white ethnic communities. Someone searching for information on sports is bound to happen upon entries dealing with cultural topics. The entry on Rock ‘n’ Roll falls on the same page as that for John D. Rockefeller. The Rowfant Club sketch is on the same page as the Roxy Burlesque Theater, and the article on Polo follows that on Polkas. In an often divided city, it is our hope that this volume will show the common ground in history, and will assist people in learning about one another. While we had foreseen these possibilities when beginning the project, it was only upon viewing the completed page proofs that we realized how wonderfully the format served to bring the pieces of history together.

While the staff began to savor these attributes of the volume as it came together in late 1986, it soon found it had an entirely new set of problems. By that time we had begun to supply text for copy editing to our publisher, Indiana Univer-

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*... we began to view the volume as a means of bringing local history together by virtue of the alphabetical juxtaposition of the articles, this often making for strange historical bedfellows.*

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sity Press. As the blue-pencilled text returned we were faced with the enormous task of making the necessary changes as well as keeping up with new material still being submitted by writers and handling factual changes suggested by our veracity checkers. Eventually, each of the articles was copy-edited twice. By December 1986, all text had been received and only then did we realize that our one-million-word work had grown to 1.4 million words. Indiana's plans and budget had been firmly set for a book that would not exceed one million words, and thus our "slight" overrun became an issue of major concern. This concern was heightened because we were committed to publication by the end of 1987. A series of compromises resolved the quandary. We agreed to edit some articles further and to delete entire entries in order to shave words. Indiana, in turn, experimented with different type sizes and thinner paper stocks. Since the publisher needed to produce a readable text on opaque paper stock, there were limits to both type size and paper weight. The result of this compromise was a volume of 2,700 articles and 1,200,000 words that presents no major visual problems, although we have heard that the sale of magnifying glasses has recently boomed in the Greater Cleveland area.

As we rushed to cut words and began to read galleys we had to confront one last set of problems. We knew that the "non-contiguous" nature of the encyclopedia would make it impossible for any researcher to locate all the information the volume may have contained about a particular topic. For instance, while there is a general entry on Tom L. Johnson, a variety of additional information about him is contained in the body of other articles. We therefore had to create cross references and indexes if the volume was to have optimum utility for researchers, and this could only be done once galleys and page proofs were received. The last six months of the project were, therefore, the most hectic.

Cross references were inserted first. This was easily handled by putting in capital letters the names of individuals, events, or institutions in an article when those names were themselves the subject of articles elsewhere. This replaced the more standard "q.v." notation. This work, however, had been started before we became aware of the need to delete entire articles to save size. We thus ended up reviewing the entire text again to locate and delete cross references to articles that had been dropped. At this time we also entered "See also" references at the conclusion of interpretive essays in order to lead the reader to related entries.

Our last task was to create two indexes. One lists articles by twenty-three subject areas, thereby enabling a reader desiring to review all articles relating, for instance, to architecture to locate the names of all relevant entries. A second index contains over twenty thousand individual, corporate, and place names appearing within articles in the volume. This second index allows the reader to locate information about people, places, or events that may not be the subject of individual entries (this is particularly important for individuals prominent in the city's history who were alive at the time of publication and thus not eligible for their own entries), and it also locates additional information pertinent to a topic that may be scattered through the book, even when that topic is an entry. This

latter index was, perhaps, our most miraculous achievement in creating the *Encyclopedia*, as it was begun only three months before the book went to press. The rush of publication necessitated indexing without the availability of final page proofs. We accomplished the task by assigning a set of sequential numbers (1 through 2,700) to the articles. Index terms were identified by reviewing the final diskette copy and keyed to the proper article number. In a final, extraordinarily hectic two-week period, the staff substituted page numbers for the sequential numbers once page proofs had been received. This last task was laborious in the extreme, as staff members manually changed the key numbers for each of the index terms to the proper page numbers by use of a 2,700-entry "keying chart." Since we had created the index on the word processor we had hoped to accomplish the switch by using a simple "search and replace" command, but found that our system was incapable of handling the task. Nor could our compositor easily prepare a computer program to accomplish the switch on the master composition tape. Perhaps Diderot would have found the frenzy of human activity at this stage of the project entirely understandable. Certainly, we could empathize with his enormous efforts when, in September 1987, we finally shipped the index diskettes off to the compositor.

Now that the book has been published and all of the work seems to be behind us, we continue to gather fresh perspectives on the processes of encyclopedia creation. These are particularly valuable because the *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* is envisioned as an ongoing project of the Center for Regional and Comparative History at the CWRU history department. Additional funds have been secured and we hope eventually to have the project endowed so we can update, correct, and publish new encyclopedic reviews of the history of Cleveland. The production of the *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* was a far more complex process than any of its editors, writers, or advisors ever envisioned. And it is equally fair to state that the completed volume is a slightly different creation than that which was originally planned. As expected, the final product has brought forth some complaints about "missing entries" and perceived inaccuracies. This, however, was expected from the beginning. Indeed, a number of people advised against embarking on the project because the product would have to be selective and might bruise a variety of egos. Yet we believed all along that the benefits from the work would far outweigh its potential flaws. Chief among these was the need to bring the city's history together, to address all aspects of the city's past, good and bad, in a manner that would elicit the interest of citizens and scholars. We believe we have done this, particularly as people from a wide variety of backgrounds tell us that they were able to find a bit of "their history" in the *Encyclopedia*. We therefore look forward to continuing the project and to expanding local understanding of the region's past as well as broadening a national awareness of the city's position in American urban history. ■

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# Review

Donald Tipka

Several months have passed since the publication of *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* (Indiana University Press, \$35), edited by David D. Van Tassel and John J. Grabowski. The book has met with immediate success, for it is impressively produced and is the first general history of Cleveland since William Ganson Rose's *Cleveland: The Making of a City* was published in 1950. Now that the initial excitement over the appearance of this imposing volume has begun to subside and it has been used as a reference work for several months, it seems appropriate to evaluate the *Encyclopedia* as both a comprehensive history of the city and as a reference tool. Accuracy and completeness of entries, balance of treatment of subjects, and ease of access to the information in the *Encyclopedia* are the key criteria in evaluating this book which, according to the Preface, "aimed to make the text readable and comprehensible to high school students, laymen, and scholars alike." Although this writer feels a slight conflict of interest in reviewing the book because he contributed one of its interpretive essays, his work as a reference librarian who daily answers questions about Cleveland's history overrides his personal commitment to the *Encyclopedia*.

The question of the comprehensiveness of the *Encyclopedia* can be quickly settled. Although some areas might be more successfully treated, the comprehensiveness of the *Encyclopedia* is its strongest point. It may be even too comprehensive on certain subjects such as "Immigration and Ethnicity." But the probing reader can, through the more than 2,500 articles, obtain a generally accurate, unbiased view of virtually every aspect of Cleveland's history, including often ignored subjects such as sports, recreation, sanitation, and popular culture. Its comprehensiveness should make the *Encyclopedia* the basic source on the city's history for casual readers as well as for students and scholars.

The text is made up of three different types of entries: 2,500 short, ready reference articles; 170 longer, signed interpretive essays; and a 40,000-word "mini-history" entitled "Cleveland: A Historical Overview," composed of four essays by three historians. The first two essays, by Robert Wheeler, cover the growth of Cleveland from 1796 through 1860. Chronological in arrangement, the essays clearly and dispassionately outline the economic forces which propelled Cleveland from a harbor village to a commercial city which in 1860



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"was one of the most beautiful cities in the country, with all the prospects associated with urban centers." Wheeler's well-written essays are followed by Ronald Weiner's "The New Industrial Metropolis: 1860-1929," which begins: "The 7 decades from 1860 through 1929 were the most exciting, eventful, and complex in Cleveland's history." Weiner's treatment of that period is, unfortunately, anything but exciting. With bloated, jargon-filled prose ("The solution to these problems was to employ the capital raised through the corporate device to vertically integrate the firm backward to include transportation and sources of raw materials and forward to build a system for distributing and marketing the finished products.") Weiner also departs from the chronological approach set forth by Wheeler and thereby confuses the reader who is expecting consistent treatment of the city's growth. The topical arrangement leads to dull generalizations rather than useful factual information. For example, though Weiner stresses Cleveland's economy, one never learns whether the Panic of 1873 had an effect on the city. The essay fails also to be "readable and comprehensible" to high school students and laymen. Fortunately, Carol Poh Miller's "Toward the Postindustrial City: 1930-1980," the final essay in the "mini-history," returns the reader to a chronological approach and a readable style. Setting forth incontrovertible facts and cogent interpretations, Miller demonstrates that Cleveland never really recovered from the Great Depression and that its postindustrial problems, which led the city to both physical and psychological decline, had their sources in that era. One is sadly struck at the end of Miller's essay by the marked difference between the Cleveland of 1980 with its neighborhoods in disarray and the beautiful city of 1860, full of optimism. The effectiveness of the mini-history, which rationally sets forth the reasons Cleveland rose to and fell from prosperity, is undercut, however, by "Epilogue: 1987," affixed by the editors, it seems, to add a note of optimism to the depressing conclusions of the essays. The Epilogue reads like Growth Association fluff ("Playhouse Square complex . . . the 3d-largest theater complex in the country") and is marked by unfortunate metaphor ("the still-present dark cloud of racial tension lowering over the city"). Had the editors felt a need for a real treatment of the city's history since 1980, they should have either commissioned one or written a serious one themselves, carefully setting forth their reasons for optimism.

The bulk of the book is composed of the short factual entries and longer interpretive essays which "explore major topical areas of local history." The strongest interpretive essays are those dealing with subjects such as "Americanization," "Residential Architecture," "Histories of Cleveland," and "Municipal Ownership," which can be effectively focused for treatment in about 1,500 words. The least successful are many of those which attempt to trace a whole cultural movement such as "Literature," "Jazz," or "Art." The essay on literature is a case in point. Having no clear focus, it leads the reader on a circuitous path: accounts of bookstores, Cleveland's literary taste ("Cleveland's literary tastes largely reflected national trends, as they always would"; later in the same essay: "By

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the 1920s, Cleveland in its literary tastes was considered on a level with eastern cities"), nonfiction books written by Clevelanders, writers' clubs, book fairs, and finally a mention of some Cleveland writers. The essay would have been more successful had it been restricted to imaginative literature—fiction, poetry, and drama—written in Cleveland. Literary magazines could also have been included instead of being covered in the essay "Printing and Publishing in Cleveland." Another interesting essay could be written about novels set in Cleveland (there is an entry called "Movies Filmed in Cleveland") that could include works like Don Robertson's *The Greatest Thing Since Sliced Bread*, Edward Dahlberg's *Bottom Dogs*, Herbert Gold's *Fathers and The Prospect Before Us*, and Chester Himes's *The Third Generation*. The names of Dahlberg, Harvey Pekar, Richard Hawley, Raymond DeCapite, and James Kilgore are nowhere in the *Encyclopedia*, nor sadly does the name of the master printer-typographer Horace Carr ever appear. The essay on art, while more focused than that on literature, would have been better had it emphasized the creation of art in Cleveland rather than arts organizations and exhibitions. Key statements remain undeveloped and unsupported. "In the 1920s, Cleveland surpassed Boston as the country's leading center in watercolor painting . . . Such attention helped bring about the identification of a 'Cleveland School' of artists." But the essay never gives the names of the painters in the "Cleveland School" nor indicates whether they shared an aesthetic or a common style. Indeed, important Cleveland artists such as Clarence Carter, Wray Manning, and William Grauer are never mentioned in the book nor are other artists like Roy Lichtenstein, Charles Burchfield, or William Zorach, who spent parts of their careers in Cleveland. The city as a center of optical painting as practiced by painters like Julian Stanczak, Richard Anuskiewicz, and Edwin Mieczkowski is never mentioned. The essay on music is more focused and is justifiably an account that centers on music-making organizations in the city. The articles on rock 'n' roll and jazz are fragmentary and are seriously underdeveloped with no real evidence to justify Cleveland's claim as the pre-eminent city for rock music. Two cultural areas lacking interpretive essays are dance and photography. Although there are short entries on some dance organizations, an interpretive essay recounting the currents which led to the present popularity of dance in Cleveland would be enlightening. An essay on photography could discuss the role of early photographers in documenting the physical aspects of the city's history as well as recognize individuals like Ethel Standiford, the fine turn-of-the-century portrait photographer, and contemporary practitioners like Abe Frajndlich.

A glance at the "Subject Guide to Entries" shows that after the broad subject area "Business Industry & Technology," "Immigration and Ethnicity" has the largest number of entries. Most of the interpretive essays on this topic are straightforward chronological accounts which avoid ethnic chauvinism (an exception: "What can be concluded from an analysis of French immigration to Cleveland is that this small immigrant group has, directly or indirectly, exacted proportionately [sic]

more of a cultural influence on the city than any other group.") The breakdown of ethnic groups would have been better, however, had the editors followed the nomenclature and authority of the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*. Despite the presence of a very large community, there is no essay on the Appalachians in Cleveland, nor is the recent presence of the Vietnamese analyzed. An essay called "Balkan Immigrants" covering Bulgarians, Albanians, and Montenegrins is strange because there are no connections among the three groups. The few Montenegrins in Cleveland never had a community apart from the Serbs, and the *Harvard Encyclopedia* treats them as Serbs. *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, however, treats Austrians as Germans, totally inconsistently with its Montenegrin practice. But one is struck by the large number of entries dealing with ethnic fraternal organizations, singing societies, and cultural clubs that could have been covered in a work of this scope in the interpretive essays on the individual ethnic groups. There are, for example, eighteen entries related to the Slovenes, many of which could be subsumed into the interpretive essay. The criterion in the "Readers' Guide," which states that "the subject of the entry . . . must have had a substantive impact on the county in order to be considered for inclusion," seems to be often ignored in the entries on "Immigration and Ethnicity." This upsets the balance of treatment in the *Encyclopedia*.

The *Encyclopedia* seems to shy away from contemporary events and the recent past. The entry for the "Mayoral Administration of Dennis Kucinich," which covers one of the most interesting periods in twentieth century Cleveland history, begs for a fuller treatment, perhaps an interpretive one. The entry does not mention Kucinich's opposition to tax abatement or his emphasis on the welfare of Cleveland's neighborhoods. Nowhere in the *Encyclopedia* does one get an inkling of the immense power George Forbes has had in governing the city during the past fifteen years. John Demjanjuk's name does not appear in the index. Readers using the work twenty years from now will certainly be struck by its skittishness in dealing with the present period.

The one overriding criticism which many librarians have voiced is that it is very difficult to find information in the *Encyclopedia*. The index is incomplete (Henry George and J.P. Morgan do not appear although they are mentioned in the entry on Tom L. Johnson) and not oriented toward subjects other than those which are used as titles for entries. For example, unless one knows Garrett Morgan's name, he cannot discover who was the Clevelander who developed the traffic light. To read about the fur trading post on the Cuyahoga prior to Cleveland's settlement, one must know that it was called Astor House, for there is no entry for "fur trading" in the index. The editors, seemingly aware of the indexing problem, have provided a "Subject Guide to Entries," but the list is of little help in finding a discussion of the development of Cleveland's harbor or of French traders (it is under "Explorations") or of many other subjects. The *Encyclopedia* contrasts with Rose's book where the index may actually be better than the text. The points of access in the *Encyclopedia*, with few cross-

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references, make it difficult to use as a reference tool and often require the user to know the answer to his question before he can find any information on it. The book is generally accurate, although the name of the bookseller Richard Laukhuff is misspelled throughout and the dates of his death and his store's closing are incorrect. A good straightforward account of every community in Cuyahoga County and an excellent interpretive essay on "Suburbs" are useful although Brooklyn is treated in its entry only as a Cleveland neighborhood and not as a suburb. The entry on the Hippodrome Theater does not indicate when it was built or opened.

The maps are of good quality, but are not always informative. "City of Cleveland Ethnic Settlements, ca. 1923," based on the Gilman study, is almost meaningless in the book because half of the groups listed in the legend ("Austrians," "Native White," "Greek-Syria," etc.) have no entries in the *Encyclopedia* under those names. "City of Cleveland Electric Street Railways 1900" should include the name of each street on which a streetcar line ran. Missing too are copies of key maps in Cleveland's history like the 1796 maps of Amos Spafford and Seth Pease, or Lewis Evans's 1755 map of the Middle British Colonies in North America (Evans's name does not appear in the index). These maps can be found in Rose's history but belong in any work that is a comprehensive history of Cleveland. Rose's book also has a map showing all annexations to the city of Cleveland, but neither in the text nor the maps of the *Encyclopedia* can one accurately trace the territorial growth of the city.

Although this review points out some shortcomings in *The Encyclopedia of Cleveland History*, it must be stressed that the book is an impressive compendium of valuable information that cannot be found in another single work. Students, scholars, librarians, and laymen had long awaited such a publication, and most of their needs for a basic reference tool for Cleveland history have now been satisfied. There are also many fine, readable entries such as those of Eric Johannesen on topics dealing with architecture or those of David Brose on explorations and prehistoric inhabitants. The editors are already planning a second edition to be ready for the city's bicentennial in 1996, and they seem open to suggestions for correction of inaccuracies, oversights, or incomplete information. Until its publication serious students of Cleveland's history will sometimes find the need to pencil in needed information in their copies of the present edition to make it more usable. ■



# Ancient and Reborn

## *The Origins of Modern Hebrew*

Ori Z. Soltes

### I.

The development of Hebrew is unique in the history of languages. It represents a concerted effort to revive, as a spoken tongue, a language which, in one sense, had been dormant for more than fifteen centuries. At the same time, though, modern Hebrew belongs to a continuum which extends unbroken through those centuries—and may be traced back another millennium and a half before them.

### II.

Among the thousands of languages spoken around the world, philologists have distinguished a number of language families—groups of languages related to each other either because they seem to have developed from a common ancestor or because they are similar phonemically, morphologically, and syntactically—that is, in the sound and structure of words and sentences. Within one such large family—the “Afro-Asiatic” family—the most substantial group is called “Semitic.” It is into this group that Hebrew falls.

Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the Semitic languages is the tendency of their primary vocabulary (verbs, nouns, adjectives) to be built on tri-consonantal roots. Thus, for example, the word for “dog” is built on *K-L-B*: in Akkadian, this became *KaLBU*; in Aramaic, *KaLBA*; in Ethiopic as well as Arabic, *KaLB*; in Hebrew, *KeLeB*. The root for “writing” is *K-T-B*; aside from the verb which it yields across the Semitic landscape, in Arabic *K’TaB* means “book”; in Hebrew, *miKh’TaB* means “letter”—and so on. Variations of prefix, suffix, and vocalic detail will be determined by the particular language as by the role of the word syntactically.

There remains to this day—particularly with the appearance of Eblaitê\* on the Semitic linguistic scene a decade or two ago—some controversy as to how to categorize the various branches within the Semitic family. Most commonly, now, Eastern Semitic, (which includes Akkadian and its descendants



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\* A language associated with a substantial empire in Syria contemporaneous with the major Bronze Age empires in Mesopotamia.

Babylonian and Assyrian), is distinguished from its closer cousin, South Semitic (which includes Arabic and Ethiopic), as from its more distant cousin, NorthWest Semitic, which includes Amorite, Ugaritic, and Aramaic on the one hand, and on the other, Canaanite, Phoenician, and Hebrew.

Among the phonemic affinities which Hebrew shares with its linguistic siblings, aside from the tri-consonantal tendency, is the fact that the written language (which is read right to left) emphasizes—is almost limited to—the consonants, reducing vowels, mostly, to marks above and below the consonants (which do not appear in the scroll of the Pentateuch or in most modern printed Hebrew books and periodicals). Some of the consonants in Hebrew are not found in English: for example, the two glottals, *'aleph* and *'ayin*, and the two aspirates, *Khaf* (*ḥaf*) and *het*. Finally, the writing system itself—the Hebrew alphabet—which consists of twenty-two consonants, has evolved (perhaps via Phoenician) from pictograms to letters which in turn have changed over three millennia or more. The modern Hebrew alphabet offers both squared and cursive forms; five of the letters have special forms when they appear at the end of a word.

### III.

Biblical Hebrew emerged as a distinct language in the course of the second pre-Christian millennium—as close to Phoenician and, perhaps, to Ugaritic as French is to Spanish and Italian. As a national language, it is associated with the Israelite tribes forged into a kingdom by Saul and David; it evolved its written alphabet through the sixth century BCE. It was during this period that the first parts of the Hebrew Bible came to be written down in a final form, and that the details of Israelite religion, having been worked out, were worked *into* the text. But also during that period, Israel would come to be divided and subsequently dispersed into Assyria and Babylonia (East-Semitic-speaking empires), so that only a portion of the nation would continue, ultimately, to dwell in the southern area of Israel—called Judah—after the sixth century. Another portion would assume permanent residence in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq and western Iran)—and while Hebrew continued to connect these two major centers of Israelite-Judean culture, other languages would come to be used by the Judeans—especially Aramaic. As the Hebrew Bible continued to be committed to final written form during the half millennium that followed (through the Hellenistic and Roman periods), elements of Aramaic—together with bits of Persian and Greek—found their way into the Hebrew text.

Even in Judea itself, Aramaic competed with Hebrew; by the time of Jesus, Aramaic was, for some segments of the population at least, the primary everyday language. Within the century following Jesus' death, a number of events came to affect the further development of Hebrew. The Judeans revolted twice against the Romans. The national center, Jerusalem, together with its Temple, was destroyed; many Judeans dispersed to other parts of the Mediterranean and the Near East; Judaism and Christianity developed as separate structures on the same Israelite-Judean foundation. The two communities, as they grew farther apart theologically, differed in

their linguistic proclivities: the Eastern Church grew with the growth of the Syriac dialects—close to, but not identical to the Aramaic dialects of the Jews; members of both communities along the Mediterranean used Greek and/or Latin; Christians in Egypt used Coptic, another Afro-Asiatic language, descended from Egyptian—and few Christians, but all Jews, wherever they were found, continued to use Hebrew, if less fully than before.

Indeed, without a clear-cut national center such as Israel-Judea had been, Hebrew became less and less actively spoken. Jews continued to read the Bible and to pray in Hebrew, but most of everyday life and even of scholarship and cultural life was carried on in other languages. By the fifth century at the latest—in a frozen state as a holy, liturgical language untouched by the everyday—Hebrew might have disappeared as an active language altogether, but for the tenacity of a series of figures who continuously revived it between antiquity and the modern era.

Thus, for example, when the pendulum of dispersed Jewish History swung from the pre-eminence of the Mesopotamian Jewish communities (where Eastern Aramaic dominated) to those of Provence and Spain, by the eleventh century, Hebrew experienced a renaissance. Particularly in those parts of Spain that were under Arabic- and Berber-speaking Muslim rule in the eleventh through fourteenth centuries—and in part inspired by the new grammarians of Arabic—a number of Jews became engaged in analyzing Hebrew grammatically; the study of Hebrew grammar stimulated the use of Biblical and prayerbook Hebrew in contemporary writing. The result was an outpouring of literature—particularly poetry and philosophy, rich in rhythm and ideas, connected both to patterns of Arabic poetry and Muslim philosophy, and to liturgical patterns derived from Biblical psalms and prayerbook hymns. The authors of these works included Samuel HaNagid, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Yehudah HaLevi, Moses and Abraham Ibn Ezra, and Maimonides. Indeed, Maimonides, a physician and philosopher, who actually wrote mostly in Arabic, spent his later years translating his works into Hebrew.

The impulse toward non-liturgical Hebrew poetry was carried from Spain to Provence and Italy, where there were also dramatic works written in Hebrew based on Italian models. The fourteenth century saw poetry by Immanuel of Rome; the fifteenth the *Mikdash Me'at* (*Little Sanctuary*)—a Jewish "Divine Comedy" written, as Dante's was, in terzetti—by Moses di Rieti. In the sixteenth century, *Me'or 'Enayim* (*Light of the Eyes*) was written by Azariah de Rossi of Mantua, and in the seventeenth, there are works by Leo da Modena and Mordecai Zacuto. The culmination of these sporadic Hebraic efforts is associated with the eighteenth century Paduan, Moshe Haim Luzatto. Luzatto was both a self-proclaimed Messianic figure—tied, thereby, to a tenet of Medieval Judaism—hope for the Messiah—and in a way, the father of Modern Hebrew Literature. In his allegorical *LaYesharim Tehillah* (*Psalm for the Righteous*), Truth and Reason battle with Deceit, which misleads the people—until a storm comes and helps Virtue to conquer all. This work would be viewed as a call to enlightenment by Jewish Rationalists of the next century, to whom we shall shortly turn.



The calendar of Gezer, an important Canaanite city. 1000 BCE. Replica in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

## IV.

Nonetheless, through the eighteenth century, Hebrew remained, for most Jews, a language associated with prayer and scholarship, with devotion and moments of piety, rather than with worldly activity. But the position of the European Jew was changing; social, political, economic ostracism began to yield to inclusion—to Emancipation. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, a movement called *Haskalah*—Enlightenment—swept through parts of Jewish Europe. Its intention was to complete the process of bringing Jews still isolated from the world around them into the mainstream by inundating them with the literature, music, politics, and art of Europe. One of the early steps taken by the *Maskilim* was the re-activation of Hebrew as a functional language of intellectual and political intercourse. The reason seems to have been two-fold: to use a language which all Jews still had in common with each other and, by using that familiar instrument in an entirely unfamiliar way, to awaken Jewish consciousness to new possibilities and realities (as well as to encourage them to abandon the elements of Jewish life associated with the familiar ossified state of Hebrew). In both connections the *Maskilim* looked to Moshe Haim Luzatto as a forerunner. But whereas Luzatto has remained—particularly in his self-conception as a Messianic figure—directly connected to the traditional Jewish stance of isolation from an estranging outer world and of longing for a restoration of Zion under Davidic kingship, the *Maskilim* moved toward assimilation. From Moses Mendelssohn under Frederick II to the Koenigsburg publishers, in 1783, of the first secular periodical in Hebrew, *Ha-Me'assef* (*The Gatherer*), they sought to become part of European culture, and to abandon Messianic and Zion-focused aspirations. Hebrew was chosen as the language of *Ha-Me'assef* for the initiation of that process—to be abandoned when assimilation had been accomplished. This effort in large part failed, because its effort was too radical, too soon (too few, that is, were willing to carry Hebrew out of the realm of Scripture and prayer into the secular)—and because its aim of bringing Jews into the European mainstream at the sacrifice of all but the most limited liturgical aspects of their Judaism could lead only to nihilism: the middle ground between outright conversion out of the faith and clinging to its tenets without change proved to be thin ice.

But the legacy of the *Haskalah*—aside from crystallizing the possibility of a revival of Hebrew—was to raise precisely the question of where to locate and how to define the Jew in the modern era. Thus, while some Jews would come to follow the kind of cosmopolitan solutions suggested, in time, by Marxist and Socialist ideologies, others recognized a future for Judaism in the nationalistic sensibilities of nineteenth-century Romanticism. The *Haskalah* had rejected a Jewish nationalistic ethos in favor of a cosmopolitan Europeanism; that ethos evolving half a century later necessarily focused on the Hebrew language as the most fundamental organ of developing nationalistic consciousness among Jews—and respect for it among non-Jews. The Hebrew which the *Haskalah* had secularized would be the bridge between abstract hopes and concrete realization in the growth of modern political Zionism.

The Hebrew renewed grammatically and philologically by Samuel David Luzatto (a scion of the north Italian family which had earlier produced Moshe Haim Luzatto) in the mid-nineteenth century, subjecting the Bible itself to textual analysis—the Hebrew used so brilliantly in the philosophical work of Luzatto's contemporary, Nachman Krochmal, *The Guide for the Perplexed of the Time*, in declaring the validity of evolution and change within Judaism (and thus, of Hebrew as an element of Judaism)—that linguistic instrument would be the basis of a literary revival that would center in the Jewish political renaissance.

## V.

The paths to political Zionism through the late nineteenth century are manifold. Among its fathers—Moses Hess, Leo Pinsker, Theodore Herzl, and Aḥad Ha'Am—the last, in particular, would, by the turn of the century, espouse the location of a homeland in Palestine as a nexus for spiritual revival. And only he, of these four, communicated his perspective in Hebrew. This was in turn a direct result of linguistic and literary outgrowths derived from the work of Peretz Smolenskin.

Born in 1842 in a small Russian town, Smolenskin followed a changing spiritual and geographic path which eventually yielded his publication of a Hebrew periodical, *Ha-Schahar* (the Dawn) in Vienna, from 1868 until his death in 1885. That periodical is usually viewed as marking the dawn of Hebrew literature connected to national awakening (as *Ha-Me'assef* had marked the beginning of the "Enlightenment" eighty-five years earlier). At the same time, he wrote essays and novels; in *'Am 'Olam* (*Eternal People*) he argues that particularized peoplehood is both compatible with and necessary to universal human ideals—as love of one's nation is, in turn, built upon love of one's family. And the centerpiece of spiritual nationalism for Jews is, in Smolenskin's terms, the Hebrew language.

For the seventeen years of its publication under Smolenskin, *Ha-Shahar* drew directly to it an array of emerging Hebrew-language literary and journalistic talents—stylistic molders of a revitalizing language. Beyond its pages, the sense of an imperative to create a modern Hebrew Literature as essential to the process of Jewish revival is reflected in the work of Mendele Mocher Seforim, with its elevations of nineteenth century East European Jewish life to genre art; that same imperative as part of a revival distinctly away from Europe towards a Palestine-centered nationhood is reflected in the work of Abraham Mapu, frequently called (when Mendele is not) the father of the modern Hebrew novel. It is reflected in the poetry and mythic worlds of Ḥaim Naḥman Bialek and Saul Tchernikhovsky who are together the bridge between the varied European Jewish past with its memories, dreams, and often painful reflections and the Zionist future; it is reflected in the stories of Y.L. Peretz and Sholom Aleichem as in the essays of Aḥad Ha'Am.

Indeed, by the time Aḥad Ha'Am's essays were being published in Odessa and Tel-Aviv—by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century—a variety of new Jewish groups had established themselves in Ottoman-controlled Palestine, in

successive waves of immigration, of *'Aliyah*—"going up"—to the land. This paralleled growing debates as to the nature of the envisioned Jewish homeland. And in the triumph of the notion of Zion as a center of spiritual and cultural renaissance, Hebrew was determined as the language both of literature and of the street—the secularized Hebrew made feasible by the developments we have observed was regarded as the most logical, universal linguistic soil in which to plant the ethos of nationhood.

The furthering of that linguistic ideal includes not only efforts of *Aḥad Ha'Am*, Bialek, and Tschernikhovsky, but those of Y.L. Gordon, Micah Joseph Berditchevsky, Joseph Haim Brenner, A.D. Gordon and others—particularly Eliezer Ben-Yehuda. All these figures contributed to the development of Modern Hebrew literature and philosophy; but it was Ben-Yehuda (son of Judea, as Eliezer Isaac Perelman would re-name himself two years before arriving in Palestine), called the Father of Modern Hebrew, who created the linguistic bridge toward the growth of a daily spoken tongue. Born in Lithuania, Ben-Yehuda lived for a time in Paris and in North Africa. In the course of his travels, three ideas welded themselves together within him: the viability of Hebrew as an actively spoken, non-liturgical language—and its importance as connective tissue for diversely-located Jews; the validity, for Jews, of European languages and literatures not traditionally read by them; and the desirability of a Jewish national home. He arrived, in 1881, at the age of twenty-three, in Palestine, where these ideas would be the basis of his one-man assault on Hebrew, his transformation of it into a modern language fit both for literary use *and* street debate.

Ben-Yehuda had, shortly before, begun the approach to the issue theoretically: he had published an essay in 1879—"A Burning Problem," wherein he focused on the importance of language to *le-umiyut*—nationalism. A people and its land are embodied in and articulated by its language, he asserted, connecting this notion to Jews and Hebrew. Arrived in Palestine, he approached the problem practically. On a personal level he insistently spoke only Hebrew at home, demanding the same of his wife, Devorah; however difficult and stilted the process, they raised their children on Hebrew exclusively—creating the *first native-born speakers of Hebrew* in perhaps seventeen centuries. Professionally, he disseminated these convictions through a column in a weekly newspaper; offered a teaching post, he refused to teach in any language but Hebrew; in 1882 he helped found a strictly Hebrew-speaking farming collective (which included among its immigrant group, David Grien—who, emulating Ben-Yehuda as they all did, changed his name to that by which one day he would be famous as Israel's first Prime Minister: Son of a Lion—Ben-Gurion).

By 1884 Ben-Yehuda founded his own newspaper: *Ha-Tzvi*—*The Deer*—which became the key organ of spreading and expanding Hebrew vocabulary. Words he would hear for the first time he would incorporate into articles written in a con-



Tablet recording the reburial of the remains of King Uzziah in Jerusalem, circa 100 BCE–100 CE. It reads, "Hither were brought the bones of Uzziah, king of Judah. Do not open." Jerusalem, Israel Museum.

versational mode; and he would devise new vocabulary for concepts and objects with no prior location in Hebrew-language experience. So, for example, reaching into Hebrew itself, he extracted a phrase "go up and come down" to engender a word for "elevator"—*'oleh veYored* (which was subsequently simplified to *Ma'alit*—"to make go up"); emulating the European word for "bookplace"—library, based on Latin *liber* ("book")—he created *SiFRiyah*, based on the Hebrew for "book", *SeFeR*.

These efforts as word-gatherer, -disseminator, and -smith led inevitably to the major work of Ben-Yehuda's life: the creation of a Hebrew dictionary. Scraps of paper on which he had recorded his vocabulary observations gave way to three-by-five index cards; he read and/or catalogued 25,000 books; he copied 500,000 references to Hebrew words to build the edifice of Modern Hebrew on its ancient foundations. The flash of fire observed by Ezekiel in his vision of the Chariot-Throne of God—*Hashmal*—became the word for electricity; the word spoken by Joseph to his brothers at Pharaoh's court—*Avreḥ*, meaning "I bless thee" (but which later rabbis discussed as a folk-etymologized combination of *Av*—"father"—and *rah*—weak and few in years) became a word for "prodigy." The word for "wheels"—*'ophanim*, which also appears in Ezekiel's vision—was converted, via the imposition of a dual ending, into *'ophanayim*, "two-wheeler, bicycle." *Sahrahok*—"distant conversation"—was the phrase which became the word for "telephone." And the very word for "dictionary"—*milon*—was derived from the word for "word," *milah*.

A modest, forty-page *milon ivri* was published by Ben-Yehuda in 1897—the very year in which the first Zionist congress met in Basel, Switzerland. Over the next decade, the mammoth undertaking of a full-fledged work began that would offer translations into French, German, and English of every word within it, and extensive examples of contexts and synonyms—for instance, 335 expressions using the word *lo* ("no") and 210 with *ken* ("yes") were included. Within the same period, Ben-Yehuda created the *Va'ad ha-Lashon ha-Ivrit*—The Hebrew Language Committee—to expand the efforts in which he had been so long engaged. He was instrumental in altering the original linguistic mandate of the first science-focused college in Palestine—the *Technikum*—from German to Hebrew, and in changing its name to that which it still bears: the Technion.

By Ben-Yehuda's death in 1922, the possibility of an officially acknowledged Jewish homeland had acquired a wide base of international support, and he had completed five volumes of a work which—when it would be finally issued in its entirety by his second wife, Hemda, and his son Ehud—would run to sixteen volumes. By then (1959), the independent State of Israel had been in existence for a decade with Hebrew as its official language, and the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) had established a successor to Ben-Yehuda's Hebrew Language Committee—The Academy of the Hebrew Language. By that year also, native-born speakers had come to outnumber immigrants, and a new wave of Hebrew literature, by native-born authors, would be under development.



From the decorated title page of a text on the sanctity of marriage and correct sexual behavior. 1599.

## VI.

In recent decades, Hebrew has grown as the State of Israel has. Another generation of poets and prose writers has emerged. The maturity of Hebrew-language literature has been symbolized by the award of the Nobel Prize to S.Y. Agnon in 1966. Modern Hebrew is a many-tiered castle, synthesizing layers which call forth Biblical, Rabbinic, Medieval, Enlightenment, and recent elements. Syntax has changed in some respects since Biblical days: what is a past-tense form there, for example is a future now (*Vayidaber*, which in the Bible means "and he spoke," in Modern Hebrew means "and he will speak"); the past-present-future distinctions of today are not present in the Biblical text. Yet the Bible flourishes in the Hebrew of today.

Hebrew often looks to itself for new vocabulary: *MaH-SHeV*, meaning "make thought," became first the word for "calculator" and then for "computer"; *El Al* ("to the Heights") became the name of Israel's airline. Yet Hebrew is as subject as any language today to English-language colonialism: nobody says *SahRaHoK*; everyone uses the word *TeLeFoN* (and its Hebraized verb-form, *Le-TaLFayN*). And although Israelis love *Kadoor Sal*—basketball—they seem to prefer *BesBall* to *Kadoor Basees*.

Aside from English, the most important influence on Hebrew—particularly through 1940, though less today—is from its South Semitic sibling, Arabic. Completing the circle of centuries-long interaction, a full-fledged reunion is in process in a common location after millennia of separation. Yiddish (Judaean-German) has also left a faint imprint on modern Hebrew: *kumsitz* (German, "come-sit"), for example refers to a campfire gathering; in *lihashlep* (from German, "to drag or carry") a German root has become a fully conjugated Hebrew verb; and *shamesh* (a "good-for-nothing") having originally come into Yiddish from Hebrew, altered its nuances, and has completed a circle of linguistic return. In a different vein, there has recently developed a campaign to reform the written vocalic system of Hebrew to make it more accessible to readers without a Semitic grounding. Should that campaign succeed, perhaps the name of Haim Baltzan, its spearhead, will one day be added to the list of the reshapers of a constantly self-revitalizing language. ■



POETRY

# Seven Poets for Summer

Nola Garrett

## In Photography Class

all is numbers  
and all the numbers are backwards.  
The big numbers are fast  
snipping bits of light  
almost before they touch  
the finely numbered film.  
The small numbers are so slow  
they soak shadows  
out of ill-lit churches.  
Disasters are to be expected.  
Developing fluids cool,  
mirror springs fail,  
F's don't stop, light  
meters routinely lie.  
The teacher, though, is ever agile  
switching lenses, stretching  
bath times, reversing  
black and white  
and erasing wrinkles.  
Only the film grows old.

So, the little girl in the picture playing  
on the beach  
at noon  
on the equator  
is forever safe  
from sharks and undertow.  
All that matters  
is the light.

*Nola Garrett is a professor of English at Edinboro University in Pennsylvania. Her poetry has been published in several little magazines including The Other Side and Byline. She explains, "Last spring I did peer evaluation of a photojournalism class taught by another teacher at Edinboro. When I wrote up my notes, this poem emerged, which he accepted for his permanent personnel file. So far no one else has noticed that it is a poem." She lists among her other interests beekeeping, wallpapering, fishing, the stock market, and fast red cars.*

Russell Atkins

### Well-Being's Paradox

—strangles a bit to learn  
that all went *fairly* in some way.  
At sudden "good," "reassurances,"  
a woman's, or a friend's understanding,  
his match of suspicion's aflame!  
Wary of health, he pays up insurances,  
fears to pharmacists for quick advice,  
notes hospitals  
    scares before a mirror

(he denies that he's a cynic)  
    —when a friend's ill'd,  
"resting satisfactorily" in a clinic,  
he says, "—resting satisfactorily?  
—we know *that* one—my God,  
and so do the undertakers—,"

When hostesses at cocktail parties  
comment casually about relatives,  
"My Dale's doing fine," or "Wilber's  
having the time of his life,"  
he snickers, opens the obituary page  
of the newspaper

—if his employer benigns,  
raises his pay, he gets out fast  
(to him, it's common sense  
that somewhere there's the deadliest consequence)

When clouds pout pouring their damp  
his respiratory depression eases:  
unable to account for his peace,  
say, in relax'd hours—suspects  
*himself*, seeks psychiatrists addresses  
and sends his doctor's prescriptions  
to medical columns in magazines  
for reassessment  
    and predictions

—he's death on "well."

*Russell Atkins, who published his first poem when he was eighteen, says "I was avant garde before I knew there was an avant garde." A native of Cleveland, he early attracted the attention and support of Langston Hughes. He is one of the first American concrete poets, and is a composer as well, with works performed in the U.S. and Germany. In 1950 he founded the literary magazine Free Lance, which continued publication until 1980. His several books of poetry include Here in the (Cleveland State University, 1976). For many years he has taught creative writing at Karamu House in Cleveland. "I like to apply musical ideas to poetry," Atkins says, "for example, putting in unexpected words, as modern composers produce unexpected modulations by avoiding diatonic progressions."*

David Graham

### Wedding Portrait

—after Jan Balet's painting *Dem Glucklichen  
schlagt keine Stunde*

The table is set for nine guests  
yet to appear. The clock face erased  
in this spotless room. Barely touching,  
this happy couple posing as the happy couple,  
thinking who shall eat the piled rolls?  
Or lift starched napkins that point like sails?

He wears a white bow tie on white shirt,  
his vest the color of starved flowers.  
She hides her hands in umbrella-stiff greens,  
veiled lightly from head to hem  
of her fluted, sturdy gown. The terrible reason  
they face outward is not yet clear.

Tablecloth pleats are shadowed blue and gray,  
as if we're meant to suspect some evil  
beneath that precarious table,  
or that unseen doors will suddenly open.  
Resign yourself, then, to this marriage  
between stubborn prime numbers, now and now.

*David Graham is assistant professor of English at Ripon College in Wisconsin. His B.A. is from Dartmouth College and his M.F.A. is from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. His first book of poetry, Magic Shows, was published in 1986 by the Cleveland State University Poetry Center, and his poems have appeared in many little magazines, including Poetry, Ironwood, and Georgia Review. According to Graham, "Ignorance is a blessing for a writer. If I had had any idea how bad my writing was in 1971, I might have been tempted to stop. The obvious possibility that in fifteen more years what I am writing now will seem equally bad does not bother me as much as it used to. In fact, I sort of look forward to it."*

David Graham

**Stinkers**

Stinkbug with its foul puddle,  
stinkhorn fungus (phallus impudicus),  
that rank and impudent sower  
of fetid oats, stinkweed, stinkwood,  
stinkpot turtle, even the soft rock  
called stink stone—

This world's a ravening musk  
when scratched, and when not.  
Skunk cabbage and stink cat—  
the earth's reeky breath  
its own inspiration. As dogs will roll  
in putrescence, I find no thought  
too foul to bathe in, my wounds  
that stink, stank, stunk.

What is this suffocating stench  
but words? Each vowel melting  
to my hunger, down to the bone  
of consonant: tainted, fulsome, rancid.

Still, something is also not rotten  
in our little Denmark, this mother tongue,  
wherein to know begins as to taste—  
how I savor whatever is  
and call it heady, a rich bouquet,  
how we dilute and dilute  
till musk turns to perfume.  
Like wine this world's long in the mouth,  
smelling no rat but indifference.

Marjorie Power

### Introduction to Geometry

Rim of a dinner plate, ring around the moon:  
a circle always moves ahead of the eye.  
The world may join it anytime  
but it will never break to say,  
"Here, I will join you."

Consider a floor tile, a napkin,  
a checkerboard: a square belongs at home.  
Stretch one, and you have a rectangle—  
a bed, an open door, a panel of light.

A triangle can only wish.  
It is the two in love with the one,  
the day too many, the dollar too few,  
the tap of a long rain.

Pentagon, hexagon, and so on,  
say all's well that ends well;  
carollers around a tree,  
a harvest safely gathered in.

A parallelogram thinks of a rectangle  
and holds its ground. A trapezoid  
slumps, an old shed in the wind.

*Marjorie Power lives in Olympia, Washington, where she works as mother, poet, and editor of the newsletter put out by Northwest Renaissance, a Seattle-based poets' organization. Her poems have appeared in little magazines and in her book Living With It (Wampeter Press, 1982). "I see poets as people who have a very close relationship to language, rather than people who use language as a mechanical tool for expression. As guardians of the language we have a responsibility to our culture, which, for the most part, has lost its ear."*

Tim McCarthy

### Vegetables for Breakfast

I found, thank you, coffee waiting  
and sat drinking, waiting for breakfast.  
Your delicious black hair long enough  
to nest in the wok, redirected the steam.

I watch the dew disappear from the window.  
I think of your face, now moist with  
steam as you cover the wok. Beneath the  
smoking cover, breakfast will hatch soon.

It will not be familiar, but doubts,  
for me, have yet to arise. I can trust  
food equally with what the  
morning extends to me.

### A Word of Advice

If and when you hear a voice  
in a playground of children  
who rush to run out of time  
tell of some running out of  
their own sons and daughters,  
or of themselves, in the stillness  
of themselves, simply narrow  
speech and thought to only breath,  
so that the value of your youth  
will not be slurred with over-  
attention, like the voice spinning  
to the past as wheels within wheels.

*Tim McCarthy lives in Kent, Ohio, where he works at the Campus Ministries at Kent State University and teaches at the Kent Zendo, a Zen Buddhist meditation center. He is also an instructor in Oberlin College's Experimental College. His poems have been published in Pudding Magazine, The Writer's Grapevine, Best of Ohio 1987, and The Akros Review.*

Ray McNiece

### The Revenge of Cleveland

*a menu against nouvelle cuisine*

At a restaurant à la arboretum in a trendy alley  
back of Harvard Square,

I sit down to a platter of minimalist philosophy  
and wait for more.

When none comes I realize that this is  
the entrée, and it hits me—this will cost!  
Three slivers of salmon looking, for the life of them,  
like playdough cut-outs; a spot  
of goose liver paté nudged  
under a scrap of spinach grown in a petri dish;  
a dash of tortellinis—that disgrace to pasta;  
an upscale garnish of designer legumes;  
and, existentially enough, a single olive  
without pimento. The whole plate  
could be a display of new-wave jewelry.

Enough of this "less is more."

More is more, and I want some.

Let's start with dumpling soup, the aroma  
buoyed by globules of chicken fat—  
the hundred suns shining on grey Cleveland;  
then the dumplings themselves, behemoths  
of ambrosia; bring on the perogies,  
and put a tub of cheezwhiz  
made from artificial imitation processed cheese food  
at one elbow, and on the other side, a mound  
of sauerkraut steaming like the Cuyahoga  
stirred by a scow on a spring morning;  
eggnoodles too, rolled and cut  
and ladled by my heavy great-aunt—  
noodles steeped in margarine  
from the contented corn of Ohio;  
and oh the loaves of seed-choked rye  
and pumpernickel smeared with lard.  
Give me a bellyfull of kielbasi-inspired  
indigestion any day, the revenge of Cleveland.  
I'll take you there my friend, to a pile  
that makes you spout,  
"Lay on MacDuffski, and let no mouth cry, hold, enough!"

Of course, to top it off, half a roll of peticza  
and a quivering dollop of pink-jello salad  
straight from the truckstops of the western pike  
all frothed with non-dairy whip.

So, none of this light-weight stuff that lets you off  
to play squash or the stocks.

None of this nuance and dabble.

I want a heap of carbohydrates so I can't move  
the rest of the afternoon,

chowed down in a bar with the Browns' game blaring.

A meal as heavy and murky as an immigrant cathedral,  
as bland and fulfilling as a busload of Slovenians  
dreaming of Sunday dinner.

*Raymond McNiece says this poem was inspired by the disparity between the nouvelle-cuisine of the yuppies in Boston where he now lives and the traditional heavy-carbohydrate meals of the midwestern blue-collar milieu where he grew up in Pittsburgh and Cleveland. McNiece, who works as a painting contractor, is founder of The Writers League of Boston. His poems have appeared in little magazines including Blue Ox Review and A Critique of America. "I'm attempting to develop a style that will continue to be spontaneous and free, but also rhythmical and musical, employing traditional techniques that American poetics have shunned for fear of being derivative."*



Ron Houchin

**The Age of Darkness**

Can we find a great column of darkness,  
say, from a well capped by Adam,  
and count the rings  
where light leaked in?

Can we count the stars  
like the hexagons on the back of a turtle?  
Can we count them back to the first one  
in the center of the night's slow shell  
and point and say it began there, then?

I swear the age of darkness is known  
each time the sun goes down  
and we stand atop the golden hills  
with our silver spoons, our nervous fires,  
our battery-powered portraits of the moon.

*After a varied work career as a janitor, steelworker, and cabdriver, Ron Houchin teaches high school English in South Point, Ohio. His work has appeared in Bitterroot, PulpSmith, The Southwest Review, and other little magazines. In 1984, he was a contributing author at the Bread Loaf Writers Conference. Born in California, Houchin now lives in an old house in South Point, from which he can see across the Ohio River to West Virginia on the left and Kentucky on the right. He began to write poetry in the seventh grade when assigned to write a poem for a class. "Ever since then my life has been that of a small boy crouching, feeding fingers of a tree to his pet fire."*

# Interstates in the City— *Speed and Beauty for a Price*

Jerome S. Karaffa

Few modern innovations have had as profound an effect upon American cities as the network of freeways known as the Interstates, built after World War II. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the urban masses rode on electric street railways, while country folk and the rich still relied on the horse. Not until Henry Ford's introduction of the mass-produced and inexpensive version of the Model T in 1914 did the automobile become affordable to the common man; succeeding years saw a rapid rise in private ownership of automobiles.<sup>1</sup> Although residential growth moved outward, the central city remained the focus of business, commercial, and governmental activity, and by the end of World War I, city streets planned for pedestrians and horsedrawn vehicles were becoming congested with increasing numbers of automobiles.

## **The largest public works project in the history of the world**

By the 1920s the Federal government saw the need to improve the national highway system, and the Great Depression of the 1930s provided the opportunity for the construction of a network of highways as part of Franklin Roosevelt's huge public works projects. These highways improved transportation between cities, but did not do much for drivers within cities or in rural areas. By the late 1930s plans for an integrated national highway system were being widely proposed, but they were postponed during World War II. In fact the anticipated projects remained in limbo until the mid-1950s, as Congress and various factions wrangled over funding and the competing needs of such groups as the trucking industry and the farm states.

Finally in 1956 President Eisenhower and Congress hammered out a comprehensive bill, the Federal Highway Act, which authorized construction of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, a network of over 41,000 miles between, around, and through major American cities. It was

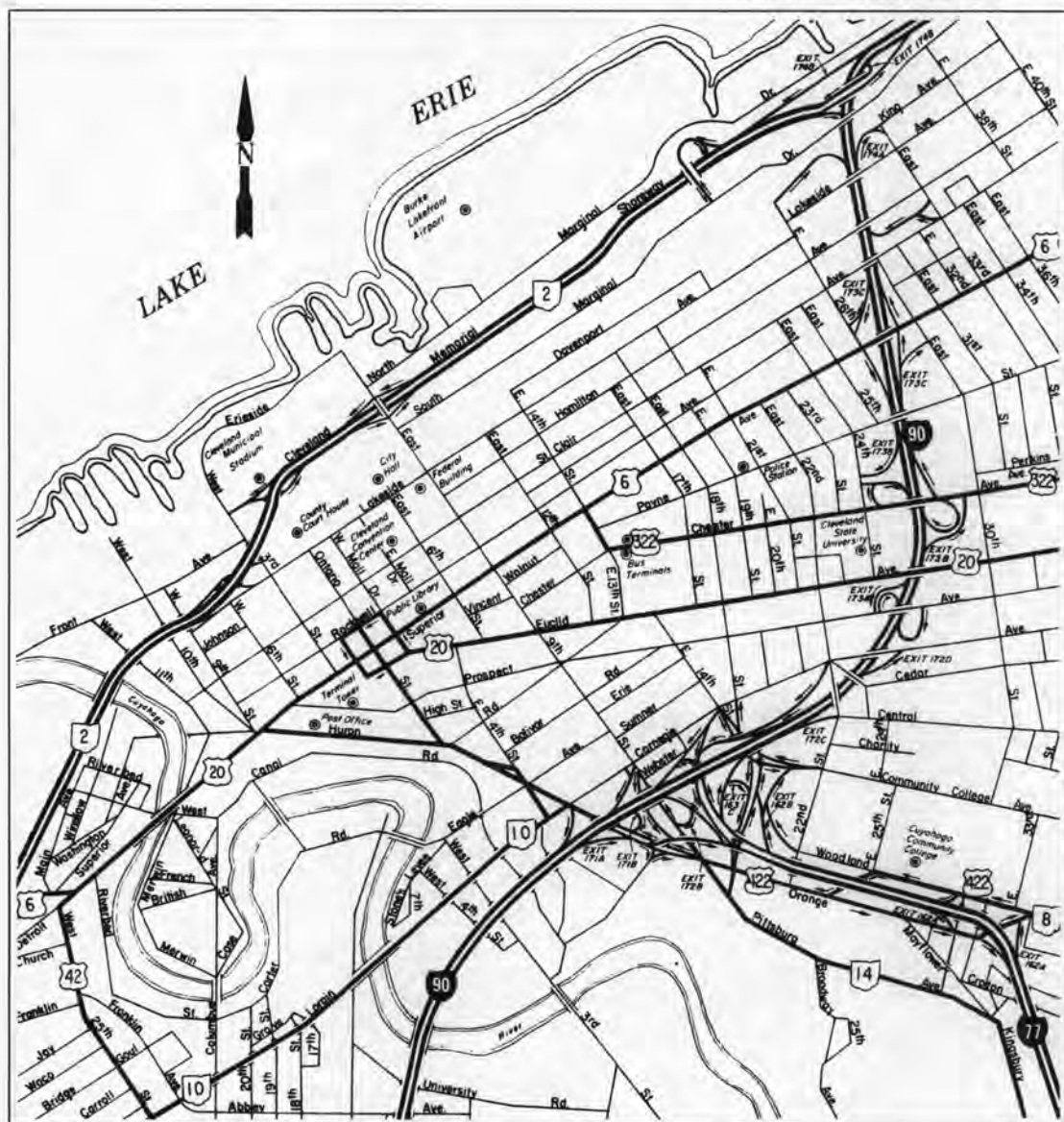


*Jerome Karaffa is a student at Cleveland State University, majoring in communication and urban studies. A native of Cleveland, he is familiar with the area highways and roads and has always found transportation systems of interest: "Aside from going on the usual family motor trips, I grew up a block away from where I-71 crossed Puritas Road. Besides the freeway, we had railroad tracks (and later RTA Rapid Transit tracks) right down the street, and the glide path for the main runway at Cleveland Hopkins Airport was just several hundred feet over our house." Among his interests he lists reading—especially history and architecture—and driving in "Big Red" (his '79 Volvo). This is his first published article.*

the largest public works project in the history of the world.<sup>2</sup> In order to spur construction of this new highway system, the Federal Highway Act of 1956 provided an extremely attractive 90%/10% division in federal-state funding for new roads, while existing routes would continue to be funded at the previous 50/50 level.<sup>3</sup> Initially the entire Interstate system was to be constructed within twelve years, but only now is it nearing completion, almost twenty years later than scheduled.<sup>4</sup>

Although the freeway has had a profound effect on the decentralization of urban areas and the rapid growth of suburbs, the central city still remains the center, and the freeway system has had striking effects upon it as well. Cleveland provides a typical example of the changes, problems, and benefits that the Interstates have brought to American cities. Of special interest is the Innerbelt Freeway, the shortest link in the system, but the most important one for such an urban area.

*The freeway system in downtown Cleveland. The Memorial Shoreway (State 2), I-90, and the Cuyahoga River form boundaries for a distinct central city district. Map courtesy of the Greater Cleveland Growth Association.*



## Decades of planning

In 1928, the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads (at the time part of the Department of Agriculture) and the Board of Commissioners of Cuyahoga County conducted a survey of highway traffic and developed an overall plan for the Cleveland area, proposing, among other things, highway routes with controlled access including the future Memorial Shoreway, the Airport/Berea Freeway, an extension of Independence Road (later US 21 and the Willow Freeway), and the Jennings Road Highway.<sup>5</sup> All except the Jennings Road route were built during the 1930s and 1940s.

In 1944 the Regional Association of Cleveland developed a plan for an inner- and outer-belt freeway system for the Greater Cleveland area.<sup>6</sup> In anticipation of the Federal highway legislation, the Cuyahoga County commissioners contracted with the New York engineering firm of Knappen-Tip-petts-Abbott-McCarthy to develop a comprehensive mass transportation plan integrating the existing highways into a new system which incorporated the earlier proposals along with new routes based on estimated traffic density and population growth patterns in 1975 (such studies are usually conducted on the basis of twenty-year projections). In the introduction to its *Comprehensive Arterial Highway Plan*, the engineers cited the need for a new urban freeway system, taking into consideration the fact that it would be laid upon the structure of an already developed city:

Although the present traffic on main arteries is almost exclusively "through traffic," it is confined to a street system basically conceived, designed and constructed to provide door-to-door service . . . . As the automotive traffic pattern developed, those streets which carried the largest volume were the first to be lined with large and expensive buildings, thus making improvements in widths or access features prohibitively expensive.<sup>7</sup>

The *Comprehensive Plan* proposed three different systems for the county, the recommended version being the basis for the present system in Greater Cleveland. Feuding between the city and state about funding delayed construction for a decade; ground was broken in 1954, but not until 1956, when Congress authorized its generous 90% Federal contribution, did construction get fully under way. Certain segments of the plan were eventually scrapped, including the Heights, Central, Bedford, and the Parma and Clark (Shaker) routes; the last of these met stiff civic opposition as the proposed route would have placed an interchange in the center of Horseshoe Lake in Shaker Heights and destroyed the natural and architectural integrity of the community.<sup>8</sup> The Innerbelt Bridge, first link of Cleveland's central highway route, was opened on August 19, 1959. At present, only two routes remain incomplete: the I-490 bridge over the Flats (now underway), and the still-planned Jennings Freeway/Broadview Road extension, first proposed nearly sixty years ago.<sup>9</sup>

## Freeways are special

The term "freeway" refers to motorists' freedom of movement without traffic signals, crossings, pedestrians, or slow-moving vehicles. As the official title of the Interstate system indicates, these highways were designed not only for peaceful transportation needs but also for wartime uses such as troop and supply movement and evacuation of civilians—functions that have since become, in part at least, obsolete.

The primary factor in constructing a freeway, *design speed* (optimum speed for the most efficient traffic flow) dictates standard formulas for curves, grades, and banking, and sight distances for passing and braking. Such standard criteria lead to uniform design specifications, so that various sections can be built by any number of construction firms.<sup>10</sup>

The construction of a freeway system is essentially an engineering exercise: although the system is built to uniform standards, variations in geography (such as hills and rivers) and economic factors (cost of land for the right of way) introduce a multitude of variables. According to Dennis Knaus, District Design Engineer for District 12 of the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), the ideal freeway should be "as flat and straight as possible"; but the engineering ideal is far from realistic. (It is interesting to note that the first modern freeways, the *Autobahns* of Germany, which opened in 1932, were flat and straight, but they were so monotonous that many drivers dozed off at the wheel; so subsequent parts of that system included long gentle curves to improve driver awareness.)<sup>11</sup>

The advantages of an Innerbelt to a city like Cleveland are obvious. Combined with the Memorial Shoreway to the north and the Cuyahoga River to the west, the Innerbelt acts as a physical boundary for the central business district, discouraging encroachment by industrial and residential areas and thus protecting land values. Even more important, freeways permit improved access to the center of the city and thus promote commercial and professional activity there. The Innerbelt



*Rush hour on Carnegie Avenue at Prospect, June 10, 1937, before freeways relieved traffic.*

made possible the revitalization of Playhouse Square and the establishment of Cleveland State University and Cuyahoga Community College, both downtown commuter schools, and all of this with greatly improved efficiency: compared with an ordinary city street, limited access freeways carry about four times the number of vehicles per lane per hour, and move them at two to three times the speed; furthermore, surface streets laid out in an age of pedestrians and horses took upwards of twenty percent of urban land, while freeways take from one-and-one-half to two percent of urban land area to carry the same amount of traffic.<sup>12</sup>

### Hidden costs: human and historical

At the time of construction there was little official notice or media coverage of the hardships and losses caused by the new Innerbelt. A *Plain Dealer* caption referring sentimentally to the "old houses, old streets, old memories" being destroyed was one of the very few such acknowledgments. In 1961 the *Cleveland Press* noted, "One pleasant side effect was the removal of many ancient buildings that stood in the right of way." Until the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 was signed into law, little protection could be given to architecture of historic importance, much less to the people whose lives the new freeway disrupted.

Seven streets were permanently closed, and to compensate, East 22nd Street was widened to six lanes.<sup>13</sup> The Tremont neighborhood was almost totally cut off from adjacent neighborhoods on the near West Side.<sup>14</sup> Over 1,250 parcels of property had to be acquired. It was a time when blanket slum clearance was coming into vogue and large-scale demolition for the sake of removing "urban blight" was largely applauded. The director of Cleveland's City Planning Commission in 1946, John T. Howard, in 1946 said that 67% of the central area (and 67% of the city's *entire area*) were unfit to live in "when considered according to modern health and safety standards"<sup>15</sup>; and the 1955 *Comprehensive Arterial Highway Plan* noted cheerfully that "when an area has reached a stage of deterioration which calls for its complete redevelopment, unusual opportunities exist for the determination of the location of highway plans."<sup>16</sup>

Two Roman Catholic parishes were affected: St. Columbkille's on Superior at East 26th Street, founded in 1871, the first church designated as a center for the speech- and hearing-impaired members of the diocese; and St. Anthony and St. Bridget parish, consisting of St. Anthony's at East 13th and Central Avenue, the oldest Italian parish in Ohio (established 1886), and St. Bridget's, founded in 1851, on East 22nd Street across from St. Vincent Charity Hospital.<sup>17</sup> On the West Side, Martin Luther Evangelical Lutheran Church on West 14th Street, founded in 1910 by Slovak immigrants, was torn down to make way for the Innerbelt Bridge; and Cleveland's Lutheran High School, at East 26th and Prospect, was also forced to vacate its buildings only six years after acquiring them.<sup>19</sup>

Three remnants of Cleveland's grand past along the "Millionaire's Row" of Euclid Avenue in the late nineteenth century were taken by the Innerbelt's path. The mansions of Leonard C. Hanna (built by famed architect Stanford C. White and the only known example of his work in Cleveland), Frank Hickox (later owned by industrialist Harvey H. Brown), and steel magnate William Chisholm, Sr., were among the last remaining residences from a time when Euclid Avenue was *the* address in Cleveland.<sup>20</sup> At present only four mansions, and part of a fifth, remain.

Businesses affected by the freeway included the Sheriff Street Market and Central Market; Cleveland's wholesale flower vendors, located for more than half a century in the East 9th Street-Woodland Avenue area (most of these merchants moved north a few blocks to scattered sites near East 9th Street); several commission merchants, also in the East 9th-Woodland area; a seed company, not slated for demolition but having most of the access to its property effectively cut off by the freeway; and, along the entire stretch of Woodland Avenue running East from Carnegie Avenue, a number of fresh produce markets, including several cooperative farmers' markets.<sup>21</sup>

The residential areas affected were among the oldest in the city. The old Central neighborhood, south of Carnegie Avenue and running eastward from the Flats (its western part once known as the "Haymarket" district), was described as a "once-teeming slum neighborhood" and, previous to that, a "fine neighborhood where the city's shopkeepers and clerics lived." Because of its location between the Flats and the lake-front passenger ship and railroad terminals on the west and north, and the major industrial areas nearby to the south, the old Central district became Cleveland's portal of entry for newcomers. It also served as an ethnic neighborhood for Italians beginning in the 1880s, followed by Jews around 1900, and, after World War I, it became the first residential area for blacks migrating from the rural South to satisfy the need for unskilled labor once filled by European immigrants.<sup>22</sup> To the north, the other residential area affected by the path of the Innerbelt was composed of several ethnic groups, including Slovenians, Puerto Ricans, and Appalachians.

### **The poor and the elderly pay with hardships**

When Innerbelt construction moved into a neighborhood, vandalism increased, unscrupulous landlords charged rents without telling tenants of orders to vacate, and parts of properties (such as three-fourths of a front yard) were seized for the right-of-way.<sup>24</sup> Families that had lived side by side or across from each other for years were uprooted and separated as eviction notices gave residents only a couple of months to relocate<sup>25</sup>; some residents, with buildings tumbling down on all sides,<sup>26</sup> still had to find new housing; most were given no assistance other than the opportunity to obtain no-money-down government loans for new housing<sup>27</sup>; many residents, either elderly or dependent on low incomes, "had no place to go."<sup>28</sup> These problems had not been much considered in free-

way planning up to that point, and the usual reply was that "on the whole, the loss that would be incurred by residents . . . would be overbalanced by the great gain."<sup>29</sup>

Up to this time, American highway engineers had dealt mainly with construction in rural areas, where population density was comparatively low: displacement and relocation of residents was a relatively rare occurrence; therefore the human factor in highway building was largely ignored. Because most of the expense in highway building had previously been due to construction-related costs (labor, material, etc.), the success of a highway project was measured almost completely from the standpoint of economic efficiency: the "cost-benefit ratio" was used to justify highway construction in terms of social value by showing relatively high benefit to highway users versus the low monetary cost of the project. But when this method was applied to urban freeway construction, it virtually guaranteed that the right-of-way would traverse areas for which the required expense for land acquisition was the lowest, i.e., older, low-income residential neighborhoods.<sup>30</sup> The general attitude of the Ohio Department of Transportation, which administers the Federal highway programs, seems to have been "we put it where we want it."<sup>31</sup>

A study of the effects of construction of the Northwest freeway (I-90) in Cleveland's Near West Side in the mid-1960s has documented the social costs of progress. One large family resided in the area because "This was about the only neighborhood we could find that would take a big (seven children) family like ours. We hate to leave."<sup>32</sup> The ability of such families to travel or even afford an automobile was usually quite limited and they seldom used the freeways themselves.<sup>33</sup>

In most cases relocated families were forced to move to areas with higher housing expenses. Elderly residents who had lived in an area for a long period of time suffered the most and the longest from displacement and relocation: they attempted to relocate as near as possible to their old residences, and if not able to do so, they tended to make fewer new friends and suffered more from isolation in their new neighborhoods than did younger relocated persons. Thus relocation was "an especially trying experience for the elderly."<sup>34</sup>

The federal government did eventually take some steps to deal with such problems, but the first important piece of legislation which dealt at all with the social as well as the economic aspects of relocation came in 1970,<sup>35</sup> too late for the Innerbelt residents, or for most of the people affected by the construction of Greater Cleveland's freeway system.

## Reaping the benefits

The Innerbelt Freeway is now in place, laid on top of a pre-existing cityscape, and will remain there most likely far beyond the foreseeable future. Its design and construction were completed within a relatively short time, and since its opening, most changes have been superficial. The recent revitalization of the central city can be traced to a considerable degree to the role of the Innerbelt as an access route and distributor for downtown traffic. An estimated 250,000 people



*I-90 slices past churches and residences in the Tremont district, one of several old neighborhoods disrupted by the Innerbelt.*



enter downtown Cleveland each day<sup>36</sup>; one-half of that number work downtown, and 54% of those use private transportation to travel to and from their place of work.<sup>37</sup> The 1955 *Comprehensive Arterial Highway Plan* estimated that the 1975 population in Cuyahoga County would total over 1.7 million people, and based its recommendations for the freeway system on these estimates<sup>38</sup>: the authors projected that the population would continue to increase in a more or less linear fashion, but actually it began to decline and currently stands at approximately 1.49 million,<sup>39</sup> with further declines predicted. As a consequence, the system as it now exists *does* handle the traffic needs of Greater Cleveland with relative efficiency, and the Innerbelt, as the central link in the system, serves its purpose well.

### Interstate aesthetics

However one may deplore the destruction and hardships caused by this monumental public works project, one must admit that the freeways often provide not only practical benefits but aesthetic pleasure as well. As Sylvia Crowe has explained,

The true beauty of the motorway [comparable to a U.S. Interstate] lies in its engineering—the perfectly co-ordinated curve and gradient, the plastic smoothness of its flow, the taut, sprung strength of its bridges, clean-cut and precise . . . an impersonal work of engineering precision springing cleanly from a . . . landform.<sup>40</sup>

Freeway driving has been compared to the visual experience of walking through a Chinese garden, in which the landscape is composed so as to be viewed in motion as an unfolding scroll, as opposed to the classic European tradition in which the landscape is made up of static compositions to be seen from different viewpoints.<sup>41</sup>

Although there are tactile, aural, and even olfactory experiences in freeway driving, the primary elements are the visual perceptions of *speed, motion, and space*. When we travel at high speed, our field of visual perception becomes greatly narrowed; we tend to focus on distant objects, as those in the foreground rush past. Because of the need for constant control of our vehicle, we focus forward, and as speed increases, our vision seeks objects far ahead: landmarks that stand out in the distance become our goals whether or not they actually are our intended destination, and the city skyline appears as a unified cluster of structures, which only begin to separate as we come within closer range.

The body of our vehicle forms a protective shell, and our view is framed by the windshield, which reinforces even more our sense of direction. With an audio system and climate control we add to our isolation a sense of comfort and security: this heightens our feeling of control, which in turn shapes our perceptions of the world outside. A dramatic contrast occurs when we exit from the freeway, park on a downtown street, and get out of our vehicle: the relationship in scale undergoes a striking change from that experienced on the freeway, where

distance and personal isolation cause us to perceive the structures of downtown Cleveland on a more human scale, rather than on the enormously disparate scale experienced when we stand next to a skyscraper.

When driving on the freeway, our relationship to objects around us also reinforces our forward focus by channeling our view: the strong horizontal lines of the highway speed our vision to the point where the lines converge, at which point we have either focused on our symbolic goal or we are prevented from access to further forward view by bridges, tunnels, hills, or long curves. These *zones of transition* hold our attention until we pass through them, and then we are forced to reorient our view and refocus on goals and landmarks: we scan the roadway from left to right, taking into our awareness all of the objects which occupy the space defined by our field of vision.

Here are some examples of freeway experiences around Cleveland:

- Because of the lengths required to span the Cuyahoga River Valley, the various bridges (Innerbelt—4,223 feet, Main Avenue [Memorial Shoreway]—8,000-plus feet with approaches, and I-480—4,155.5 feet) appear as graceful and slender structures when viewed from a distance.

- In the elevated roadways of I-71 over a railroad yard, the RTA Rapid Transit right-of-way, and Brookpark Road, the use of bridges supported by beams and relatively slim concrete piles instead of an earthen embankment creates a visual impression of lightness, so that the arched structures almost seem to fly over the several rights-of-way.

- Multilevel interchanges, such as the I-77/I-480 junction, provide a merging of three-dimensional shapes which, depending upon one's chosen route, can be viewed from a multitude of perspectives.

- The roadways of the northbound lanes of I-71 at their junction with the Jennings Road ramps (the "Metro General Curve") and the West 14th Street exit are stacked to use less lateral space, and the resulting visual effect is one of traveling through a semi-enclosed corridor with the forward views framed by the parallel structures.

Traveling the freeway system into and through Cleveland provides a wonderful opportunity to view the form of the city as a whole. Although

*Upper photo: steel bridges give a light, graceful appearance to elevated portions of the 8-lane Innerbelt, such as this one over rail tracks and the Cuyahoga River. Lower photo: driving through the I-77/I-480 interchange is a stimulating three-dimensional experience.*



most of these perspectives of Cleveland are the results of "accidents of design,"<sup>41</sup> they nevertheless *are* there to observe and experience, and they help us understand the growth and development of this active and complex metropolis.

Driving into the city across the Innerbelt Bridge, say, early on a summer morning, one may feel as Wordsworth did viewing London at dawn from Westminster Bridge:

Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie  
Open unto the fields, and to the sky; . . .  
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by  
A sight so touching in its majesty!



## Notes

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of the Interior, *Historic American Engineering Record, Cleveland, An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), 39.

<sup>2</sup>Mark H. Rose, *Interstate Express Highway Politics, 1941-1956* (Lawrence, Kansas: Regents Press of Kansas, 1979), 15-94.

<sup>3</sup>Muriel Campaglia, "In the Path of the Interstates," *City* (June-July 1970), 30.

<sup>4</sup>Rose, 92.

<sup>5</sup>U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Public Roads, and Board of County Commissioners, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, *Highway Survey* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1928), 119-121.

<sup>6</sup>Eric Johannesen, *Cleveland Architecture 1876-1976* (Cleveland, Ohio: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1979), 200.

<sup>7</sup>Board of County Commissioners, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, prepared for the Board by Knappen-Tippetts-Abbott-McCarthy, *Comprehensive Arterial Highway Plan* (New York: 1955), 1, 3, 4.

<sup>8</sup>Campaglia, 29.

<sup>9</sup>Interview with Dennis Knaus, District Design Engineer for the Ohio Department of Transportation, District 12, Garfield Heights, Ohio, 19 February 1987; also *Highway Survey*, 121 (see n. 5).

<sup>10</sup>Interview with Dennis Knaus, 30 January 1987.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid; also interview 22 January 1987.

<sup>12</sup>Frank Donovan, *Wheels for a Nation* (Thomas Y. Crowell, 1965), 271.

<sup>13</sup>*Cleveland News*, 14 May 1949.

<sup>14</sup>Becky Freligh, "We Shall Return," *Plain Dealer*, 22 February 1987.

<sup>15</sup>"Overall crowding due to population increase with practically no new residence building, with all the resulting health and safety deficiencies, makes my apparently radical statement not at all out of line." (*Plain Dealer*, 9 December 1946).

<sup>16</sup>*Comprehensive Arterial Highway Plan*, 11.

<sup>17</sup>Diocese of Cleveland, prepared by the Ohio Historical Record Survey Project, Service Division, Works Projects Administration, *Parishes of the Catholic Church, Diocese of Cleveland* (Cleveland: Cadillac Press, 1942), 108-109, 87-91.

<sup>18</sup>*Plain Dealer*, 13 July 1956.      <sup>19</sup>*Plain Dealer*, 1 February 1956.

<sup>20</sup>Eric Johannesen, *Cleveland Architecture 1876-1976* (Cleveland: Western Reserve Historical Society, 1979), 216; George J. Barmann, "Memories in the Road," *Plain Dealer*, 6 April 1956.

<sup>21</sup>*Plain Dealer*, 1 February 1958; *Press*, 12 April 1956; *Plain Dealer*, 17 September 1958; *Plain Dealer*, 20 December 1958, 19 October 1960.

<sup>22</sup>Donald Levy, *A Report on the Location of Ethnic Groups in Greater Cleveland* (Cleveland: The Institute of Urban Studies, Cleveland State University, 1972), 5-26; *Press*, 11 May 1960.

<sup>23</sup>Levy, 4, 34, 40.      <sup>24</sup>*Press*, 23 April 1958.      <sup>25</sup>*News*, 5 July 1956.

<sup>26</sup>Residents likened it to the "London Blitz" (*Plain Dealer*, 2 November, 1957).

<sup>27</sup>*Press*, 22 June 1961.

<sup>28</sup>*Plain Dealer*, 2 November 1957.

<sup>29</sup>*Plain Dealer*, 9 December 1946.

<sup>30</sup>David C. Colony, *Socio-Economic and Environmental Effects of Right-of-Way Acquisition: A Report on Relocation from Highway Projects in Cleveland, Ohio* (State of Ohio, Department of Highways; Federal Highway Administration, 1971), 6-7.

<sup>31</sup>It should be noted that cost is not the only consideration, however; terrain, zoning, placement of landmarks are taken into account.

<sup>32</sup>*News*, 5 July 1956.      <sup>33</sup>Colony, 8.      <sup>34</sup>Colony, 115-116.

<sup>35</sup>"Each relocation assistance advisory program . . . shall include such measures, facilities, or services as may be necessary or appropriate to . . . provide other advisory services to displaced persons in order to minimize hardships to such persons in adjusting to relocation." U.S. Congress, *Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970* (Approved 2 January 1971), Sec. 205(c)6.

<sup>36</sup>Jim Toman and Dan Cook, *Cleveland's Changing Skyline*, vol. 3 of the Cleveland Landmarks Series, (Cleveland: Cleveland Landmarks Press, 1984), 3.

<sup>37</sup>Source: Greater Cleveland Growth Association Research Department, *Downtown Worker Profile*.

<sup>38</sup>*Comprehensive Arterial Highway Plan*, 3.

<sup>39</sup>Source: Northern Ohio Data Information Service (NODIS), March 1987.

<sup>40</sup>Sylvia Crowe, *The Landscape of Roads* (London: The Architectural Press, 1960), 88-93.

<sup>41</sup>Crowe, 33-34. Many of the concepts mentioned here are derived from two sources: a study conducted by the Joint Center for Urban Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard (Donald Appleyard, *The View From the Road* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1963); and a report submitted to Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation Alan Boyd in 1968 by The Urban Advisors to the Federal Highway Administration, Michael Rapuano, chairman (*The Freeway in the City* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968), which compiled information from various sources (including the 1963 MIT/Harvard study) and submitted a set of recommendations concerning the aesthetic values of urban freeway design and construction. The authors of the MIT/Harvard study explained their interest in the aesthetics of the freeway as rising "out of concern with the visual formlessness of our cities and an intuition that the new expressway might be one of our best means of re-establishing coherence and order on the new metropolitan scale."

<sup>42</sup>Interview with Dennis Knaus, 22 January 1987.

# A Paradigm for Changing Times

## *Implementing Strategic Management*

Mariann Jelinek  
and Beverly C. Winterscheid

American business is currently in a period of revolutionary change. This might sound like an exaggeration until one considers the following facts:

- The number of bank failures in 1984 equals that of 1937 and 1938, the closing years of the Great Depression.
- A study of the current status of a random sample of firms from the 1975 Fortune 500 listing revealed that 27% of the firms did not even make the 1987 listing, and 21% of the firms that have remained on the list have restructured, either by adding or deleting key business segments.
- Of the 27% that were dropped from the 1987 Fortune 500 list, almost half of the firms were acquired, many by foreign companies; a tenth have initiated bankruptcy proceedings.

Other things being equal, stability is desirable in an organization; but when competitive conditions change, so must firms. The standard means for guiding action within an organization—organizational structures, authority patterns, and information flows—change slowly in normal times, and thus provide a necessary base for stability. In turbulent times, when they must change more rapidly, they can no longer sustain the links to coordinate action. To fill this need, we nominate *strategy*, which can be defined as a set of interpretive rules and assumptions to make sense of the world (Kuhn, 1970; Fleck, 1979). In this sense, a strategy unifies the organization and its members in a consensus, enabling them to reinterpret the flood of new information around them, and to act in a consistent, reasonable manner.

When conditions dictate, strategy, too, must change, and the formerly taken-for-granted assumptions about how the world works must be re-examined. Indeed, strategy may have to shift from the old even before the new direction is clear. When this happens, key skills and elements that have formed the organization's identity, and key assumptions and rules for making sense of the world must be called into question. To



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change strategy is to change paradigms—basic models of organization—and to re-examine much that has been simply accepted without question before.

## Normal Strategy vs. Extraordinary Strategy

The organization's established strategy operates as "normal science" or "business as usual" in stable periods. Such thinking is dominated by a single, shared outlook, which conditions what people notice and how they interpret it.

Normal strategy is anchored in one or more past achievements (or truths) that are widely acknowledged as providing the foundation for further efforts. The more successful the prior approach, the more thoroughly reinforced it is. In contrast, anomalies that are not well explained or perhaps not even recognized by the established strategy are the very basis for a competing vision that might be called "extraordinary science" or "extraordinary strategy"—the new and more inclusive paradigm for making sense of the world in a new way. In the sixteenth century the Copernican idea that the earth revolved around the sun was an "extraordinary strategy" of explanation that replaced the long-held Ptolemaic view of the earth as the center of the universe. Defenders of the Ptolemaic system gave up their beliefs only with great reluctance, even in the face of overwhelming empirical evidence.

A similar reluctant shift has taken place in the U.S. auto industry over the past fifteen years. Until the 1960s, developments in the auto industry were relatively slow, consisting largely of superficial changes in styling, options, and the like. Manufacturers were confident that they knew the consumers' preferences, and that competitive information was relatively easy to obtain. They felt that the market was North American, and the major competitors were all based in Detroit. The single paradigm in operation for the automotive industry was that U.S. consumers (the only ones who mattered) really wanted large, elaborate gas-guzzlers. The oil crisis, rising prices, and foreign competitor inroads were certainly annoying, but they were typically viewed as a momentary setback. Americans would always buy American, it was felt, and besides, weren't all Japanese products shoddily made?

Some have accused Detroit automakers of simple arrogance. Others have excused them on the grounds that no one could have anticipated that the very source of their prior success—the special-purpose automation they adopted long ago—would prove a strategic straightjacket, preventing them from understanding their changing circumstances (Abernathy, 1978). The notion of strategy as paradigm, applied to Detroit, helps us understand how an established mindset can resist disconfirming information. During normal operations, anomalies that do not conform to the expectations of the existing paradigm are dismissed or ignored. Business managers who encounter a competitor defining the business in a different way deny the new approach, dismiss it, or discredit it.



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U.S. automakers could not believe that Japanese firms actually were able to manufacture defect-free cars at 20% to 30% less than the U.S. firms could. A variety of "non-manufacturing" explanations (such as tariffs, lower hourly wage rates, or government subsidies) are still offered as explanations, to this day. Only when some U.S. firms began to produce at doubled productivity rates, with much increased quality and lower work-in-process inventories, did some U.S. manufacturers begin to credit the data from abroad as legitimate. More often, industries under competitive attack merely rejected "anomalous" data and reinforced the old view of U.S. industry as "the best in a fair fight" (Hayes and Abernathy, 1980).

Mature industries such as steel and automobiles are especially at risk when someone else changes the rules, as did the Japanese or the Koreans, by developing a new paradigm with changed assumptions and approaches to competition. The U.S. firms' previous successes contributed to their failure when the rules changed: success crippled them by encouraging them to discount, deny, or ignore information that didn't fit their prior paradigm for making sense of the world. Effective response was slow to evolve—Ford's successful recent emphasis on quality and worker participation has taken more than five years to implement. It took even longer to be considered in the first place. Recognition time and implementation time are telling indicators, which may well spell the difference between competitive success and failure. Above all, changes like these demand careful management of values, assumptions and the structure of beliefs—precisely the most difficult areas in which to accomplish change (Delbecq and Mills, 1985). At Ford, this shift has entailed wholesale change in management approaches, new sorts of information and radically different interpretation of it, and new understandings of what is required for competitive success.

Ford's motto, "Quality is Job 1," has been reinforced not only in the media, but on the shop floors, and, most important, in employee reward programs. Thousands of employee suggestions were incorporated into the design and manufacture of the Taurus, adding substantially to its quality and profitability. Ford backed up this culture change by awarding an average \$3,700 per worker in profit-sharing in 1988. Putting workers in T.V. ads also put individuals personally "on the line" for quality, and on record as publicly asserting their conviction. All this is a long way from the traditionally authoritarian, adversarial management-worker relations of the past.

## **A Theory of Stability**

How we think about truth and theory matter in business. One ancient and still popular view holds that truth is eternal, objective, and accessible through the discovery of unchangeable laws. The implication is that there is only one right way, one solution waiting to be discovered for each problem, and all persons in an organization should be oriented towards discovering and supporting this immutable truth: dissenters need not apply.

Many organizations seem to operate on such a basis most of the time, functioning as if there were only one best way, namely the current strategy. In relatively stable times, when there is little change, it is easy to construe data about the competitive environment as objective. Because not much is changing, past practice works. The current strategy offers a generally confirmed map of how the strategy operates, often complete with "if . . . then" predictions: "If we lower our price by 10%, then the customer will . . ." When something fails, it is seen as someone's failure to follow the plan, rather than a failure of the plan itself.

Premises that are not challenged or that change infrequently can easily take on the appearance of truths. Information is sought in terms of the existing system, and it seems to confirm known "truths"—even when these are only presumptions. After the early successes of main-frame computers, for example, few in the industry could have foreseen how mini-computers and even souped-up personal computers would become so fast, technically capable, and widely available as they have. As a result, innovative companies like DEC and Data General have made major inroads into business and scientific computing against IBM, and Compaq has even begun to challenge it in desktop machines.

An alternative to this absolutist approach to truth is the relativist one that our theory determines what we see. An organization's strategy determines what data members can perceive. Consensus thinking makes stable environments seem objective. In times of rapid change, however, the limitations of so fixed a view become apparent. In such times, a paradigm theory, in which an organization's strategy is treated as a stance in need of significant revision, can help devise reformulations of "the truth" in light of new insights and changed conditions.

## **Implementing Strategic Change**

A paradigm approach recognizes the existence of multiple contributors with differing expertise, each with a somewhat different vision of "the truth." The benefit of such participation is to invite anomaly into the process, rather than dismissing it. For example, some organizations formalize the devil's advocate approach. Designated individuals or groups challenge proposed plans with alternative explanations of the same facts, alternative actions to be taken. Their charter is to work anomaly into the fabric of the emerging strategy.

Other companies develop a crisis management orientation, envisioning a "worst case scenario" and appropriate responses, so that the organization has a repertoire of plans ready to put into action if the existing strategy should fail. After the Tylenol, Bhopal, and other major disasters, such thinking becomes obviously useful. But even more mundane shifts of key assumptions can and should signal "extraordinary strategy" reconsiderations. Without the preparation provided by these alternative views, the need for strategic change may not be recognized, or response may be too slow.





Expanded participation in strategy formulation is essential to deal with the increasingly complex global environment faced by most U.S. businesses (over 70% of them, according to the U.S. Commerce Department). The leader who wishes to accomplish strategic change must command a clear sense of purpose. Change in some sense will occur regardless of the leader's wishes; the question is whether the change will be guided in some useful way, or simply experienced helplessly. In the wave of acquisitions in the 1960s, certain leaders redefined their distinctive competence from product or technology to investments. By the 1970s, many such companies found themselves far from their initial concerns and spread too thin, leaving themselves vulnerable to a focused approach by competitors in particular product markets.

Chief executive officers have recently found themselves again trying to identify the specific capabilities or limitations of their organization and articulating its values—in other words, a necessary self-assessment (Selznick, 1957). This self-assessment should begin on a personal basis—examining one's values and distinctive competencies before moving on to those of the organization. In this way, organizational strategy becomes almost a personal statement. CEO's such as Jack Welch of GE, John Akers of IBM, and Lee Iacocca of Chrysler become symbols of and for the organization, embodying what it means to be a part of that particular company. But so, too, do Ford assembly-line workers in television ads, or Hewlett-Packard engineers "visiting" as store salespeople. An understanding of core organizational values embodied by the leader, and how these values relate to each individual's personal identity, offers the key to successful change in today's world.

### **Examples of Change: High Technology Industries**

High technology industries—computers, electronics, and aerospace—are very competitive and face constant change. They are also often thought of as "loose," "organic" structures, because they must change so often. On the contrary, these firms are highly structured, though also flexible. Their manufacturing processes are often extremely complex: design of a new integrated circuit may take the equivalent of hundreds of person-years of effort. The many specialists required for these firms' scientific and business functions are essential to success, even those low in rank and new to the organization. They do participate, both in specific projects and in the generation of new strategies. But the firms are not loosely managed or "organic." Instead, managers in high-tech firms repeatedly emphasize the importance of tight controls, definitive goals, explicit responsibilities and well-defined (yet flexible) structures. These managers rely on explicit organizational arrangements, bolstered by information systems, performance appraisal systems, and the like.

Strategies geared to rapid change often call for revisions in organizational structure, such as the introduction of a new department or team to deal with new circumstances. Over 25 years ago Burns and Stalker studied British firms trying to enter the electronics business; among the failed firms there

was a common element: a determined effort to keep the new group as separate as possible from the rest of the organization (Burns and Stalker, 1961). Here changing structure in the creation of the new department served primarily as a method for containing the disturbance or anomaly, walling it off so that the rest of the organization could go on as usual.

IBM has accompanied its moves into new technologies and markets with no less than twenty significant restructurings between 1963 and 1982. Another sweeping reorganization has just occurred, establishing five separate business organizations, and pushing authority down to match the change in structure. IBM has long valued coordination—but it must respond more nimbly to its highly competent adversaries. Decentralization is a shift in IBM values which previously sought a greater degree of centralization. This is a fundamental change, speaking to a core characteristic of IBM's paradigm for making sense of the world. Formerly, central management coordinated key decisions. Now, this responsibility is more dispersed.

Hewlett-Packard offers another example of the way in which structure can be used to facilitate change. Its units are deliberately kept small, and when a group reaches a certain maximum size, a part must spin off. This insures a variety of somewhat distinct viewpoints, as well as duplicate capabilities among divisions. Each division is expected to stay at "the edge of the state of the art" in its specialty area—but how it does that remains the responsibility of division management. Hewlett-Packard, long renowned for its decentralization, has recently chosen to recentralize certain functions—most notably marketing—and to provide new structures to enable different divisions responsible for products to share information. This shift from the cherished autonomy of the past (a fundamental organizational value) is crucial to insure that the firm's computer products—the responsibility of many different divisions—work effectively together.

As the IBM and Hewlett-Packard examples suggest, the sort of change to be found in high-tech firms is very different from the creation of new isolated departments, which are then cordoned off. Instead, we see frequent, almost continuous reorganization, in which even cherished values and basic strategic premises change.

While frequent restructuring may cope with rapidly changing external forces, in undermining stability it also removes a source of identification for organization members. Values, beliefs, and distinctive competencies take on new importance as a source of stability and identification for organization members. A practical theory of strategy must integrate the differing values held by organization members and provide an overriding concept of values that supersedes, but does not supplant, each subgroup's values.

## **Born-Again Management**

The strategic paradigm, as a shared understanding and a framework for interpreting the world, offers a useful means for dealing with change. Shared understanding is essential to successful implementation of a strategic shift—particularly



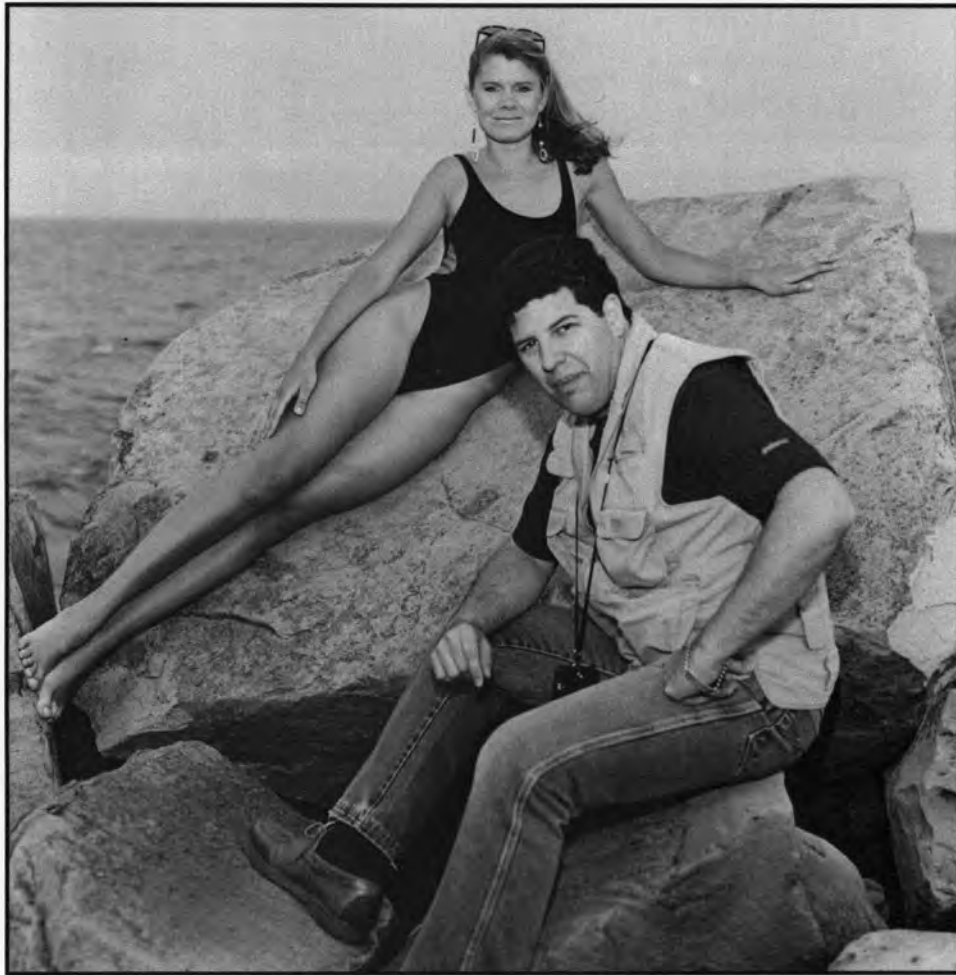
when the complexity of global competition precludes a top-down, authoritarian approach (Litterer and Jelinek, 1987). In the old days of rigid organizations, the formal structure, reporting relationships, and communications patterns were sufficient to define a world view, provide stability, and establish a common interpretive framework for organization members. Now, that old stability is gone, replaced instead by a new requirement of fundamental flexibility. This does not mean that the need for structural stability and interpretative guides is gone—the need remains. But “stability” is now dynamic: organization members must understand and act on the run, without the comfort of familiar, unchanging environments. They must be prepared to re-examine basic ideas, and to change old ways of looking at the world.

The leader's role in strategy must also shift, from laying down the law (in the distant past) or translating past practice into present (not long ago), to calling forth new visions of the future. Strategic planning used to produce a document that constituted working orders. At first, those orders were fixed; later on, among more sophisticated practitioners, the plans acquired some flexibility. Today, in many companies facing substantial change and challenge, what matters is not so much the plan itself, but the planning *process*. The process calls many to participate and bring to bear their divergent views of the data. This widespread participation captures many anomalies and creates a robust understanding of strategy among organization members.

To provide a framework for interpretation amidst this change, the strategic paradigm—a vision of what the organization is and does, and how it is and does it—takes on a new importance. To implement strategy, there must be a shared vision, so consensus can guide members to deal with the details as needed. When strategy changes, the former underlying consensus is also changed. Such a change is so fundamental that, in order to implement it, organization members must, one might say, be “born again” and enabled to see the business world in a fundamentally new way. ■

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