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The Otterbein Miscellany - June 1982

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THE OTTERBEIN MISCELLANY

- LOUIS XIV'S ABSOLUTISM:
THE PARADOX WHICH BASVILLE REPRESENTS
Sylvia Vance
- MALE NORMS, WOMEN'S LIVES:
ADAMS RIB AND THE ACADEMY
Alison H. Prindle
- HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPATION OF
WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES
LABOR MOVEMENT
Mary Margaret Fonow
- THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
Susan Klopp

*The
Otterbein Miscellany*

Dedication

This issue of **The Otterbein Miscellany** is comprised mainly of two sets of essays. The first set, dealing with the subject of feminism, was presented at the Otterbein College Integrative Studies Faculty Interterm Workshop in December of 1980. The second set, dealing with the subject of nature vs. nurture, was presented at a similar workshop in December of 1981. Together with the other contributions which make up this issue (poetry and an essay on a sabbatical research project), these essays afford an index to the academic concerns of members of the Otterbein faculty.

The life of the teacher is one that requires numerous skills. The Swiss writer, Henri-Frederick Amiel, might well have had these skills in mind when he wrote in his **Journal** in 1877:

We must try to grasp the spirit of things, to see correctly, to speak to the point, to give practicable advice, to act on the spot, to arrive at the proper moment, to stop in time. Tact, measure, occasion—all these deserve our cultivation and respect.

In the seventeen-year history of the **Miscellany**, many persons have exemplified teaching skills within the pages of this publication. One of these persons was the late Cleora C. Fuller, professor emeritus of English, to whose memory this issue of the **Miscellany** is dedicated. Words that she wrote in a poem titled "For Thomas Hardy" are apt:

The lone man, steadfast against Immensity;
The selfless sacrifice, Love's only might
When Doomsters—blind—decreed futility.
Impercipient he was to love in Heaven's plan:
Heaven he saw in mankind's love for man.

The Editor

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MALE NORMS, WOMEN'S LIVES: ADAM'S RIB AND THE ACADEMY

Alison H. Prindle

Whether we are males or females, the most exciting questions for our academic disciplines—and ourselves—today come from the feminist challenge to the historically male-centered curriculum of higher education.* Florence Howe has said, and I repeat with her, we participate in a major historical revolution. The Copernican revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries shifted Western European culture out of assumptions about geocentricity. Darwin in the nineteenth challenged our assumptions about the centrality of the human species. The twentieth century has made Western Europe reconsider its ethnocentricity. Now, under the pressure of feminism, economics and birth control, the adequacy of androcentricity as the dominant cultural and historical, as well as sociopolitical, perspective is at issue. Like all revolutions, this one will not be over and done with as soon as either its supporters or its opponents wish. Its implications are both stimulating and uncomfortable; part of my objective here is to stimulate, part to make all of us uncomfortable.

*What follows began as introductory remarks for the Integrative Studies Faculty Seminar, December 1980. It has been revised slightly, to include references to some of the subsequent presentations in the seminar, and to make an essentially oral presentation more orderly on the printed page. Participants in the seminar were encouraged to read the following articles, some of which are referred to directly in my discussion here: Carol Gilligan, *Woman's Place in Man's Life Cycle*, **Harvard Educational Review**, Vol. 49, No. 4 (Nov. 1979), pp. 441-446; Florence Howe, *Three Missions of Higher Education for Women: Vocation, Freedom, Knowledge*, **Liberal Education**, Vol. 66, No. 3 (Fall, 1980), pp. 285-297; Elizabeth Minnich, *Friends and Critics; The Feminist Academy*, **Toward a Feminist Transformation of the Academy: Proceedings of the Fifth Annual GLCA Women's Studies Conference**, Nov. 2-4, 1979; Adrienne Rich, *Toward a Woman-Centered University* (orig. 1973-4), in **On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-78** (N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 1979) pp. 125-55.

My first premise is that all of us in academe need to re-examine the received tradition and its content, the kinds of questions we ask about our disciplines, and the bases and perspectives of those disciplines. My second is that all of these, in my discipline and classroom as well as yours, are profoundly biased by a male-dominant perspective. My third is that this bias limits, to greater or lesser degrees depending on our disciplines, our claims to be pursuing truth and our efforts to be good teachers.

I'd like to use a poem, a prose poem by Muriel Rukeyser, to provide the image for the feminist re-examination of the curriculum. The poem is entitled *Myth*, a title appropriate for my purposes as well as Rukeyser's. The particular myth of the poem is the story of Oedipus, King of Thebes, who killed his father and married his mother, ignorant of their identity and his own, and who, then, according to Sophocles, found out what he had done. Self-blinded, banished from his homeland, Oedipus wandered as an outcast and beggar, assisted only by his daughters, until his death at Colonus won for him some refuge and acceptance by the gods. Rukeyser takes up the story with Oedipus in the midst of his blind wandering. She refers us back to the Sphinx, woman-beast, whose power and riddle had held Thebes in bondage until that riddle was answered by the young Oedipus. Sophocles' famous play interprets the myth as an experience of human limitation, of lives patterned for destruction despite our best intentions, and of the human will to pursue and know the truth about oneself, no matter the cost. Rukeyser's point is a slightly different one:

"Myth"

Long afterward, Oedipus, old and blinded, walked the roads. He smelled a familiar smell. It was the Sphinx. Oedipus said, "I want to ask one question. Why didn't I recognize my mother?" "You gave the wrong answer," said the Sphinx. "But that was what made everything possible," said Oedipus. "No," she said. "When I asked, What walks on four legs in the morning, two at noon, and three in the evening, you answered, Man. You didn't say anything about woman." "When you say Man," said Oedipus, "you include women too. Everyone knows that." She said, "That's what you think."

In addition to allowing a voice to the Sphinx, to the other side of the riddle story, and expressing in that voice an enigmatic, hostile glee at catching the great rational mind up short, the poem says directly that Oedipus' "right" (linguistically correct) answer was wrong. It implies too that the tragedy might have been averted;

much feminist energy today comes from a similar, sustaining idealism. Oedipus didn't recognize his mother. What in fact have any of us learned about our cultural foremothers in our graduate and undergraduate training in the past? Oedipus' unexamined androcentricity cut him off from a source of his own identity, from an intimate part of himself. "When you say Man, you include women too. Everybody knows that." Oedipus assumed that knowing man he would automatically know woman as well. Because he thought he didn't have to think about gender, he missed knowing who he was until harm beyond measure was done. Rukeyser's poem suggests we have to re-examine the answers we've given in the past to our riddles at a basic level: in the words we choose to use.² Many groups have contributed to the formal language of the past, but every indication is that "everybody" really means, in standard written speech, then and now, the dominant class whose control of institutions (like education and government) has made possible the perpetuation of their "everybody" as the standard category of knowledge. Would those we assume are included in our answers themselves feel included? What are the consequences of this conscious or inadvertent exclusion for our answers?

There is another point Oedipus tries to make in Rukeyser's telling: "But that was what made everything possible." Our answers, his answer, have made the past. If the past is that of a patriarchal culture, or a male-dominated culture, or a white male European culture, it is nevertheless a rich and complex past, as all of our disciplines attest to. The past has created the educational structure we know; it has made our disciplines and, by and large, it has made us. How are we, as persons or as educators, to dispense with it utterly? Should we not merely add a new chapter rather than attempting to revise the model of the past which we have inherited?

I think we need not throw all away. But I think our approach needs to be *radical*, in the etymological sense of getting at the roots of the answers we unriddlers have given and the "possibilities" they have produced.

One reason is our students, both male and female, who have the right to recognize their foremothers. The traditional content and questions may seem to all of us to be open-ended and speculative, because we are in charge of them. They are more likely to be perceived by our students as prescriptive patterns: the way culture is and has been is the privileged knowledge they are here to memorize, learn, inherit from us. The title of the collection of books on women that I've put together for the Otterbein library is *Adam's Rib: Women's Lives*. The reaction to it from colleagues has been interesting. Though it could be taken as merely descriptive of the definition traditionally accorded to women in our culture, it almost invariably meets with irritation, because it suggests (as every

culture does suggest about its myths) that the words prescribe truth rather than describe situations. Have we perhaps done the same thing in our disciplines: willingly or inadvertently prescribed, or allowed others to see as prescriptive, an image of the world as white and male? Merely to add another chapter doesn't meet this problem honestly. Did "everyone" agree with what we "meant" when we called the Integrative Studies courses Studies in the Nature of Man?³

There is another reason for a radical approach to our disciplines. If we follow Rukeyser's point, we ought to be asking of our classes and our disciplines: why have we accepted/given that answer? (Obviously "everybody knows that" is never a response we think of ourselves as tolerating; it may be hardest to see ourselves making that response in matters of gender and race.) We ought to be asking: what's been left out in this answer; who can't be recognized by this approach? And these must be assessed as serious questions, for our own sakes. Let me offer in evidence here a piece of literary criticism by Lionel Trilling, a critic I have learned from and respect deeply. It is taken from some introductory lectures on literature for the beginner—the most vulnerable of audiences. The problematic of our inherited disciplines, as feminism would see it, is raised in another way by Trilling's words. He has been arguing that when we read a piece of literature we do bring to the poem our knowledge of the writer as a person: that this is inevitable and necessary. Feminist critics, who argue that gender is a bias in all of our work, and that it is part of the writer as well as of the writer's world, would so far agree. As Trilling says, Milton's youthful poem, *Lycidas*, on fears about whether the poet's own work will be recognized, has greater resonance because Milton later became a great poet; our knowledge of Keats' and Wordsworth's ideas in the whole body of their work helps us as we read individual poems. And, says Trilling, Emily Dickinson is another case in point. Her poem, *Go Tell It—What a Message*, is about the messenger charged with reporting the Greek defeat by the Persians at Thermopylae in 480 B.C., a classical paradigm of heroic will to resist. Here is the poem:

“Go tell it”—What a Message—
To whom—is specified—
Not murmur—not endearment—
But simply—we—obeyed—
Obeyed—a Lure—a Longing?
Oh Nature—none of this—
To Law—said sweet Thermopylae
I give my dying kiss.⁴

It is not an easy poem; Dickinson's simplicity of diction is always deceptive. Here is Trilling's opening comment:

And in the case of Emily Dickinson's striking little poem, there is at least one personal fact about the author which it is essential we bring to our reading—that the poet is a woman. If we were not aware of this, we might well be made uncomfortable by the poem, for its tone and diction seem appropriate to a woman but not to a man, and we would surely be ill at ease if we thought a man had been the writer.⁵

The condescension in the passage becomes clearer as Trilling continues, but even here a scholar-critic might wonder why this poem is called a "striking little poem," when all of Dickinson's lyrics are short by the standards of her male, classically trained predecessors, but not by the standard of twentieth century contemporary verse. As a woman, I wonder why it did not matter to note that Milton was a man, not a woman: this fact affects his verse, its tone and ideology as much as Dickinson's gender affects hers, if not more. The unexamined assumptions lie behind Trilling's pronouns: we might be uncomfortable, we might be ill at ease. I am not made ill at ease by Dickinson, and I do not have to make it clear that she is "other" than I, in order to be able to approach her. Not all the persons who read or will read her poems are male, yet Trilling's androcentricity allows him to speak as if they were. And I would submit that even if his original audience of college students was all male at Columbia, his remarks remain problematic; he has not simply made practical adjustment to his audience. Trilling's passage continues and demonstrates yet more clearly what feminists protest in the traditional uses of gender categorization.

The poem is, as it were, based upon the femininity of the poet. The word femininity is never used in a neutral sense but always with the intention of praise; it connotes charm, delicacy, tenderness. These qualities are no doubt readily seen, or heard, in the poem, but they will be the more quickly perceived by the reader who has some previous acquaintance with Emily Dickinson's work and knows the extent to which the poet represents herself in the postures of femininity, as a young woman, or girl, of high sensitivity, delicate, fastidious, quick to be apprehensive yet courageous and even daring, standing in a daughterly relation to God, whom, on one occasion, with the licensed audacity of rebelliousness characteristic of her manner, she addresses as "Papa above." The rules of the world are laid down by masculine beings and the point of many of her poems

lies, as in the present one, in the opposition of the feminine creature to the masculine authority, which usually delights her even though she addresses it in irony or protest.⁶

Wouldn't it have been better *not* to know that Dickinson was a woman, the female critic might ask at this point? Categorizing her as a woman has transformed her with startling speed into a charming little girl. Trilling is usually an admirable critic, and I say that with full sincerity: I have learned much about great literature from him. However, by his assumptions about "femininity" (male assumptions about the definition of the other sex), by his assumptions about Dickinson's relationship to the male authority ("usually delights her"), by his statement that "the rules of the world are laid down by masculine beings" (notice that it is unclear from his sentence whether this is his position or merely a description of Dickinson's nineteenth century, New England, personal milieu), Trilling traps himself (and his reader) and becomes a lesser critic. Dickinson is not a charming little girl playing a poetic game; she is not the good little daughter pretending to a rebellion that poses no real threat. She is a poet, adult, of deadly seriousness and extraordinary metaphysical range. By his language, Trilling authorizes his audience to take her work as appealing, charming, "even daring" in the manner of children pretending to importance, but not as a serious and difficult achievement.⁷

Having 'answered' the Sphinx's riddle, Oedipus married Jocasta who was part of his acquisition of power as King of Thebes. Trilling makes Dickinson into a little girl, not a poet, and inadvertently associates himself with a remote, but charming "papa God." He would be, he says, uncomfortable if he had to deal with her poem as anything but delicate, tender, and playful, though his critical mind tries to tell him that her major subject is her opposition to a male dominant world and her need to survive with her own vision intact, unviolated. This is not a tender, delicate, or playful subject. In fact Trilling's discomfort probably stems from Dickinson's own poetic strategies for challenging the omnipresent male authority.⁸ But his cultural option—of assuming a male 'superiority' and distance—proves corrupting, and he does not permit himself to confront the work of Dickinson as honestly as he might, for example, confront Milton or Keats. Nor does he say, as he might, that his imaginative access to Dickinson's world is blocked by his own 'male' responses, a situation which I, as a woman critic, find and acknowledge with John Milton's work.

It is not enough, then, in response to the statement, "when you say Man, you include woman too," to say, no, men and women differ. One must also say, there is no hierarchy of values which, *a*

priori and in instances unexamined, makes one gender or the other superior. And it is not enough to say, with Trilling, that we can properly bring to what we read our knowledge of the person writing: we need bring also our self-knowledge, and awareness of our own gender perspective. Unacknowledged, that perspective can pre-empt full humanity for us. I am afraid that the "us" here is most likely to be a pronoun for the dominant group, which carefully refuses to see, does not even recognize what can be seen, through the eyes of an other gender, race or class. I have no desire to support an inversion of the patronizing distance from the opposite sex that I feel in this passage from Trilling. That would be to subscribe to the distorting and malign resource of "superiority" that clearly betrayed Oedipus, and Jocasta as well, trapped both Dickinson, who indeed had to play at femininity to survive, and Trilling, who could not allow himself to see what her poems say.

The first phase of the feminism of our generation has used such strategies of inversion to deny males any role but that of guilt and willful blindness in pursuit of power; it takes courage to fight against an entrenched pattern of thought and status, and the claim of superiority is one road to combative energies. The next wave of feminism may require enemies less than the previous one has. But I am not quite ready to believe that we ever do or should "transcend" gender itself. It seems to me the claims for overcoming gender perspective in the past have been much exaggerated, particularly since subordinate groups have historically been asked to 'transcend' and see the world through the eyes of the dominant group, and the process was not reciprocal. I'd like to see a world where, to be human, we don't have to become not male or not female. To be female is to be human. To be male is to be human. To see our own perceptions distinctly we need self-knowledge that starts with gender and with what gender has meant in the daily texture of our lives, the historical relationships of which we are a part, and the future we'd like to claim. Trilling on Dickinson would, I claim, see more if he'd started by saying, as a man, I would be uncomfortable speaking in Dickinson's voice; is that because I feel this "feminine" diction would be shameful in me (and thus I would make her own achievement less) or because the poetry is designing a discomfort for me and drawing my attention to the 'feminine' struggle to live within the male-shaped world, or, perhaps, both?

Thus far, I'm proposing three forms of conscious self-questioning of our academic work: what's left out/who's left out, of the answer, the data, the picture, the story, the experiment? What does "everybody" know about it: particularly, what are the gender assumptions behind the material and words we use? And finally, who do we think we are, who are we addressing, who are we talking about: and what gender perspective is laced through these

formal personae? I cannot rest with the sacred number three, and must suggest one more set of questions.

The Sphinx's riddle was about the pattern of human life: what goes on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three in the evening? The riddle is a kind of model. All of our disciplines work with models and paradigms—for structuring an argument, for developing an idea, for studying an issue, for acquiring information, for achieving success, for claiming truth. And we have models for professional accomplishment. One of the articles sent out to the original seminar participants, Carol Gilligan's *Woman's Place in Man's Life Cycle*, takes its direction initially from what I think is a seminal feminist work, Nancy Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Chodorow's work deals with a riddle: the origins of the gendered patterns of human behavior. Her line of argument, as summarized by Gilligan, goes something like this.

Like our traditional cultural patterns (Adam's rib, Eve and the apple), the traditional psychological patterns describing gender have seen females as deviant from a male centered norm (for Freud, lacking a penis). Freud specifically asserted an incomplete development of the superego in women. Thus, without the Oedipal stimulus for repression that males had, females retained infantile emotional ties to the mother and could not reach the highest plane of ethics and conceptions of justice. Chodorow challenges Freud's hierarchical language and perspective, saying instead that feminine personality, because of gender identity with the nurturant mother, defines itself in relationships, in closer connectedness to other persons, and possesses more flexible ego boundaries (her term). For the masculine personality, gender identity is bonded tightly to issues of differentiation and unlikeness; thus, the male possesses sharper ego boundaries. In this analysis, then, the early, unconscious definition of self differs for males (separation) and females (attachment). It follows from Chodorow's model that the male gender identity will experience more threat from pressure for intimacy and relationships and those experiences will be secondary adult experiences; they will not come early in his adult development and he will not be prepared for them. Female gender identity will experience threat in separation and individuation (Freud's lack of sharp ego boundaries reunderstood), and these will be secondary adult experiences; she will not come early to them or be prepared for them.

The traditional studies (Piaget, Kohlberg, Erikson, etc.) do not establish parallel lines as models for human development, but merge them into the male line, so that in the "human" model, the failure to separate becomes a failure to develop maturity. This is of course the point of work like that of Chodorow. It is not necessary

to endorse a Freudian approach to personality or human development to accept the point of her remodeling. The unbalanced study of human nature in the past has given women very little reason to trust the resources of psychiatry and psychology; yet, ironically and also understandably, given the nature of the models used, it is women who use those resources in larger numbers than men, perceiving themselves to be incomplete and unbalanced by the models used in our society.¹⁰

Gilligan's article next addresses her own studies, challenging the received models of moral development. As she analyzes the studies in this area, there is, usually asserted as a standard in our society, a morality based upon individuation: competing rights, where individuals may do as they please, as long as they do not usurp other's rights. There is, also, a morality based upon attachments, where the model is one of weighing and living with conflicting responsibilities, not rights, and where the individuals are not isolated from each other, save when they challenge each other, but where individuals live always within a web of other selves so that *contextual*, not absolute, codes of judgment are both necessary and appropriate.¹¹ The two strategies for handling relationships are clearly not slight variations, but approaches to moral decisions that proceed from a different sense of self, a different way of experiencing the world, and different agendas for living. Gilligan's research has suggested that at least for a particular class of Western, educated people, these are gender-linked differences.

Chodorow's and Gilligan's concern to reexamine models, and the language and assumptions on which they are based, from the point of view of women, seems to me to raise large issues in several disciplines, not just in its obvious connections with psychology, and I will return to this later. In particular, I wonder about the area of education itself. Is the learning model we use, as teachers in our classrooms, based upon unexamined assumptions about the developmental processes of our male and our female students? Do the university and college generally base their institutional structures (the 'isolated' individual in the lecture or discussion classroom), their assessment of achievement (competition to be "the best", grades, public questioning and debating), and their ideas of the value of education (detached, irresponsible, private, personal growth) upon a male model of individuation, separateness, and the competition of rights rather than the weighing of conflicting responsibilities? Even here, at the heart of our own value system as professionals in the classroom, might we not examine whether we have devalued or circumvented the norms of women's lives? In college, plagiarism is wrong: there are to be clear boundaries between one person's mind and another person's thoughts; in college, we are to learn to be independent and think

for ourselves—dependency is immaturity and weakness; in college, the written tradition prevails with all of its assumptions about writing for a generalized audience from a detached specialized perspective. The female student who comes to college for her Mrs. degree is dismissed with tired comedy; yet her agenda is clearly the pursuit of affiliation. Is education, then, bound to, does it only work for, the isolated individual who does not seek affiliation first? Is the achievement of affiliative ties inimical to, beneath the notice of, to be isolated from what education is all about?

I certainly don't know the answers to the questions I'd like to raise by writing this. I don't even know the right questions yet, in many cases, and the ones I've just asked make me very uncomfortable. But one question has the ring of authenticity to me: what have we left out in our models? My own experience, and that of many other women and men, including those who contributed to the seminar's discussions which followed this talk, convinces me that our sins of omission are abundant and various in the area of gender, and that the sin of omission is not less costly than that of commission. Let me turn to specifics about what we can do, and are doing to re-evaluate the models we've inherited. Following the original version of this talk, three members of the faculty, Dr. Paul Laughlin, Dr. Mary Margaret Fonow, and Dr. John Coulter, spoke about their methods of addressing the absences and invisibilities of women in the curriculum. I'd like to summarize them here.

Paul Laughlin spoke about teaching I.S. 26, until recently titled *The Nature of Man in the Christian Tradition*, and the various problems faced by a discipline which speaks of God the Father and the Brotherhood of Man. His approach begins with a lecture retitling the course and analyzing some of the linguistic and sociopolitical implications of the use of the male specific as the generic noun for human being. He draws attention in the content of the course to the elements of the Judaeo-Christian tradition which are male-specific (the Orthodox Jewish prayer, "Thank you, God, that I am not a woman") or show strong male point of view (St. Paul's comments on the marriage relationship) with particular concern to place such elements in their historical and cultural context as distinct from the time-transcending spiritual context of other elements of the tradition. In addition, the discipline of theology has historically been male-dominated through control of church hierarchies and of the educational systems of the past, and the course offers direct discussion of this phenomenon. A text has been chosen for the course that is inclusive of women and their participation in the Christian tradition: **Women, Men, and the Bible**, by V. A. Mollinkott.

This example offers one model for incorporating into our existing classes a concern to recognize women's contributions and ad-

dress the causes for their comparative absence in the disciplines we teach. Another approach is to consider the level of language itself. In her sociology classes Mary Margaret Fonow works with language as a socializing agent. Talking with students about the power of language to shape our perceptions and the specifically sexist quality of much of our public and private language is one way to focus on Oedipus' claim that when you say man, you include women. The class can tabulate the pronouns used for generic references in the textbooks and lectures in the course, and be given guidelines for how to use non-sexist language in their written work. (Dr. Spock now alternates male and female pronouns in his references to "the child", for example: this is one model students and instructors might use.) Must students be always male? Interestingly, when misbehaviour is described, the student is always male: an example of the way discrimination is not itself gender limited. Must professors, or researchers, or writers be always male? Do the pictures illustrating the course materials, or the concrete examples chosen to develop a concept or work out a scientific problem, show gender bias? Fonow's students, studying texts, have been able to demonstrate for themselves that in practice there is a gender specification to phrases using the word *man*. Illustrations for chapters called Social Man, Economic Man, and Urban Man tended to exclude women; pictures chosen for chapters called Urban Life, or Society, include both sexes.¹² Some discussion with students of the history of words in English may sensitize them to the gender assumptions we have held: master and lord have a completely different field of connotation than do mistress and lady. Women are defined by language usage in relationship to men, men defined by language usage in relationship to the world. Words referring to women historically develop into references to sexual behaviors: housewife has become hussy, for example. Women are often placed in categories with people defined by the society as not whole, not complete: children, prisoners, the mentally or physically impaired.¹³ Students, made aware in a variety of classes, that language is not a neutral or transparent medium, but a set of forms which categorizes and discriminates for us in ways we as individuals may not intend or choose, can then be freer to select alternative forms: human instead of man, he and she instead of he, woman instead of girl, etc. Fonow's example of signs on public bathroom doors in the Licking County Memorial Hospital,¹⁴ which brought down the house at the seminar, should stand as the object lesson in what we want our students to reject in our language: the implication that female is a negativity, a failure to be male, a place forbidden to men.

In the panel on 'What We're Doing Now,' Jack Coulter added one further example of an approach which can be taken in the cur-

riculum to oppose an imbalance in materials taught. In the Fall of 1979 the English department formally adopted as the *goal* for its courses and readings the following: "Women writers and women's lives, considered together, will be given representation in English Department courses equal to that accorded male writers and male lives. Furthermore, all reasonable efforts will be made to choose texts and anthologies that offer the most even balance of male and female writers, given the restrictions of historical circumstances; the use of supplemental material (xeroxed handouts, reserve reading) is encouraged." The department has worked thus far on revising all of its Integrative Studies offerings to bring them in line with the goal. The objective in those courses has always been to select literature that represents the human experience; the assumption we could once make that human is identical with male no longer holds conviction. Coulter spoke both of the department's positive will to acknowledge this and make changes, and of the difficulties we face when dealing with literary history itself, difficulties arising when we construct courses for our majors. We resist, legitimately, turning art into propaganda for any sociopolitical stand, though perhaps it is harder to see the presence of propaganda (class values, for example) in literature we have gotten used to, and harder to see the art in literature whose point of view is new to us. In any case, such revisions and critical judgments are not easy to make: the past is "what has made everything possible"—shouldn't we make sure our students know it without modern frameworks imposed upon it? Clearly such a departmental goal as that adopted in the English Department does stir fundamental oppositions: so far that has been a productive argument.

Thus three colleagues have offered concrete approaches to the issue I am raising: how do we address male bias in the curriculum, whether it emerges within the Integrative Studies framework or in our own separate departmental offerings. Let me conclude by mentioning some of the specific questions and approaches Women's Studies has recently brought to the traditional curriculum. Since I keep using words like "traditional," history might be the best place to begin. History as a discipline must work with the traces of the past—thoughts, acts, events, changes whose existence has survived the moment of origination and left some "permanent" record. The access to history-making is—as historians have always in some fashion recognized—likely to be controlled and biased. Who keeps the records? Who is trained to write (in a literate society) or recite (in an oral society)? What are the standards for permanent recognition at that time and place? Who made the standards? For women in the Western European tradition, the distinction between public worlds (not female places) and private worlds (female places but not, by definition, places where history—public events—happens)

has worked to exclude them from our textbooks. Lawrence Stone's fascinating history of the family in sixteenth and seventeenth century England is one of several recent historical enterprises that restore the private world to permanence and explores its patterns and significances; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's work on female friendships in nineteenth century America is another example of exemplary scholarship directed at the female worlds of the past; Elise Boulding's **The Underside of History** offers a thorough, well-documented survey of the history of women's lives and experiences for the intelligent layperson.¹⁵ Elizabeth Janeway in **The Powers of the Weak** and Richard Sennett in **Authority** explore in theoretical terms the dynamics of the power/powerlessness relationship in our culture, an issue at the heart of women's experiences; both books I'd strongly recommend.¹⁶ All kinds of people have not had public power as groups, whether class, race, or gender has kept them out, but their work from their subordinate status is the hinge on which the culture hangs. Sennett and Janeway restore this dynamic to our view and analyze its patterns and its costs.

Sometimes women have left traces in the past but we've not looked at them. In literary history, the work of Ellen Moers, **Literary Women**, and Elaine Showalter, **A Literature of Their Own** deciphers and defines a female tradition created by a group who had, until the mid and late nineteenth century, little or no access to the classical, written, learned tradition men knew through their schooling and used as model, allusion, and substance in their own, male, literary tradition.¹⁷ Jane Austen's famous disclaimer that she was "the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress" was given in response to an admirer of her work who wanted her to write a novel about a serious, admirable clergyman: "Such a man's conversation must at times be on subjects of science and philosophy, of which I know nothing; or at least be occasionally abundant in quotations and allusions which a woman who, like me, knows only her mother tongue, and has read very little in that, would be totally without the power of giving. A classical education, or at any rate a very extensive acquaintance with English literature, ancient and modern, appears to me quite indispensable for the person who would do any justice to your clergyman."¹⁸ Her remarks are only one example from many where women writers speak of their consciousness of belonging to a separate tradition and world of experience.

In addition, the work of innovative historians like Natalie Zemon Davis, who writes about women in sixteenth and seventeenth century France, demonstrates that historians have assumed motivations for past female behavior, without seriously studying the historical circumstances of women's lives. Thus they misread the choices, for example, made by women when they confronted the

new Protestant sects in the sixteenth century.¹⁹ Furthermore the past may have been revised for public viewing before we rediscovered it. John Benton, writing on the famous letters of the medieval lovers, Abelard and Heloise, both confined to the celibate life after their love affair was forcibly halted by her family, argues that a prescriptive record of man and women has been created by the letters: those surviving show signs of forgery designed to rewrite the love affair and render Heloise's character and role more 'appropriately' feminine, by the standards of the period.²⁰

While the periodization of the past has always sustained attack within the discipline, the questions raised by women's studies ask historians to consider whether the changes which mark the periods we now use affected males and females in the same way.²¹ If we only considered changes of major importance to female lives, would the boundaries of our periods fall at the same points in time as they do now? Certainly for female lives, birth control devices are far more significant than conventional armaments, to take only one of the more obvious examples. Recent studies suggest that the Renaissance was not an advance for women's education and independence, though traditional histories stress the 'new learning' of the lay person as one of the period's major characteristics. Why is the history of women's suffrage a minor element in discussions of nineteenth and twentieth century Europe and America? Must it be assumed that Bismarck is more important than Elizabeth Cady Stanton?

In her essay, *Feminist History in Perspective*, Alice Rossi has raised questions about our approach to biography: is the focus on the individual life (or on large organized movements) a biased model?²² What prevents us from approaching life histories as histories of marriages, or sibling sets, or networks of relationships, from developing biography that assumes the context and balances of a group of people are the reality of life, rather than one that assumes a single separate individual in contact with isolated 'influences' from other individuals? The separation of public life from private life may be a distortion of history and of biography for male as well as female. Have we the models both of history and biography that we do because those models match a male experience of independence, separation, and individuation, to use Chodorow's suggestions, rather than a female experience of context-dependence, relatedness, and intimacy?

Mathematics, and the sciences which speak that language most exclusively, offers another kind of academic issue. Colin Bull, Dean at Ohio State, has talked recently about the differences in the ACT scores of entering OSU freshmen, a population of over 41,000 students tested between Winter 1974 and Fall 1978. His analysis shows on the ACT scores in English for this population a unimodal

distribution and no significant differences between males and females. The ACT scores in Math show a different distribution: "For the whole population there is a bi-modal distribution with distinct peaks at 26 and 16 (36 is the top score possible). For men and women, taken separately, we again have the bimodal distributions, with peaks near 26 and 16; with the male students, however, the upper peak is approximately twice the size of the lower, while for females the two peaks are about the same size." Bull goes on to suggest that for English, which is a required high school subject, we observe essentially similar scores for males and females (and one peak) while in math, not required of all students at the same levels and amounts that English is, a bimodal distribution reflects the different preparation levels of the students. And the difference between male and female ACT Math patterns raises the question whether "the poorer performance of the woman students in ACT Mathematics (is) also due to the effects of counseling?"²³ The mean high school class rank of entering women was 73.4 percentile; entering men, 65.4. Sheila Tobias' work on math anxiety points to a culturally stimulated high level of anxiety about mathematical work, particularly in women.²⁴ The evidence is strong enough to suggest that, at the least, female students avoiding math have been supported by their advisors if not stimulated to the avoidance pattern by those advisors. The academic setting needs to attack such gender biased patterns more effectively and appropriately on a daily basis than we have so far. Of course, both males and females are discriminated against by an academic environment that follows older cultural assumptions that males should choose scientific and practical majors, females the 'impractical' and refined arts. But perhaps we need as advisors to place more rigorous demands upon those who "aren't good" at math, and legitimize for them behavior that, in going against a culturally approved role, may help them fulfill their own potential. Tobias' work suggests that the problem of math anxiety is severe enough in students, particularly female students, to warrant an institutionally supported math clinic, staffed with individuals trained in confronting math anxiety and avoidance patterns.

My own discipline, literature, and the other arts are not without error and blemish from the point of view of feminist thought, of course. The arts generally survive from generation to generation because they are preserved: thus the biases, of class and gender, in the those whose task it is to establish the canon are an appropriate subject for investigation. Access to the materials of creation—orchestras, marble, actors, education, or merely leisure and a pen, as in Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*—also varies in class and gender groupings. Certain arts seem more inimical to female artists: the female playwright and conductor, for

example, are less in evidence than the female poet and novelist. Is this, again, a result of the cultural division between public/male and private/female worlds? In literary criticism, much importance has been placed upon the complexity of the artist's language, the density of the verbal texture used. Women poets and fiction writers generally display this verbal density to a lesser degree than male poets and fiction writers. Does this make their rank inevitably lower? Or are there different and equally productive traditions of language used? In the praise of verbal density a product of the classically educated male models of the past or a non-sexist criterion for excellence? The arts, when they are seen as the product of the intense vision of the individual creator, may be offering a paradigm of action women feel uncomfortable with. Does the group enterprise, or the group involvement which produced the embroidery, china, and historical references of Judy Chicago's Dinner Party²⁵ represent a mode of creativity more characteristic of women but discriminated against by our individualistic view of art history? Many arts are group efforts—dance, theater, musical performances—as well as individual creations, and women as performers in these groups have shown themselves to be major artists. It may be that when we teach art and literature as the product of the isolated creative imagination we are stressing the side of art which threatens rather than strengthens the woman artist, and lacks full truth as a description of the creative process which is the result of a texture of experiences and persons (witness the medieval cathedrals) as well as the vision of one shaping will. High art, like high literature, often seems the art chosen by the wealthy, leisured class, not the art arising from the context of a wider cultural base.

What can women's studies productively say to the academy about issues of gender? Let me sum up with experience rather than bibliography. I ask my students from time to time to revision the world: all the world leaders, except two or three, are female; all the persons in the U.S. Senate, save one, are female; all state governors are female; all the Supreme Court justices are female, save one; seven-eighths of the representatives in the U.S. House are female; the President's Cabinet is female, as is the President; the President, Board of Trustees, and all but one of the Vice-Presidents of Otterbein College are female; all of the Nobel Prizes this year go to females. Would living in such a world alter your sense of yourself? Both males and females respond, without hesitating, yes. I am not by this exercise charging the culture with discrimination and malice toward women, only asking how the features of our world may affect us. The relationship between the culture and the person will differ significantly when the person is male and when the person is female.²⁶

When asked what the human pattern was, we have in this culture been willing to say that it was male and white. To be male and white doesn't exclude a person from humanness; that isn't my argument. But must we still in our transfer of the culture to each new group of persons in our courses convey only the white maleness of the culture? To acknowledge the bias of the past, seriously and with substance, is, I think, the very least degree of liberation we are obligated to offer to the future.

I am optimistic that we will see change. Students have begun to note, on their own, for example, that women are present in Dante's *Inferno* only in the earliest circles of hell, and primarily in the circle of the lustful rather than the other areas of incontinence, let alone the lowest areas of violence and malice. Women show no signs of an inability to sin in daily life. Dante's segregation suggests that women didn't have access to the arenas for sinning—politics, commerce, warfare, education, the church hierarchy—from which he drew his material. Their presence in the circle of the lustful suggests more about Dante's encounters with women than it does about women's encounters with sin. Male bias, even when it apparently keeps women out of hell, is not what women want, to answer Freud's famous question. As Florence Howe's essay indicated,²⁷ the first goal for reformers of education for women was access to the male curriculum, a focus which remains important now primarily for the professional schools. Now the goal is revising the curriculum, through new perspectives on the old answers and assumptions, and through new knowledge and information about the invisible, silent reality of women's lives.

NOTES

¹Muriel Rukeyser, *Breaking Open* (N.Y.: Random House, 1973) p. 20.

²For the use of the generic man, the sexist complexities of pronoun use in English, and a specific, intelligible linguistic survey of the questions about sexist bias in language, see Mary Ritchie Key, *Male/Female Language* (Metuchen, N.J.: The Scarecrow Press, 1975) esp. Ch. 8, *Subjects, Not Objects*, and Ch. 9, "Speaking in Reference to Male and Female."

³Integrative Studies in the Nature of Man was changed, Winter 1981, to Integrative Studies in Human Nature, as a result of resolutions passed by the December Interterm Seminar.

⁴#1554, in *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Boston & Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1955).

⁵Lionel Trilling, *Prefaces to the Experiences of Literature* (N.Y.: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979), pp. 266-67.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷For other, less limiting discussions of Emily Dickinson, particularly of the relationship of feminine to masculine worlds, see, for example, Albert Gelpi, *Emily Dickinson and the Deerslayer: The Dilemma of the Woman Poet in America*, in *Shakespeare's Sisters*, ed. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (Bloomington, Ind.: I.U. Press, 1979); or Cynthia Griffin Wolff's forthcoming biography of Dickinson: *Pugilist and Poet: Emily Dickinson in Her Work*, Oxford University Press.

After the seminar, I discovered corroboration of my view of Lionel Trilling's male-centered perspective: see Carolyn Heilbrun, who was one of his students and colleagues at Columbia, in *Reinventing Womanhood* (N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 1979), p. 125 ff., particularly p. 135: "One must also watch out for Trilling's 'we'. Women are not part of his 'we'."

⁸The male adoption of superiority may also be designed, that is, to combat what is perceived psychically or politically as a threat.

⁹(Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1978). See also the valuable discussion of Chodorow's work, *On The Reproduction of Mothering: A Methodological Debate*, J. Lorber, R. Laub Coser, A. S. Rossi, N. Chodorow, in *SIGNS*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Spring 1981), pp. 482-514.

¹⁰See N. Weisstein, *Psychology Constructs the Female*, in *Woman in a Sexist Society* (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1971); *The Development of Sex Differences*, ed. E. E. Maccoby (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1966); Judith M. Bardwick, *Psychology of Women* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1971); *Readings on the Psychology of Women*, ed. J. M. Bardwick (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1972); Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness* (N.Y.: Avon, 1973); Dorothy Tenner, Review of *Gender and Disordered Behavior: Sex Differences in Psychopathology*, ed. E. Gomberg and V. Franks (N.Y.: Brunner/Mazel, Inc., 1979) in *SIGNS* Vol. 6, No. 1 (Autumn 1980), pp. 168-69.

¹¹For a sociologist's description of a similar pattern, see Alice Rossi's use of *Agency and Affiliation* in *Life Span Theories and Women's Lives*, *SIGNS* Vol. 6, No. 1 (Autumn 1980), pp. 4-32, pp. 8-9. An interesting analysis of Niebuhr and Tillich, *Sex, Sin and Grace: Women's Experiences in the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich*, by Judith Plaskow (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1979) suggests that definition of pride as the prime sin reflects a male perspective; self-abnegation may be the prime female sin (p. 2).

¹²A student recently (Fall 1980) wrote in an essay for one of my classes: "Now, during the present years of man's society, he occupies himself with business, finances, and other time consuming events." Generic man becomes gendered male very easily.

¹³Mary Ritchie Key, *Male/Female Language*, pp. 82-84. Nathan Pusey's "We shall be left with the blind, the lame, and the women," and Spiro Agnew's references to the difficulties of taming "oceans, fools, and women" are quotable, recent examples.

¹⁴Its source is: Joan Straumanis, Denison University, *Generic Man and Mortal Woman*, Paper presented first at GLCA Women's Studies Conference, Nov. 11, 1978.

¹⁵Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1977). Carroll Smith Rosenberg, *The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in 19th Cen-*

tury America, *SIGNS*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (Autumn, 1975) pp. 1-30. Elise Boulding, *The Underside of History: A View of Women Through Time* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1976).

¹⁶Elizabeth Janeway, *The Powers of the Weak* (N.Y.: Knopf, 1980). Richard Sennett, *Authority* (N.Y.: Random House, 1980).

¹⁷Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976). Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977).

¹⁸Jane Austen, Letter to J. S. Clarke, Dec. 11, 1815, in *Jane Austen's Letters to Her Sister Cassandra and Others*, ed. R. W. Chapman, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), Letter #120; also reprinted in *Emma, A Norton Critical Edition*, ed. Stephen M. Parrish (N.Y.: W. W. Norton, 1972), p. 361.

¹⁹Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1975), pp. 66-68. See also E. William Monter, *Women in Calvinist Geneva (1550-1800)* *SIGNS*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Winter 1980), pp. 189-209.

²⁰John F. Benton, *Fraud, Fiction and Borrowing in the Correspondence of Abelard and Heloise*, in *Pierre Abelard - Pierre le Venerable*, Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche scientifique, 546 (Paris, 1975), pp. 470-507.

²¹Joan Kelly-Gadol, *Did Women Have a Renaissance?* in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. R. Bridenthal and C. Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), and in a previous version, *The Social Relations of the Sexes*, *SIGNS*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Summer 1976), pp. 806-23.

²²Alice Rossi, *Feminist History in Perspective: Sociological Contributions to Biographic Analysis*, in *A Sampler of Women's Studies*, ed. D. G. McGuigan (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan, 1973), pp. 85-108.

²³Colin Bull, *Letter to the Editor*, *Sojourner*, Vol. 6, No. 10 (June 1980), p. 8.

²⁴See Sheila Tobias and Carol Weissbrod, *Anxiety and Mathematics: An Update*, *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Feb. 1980), pp. 63-70.

²⁵Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979).

²⁶This is an exercise we ought to do, of course, for black persons as well as female ones.

²⁷Florence Howe, *Three Missions for Higher Education for Women: Vocation Freedom, Knowledge*, p. 292.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE UNITED STATES LABOR MOVEMENT

Mary Margaret Fonow

Union activity during the first two decades of the nineteenth century was highly dependent on the fluctuations of the economy and most efforts to organize workers were spontaneous and temporary. However, the development of the factory system of production which brought large numbers of women workers together under the same roof opened the possibility that women could be organized to exercise some control over the conditions of work.¹ The earliest form of factory employment among women is found in the New England cotton industry where work in the cotton mills was viewed as the logical extension of women's work in the home.² For women, the textile industry became the first target of "labor's untold story."

Early Organization: 1825-1840

Labor union activity during this period was generally spontaneous, short-lived and more often than not unsuccessful. However, there is ample evidence to suggest that women did engage in collective efforts to challenge the conditions under which they worked.³

In 1824, Pawtucket, Rhode Island, became the site of the first organized protest by female factory workers. Women went out on strike in support of male weavers who were protesting the reduction of wages and the extension of the work day.⁴

In the following year women formed the first all women union, the New York City United Tailoresses Society. They not only demanded higher wages but also advocated the right of women to vote and hold political office. In 1831, the union led 1600 women in a strike for better wages. Unfortunately, the strike was short lived and there is no record of when or why the union disbanded.⁵

The first important strike of women mill workers, on their own behalf, occurred in Dover, New Hampshire, in 1828. The tactics employed by the women strikers were forerunners of many of the contemporary practices of the trade union movement.

Against reduction of wages, monthly payments, and exasperating rules the Dover girls furnished to their compliants by means of street parades, protest meetings, placards, poetry, and widely published resolutions. They appointed committees to secure the support of workers in other towns, and raised funds to relieve the necessities of the strikers.⁶

Strike activity often led to the awareness of the need for a more permanent organization to represent the needs of women workers. For example, a strike of women cotton-mill workers in Lowell in 1834 led to the formation of the "Factory Girls" Association. The association numbered about 2,500 women and passed resolutions reflecting their right to form unions. Their proclamation read, "Our present objective is to have union and exertion, and we remain in possession of our own unquestionable rights."

Finally, in 1835, women in the sewing trades formed the first city-wide association of women workers across job classifications. The Female Improvement Society for the City and County of Philadelphia included tailoresses, seamstresses, binders, folders, milliners, stock makers, corset makers, etc. These women organized to protest low wages and the practice of charging workers for needles, thread and damaged cloth. Each group formed its own committee to develop a scale of price demands. After some small victories, however, the organization vanished.⁸

The organization of women workers during this period primarily took the form of strike activity. Some were pre-planned; many were spontaneous; most were short-lived and unsuccessful. However, this was also the case with the labor movement as a whole. While strikes may not have been successful in winning particular demands, they did establish some of the basic principles of the trade union movement: the right to organize and the power of unity.

The Development of Female Labor Associations 1840-1860.

According to Andrews and Bliss, This period is characterized by the formation of "labor reform" associations. While these organizations were predominantly educational in nature, they did organize a number of successful strikes, fight for increased wages and a shorter work day and agitated for protective legislation.⁹

Lowell, Massachusetts was perhaps the center of the labor reform movement. In 1844, twelve women met to form the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association and within six months the

membership reached five hundred. This marks the first attempt to form a permanent organization of women workers.¹⁰

The constitution of the organization reflected a high level of working class consciousness:

Shall we, operatives of America, the land where democracy claims to be the principle by which we live and by which we are governed, see the evil daily increasing which separates more widely and more effectually the favored few and the unfortunate many without one exertion to stay the progress?¹¹

The constitution also established the rights and obligations of the membership, provided for the election of officers and established a dues structure.¹²

The association affiliated with the New England Workingmen's Association and joined in the campaign for the shorter work day, collecting thousands of signatures on a petition calling for the ten hour day. The association also engaged in political activity and was responsible for the first governmental investigation of working conditions in factories. Activity was not limited to Lowell. Members traveled to other mill towns in Massachusetts and New Hampshire in an effort to help other women organize reform associations.

In 1846, the organization in Lowell changed its name to the Lowell Female Industrial Reform and Mutual Aid Society. The name change reflected a more fundamental change in the character of the organization. According to Wertheimer, the Society became more practically based. "It set up sick funds and benefits and tried to appeal to the self interest as well as idealism of the mill women"¹³ It also formed a library, held classes and continued to publish the **Voice of Industry** (labor newspaper) until late in 1847.

Women were organizing in other industries as well. In Lynn, Massachusetts women in the shoe industry founded the Female Society of Lynn and Vicinity for the Protection and Promotion of Female Industry. The organization drew up a constitution recognizing equal rights and the right to organize. It also had an executive structure, held regular meetings and collected dues. It organized women around the issue of low piecework rate and attempted to establish a uniform price list. However, the organization was short-lived. Unlike mill work, where women worked under the same roof, women in the shoe industry worked primarily in their own homes, and it proved difficult to organize women who worked in isolation from one another. Despite the failure of the organization, women participated in many strikes. They joined with male workers when over 20,000 New England shopworkers organized one of the largest walk-outs during this period.¹⁴

In general this period marks the transition from strike activity to the establishment of more formalized expressions of protest. Although the organizations were for the most part short-lived, they served an educational function exerting influence upon public opinion and legislation.

In general the ups and downs of the labor movement reflected the ups and downs of the national economy. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the labor movement was marked by a long series of local strikes and a long succession of short-lived organizations. The labor movement, as a whole, lacked continuity. One generation did not know about the efforts of the preceding one, and efforts to organize in one place were unrelated to efforts in another.¹⁵

Development of Trade Unions 1860-1880.

The Civil War greatly accelerated the pace of American industrialization. According to Flexner, westward expansion and war production brought about large scale capital growth. In addition, the victory of free labor over slave labor further stimulated economic development. The period also marks the permanent foundation of the modern trade union movement. By 1870 there were thirty-two national unions; only two, however, the printers and cigar-makers admitted women.¹⁶

The Civil War and its aftermath sent thousands of women to the cities in search of work. During the war women were needed in industry to replace the men who were drafted or lost to the war effort. After the war, women left destitute by the death of their husbands flocked to the sewing trades. It was about this time, however, that the introduction of the sewing machine was beginning to displace thousands of workers. Working conditions were the worst ever and wages were extremely low or in some cases nonexistent.¹⁷

In response to this situation protective unions were established. These were not trade unions but organizations formed, in part, by women reformists concerned about the victimization of women working in the sewing trades. The protective unions combined many functions but never really encouraged women to organize. They did, however, provide legal services to women seeking compensation for back wages. Also in some cities they served as employment agencies and training schools, but never really significantly affected the working conditions in the clothing industry.¹⁸

This period also marks the formation of the first national labor federation, and in 1866, the National Labor Union held its first convention. The National Labor Union endorsed equal pay for women and encouraged the organization of women into trade unions. A resolution passed at its second national convention urged

women to "learn trades, engage in business, join our labor unions or form protective unions of your own, and use every means to persuade or force employers to do justice to women by paying them equal wages for equal work."¹⁹ Women delegates were seated at the convention.

Labor was still mainly organized on a local basis. By this time the original "Yankee" women workers in the New England textile mills were replaced by immigrant labor. Strike after strike was lost. According to Henry, organizing drives met with little success because working conditions were so appalling and wages so depressed. Competition between home and factory systems, the influx of war widows and economic speculation served to reduce wages to starvation levels.²⁰

However, in other industries, where conditions were not so bad, organization was more successful. Women laundry workers organized so effectively in Troy, New York that their union the Collar Laundry Workers was able to contribute strike funds to other unions. They were able to raise their own wages from \$2 and \$3 a week to between \$7 and \$14. However, their union was broken by a strike in 1869.²¹

The experience of women who worked in predominantly "male" trades were best reflected in the printing trade. Women had always been found in small numbers in printing since the colonial era. At first discouraged by the male unions, they were often employed as strike breakers. While opinion was divided, the International Typographical Union initiated the expenses of starting a women's union and on October 12, 1868, the Women's Typographical Union No. 1 was organized. While never a very large operation, women had been admitted to a number of other locals on an equal basis with men.²²

Another industry where the organization of women workers met with a measure of success was the tobacco industry. During the war women cigarmakers formed the Lady Cigar Makers in Providence, Rhode Island and organized a campaign to boycott a non-union employer. Male cigarmakers threatened by the growing numbers of women, blacks and immigrants who worked as cheap labor in the industry, opened their doors to women and blacks. In 1875, the National Union of Cigar Makers amended their constitution to prohibit local unions from discrimination against women workers.²³

The first national union of women, the Daughters of St. Crispin, was organized in 1869 by women in the shoe industry. According to Flexner, the history of the organization is sketchy. It is known that the union had "fraternal" ties with the National organization of men shoe workers the Knights of St. Crispin and that the "Daughters" had twenty-four lodges throughout the country. It held annual conventions until 1872 and in that same year successful-

ly organized women workers in Lynn, Massachusetts to strike in protest of a wage cut. It is believed that the organization declined in 1876 when the economy suffered one of the worst depressions.²⁴

Despite brief periods of economic decline after the Civil War, wages and working conditions substantially improved for union workers. Wage increases of organized workers were forty percent higher than those of unorganized labor. However, when in 1873 the banking house of Jay Cooke and Company closed its doors the situation changed completely. Overnight the entire credit structure of the country collapsed, and by the end of the year over five thousand commercial failures had been reported.²⁵

Unemployment was high and trade union membership declined rapidly. Few unions were capable of surviving a long depression. In 1873 there were thirty national unions, but by the end of the depression only eight or nine remained.²⁶ Despite the bleak realities of depression living, workers fought back. Unemployment rallies were held demanding food, shelter and jobs. In 1874, in New York City, protesters were attacked by police, and hundreds of workers were injured and several were arrested.²⁷

Strike activity continued despite the use of lockouts, blacklists, legal prosecutions and yellow dog contracts by employers to smash the trade unions. In Fall River, Massachusetts women voted to strike a textile firm over a proposed ten percent wage reduction, regardless of whether the men voted to or not. More than 3,000 workers had stopped working, and those who remained on the job were taxed to support the strikers. Initially, the workers prevented the wage cut, but eventually the company, with the support of the militia, reinstated the wage reduction.²⁸

During the summer of 1877, a nationwide strike of railroad workers was called. Almost all major cities were involved, and over 100,000 workers walked out. They were met again by the militia. "Twenty men, women and children were killed by the militia in Pittsburgh, twelve in Baltimore, and similar troop attacks against strikers took place elsewhere."²⁹

By 1878, the economy entered a period of recovery, and the trade union movement experienced unprecedented growth. It was also the age of monopoly, and the demand for cheap labor increased. "Cheap tractable labor was needed for these giant enterprises; in the decade after 1880, immigration from impoverished European countries topped five million. Women workers were in rising demand, always for the lowest paying jobs."³⁰ However, women continued to work in the same types of occupations they held prior to industrialization. They were concentrated primarily in clothing, textile, laundry and household domestic work.

Despite advances in technology and rising corporate profits, working conditions worsened. Wages were lower than the pre-

depression level. Working conditions deteriorated and the rate of industrial accidents increased in the absence of any health or safety legislation. In the cities women worked 12 and 14 hour days in crowded, unsanitary tenement dwellings. In the mill towns workers were still paid in script redeemable at the company store, and children went into the mills and mines as soon as they were able. In the South, black workers often earned no more than fifty to seventy-five cents a day. They, too, were paid in script and often times found that after the harvest they owed the employer more than they received in wages.³¹

Women in the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor.

In response to declining wages and worsening working conditions, labor increased its organizational activities. Those unions that survived the depression emerged to form the first solid national organization of workers, the Knights of Labor. The Knights of Labor originated in 1869 as a secret order pledged to the improvement of living conditions, and in 1878 held its first convention. The Knights attempted to organize on an industrial basis rather than along craft lines and to include unskilled workers. The preamble of their constitution called for equal pay for equal work for both men and women. Black workers were included from the beginning and were organized in both segregated and integrated assemblies.³²

In 1881, the Knights became an open organization and in the same year voted to admit women workers. According to Wertheimer, women joined in great numbers, and by 1886, 192 women's assemblies had been organized. Women also joined previously all-male assemblies. At the peak of its organizational strength over 50,000 women were members of the Knights of Labor, representing ten percent of the total membership but only two percent of all employed women. Most of the women assemblies were organized geographically across trade lines while a smaller number were found in single trade assemblies.³³

On paper the Knights were committed to the full participation of women in the labor movement, but it was the women themselves who initiated action to realize that goal. At the 1886 convention, sixteen women were seated as delegates and these women took independent stands in the interest of the women workers they came to represent. The following account is given by Henry:

. . . the (women) announced that they had 'formed a permanent organization, the object of which will be to investigate the abuses to which our sex is subjected by unscrupulous employers, to agitate and principle which our order teaches of equal pay for equal work and abolition of child labor.' They also recommended that the ex-

penses of this new women's department and the expenses of a woman investigator should be borne by the order. The report was adopted and the memorable Women's Department of the Knights of Labor was created.³⁴

The establishment of the Women's Department and the development of women assemblies afforded women the opportunity to develop their own organizational and administrative skills that would prove useful even after the Knights of Labor ceased to exist.

The early 1890's marked the decline of the Knights of Labor and rise of the American Federation of Labor (AFL). The AFL was a loose federation of national and international unions primarily concerned with consolidating and advancing gains won by skilled workers. It placed great emphasis on the autonomy of its affiliates and on the principle of organizing workers into separate craft unions. It refused to broaden the scope of the organization to encompass political action preferring, instead, to follow more pragmatic guidelines to accomplish the objectives of the labor movement.

In principle the participation of women was encouraged; however, the actual practices of the AFL served to insure that their role would be minimal. In a speech before a trade union congress in 1901, Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, declared, "The American Federation of labor affirms as one of the cardinal principles of the trade union movement that the working people must organize, unite and federate irrespective of creed, color, sex, nationality or politics."³⁵

The 1882 convention gave representation to women's labor organizations on the same basis as men's, and in the following year there was a declaration calling for equal pay for equal work. The convention of 1885 sent out a call urging women to organize, and, by 1890, the first women delegate was seated at a national convention. The AFL passed a resolution in favor of suffrage and another calling for the appointment of women organizers.³⁶

Foner, however, contends that the actual practices of the AFL were incompatible with the expressed goal of affiliates. Some member organizations openly excluded women through constitutional clauses barring women from their craft. However, it was more common for the unions to exclude women by restricting their apprenticeship programs to men only or to reject their transfer cards from another local within their jurisdiction.³⁷

Throughout this period the proportion of women who held trade union membership began to decline. In New York the proportion of women to all trade unionists fell from 4.8 to 2.9 percent, and in Chicago the number of women trade unionists dropped from 31,400 to 10,000. At the same time the number of gainfully

employed women doubled, and by 1910 only 0.9 percent of women workers were unionized.³⁸

Yet, Gomper's consistently justified American Federation of Labor policy on the grounds that women were "only" temporary workers and that their real "place" was in the home. He did not believe that married women should work, despite the fact that between 1890 and 1912 married women in industry increased from 515,000 to over 3 million.³⁹

Eventually, the American Federation of Labor did appoint a full-time women organizer without status on the executive council, but when funds were short they asked her to leave. The executive council refused to appoint another organizer on the grounds that no qualified women could be found and that the money would be better spent by hiring male organizers.⁴⁰

With or without the support of the American Federation of Labor, women continued to struggle. Between 1895 and 1905, women were directly involved in 1,262 strikes, and in 83 of the strikes women workers alone were involved.⁴¹ A survey of the major national and international unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor concluded that the participation of women in union activity was greatest in sex-segregated locals than in mixed locals.

She also makes note of two other types of women's organizations, the auxiliaries and the consumer leagues.

Women's auxiliaries are composed of women belonging to the families of male unionists. In the Typographical Union, the auxiliary is organized along local and international lines, and their objectives are the social enjoyment of its members and the furthering of labor interests. The locals (auxiliary) insist upon the use of the union label, agitate for improvements in child labor laws, look after the sick of the society, and increase the 'good fellowship' among the families of the locals by social gatherings.⁴²

The other type of women's organization found as a "support" group within the labor movement was the Women's Union Label League. The organization was first established in 1899 to emphasize to the community the importance of buying only goods that carried the union label. Other objectives included: the promotion of the welfare of the wage earner, fight against the sweat shop method of production, to gain a universal eight-hour day, abolish child labor, secure equal pay for equal work regardless of sex, aid Sunday and early closing movement, sustain fair employers, and to aid in the study of social economics.

The primary focus of the Women's Union Label League was the

encouragement of the use of the union label. Membership was primarily the male unionist's family. The organization was modeled along the lines of ordinary union structure . . . local, state and international.⁴³

Women's Trade Union League

Perhaps the most written about chapter of the history of women in the labor movement was the establishment of the National Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) in 1903. Up until that time, two facts had characterized the attempts to organize women workers. Women had clearly demonstrated that it was possible to organize women workers, yet their organizations were short-lived and there was a lack of continuity.

Historians have suggested a number of reasons why the above occurred. First, the AFL policy of organizing along craft lines virtually assured the exclusion of the participation of women. Women worked primarily in unskilled low paying jobs and not in the crafts. Second, the belief that women were only temporary members of the labor force affected the willingness of labor leaders to allocate the necessary material resources and personnel it would take to organize women. Also traditional ideas about the roles and status of women proved to be an obstacle in organizing. Women's dual role (home and work) made it difficult for women to find the time and energy organizing required.⁴⁴

Women who wished to join or form unions faced competition from the large masses of unorganized women workers. Employers could easily replace a woman unionist with the women who attempting to escape wretched working conditions and low pay were willing to give up their right to form a union. Typically, it had always been difficult to organize the most disadvantaged sector of workers because their most pressing needs are of immediate concern. Formation of trade unions required long range planning and sustained activity. Perhaps, the most important obstacle was the hostile reaction of employers. Women workers represented a vast pool of cheap labor and manufacturers were willing to fight to maintain that pool. This was also the case with any group of workers seeking to form a union. As soon as a worker's organization gained in size or strength, employers almost always sought to break it up. But this was especially so for women.⁴⁵

Some of the tactics used by employers to prevent the growth of unions included: requiring the worker to sign an agreement that they would not join a union as a condition of employment, circulating lists of workers who sympathized with labor among employers ensuring that such a worker could find no work, and lockouts or simply firing union organizers. If all else failed, court injunctions were easily obtained and the police could be called out to handle the situation in a more forceful way.⁴⁶

Despite such obstacles, women trade unionists and social workers began to hold small meetings to discuss the problems of women workers and the obstacles of organizing. From these discussions came the idea for a national organization that would bring together working women from different industries and occupations to confront the situation facing women workers and to lend support to each other's efforts to bring about better wages and working conditions.

The model for such an organization was the British Women's Trade Union League formed thirty years earlier in England. The original constitution of the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) stated that membership ". . . was open to any person who will declare himself or herself willing to assist those trade unions already existing, which have women members and to aide in the formation of new unions of women wage-workers."⁴⁷

From the beginning the WTUL, according to Wertheimer, sought a close alliance with the AFL in order to avoid the appearance of establishing a dual union structure. In fact, all League publications carried the motto: "The eight hour day; a living wage; to guard the home" and the statement "Endorsed by the A.F. of L."⁴⁸

The national office of the WTUL was located in Chicago with local branches in New York, Boston, St. Louis and Kansas City. The specific program of the WTUL throughout various times in its history included: (1) organizing the unorganized; (2) shorter work week; (3) a standard of living commensurate with the nation's productive capacity; (4) equal pay for equal work regardless of sex or race; (5) cooperation with trade union women in other countries; (6) international cooperation to abolish war; (7) equal opportunity in trades and training programs; (8) training of women trade union leaders, and (9) representation of women on industrial tribunals and public boards and commissions.⁴⁹

The WTUL published a labor paper, **Union Labor Advocate**, held educational classes for women trade unionists, and developed a speakers bureau. It also provided support for striking women through picketing, publicity, fund raising and court investigations. It also provided paid organizers to the labor movement and engaged in political lobbying.

According to many historians, the WTUL was pulled, sometimes in opposite directions, by its dual allegiance to the labor movement and to the women's movement. According to Boone, the function of WTUL was to keep the labor movement alive to the problems of working women and at the same time act as the interpreter of the labor point of view to women in general.⁵⁰ Did the WTUL represent women to the labor movement or labor to the women's movement?

In a provocative article, Robin Miller Jacoby⁵¹ contends that it was this tension between class consciousness and feminism that ultimately led to the decline of the League. The WTUL support of a labor party and its socialist connections alienated the AFL and the League's support of protective labor legislation and opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment alienated the women's movement.

The WTUL founded in 1903 began its decline in the 1930's and closed its doors in 1951. According to some, the influence of the WTUL far exceeded its numbers. "The rank and file women unionists, trained by the league, went on to help build the labor movement throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In 1920 the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor was established, in part because of WTUL persistence . . ."⁵²

In the 1920's the League fell victim to anti-communist hysteria. This coupled with the disinterest of the AFL and disagreements with the women's movement led to a drastic decline in membership. Many of the original goals of the WTUL had now become law and women would gain greater acceptance in the campaign for industrial unionism.

Women and the Rise of Industrial Unionism.

The early part of the twentieth century saw the "great uprising" of workers in the garment industry. Working conditions in the garment industry were intolerable. "Work was seasonal, which meant weeks of unemployment each year. Employees paid for their needles and a fee for electricity, and often were charged for the boxes they sat on and for coat lockers (when there were any). They paid for any damaged work and were fined if they were late. Clocks were set back so workers would not be able to calculate how much overtime they worked. Frequently their paychecks were short."⁵³

In response, over 20,000 workers in over five hundred shirtwaist shops in New York City walked off their jobs in 1909. The labor movement was still young and the employers were able to break the strike through the use of scab labor. At the Traingle Shirtwaist Company the owners would make certain that the unions would not gain a foothold in the garment industry; they literally locked union organizers out and workers in.⁵⁴

On March 25, 1911 an explosion and then fire broke out at the Traingle Shirtwaist Company. One hundred and forty-six trapped workers, mostly women and children, jumped to their deaths or were burned and suffocated in the building. The exit doors were locked. The owners were indicted on murder charges but were later found "not guilty." Hundreds of thousands of New York City working men and women turned out to pay tribute to the victims of the fire. The tragedy sparked an organizing drive in the garment industry that would span many years.⁵⁵

The National Labor Relations Act, guaranteed workers in certain industries the right to unionize, even to have government supervised elections, and required employers to bargain with the union representatives for wage rates and working conditions.⁵⁶

While New Deal labor legislation did not cover many of the areas of employment where women were to be found, it did stimulate large organizing drives in the garment industry. Under the new legislation, 95 percent of the workers in the cloak and silk-dress industry were unionized and the ILGWU grew to 200,000 in two years time, a growth rate of 500 percent. In addition membership of the New York Joint Dress Board went from 10,000 to 70,000 in two weeks.⁵⁷

In 1937, the Congress of Industrial Organization (CIO) formally split with the more conservative AFL and undertook the task of organizing in the mass-production industries like: steel, auto, rubber, electrical and textiles. Long and protracted struggle brought union protection to thousands of new workers.⁵⁸

Some historians have noted that the organizing drives of the CIO marked "dramatic" advances for women in trade unions, but there is little documentation of the actual role women played in these organizing drives and in the subsequent growth and development of industrial trade unions. The names of Mother Jones, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Rose Schneiderman, Pauline Newman, and many others are firmly etched in the annals of history, but a systematic examination of the overall participation patterns of women still remains to be written.

More is known about the role of women in the auxiliary formations of the CIO unions. Fine, in a comprehensive study of the United Auto Workers (UAW), writes about two of these organizations: the Women's Auxiliary and the Women's Emergency Brigade.

The Women's Auxiliary was primarily a strike support group. Women organized a speakers bureau and a publicity department for the sit-down movement in the auto industry. They picketed on a regular basis, staffed first-aid stations and collected food and money for the strikers.⁵⁹

The Women's Emergency Brigade actually took part in street battle against police and company thugs. According to Fine the organization originated in Flint, Michigan and then spread to Detroit, Cleveland and Toledo and was structured along semi-military lines. The women would form a human barrier between police and striking men: "We will form a line around the men and if the police want to fire then they will just have to fire into us."⁶⁰ He reported:

Six or seven hundred women marched through the business district of Flint, some of them wearing the red berets of the Emergency Brigade, others the green tams of the Women's Auxiliary. They sang as they marched and shouted imprecations to the Flint . . . (police) and Sheriff Wolcott.⁶¹

The latest chapter in the history of women's trade union activity is the establishment of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) in 1974. The Coalition was formed to articulate the needs of women trade unionists and lobby organized labor to be more responsive to the concerns of women workers. The objectives of the organization are: 1) strengthen the role and participation of women within their unions and within the trade union movement as a whole, 2) seek affirmative action in the work place; 3) organize the millions of unorganized women workers and 4) encourage union women to play an active role in the legislative and political processes of the unions and the nation.⁶² CLUW has already established a prototype for labor-management contracts ensuring the protection of women's rights in such areas as equal pay for comparable work, non-sexist language, pregnancy benefit clauses, maternity leave, child-care and affirmative action.⁶³ As the participation of women in the labor force increases we can expect their struggle to improve the quality of work life to continue.

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⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 279.

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⁶³Philip S. Foner, **Women and the American Labor Movement: From World War I to the Present** (New York, N.Y.: Free Press, 1980), p. 536. An excellent documentation of the role of women in working class movements during the 20th century.

SWEET LESBIA

Cecile Gray

You should have been a character,
Sweet Lesbia, in Jules Verne's
Journey to the Center of the Earth.
You'd poke into the lava pools
and siphon for a way to enter.

Beside science fiction, nothing
Suits you like an onion does.
Reeking skin by fleshy layer,
You peel it, lusting for a pit;
But nothing meets you in the middle.

You're in love with your womb.
You live inside out, and find
In women what a woman can see:
A kind of fig's eye vision, outside
In, of what you're round about.

CADILLAC/TIGER

Cecile Gray

He's a Cadillac, flashes gold
Coming down the road at 80;
She's the air he drives through,
A water-mirage on the highway:

He hears nothing, not even
The wind scream; she is still
And silent as facing the Nightmare
In a dream.

Or he is a gold-ribbed tiger,
And she is a pond or its morning fog;
He passes her by in her unwilling languor
That saves her for the sun.

He hunts silently, and sees
Nothing, no shake of a bush;
She evaporates into waking
Out of the hush.

BETH ALWAYS CAME OUT ON TOP

Cecile Gray

Beth always came out on top.
She was the instigator
Who never took the rap
Because she was quiet with grownups,
And I always forgave her after a while.
We were friends from Horse Face Varner's
Second grade to puberty;
After that we didn't have much in common.

Once, home from college,
With nothing to say to each other,
We dragged out her Barbie dolls
And played for hours.

And after they way of women,
I worried when she was single too long;
But she had two sugar-daddies
And trapped the second
In the midst of the game.

She owns great houses now,
In Europe and Washington State;
And if I saw her tomorrow
I'd forgive her for that,
And we'd probably play dolls
And call one another
By our secret childhood names.

CHARLIE

Norman Chaney

Little Charlie was just common,
though he was pampered, clear enough.
His mother made him play the flute
and stay inside if games were rough.

Aunt Alice he could not abide;
she pulled his ear and made him cry.
And if he ventured to complain
was forced to kiss her twice goodbye.

In school the boy was never bright.
He was, however, always passed.
"Scholastics is not Charlie's game,"
his mother said, if people asked.

Time came for Charles to take a job.
His mother thought that sales was right.
His father thought the navy best,
but was outnumbered in the fight.

So Charles went out into the world
to score his mark, to make his name.
He also took himself a wife
(whom Mother thought was rather plain).

For all of that he did succeed.
His colleagues say he earns his pay.
And while his mother's dead and gone,
his wife grows like her every day.

FATHERS AND SONS

Norman Chaney

When he burst his mother's watery belt,
he fell into his father's world.
Troubles, doubts, guilts long-felt:
these his heritage assured.

In time he cast his vagrant seed.
The story, old, is not yet spent.
Pity the sons whose bones must bleed
the blood their fathers' fathers lent.

ESSAYS IN HAIKU - POETIC PLATITUDES?

Albert Lovejoy

An ounce of caution
May save a pound of distress:
Gray hair comes slowly.

An island haven,
Without friends all around me,
Is a poor escape.

Cool in the morning,
Sultry by mid-afternoon:
Beginnings are fresh.

Raspberries are luscious
For the brief moment they last:
(common things persist.) . . .

Warm and wet the grass,
Teeming with bugs and vermin:
Nature's uterus!

Candid is the child,
But cautious grows the adult:
Age is free again.

Squirreling his store
For the long winter season:
Will there be enough?

Thunder roars darkly,
A hush descends on the earth
As a chipmunk pauses.

The season's too wet,
Farmers delay their planting:
Will frost shatter hope?

My mind is frenzied
Thinking of future events:
Robin cocks his head.

Everyone knows him
Who is wealthy and famous:
He too grows older.

He prays long and loud
For health and prosperity:
Wild flowers flourish.

He finds her in film
The scene is re-enacted
What is real, what reel?

Small cars save gas,
Therefore we can drive farther:
That's conservation?

Friends flatter quickly,
Enemies deceive, destroy:
who, then, can prosper?

The leaves sway gently
High in the ancient oak tree:
Age has its rewards.

Wars provide men work
And also destroy people:
Lets give peace a chance.

The world is crowded,
Yet a baby brings great joy:
Small is beautiful.

Yesterday looks bitter;
Tomorrow brings hopefulness:
Today's where we are.

"Dog days" are now here
With heat and humidity:
Do they enjoy it?

Polar bears like ice,
Scorpions prefer desert:
People thrive on love.

The rains nuture earth,
Bright lightning crosses the sky:
Life is a mixture.

Day lilies open,
Leaving the night forgotten:
Children laugh gaily.

We feed the wild birds
From our human abundance:
What of our own kind?

Cardinal mates wait,
For squirrel to fill belly:
Beauty is fragile.

Sky is cast in lead,
But the sun's golden shimmer
Now brings good tidings.

Wood pile grows larger;
Autumn winds foretell winter:
Plan ahead, young man.

Lovers now exist
In delightful delusion:
Star dust clouds vision.

Two friends stop to chat
Halfway from destination:
Serendipity.

Husband tries to write
Hailku, as wife half listens
To broken meter.

Procrastination
Loses its chance for success
In full completion.

Sweet sings the song bird
By reflexive instinct.
Homo *sapiens*?

Do as I say, not
As I myself tend to do:
words turn mute, acts shout!

That pleasant odor
From honeysuckle arises:
the sweet scent of grace.

Friendship is priceless,
Not to be stolen or lost:
Doubly valuable.

NATURE VS. NURTURE: OVERTURE AND OVERVIEW¹

Paul A. Laughlin

In a popular version of one of Aesop's classical Greek fables, Zeus and Aphrodite argue about the mutability of nature: the chief of the Olympian gods contends that innate nature can be changed, while the goddess of beauty maintains that it is intractable. In order to prove her point, Aphrodite changes a cat into a beautiful woman and conspires to have a handsome young man fall in love with the mutant and eventually marry her. Then, at their wedding feast, at the very height of the festivities, the goddess lets a mouse loose into the room, with predictable results: the cat-woman bride jumps up from her chair onto the table, pounces on the rodent, and proceeds to devour the hapless varmint. Always a good winner, Aphrodite gloats to Zeus: "You see, O Father of the Gods! Nature will out!"

This fable and its conclusion fly in the face of prevailing modern attitudes, particularly with reference to *human* nature. Most of us assume that human nature can be changed, and we operate our society and our individual lives accordingly — from our child-rearing methods to our penal systems, from our educational techniques to our religious institutions. Much of our optimism in this respect may well derive ultimately from our dominant Christian religious heritage, which has always asserted the possibility (nay, the necessity) of conversion, that is, the radical *and* substantial transformation of the individual. But even many who have rejected the religious idea of conversion still appear to embrace a more general, secular assurance that human beings can change drastically. Just look at the growing popularity of current self-help therapies and programs, which range from the psycho-spiritual expansions promised by Silva Mind Control to the physio-somatic reductions promised by TV fat-fighter Richard Simmons. Indeed, the field of higher education is based on the premise that human nurture is not only possible but also measurable — any quarter's final grades notwithstanding. Does not the very existence of a bastion of higher learning like Otterbein College, not to mention our unwavering devotion to its lofty academic goals, attest our implicit conviction that human beings can be transformed from ignorant and mindless cretins, who came to us (in the immortal words of Professor Kingsfield in "The Paper Chase") "with heads full of mush," into knowledgeable, critical thinkers of respectable if not remarkable acumen?

On the other hand, do not some of our own less than stellar results with students — detractors would say our “failures” — leave us with the nagging suspicion that Aphrodite may have been right after all; that “Once a cretin, always a cretin”? And, from a wider perspective, does not the persistence of such deleterious human institutions as injustice, crime, war, and all forms of violence suggest that “Nature will out” over nurture, despite all our noble efforts? And who among us has not struggled in vain to alter some undesirable personal trait — a fault or a foible — only to have it resist our every device? Are there not, in short, all around (and within) us, hints that our tendency to emphasize nurture over nature, as well as our consequent optimism about the possibility of significant human transformation, whether individual or corporate, may be just so much wishful thinking?

The nature-nurture controversy is still with us, and in this and the following papers we hope to look at it afresh, to explore some different viewpoints on it, and perhaps to draw some tentative conclusions that will help us to clarify our goals and expectations as teachers and learners. My own objective is to start the cognitive wheels turning on the nature-nurture track with what I call an “overture and overview,” thus to prepare for the more focussed and substantive presentations that will follow. I intend to accomplish this task by offering what I hope are general but relevant and timely observations about historical and contemporary phenomena that speak to the matter at hand. I offer a kind of pot-pourri, a smorgasbord, a veritable mishmash of items, meant to be by no means exhaustive or definitive or final, but only preliminary, suggestive, and provocative. Nevertheless, these examples would indicate that, contrary to the preferential status that especially we educators in the liberal arts give to nurture, there is an increasingly large and steadily growing body of testimony from a variety of circles supporting the pervasive and persistent impact of nature upon us. I begin my litany with recent personal experiences, and shall move gradually into the public domain.

Item: This summer I read for the first time Mark Twain’s *Pudd’nhead Wilson*, a delightful tale of mistaken identity ala Shakespeare. It is the story of a black slave woman, Roxanna, who, desiring the welfare of her own light-skinned infant son, switches him in the cradle with her white master’s son, who happens to be the identical age and the spitting image of her own child. She thus causes her own offspring to be reared in wealth and comfort, educated at Yale, and bedecked for life with fortune and finery. Her substitute child, conversely, the slaveowner’s true son, is reared as a slave and develops the manners of a slave; and even after the ruse is lately discovered, after the sons have reached adulthood, and the master’s natural son has finally been restored to

his rightful status of privilege and freedom, his language, his gait, his demeanor, and his attitudes are those of a slave, “vulgar and uncouth.” Twain’s pro-nurture conclusion about this affair is summarized in one of the aphorisms of Pudd’nhead Wilson, the lawyer-detective in the story: “Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education.”² But what about equally convincing pro-nature adages, such as “You can’t make a silk purse from a sow’s ear”? Surely anyone who has taught a freshman writing seminar will have countless examples of immutable sow’s ears in support of that assertion, not to mention a few incorrigible cabbages!

Item: My wife and I were visiting some friends in North Carolina this summer, a couple whom we hadn’t seen in over two years. In that period, their formerly two-year old daughter had reached (to everyone’s relief) age four, and they had produced a second daughter who by now (to everybody’s chagrin) was approaching the terrible age of two. The mother, reflecting privately on her own and her husband’s concerted and conscientious efforts to rear their children in a liberal, positive, stimulating and supportive atmosphere, admitted with a sigh how quickly it had become evident that the basic personality patterns of their own offspring were completely out of parental control. The one child, she observed, had always been of relatively angelic disposition, while the other, in the mother’s words, “came out of the chute bitching and screaming and has been bitching and screaming ever since.” Our friend’s informal observation appears to be substantiated by recent research at the National Institute for Mental Health, which found that behavioral differences in newborn babies — differences, for example, between quiet ones of even disposition and cranky, unpredictable ones — are due to a genetic-based enzyme in the blood (and therefore in the brain) called monoamine oxidase (MAO). The researchers even acknowledged the possibility that these biological dispositions may shape the personality for life.³ In a different study, Alan P. Bell and his colleagues found (and published in a recent book entitled *Sexual Preference*) “that the root cause of homosexuality is biological, or, more precisely, hormonal,” and that sexual identity in general is thus “impervious even to such powerful influences as mothers, fathers, and doctors,” Freud notwithstanding.⁴ If the findings of our friend and these experts are true, and these and perhaps other basic personality characteristics are more fixed than fluid, are we not forced to conclude that we have underestimated the power of nature in determining our lives?

Item: One of my interests is jazz, a music of great spontaneity and freedom. For many years it was generally assumed that playing jazz was a natural ability, a gift that could be neither taught nor learned. Yet today there exist all over the country instructors,

departments, and institutions that teach jazz theory and improvisation at all levels. In a related vein, I have a musician friend who learned and teaches to others a form of relative pitch discernment that is so close to perfect pitch as to be virtually indistinguishable — yet another musical argument for nature over nurture. On the other hand, however good it may be, relative pitch is not perfect pitch, which appears to be bestowed by nature on individuals, many of whom exhibit no other musical aptitude. And, some would argue, what separates the first-rate jazz musician — or premier musicians generally — from the diligent-but-mediocre hacks is precisely the natural ability that education can but enhance. Supporting this nature argument, but in a much broader musical perspective, is Leonard Bernstein, who contends that all humans, like some species of birds, are born with a universal, primeval Ur-Song, consisting of three notes (G, E, and A) and embodied in the childhood chant “NA-NA-NA-NA-NAA-NAA.” Says Bernstein, “these three universal notes are handed to us by nature on a silver platter,” and the entire corpus of human music is derivative from them.⁵ If he is right, does not nature preempt nurture not merely with respect to musicianship, but in music itself?

Item: Natalie Wood drowned recently, an untimely and unfortunate occurrence (though probably not, in the ancient Greek sense, the “tragedy” that many proclaimed it to be). One of the TV news reports reviewing her life quoted Orson Wells on the consummate dramatic ability that the actress had displayed even as a child: “She was a professional when I first saw her. I guess she was born a professional.” A similar conclusion was reached in a TV sports segment by a Pulitzer Prize-winning author who had just completed a book on his passion, basketball. Comparing the enormous talents of one of the star players on the Seattle Seahawks team with the hard-acquired but lesser skills of his teammates, the writer asserts that he was an expert virtually from the moment he first tried the sport, that he had been, in short, “born to play basketball.” What about such claims, the likes of which we hear often about individuals in all sorts of fields? What about, not just the prodigies (like a Mozart, who begins to compose music at age five, or the autistic child who draws and paints naturally like a master), but the students that we encounter whose gifts for thinking and self-expression cannot be attributed to the mediocre educational system that has delivered them to us? Is there not another argument here for nature over nurture? Or, to put it another way, how often have we *really* seen a poor student metamorphosed into a true scholar?

Item: Paul Chance reports in *Psychology Today* about an Israeli psychologist named Reuven Feuerstein, who believes that intelligence is malleable, that it can, in fact, be “shaped at will.”

Chance describes Feuerstein as “a former pupil of the late Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, who held that the development of intelligence is essentially a maturational process, an unfolding of innate biological talents.” In other words, Piaget was a proponent of nature over nurture with respect to intelligence. By contrast, his student Feuerstein has created a program called “Instrumental Enrichment,” which consists of 500 exercises geared, not to increasing knowledge, but to improving cognitive skills (which is to say “I.Q.”) through “mediated learning experiences.” And he has reported some positive results, the raising of intelligence pretested at levels well below average (about 80) to the slightly-above-average range (103 or so). But Chance also points out in his article that Feuerstein’s results are based on a very small sampling, and that his program as a whole is regarded by most psychologists with suspicion if not contempt.⁶ But even if Feuerstein’s reported results are valid, is a twenty point increase really evidence that intelligence can be “shaped at will,” or is it enough to convince us of the dominance of nurture over nature relative to I.Q.? Don’t we really operate with the practical working assumption that “some of our students have it, and some don’t — and never will”? Besides, how much would 20 I.Q. points matter to some of our mushy-headed cretins anyway?

Item: Recent studies have been conducted at the University of Minnesota and New York University on identical twins separated at birth (or soon afterward) and reared apart. Such twins are particularly good subjects for a nature-nurture inquiry because they are genetically identical (having developed from the same sperm and egg), leaving their heredity constant while their respective environments have varied during separation. Susan Farber, a clinical child psychologist at N.Y.U. and author of the recent book, *Identical Twins Reared Apart: A Reanalysis*, summarizes her own findings based on 95 cases:

There are remarkable — sometimes unnerving — similarities (between such twins) in many dimensions, including physical characteristics as disparate as height and the pattern of tooth decay; temperament and personality; mannerisms, such as firm or limp handshake; smoking and drinking habits; taste in food; and special aptitudes and interests, especially in the arts or in athletics. A paradoxical and rarely emphasized pattern also emerged: the twins who had had least contact with each other, either before or after they began living in separate homes, often turned out to resemble each other most strikingly in personality.

Despite all the strong evidence in favor of the enormous impact of

nature, however, Farber nevertheless cautions that “the influence of heredity, though powerful, is not immutable. Twins were not *invariably* alike; in a few cases they were quite different.” Her conclusion speaks directly to our topic: “. . . nature and nurture are both important. Moreover, the ways in which they interact are more complex than is generally realized.” Perhaps we should take a clue from her and begin to think about the dialectical relationship between nature and nurture rather than the alleged hegemony of one over the other. But before we can attempt such a balanced approach, will we not have to give disproportionate attention to the power of nature, precisely because we have for so long failed to give it its due?

Finally, having ranged thus afield, far beyond the boundaries of my field of expertise, I would like to return to my own discipline for one last viewpoint (which is not to say “last word”) on the subject. I do this not simply as a matter of personal privilege, but because it seems to me that underlying the whole nature-nurture question, as perhaps the source of much of the emotion that it evokes, is the deeper philosophical or theological issue of determinism vs. freedom. For the alleged predominance of nature implies a certain necessary fixity to human potential and limitation to an individual’s prospects, while an argument for the preeminence of nurture suggests, conversely, flexibility and a wider range of possibilities. The philosophical consideration of that matter I gladly leave to philosophers. I would simply like to point out the indisputable fact that throughout its entire history Christian theology has come down predominantly if not unanimously, and officially if not popularly, in favor of nature over nurture — despite what I said earlier about conversion. For Christian theology from Sts. Paul and Augustine to Luther and Calvin to Karl Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr has consistently affirmed that the fundamental truth about human beings is that they are all thoroughly sinful, not merely by virtue of our bad acts but as an innate condition. This is the idea that Augustine drew from Paul and perfected under the banner of “Original Sin,” which contends that a human being is, from the moment of birth, a part of the “mass of damnation” that is the human race, all because of the inheritance of the guilt and all other effects of Adam’s sin.

Far from being an extraneous bit of theological sophistry, much less the expression of a few theologians’ misanthropy, this overtly negative assessment of human nature provides the essential presupposition to the whole orthodox Christian scheme of salvation and understanding of the person and work of Christ. The theologic runs thus: we are so “rotten to the core” (says orthodox Christianity) that we cannot save ourselves, either by good works or by saving knowledge; only a divine and dramatic action will do; hence, the

sacrificial atoning death of the God-man Jesus Christ. This is why only Christianity among the world’s major religions requires its founder to die in behalf of its adherents, rather than merely to provide a moral example or teachings for them to follow, as Confucius, Lao-Tze, Moses, Buddha, and Mohammad did. Christianity’s premise about human nature is simply too thoroughly and profoundly negative for such superficial corrective measures to be effectual.

Herein, then, lies the theological rationale for *grace*, which means God’s free gift of a salvation or redemption that cannot be humanly willed or merited or earned in any way because humans are too damned sinful by nature. God must, therefore, do it all. Even conversion in the orthodox Christian sense is not a human act of the will, but God’s action in the individual. In fact, Augustine, Luther, and the other pivotal formulators of Christian doctrine — both Catholic and Protestant — underscored salvation’s remoteness from human activity and its proper place in God’s providence by formulating the doctrine of Predestination, which holds that the decision about a person’s salvation not only belongs to God, but was made (in Augustine’s words) “before the foundations of the world,” thus leaving redemption eons out of our hands. Here the implicit link between an emphasis on the dominance of nature and a tendency toward determinism is expressed clearly and, given the negativism, with a vengeance. The catch is that without this pessimistic view of human nature as a theoretical starting point, a divine Christ dying for our sins is unnecessary; a human Jesus living and teaching the moral life would do nicely.

The nature-nurture question, here cast in strictly religious terms, raises some interesting problems for any institution claiming, as Otterbein College does, to be trafficking in “liberal arts education in the Christian tradition.” For liberal arts education, as generally understood today, is a bequest of a humanistic tradition that has always borne a much more optimistic view of humanity than has orthodox Christianity with respect to both the basic goodness of the individual and the perfectability of the species. To be sure, there have always been Christian humanists, especially since the Renaissance, but they have invariably been on the fringes of orthodoxy and often have been numbered among the heretics. (when is the last time you drove past a St. Erasmus Catholic Church? Christian humanist never became saints because their ideas about the basic goodness of humankind made them “losers” in the eyes of the orthodox.) The orthodox mainstream did allow for a kind of Christian nurture — usually in terms of “sanctification” — but it was always seen as subsequent to the divine transformation of human nature, and was itself ascribed to the inner-workings of the

Holy Spirit rather than to the willful efforts of the individual or the salutary influences of a wholesome environment. What, then, does it mean for a college to stand in the Christian tradition? Are we to presuppose that humanity is by nature "rotten to the core"? If so, I suspect that our whole approach to education will be affected, from the way we design our courses and proctor our exams to the way Dean Van Sant monitors and moderates our students' social and residential lives. Or are we to confess what I suspect is the truth: that as educators we assume the preeminence of nurture over nature, that we are all thus humanists of one kind or another, and that — if we are a Christian institution in any respect — we are at best a borderline heretical one, precisely because of where we come down on the nature-nurture matter?

Our discussion of the relation between nature and nurture, therefore, is by no means merely theoretical; its subject is one that affects the most practical matters of who we are as educators and what Otterbein College is as an institution. As I have indicated, I believe that most of us are predisposed to emphasize nurturism over naturism. But I hope that we will give a fair hearing to the articulate voices among us and around us that are emphasizing the impact of nature upon us. In John Irving's latest and much-touted novel, *The Hotel New Hampshire*,⁸ one of the characters expresses his view of human existence by drawing an analogy to the furniture in a hotel that had once been a school. There all the chairs and tables were still screwed to the floor, and again and again throughout the novel the characters echo the sentiment, apparently with a justified fatalism, "We're all screwed down for life." Maybe, just maybe, as much as we would like to think otherwise, we are indeed "all screwed down for life" — and whether providentially or genetically hardly matters.

NOTES

¹This paper is a slightly abridged version of a keynote address delivered to the Otterbein College Integrative Studies Faculty Intern Workshop in December, 1981. As its title indicates, it was intended to set the theme of the papers and discussions that were to follow, all of which focused on the relationship between "nature" and "nurture."

²Toronto/New York/London: Bantam Books, 1981, pp. 26, 143. This Bantam Classic paperback is by far the most accessible edition of Twain's book.

³Andrew J. Sostek and Richard J. Wyatt, "The Chemistry of Crankiness," *Psychology Today*, October, 1981, p. 120.

⁴Paul Robinson, review of *Sexual Preference*, by Alan P. Bell, Martin S. Weinberg and Sue Kiefer Hammersmith, in *Psychology Today*, December, 1981, pp. 105-108.

⁵Howard Gardner, "Do Babies Sing a Universal Song?" *Psychology Today*, December, 1981, pp. 70-76.

⁶Paul Chance, "The Radical Thinker," *Psychology Today*, October, 1981, pp. 63-73.

⁷Susan Farber, "Telltale Behavior of Twins," *Psychology Today*, January, 1981, p. 59.

⁸New York, Dutton, 1981.

THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Susan Klopp

The statement, "Culture makes the man makes the culture makes the man," is called a half-truth by Edward O. Wilson in *On Human Nature* as he emphasizes the role of the genes in molding human behavior.¹ However, it is on this half of the truth that I would like to focus as I consider aspects of human behavior that are not biological, but learned through membership in a particular culture. Wilson quotes Conrad H. Waddington's metaphor of human development as a landscape that descends from the highlands to the shore with particular traits developing like a ball rolling down the slope guided by ridges and valleys. Wilson admits that in the case of complicated, culturally sensitive phenomena, the landscape on the lowlands "dissolves into a vast delta of low ridges and winding oxbows."² It is here, among the oxbows, that I would like to wander in order to look at some of the ways that culture has an impact upon the individual and at behavior that is learned rather than genetically determined.

Wilson calls for a new description to replace what he terms the archaic one between nature and nurture. However, in the IS 13 module on cross-cultural perceptions last fall, one of my principal aims was to sharpen that distinction. Our consideration of various culture-based differences in the ways people perceive the world was supposed to make the students more aware of certain aspects of American culture and of their own behavior as Americans, and then to help them recognize that values, assumptions, and behavior which are characteristically American are *not* natural—that is, not "natural" in the sense either of being "universal" or "necessary," or in the sense of being "rational" or "right."

Because so much of our culturally determined behavior is rarely brought to our conscious attention, we feel vaguely uncomfortable when we encounter people with different sets of assumptions or values. When our own patterns are violated, we conclude that something is wrong—and, not surprisingly, we conclude that *they* are wrong and unnatural. What was emphasized throughout the term in the IS module was that in the variety of human perceptions and human behaviors that exists in the world, "different" means simply "different;" "different" does not, by itself, mean "inferior," "wrong," or "against human nature." We tried to isolate and examine certain habits of behavior at a conscious level as an

antidote to the instinctive judgment of strange behavior as bad behavior.

What does culture mean? Edward T. Hall, author of several books on intercultural communication, calls it simply "a way of life."³ In the module we used the more specific definition of culture as "the patterns of behavior and beliefs common to members of a society and the rules for understanding and generating customary behavior. Culture includes beliefs, norms, values, assumptions, expectations, plans for action."⁴ Culture is a way of organizing experience. It is a framework. Some, even, have termed it a prison from which it is difficult to escape.

There is a sense in which people are all basically alike; human nature, of course, has genetic origins. But this truth should not blur the real differences among people. Tensions are created and lack of communication results when different kinds of people meet without a recognition of these differences. At Otterbein, as well as elsewhere, an increasing number of encounters among people from different cultures is likely, so an increasing awareness of the kinds of differences is prudent.

Some of the following differences in behavior are examples of potential obstacles to communication.

1.) *Language*

One difference that is immediately obvious is language. Non-English speakers not only speak differently, to most of us they speak incomprehensibly—a fact which makes us uncomfortable. This discomfort may cause us to avoid situations where non-English is used and perhaps even reject non-English speakers. But at least we have no difficulty recognizing that a difference exists.

However, it is not necessarily so obvious that this is more than a surface difference. Arabic is not, after all, merely English with different terms for the objects and actions of reality written in a crazy kind of alphabet. It is a different system, part of a different reality. It is not possible—though my students don't believe it quite—to take an Arabic-English dictionary and pair up equivalents, map them on the awkward and unnatural structures of English, and end up with a recognizable language. Languages, that is, are not merely varieties of one another. A true and complete translation of a message from one language to another is, in fact, an impossibility.

Even the commonest nouns do not translate exactly. Consider English "bread" and Italian "pane." The appearance, the use, the importance and value, the extension by metaphor for each of these varies. "Bread" means a soft, white, pre-cut and sanitarily-packaged loaf; "pane" comes in many shapes, sizes, and textures, each characteristic of a particular Italian city. Dante, in fact, when exiled laments the loss of the unsalted bread of his native Florence.

In English "bread" can mean "cash," while "pane" is the root for the word "company"—it is with your "companion" that you break bread. We say "bread and butter"; the Italians say "pane e vino" (bread and wine). Similarly, for the English words "house" and "home," there is only a single Italian term: "casa." The distinction, the classification of reality that English makes, is not made (or at least not this way) in Italian.

Probably anyone who has lived abroad has acquired certain phrases for which there are *no* English equivalents. The Turkish "inshallah" roughly translated as "God willing," is used by the Turks when making statements about the future. "See you tomorrow, inshallah." It is a kind of recognition of the unforeseen, an avoidance of arrogance with regard to control over future events, a kind of knocking on wood. There is also in Turkish a useful phrase, "afiyet olsun," which is a polite response to a guest's compliments on a meal. The literal translation, "let it be digested," loses the tone of the original. "Afiyet olsun" is a courteous way for the host(ess) to indicate that the meal was prepared for the guest's pleasure and nourishment and to return attention from the food to the guest. It is part of the elaborate hospitality that Turks bestow on their guests, and neither phrase nor gesture has an English equivalent.

Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf, in their studies of non-Indo-European, American Indian languages came to the conclusion that each language creates its own reality; meaning is *imposed* upon the kaleidoscope of raw experience; meaning is not discovered *from* experience. In 1929 Sapir wrote, "the worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached."⁵ Language imposes categories, it separates some things and joins together others—and we see and hear what our language points out to us. There is the famous example of the numerous terms that Eskimos have for different kinds and qualities of "snow" while we English speakers (with the possible exception of skiers) probably view snow fairly uniformly, modifying it with adjectives such as "heavy" or "bright" or "dirty."

Navajo has five color terms, one of which is roughly equivalent to English "white," two of which are equivalent to English "black," one to English "red," and one to both English "blue" or "green."⁶ Peter Farb in **Word Play** reports that several New Guinea tribes have only two basic color words which translate roughly as "black" (or "dark") and "white" (or "light").⁷ Speakers of these languages see the world colored differently than do English speakers, not because of differences in coloration in the world, but because of the different ways that the languages categorize color.

The three-tense verb system of standard English influences our views of time and reality. Even with closely related languages like French and Spanish, the varied systems of dividing up time by tense cause great confusion. The English present perfect tense, which carves out a piece of time from the past that is integrally related to the present, has no exact equivalent in French or Spanish, and while students whose native tongue is one of these languages easily learn the formation of the tense, mastery of its use comes very gradually, and only when they cease translating from their native languages and begin to think in English. For speakers of a language not based on a system of tenses, time itself must be perceived differently from the way of an English speaker.

A pair of words that we examined in the IS module are the English words "bake" and "roast." What is the difference between these two? It should be clear after considering how—and with what objects—each is used that the difference does not lie with the cooking process since both terms are defined as "cooking something by dry heat as in an oven." The difference lies instead in the history of the words themselves. "Bake," which is done to fish, cake, and ham, is of Germanic origin, coming from the Old English "bacan," while "roast," which is done to beef, veal, and pork, entered English by way of Old French "rostir." Potatoes and tomatoes, foods introduced after the Norman Conquest of England, can be either baked or roasted.⁸ We "chewed" on these distinctions for a while, without, I'm afraid, digesting the point that language is here making a distinction that does not really exist. Rather than developing an awareness of the way language colors reality, one student—upon hearing that I *roasted* chickens—declared nicely but firmly that I was wrong!

Imagine how wrong are the Italians who say "arrostire" of the Turks who don't even have a single verb for the process but must say "firinda pishtirmek" or "cook in the oven," possibly because traditional Turkish cooking is not based on ovens. This student's reaction to an intra-cultural difference illustrates the marked tendency of culture-bound thinking to label differences as "wrong."

2.) *Non-verbal communication*

This is another area where we can observe differences in learned behavior from culture to culture. Kinesics, or body motions that are communicative, includes body gestures, posture, movement, facial expression, eye management, and proxemics, or use of space. Studies seem to indicate that there is some kinesic behavior that is in fact universal. Wilson mentions the smile, the eyebrow flash, and facial expressions for basic emotions like fear, anger, surprise, happiness, and so on. In an experiment I conducted, both

American students and foreign students were able to match names of emotions with faces showing various expressions on part one of the Facial Meaning Sensitivity Test with about equal accuracy.⁹ Thus the physical formation of the face in response to emotions may indeed be common across culture, but, on the other hand, the appropriate times and places for expressing emotion will vary drastically from one place to another; the Japanese, for example, will not show their feelings under the same circumstances that an American would, and it is under these circumstances that Americans find it difficult to “read” the Japanese.

Unlike facial expressions, body gestures obviously vary throughout the world. Especially for those who possess a richly inventive body language, it is often possible to identify someone’s native origin simply by watching their gestures. When Fiorello La Guardia was campaigning for mayor of New York, he would deliver speeches in Italian in the Italian neighborhoods and in English elsewhere. Watching TV reports identify the language by La Guardia’s gestures.

Even such basic messages as “yes” and “no” are signalled differently in different places. Anyone who lives in the Middle East soon learns that the head lifted up and back is not a wishywashy half “yes,” a kind of “maybe yes,” but a full-fledged “no.” Sometimes this gesture is reduced to a mere lifted eyebrow. In Bulgaria the head gesture for “yes” is a lateral head movement with the chin as a pivot. For an American, the gesture registers as a slightly deviant “no” gesture—an obvious source of miscommunication.

These gestures are examples of different signals for similar messages; other gestures cross over cultures but carry different messages. A gesture neutral or positive in one place may be insulting or obscene in another. The American “AOK” sign means “money” in Japan and in other places is an obscenity. The Italian hand gesture for “ciao” (goodby) looks more like “come here” or “hello” to an American, and since “ciao” itself means both “hello” and “goodby,” two people could have a great deal of difficulty separating from one another.

Misuse of body gestures can thwart communication temporarily, but there are aspects of kinesics which result in a wider, more fundamental gap in communication—where a message is sent but a different message is received and where, further, there is no recognition that any misinterpretation has occurred. Posture, distancing, and eye management are examples. One might ask another the meaning of a word, and even the meaning of a gesture, but it is rare to question what was meant by a stance or by that fluttering of the eyes. The message is received and reacted to, but not at a conscious level. Americans leaning against a wall in Latin America can con-

vey sloppiness, poor manners; in Thailand or Malaysia, feet on a table, or legs crossed so that the sole of the foot is visible or pointed at a companion can signal disrespect rather than informality or companionability. Eye behavior is particularly vulnerable to misinterpretation. A female American teacher smiling and looking directly at an Arab male may be sending messages of brazenness and availability, rather than the intended friendliness and support. In many places where it is inappropriate to look directly at a superior, proper respect is shown by downcast eyes. However, Americans, when confronted by people who refuse to “look them in the eye,” conclude that they are shiftless or devious, trying to conceal something. This behavior has been a common cause of miscommunication between the children of southeast Asian refugees and their American teachers—the teacher looking for understanding, but finding defiance, the child desperately trying to show respect, but failing, and neither aware of the form in which the message is being sent and misinterpreted.

Proxemics is a term coined by Edward Hall for social distancing, another fertile area for miscommunication where messages are sent, unconsciously, and different messages, also unconsciously, are received. Hall has charted the distances for various kinds of interaction for Americans; he has called them the intimate (up to 18 inches), the personal (from 18 inches to 4 feet), the social (from 4 to 12 feet), and the public (12 to 35 feet).¹⁰ These boundaries, though invisible and unconscious, are quite fixed for members of the American culture, and activities appropriate to one zone that move into another are perceived as violations. We all walk around with our own “space bubbles” and react negatively when someone breaks the bubble without excuse. Notice how often we say “excuse me” if we brush near someone or need to go through a door where there may be physical space to pass, but not enough to avoid violating someone else’s bubble. These zones, however, are arbitrary and do not carry over to other cultures. Middle eastern cultures are much more touching than the American, and an individual’s space seems to be contiguous with the skin and does not extend to a bubble around the body. An American can feel rather uneasy and vulnerable in Cairo or Istanbul where people constantly jostle and nudge, without saying “excuse me.” The classic example of conflicting uses of distance is that of an American and a Latin American at a party in which one keeps advancing, the other retreating as each tries to establish a comfortable distance, until they are backed up against the wall. The Latin judges the other aloof and withdrawing; the American considers the Latin to be presumptuous, overbearing, and overly friendly.

3.) *Time*

A final area of learned behavior that exhibits great variety is the management of time. Americans, we know, put a great value on time; like money, time can be spent or wasted or, best of all, saved. We expect people to manage time efficiently, to *be* on time, to be conscious of time. We function best doing one thing at a time; we set deadlines and often let these deadlines override other important considerations.

When we are in a foreign country we are likely to notice that the day is scheduled differently; meals occur at different times and in an order unlike that to which we are accustomed; work and social periods are arranged differently. Probably it is not too difficult to adjust to the main meal in the middle of the day or an evening meal at 10:30 (as in summertime Spain), but it is much more difficult to learn how long is long enough, how long is too long, how late is too late.

In **The Silent Language** Hall contrasts the American's division of time (with respect to being punctual) with the Arab's.¹¹ The American, according to Hall, has 8 sets: on time, 5 minutes late, 10, 15, 20, 30, and 45 minutes late, and 1 hour late. The Arab, on the other hand, has 3 sets of time: no time at all, now or present (of varying duration), and forever (in which there is no difference between a long time and a very long time.) We can imagine the problems ready to surface when people holding these two very different concepts of time try to work together. There are many stories of Americans cooling their heels and warming up their tempers in outer offices waiting for appointments. What the American understands is not intended, what he expects is not justified by the scheme of reality in which he is trying to operate.

These, then, are some of the areas of human behavior which are culture-specific, and in which confusion arises, communication goes awry, and where bewilderment, resentment, and even hostility can result.

Culture Shock:

There is a second kind of impact by culture upon the individual, that impact called "culture shock," which occurs when someone from one culture goes to live in a foreign culture. The degree and seriousness of culture shock will vary from one individual to another and depends on personality, age, sex, and degree of difference of the new environment, but *everyone* who lives in a foreign environment for any length of time will experience some form of it. Culture shock occurs when all the familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse are removed and replaced with strange ones. One's peace of mind and efficiency depend on the hundreds of conscious and unconscious signals of the kinds mentioned above.

Without them, people become disoriented and each simple action takes enormous concentration. Time slows down, filled as it is with new experiences and focussed attention. Physical and mental fatigue result. With all the familiar props knocked out from under them, people feel unbalanced and anxious, and then resentful of the environment that seems to be the cause of these unwelcome feelings. Of course individuals differ greatly in the degree to which culture shock affects them—there are even some who simply cannot tolerate living in a foreign culture—but for most, various stages in the process can be predicted.

The first stage or "honeymoon" stage lasts for a few weeks and is the time during which everything is new and exciting. The novelties are attractive—new foods to try, new people to meet, new amusements, smells and sounds. There is a kind of euphoria, a new sense of freedom or pioneering. At first, too, newcomers receive a great deal of attention and help and they are apt to meet others like themselves who are new to the country.

Soon, however, the novelty wears off and minor irritations begin to build up. There is now a desire to get back to "reality," to take up "real life" and "real work" again; instead, all of the unfamiliarities persist. At this second stage, everything provides trouble; there is trouble with the kinds of food available and the times and manner of eating it; with the organization of the day with living arrangements, with ritualized social behavior, with transportation, with mail and telephoning, with financial matters, with classroom behavior and expected academic performance, with library procedures, and with the difference between "friendly" and "friendship." Nothing is automatic and therefore nothing is easy.

All of this is compounded, of course, by those who arrive without knowing the language. There are the additional frustrations of having inadequate control of English and of seeming to regress to the position of a child. However, when a language problem exists, people at least recognize where their communication problems lie. More elusive is the problem of people who are proficient enough in the language but not proficient in the culture.

During this stage, foreigners become increasingly hostile towards the host country and tend to grumble and complain with others from their home country. They naturally seek relief and refuge among others of their own kind. They begin to stereotype the host country and its citizens—"all Americans are impatient and unfriendly;" "all Americans are hypocritical or materialistic." At this point, too, the home country seems to be 100 percent wonderful and right, and naturally superior to the new country.

Americans, in turn, who encounter these attitudes, not unnaturally react negatively and draw away, thus isolating the foreigner still further. What is to Americans a typical conversation

starter—"Well, how do you like it here (in the U.S.)?"—is abhorrent to the foreigner, especially when in the throes of this second stage. The question is perceived as hypocritical and is not considered to be an indication of the questioner's concern for the newcomer's well-being. There is only one possible set of answers to the question: positive. The American would be offended to hear a negative response or a detailed assessment of the difficulties the foreigner is having in "liking it here." Moreover, it seems that the American himself who asks the question is simply seeking reassurance that American culture is "AOK."

This stage of culture shock may be apparent in the classroom; the student may exhibit lack of motivation and perhaps lack of cooperation, may perform poorly on tests, may fail to turn in assignments, and may daydream in class.

However, most people (including students) do not remain permanently stuck in this hostile stage. Most work their way out to the next stage characterized by a gradual accommodation to the new culture. Typically, a sense of humor reasserts itself—and with humor comes greater objectivity. Problems are taken less seriously and seem less personal. As control of the situation increases, anxiety, frustration and resentment decrease. There is greater participation in the new culture and more participation and enthusiasm in the classroom as well.

Probably most people who reach this stage remain here, with a large degree of acceptance of and participation in the new culture. Perhaps never again is there the same, unqualified enthusiasm of the first, honeymoon stage, but they are able to function comfortably, even joyfully in the new culture, to relish the differences open to them without relinquishing their native culture. Ultimately, when they return to their home country, they will even have regrets at leaving.

There is, however, still a further stage in the process of adjustment that presents another set of problems—the so-called Home stage. After many years in a country, it is sometimes extremely difficult for a person to return home. Students, who have made an emotional commitment to a new country and who have accepted many of its values, have the problem of culture shock once again when they return home. If, added to this, their education has catapulted them beyond reasonable employment at home, they are left with the heart-rending decision of which culture to accept, which to give up. Some of our present students are at this stage.

This kind of impact by culture upon individuals is a problem for all of the foreign student members of our Otterbein community, and therefore it is a problem for those of us who teach them, work with them, and share our lives with them.

Foreign students and the cultures they represent, in their turn,

have an impact upon Otterbein. The impact may at first cause some friction, but even the friction can lead to learning. In class recently students were asked to replace general verbs such as "look" with more descriptive ones; "glare" was suggested for "look angrily." One Latin American girl promptly used it in a sentence, saying that certain girls regularly "glared" at her whenever she met them in the dormitory. Further, these girls refused to talk or even greet her or her Latin American friends. The lesson shifted from descriptive verbs to culture clashes—and it seemed to make sense to them when I suggested that it was likely that those girls who glared were made uncomfortable by their foreignness, that they felt at a disadvantage because of their ignorance of Spanish, and uneasy by all of the "wrong" behavior that the Latin girls exhibited. My students were being judged as a type and not as individuals.

Sometimes the stereotyping of foreign students becomes more encompassing—all foreign students are lumped together in the category "un-American" and viewed as a mass, even though a Venezuelan has less in common with a Saudi than with a North American. However, the presence of individuals from other cultures who differ from one another in all conceivable ways offers incomparable opportunities for reducing or eliminating this stereotyping.

During a discussion of these matters, it was obvious that most of our students come here because they have chosen to come. They want to take advantage of an American education and they want to learn about the United States. Some would like, above all, to make American friends. They also realize that they must adjust to the new culture, not the reverse. As one Venezuelan said, "If I wanted to eat my mother's cooking, I should have stayed in my mother's house." And of course she is right; the burden of adjustment is upon the foreigner.

Nevertheless, we have the obligation—if we receive these people into our community—to help ease the adjustment, to be aware of the effects of culture shock on students' behavior, in and out of the classroom, to be sensitive to their problems.

The impact of foreign students upon Otterbein can be a very positive one; they offer us a rich educational resource. Meeting and interacting with individuals can help destroy stereotyping. More important, meeting representatives of other cultures can broaden our students' horizons. The American students who have tutored the beginning language students frequently remark that they have learned far more from these encounters than they have given.

Simple contact with other people does not—as I have tried to illustrate—insure communication. But with attention and guidance the increased numbers of foreign students at our college can provide unique contributions to the educational experience both in and

out of the classroom. I hope that we will find ways to tap this resource. And I hope that a foreign presence will shift the connotations of "foreign" and "different" away from the company of "lesser," "wrong," and "unnatural," and toward "curious," "interesting," "attractive," and "natural"—or should we coin the word "nurtural"?

NOTES

¹Edward O. Wilson. *On Human Nature*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978) p. 18.

²*Ibid*, pp. 60-63.

³Edward T. Hall. *The Silent Language* (Greenwich, Connecticut: Fawcett Publications, 1959) p. 31.

⁴James P. Spradley and Michael A. Rynkiewicz, eds. *The Nacirema*, (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1975) p. 7.

⁵David G. Madelbaum, ed. *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1949) p. 162. (Quoted in Larry A. Samovar and Richard E. Porter. *Intercultural Communication: A Reader* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1972) p. 114.

⁶Samovar, pp. 117-118. Harry Hoijer, "The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis."

⁷Peter Farb. *Word Play*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974) pp. 174-175.

⁸Spradley, pp. 19-20. Murray Leaf, "Baking and Roasting."

⁹Dale G. Leathers. *Nonverbal Communication Systems*, (Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1976) pp. 26 ff.

¹⁰Edward T. Hall. *The Hidden Dimension*, (New York: Doubleday, 1966) pp. 110-117.

¹¹Hall, *The Silent Language*, pp. 135-137.

W. H. GOMBRICH: A THEORY OF CREATIVITY

Norman Chaney

What is creativity? Is it a matter of nature or nurture, something a person is born with or something he acquires through learning? These questions are age-old, and there are perhaps as many understandings of "creativity" as there are persons who choose to define the term. The definition I shall offer here is one that is set forth by the distinguished art historian, E. H. Gombrich, in his book titled, **Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation**.

To explain how knowledge at once reflects cultural perception and also changes it, Gombrich invokes the common psychological notion of *mental set*. Applying this term to a shared set of perceptions, or "schema," Gombrich insists that all knowledge is based upon the interplay between anticipation and observation, projection and corroboration. All perception involves the matching of the framework or "schema" of meanings on which we provisionally rely with the actualities of our own ongoing experience. The process of learning therefore entails the falsification of our premises or expectations and their continuous revision to fit the "facts" of our experience.

The same process of learning applies to art, which Gombrich describes as a dialectic between making and matching, where the aim is not to see the object as it really is in itself, but to adjust the schema with which we see to the things it permits us to see. We cannot "see" at all, Gombrich maintains, without some initial schema, some set of expectations, to arrest and organize what William James graphically described as the "booming, buzzing, confusion" of experience. "Without categories, we could not sort our impressions."¹ Therefore the artist does not so much paint what he sees as see what he paints.² And the truly creative artist is the one whose painting not only presents us with new things to see but also provides us with a new way of seeing. The creative artist, in a word, is one whose painting enlarges our possibilities for imaging, comprehending, and evaluating the facts of our own experience—possibilities which transcend the schema or mental set we currently employ for that purpose.

Authentic artistic innovations occur, then, in Gombrich's opinion, whenever the artist successfully challenges his culture's mental set by breaking through the conventional hierarchies of

significance in which experience is presently ordered to a new vision of things which existed previously only as a perceptual possibility. The history of art, Gombrich therefore concludes, is no more and no less than the history of violated mental sets.

A striking feature of Gombrich's theory of creativity is that he does not attempt to elevate the artist to the status of a Promethean cultural hero, but attempts instead to suggest that the creativity that is exemplified in the artist is in fact inherent in all men and women. He writes:

Even in classical antiquity Cicero had marveled at the many things painters saw in shade and light that we ordinary mortals do not see. No doubt this is true, and yet it is not the whole truth. Seeing in itself is so complex and miraculous a process of interaction and integration that not even art could teach us that. The current idea that we look lazily into the world only as far as our practical needs demand it while the artist removes this veil of habits scarcely does justice to the marvels of everyday vision. I believe that André Malraux here came much nearer to the truth when he stressed that all seeing is a purposeful activity, the artist's purpose being painting. In thus looking for possible alternatives the artist does not necessarily see more than the layman. In a certain sense he sees even less (as he shows when he half closes his eyes). And yet he enriches our experience because he offers us an equivalence within his medium that may also "work" for us. The layman who looks at his painting and says, after an honest try, "I am afraid I cannot see it like that" is not the artist's enemy, he is his partner in the game of equivalences. Admittedly there are other games in art, but it is not always the layman who is a little muddled about what game is actually being played at a certain moment.³

In Gombrich's view, all of human life, to the degree that it is vital, is engaged in "the game of equivalences." "It is the business of the living organism to organize," he declares, "for where there is life there . . . [are] . . . also fears, guesses, expectations which sort and model the incoming messages, testing and transforming and testing again."⁴

One of the lessons to be drawn from Gombrich's study of the history of art is that the human mind, in its cultural no less than in its individual manifestations, changes very slowly, and it does so only when habitual modes of thought and feeling are disrupted and displaced; only when *the familiar is defamiliarized*. Paradoxically, the function of this process of defamiliarization, at least as it

operates in art, is to enable us to "see" what was potentially there all along, to discern possible aspects of our experience which established and assured habits of perception and interpretation had hidden from view. But the familiar in this deeper sense, as the element of potentiality in all our experience, does not consciously appear, save in an unexpected, novel, situation, where the familiar presents itself in a new light and is therefore not wholly familiar at all. In time, of course, the techniques of defamiliarization themselves become familiar and eventually obscure once again the very things they were meant to disclose. But not before they have provided the mind with new meanings and thereby added to the store of potential symbolic resources we have at our disposal to adjust our relations to the world outside us.

In summary of Gombrich's views, then, one may say that the idea of the defamiliarization of the familiar encapsulates his theory of creativity. In the book as a whole he does not attempt to explain what separates true creative genius from mere doggedness. In the conclusion of this paper, however, I wish to suggest that an answer to this question is implied.

Human experience is the reciprocal flow between the self and its world. On the one hand we do not passively receive or mechanically react to stimuli from our world. We do more than register the results. We interpret what we receive according to symbolic structures of the mind. The thomistic maxim is valid: *whatever is received is received according to the mode of the receiver*. On the other hand, we do not arbitrarily interpret what has been received. We interpret in terms of the schema which our culture makes available to us.

But creativity involves a breaking of the schema or mental set of our culture; the path to creativity is collapse. When our most prized assumptions about life are stripped away—perhaps in a moment of insight, perhaps through a long process of reflection—we are plunged into risk. Not all persons are open to risk-taking; they lack, in Rollo May's phrase, "the courage to create."⁵ And it may well be that at least one element that separates the Michelangelos, Goethes, Beethovens, and Einsteins from the mass of the men is that the former were great risk-takers.

NOTES

¹E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 88.

²*Ibid.*, p. 86.

³*Ibid.*, p. 326.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 298.

⁵Rollo May, *The Courage to Create* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1975).

LOUIS XIV'S ABSOLUTISM: THE PARADOX WHICH BASVILLE REPRESENTS

Sylvia Vance

(Author's note: this article is an account of the research I conducted during my sabbatical, autumn term 1981. Because sabbatical reports constitute an incompletely defined genre, I might well explain my purposes for this one. First sketching the background and preparation for this project, I want to describe it as an ongoing exploration on my part into the administration of the province of Languedoc in southern France by the royal *intendant* Nicolas de Lamoignon de Basville, who represented there the authority of the monarchy from 1685 to 1718.* I want to incorporate some sense of the development of my appraisal, some suggestion of the way my questions about his administration evolved. Therefore, this report is not yet a scholarly article. It is more akin to a detective story—a section, perhaps, in the middle of a tale to which there is no necessarily implied ending. I shall here sample from what I found, using on occasion extracts from the journal I kept, because a sense of process is part of what I want to convey.)

The closest Metro station for the Archives building is Rue de Rambuteau, and emerging up its steps on a chilly October morning into an autumnal, Parisian drizzle, one is confronted head-on by the magnificent, monstrous mass of the Centre Pompidou, the "Beaubourg," with its profusion of pipes, tubes, and girders in blatant, primary colors. Parisians, I discovered, are apologetic for its incongruity in the midst of the Marais, where admirable sixteenth and seventeenth-century townhouses rubbed shoulders, until a few years ago, with the wholesale market of the city of Paris, the famous Halles, now removed to the suburbs. There still remain retail market shops on the Rue des Francs-Bourgeois, which one descends to reach the Hotel Soubise where the national archives are housed. I pass stalls of fruit and vegetables, so artistically arranged

*See *The Otterbein Miscellany*, December 1977, for my article "Serving in Difficult Times: The Intendancy of Nicolas Lamoignon de Bâville in Languedoc, 1685-1718." The modern spelling of the name (Bâville) that I used then I have here preferred to replace with the older one (Basville), for this is the way the intendant signed his name; after seeing it spelled this way so many dozens of times, it seems only right that I follow his practice.

that it would almost constitute an act of vandalism to buy some and thus disturb the arrangement; even the leeks form a captivating still life, set off by a border made up of uniform bunches of unblemished carrots. Seafood is featured next door; I can smell the *turbot*, the *crustacés*, before I can see them, and before the piles of *moules* remind me of our delicious roadside luncheon near Béziers, when following the trail of Lamoignon de Basville's geography had led to the Mediterranean coast. Now I walk past the traditional *boucherie chevaline*, where the windows feature pinkish sausages of horse meat, and I notice that few people seem to frequent it, in contrast to the animation engendered by the voluble neighborhood shoppers who mingle the latest gossip with their purchases in the more active butcher shop nearby. Past the *coiffeur*, past the *parfumerie*, past the bookstore, past the specialty shop where products of Quercy are sold and jars of southern honey share the honors of the window with bunches of lavender. To the corner, and the street which one crosses with all essential attentiveness to the speeding Paris traffic. To the pollution-blackened stone walls of the street corner side of the Palais Soubise, and the into its courtyard, past the wrought iron fence tipped in gold, past the *concierge* and across the wet *pavés* toward the interior facade built of the light stone so characteristic of Paris, now beautifully restored by sand-blasting to its original color. Turning to the left, I enter a further courtyard, climb the wide and curving Guise stairway, remembering that there was planned in this building the infamous Saint Bartholomew's day massacre of French Huguenots, 23 August 1572. On to the third floor, and the Salle Clisson, where the archives of the *ancien régime* are made available to approved searchers. I leave my card on the entrance desk, find a numbered seat at one of the tables, and go to pick up the dusty carton of archive materials I had requested. Another day with Basville has begun.

It all started, for me, back in 1974. My present journal entry for September 29, 1981 tries to come to grips with what has impelled me to Paris and to the Archives, seven years later:

I realize that before this sbbatical project unfolds any further I must take time to try to say what gave it birth, because I already know that it's going to change in shape and scope very quickly in the days here in Paris. What was there in the life of the *intendant* Nicolas de Lamoignon de Basville, administering Languedoc during thirty-three years for Louis XIV, that has so fascinated me? So much so that I have always known I'd come back to him, ever since those days in the spring of 1974 when I made his acquaintance through the pages of the 1734 printing of his administrative memoir of 1698. The pages described the southern province he

“ruled”; the verb is appropriate, for not without cause was he known as the King of Languedoc in his own day. He was thirty-seven when he first came as *intendant*; seventy when he left. A professional lifetime, with a historical legacy that has termed him brutal, charged him with the calculated diminishing of provincial autonomy, and—in short—hated much of what he represented. But I had seen something else in those administrative letters of his through the years to the *contrôleur général* (the King’s finance minister)—at least in the years up to the time of the Cévennes revolt. This man had appeared to be deeply concerned for the health of the province of Languedoc—its agricultural and commercial well-being, its fiscal stability, and its spiritual integrity. He honestly believed, it seemed, that once Protestantism had been outlawed, the “new converts” (as he called the former Huguenots) had no religion at all unless the State and the Church together could provide effective Catholic instruction and pastoral care. I knew that French historian Philippe Joutard agreed with me that Basville deserved a fresh treatment. I wanted to contribute to a more balanced historical presentation of what he represented, but even at the beginning there was more. There was a fascination with the results of his marvelously strong administrative consistency, combined with the consequences of that inevitable ignorance of rural, southern French Protestant culture which Basville was fated not to correct, wealthy, well-educated Parisian that he was. And there was also my marveling at the weight of the problems with which he had to deal. I wanted to understand a man like this, a system like this. I don’t yet, not fully enough.

Preparation for this sabbatical venture began in the spring and summer prior to my September departure. Beyond the materials I had earlier studied, there was some further printed administrative correspondence available at the Ohio State Library, and these many letters I read, adding especially to my knowledge of the later years of Basville’s administration. I needed additional information on the French archives themselves, and also as many of the pertinent detailed inventories as I could get my hands on. Exploration at Ohio State was filling in for me the basic pattern of the archives, but not without much searching. I already knew that the amount of material—national, provincial, and local—was massive; now I began to understand how intricate a process it is to seek out what you need when such materials go beyond the obvious. I wrote to the archivist of the departmental archives of Hérault, in the southern

city of Montpellier, where Basville’s residence had been, and where now one complete set of the records of the Languedoc Estates is housed. Montpellier is also the place where the local records of the intendency are kept. I needed to examine there some hand-written inventories not available in the United States, and to acquire some sense of the procedures for dealing with local materials. I would have only limited time there; I pondered what I could most usefully do.

The correspondence which Basville maintained through the years with the monarchical ministries at Versailles is mainly located in the *Archives nationales* in Paris, but there are letters also in the separately constituted archives of the foreign office and some personal correspondence with his brother in a private archive (the Tocqueville *Fonds*), for which special reader’s permission must be obtained. There are letters in the army archives and in those of the navy. I have often maintained that I like inexhaustible subjects; this topic indeed began to appear endless.

I had to have “handles.” My final preparation over the summer was the process of judging what might most profitably serve me as the entry points into further research. I began to think of these as the minor mysteries within the major conundrum of Basville’s administration. Knowing that some “handles” might turn out to be unproductive dead ends, I settled on five focal points as a reasonable number to have in my arsenal, preparing background information on them as far as I could find materials. First of all, I wanted to see Basville’s 1718 memoir to Louis de Bernage, his successor as royal intendant in Languedoc, written when he retired at the age of seventy. This manuscript, I discovered, is in the departmental archives at Montpellier. How lengthy was it? I didn’t know. Surely Basville had given some worthwhile advice; perhaps he’d come to understand the Protestant “heresy” a little better.

A second possible “handle” to pursue during the several weeks in Paris was the question of Basville’s disappointment with the efforts of missionary education in Catholic orthodoxy to the “new converts,” the former Protestants, who—by royal law—were after 1685 unable to worship in the Huguenot creed. Why was Basville so disillusioned about these educational efforts, so soon after he had proclaimed to the *contrôleur général* at Versailles his reasoned faith in the efficacy of religious instruction? In the many, many letters from him which had never been printed were there some which could explain this change?

As a third possible focal point, I chose the question of abandoned lands. Knowing, from some of the printed materials which I had read, the tremendous financial problem caused to the monarchy in the later years of Louis XIV’s reign by landholders who simply gave up the cultivation of lands they held through the seigneurial

system rather than continue the struggle to pay taxes each year, I had noted Basville's proposal to help find a solution to this difficulty by awarding lands to demobilized soldiers at the time the War of Spanish Succession ended. This proposal was not accepted by the monarch, mainly because an influential advisor to the *contrôleur général* at Versailles did not think soldiers would make good farmers. But what else was involved? That influential advisor was the former *intendant* who had preceded Basville in Languedoc, and whose "enlightened" policies toward the Protestants had been superseded by Basville's harsher *dragonnades*, at royal command, many years earlier.

Another potential "handle" involved continuing my examination of Basville's relationship to the Languedoc Estates, that body of clergy, nobles, and bourgeois *notables* which constituted by the end of the seventeenth century more of a bank for tax assessing and collecting than a representative advisory assembly on legislation. Or, beyond the Estates lay the question of Basville's relationship to other *corps*, especially judicial bodies. I had noted a reference to complaints by the *Cour des Aides* in Montpellier over alleged infringements of authority by the *intendant* in the matter of judging carriers of contraband salt tax. What events lay back of their complaint? Perhaps the administrative letters would make the situation of justice in the *intendant's* hands more clear. When and why was he bypassing the normal, traditional processes?

And there was one final mystery on my list, seemingly inconsequential, yet naggingly unclear. Published with the administrative correspondence edited by Arthur Boislisle about a hundred years ago was a letter of 3 November 1711 from Desmarets, then *contrôleur général* at Versailles, to Caumartin de Boissy, a lawyer (*maître de requêtes*) serving the Council of Commerce. Desmarets says there that he has delayed signing the letter and plan for an *arrêt* (royal legislation) concerning the regulations for the silk hose industry of Nîmes; what has delayed him is his conviction that Basville will not be content to see that his advice was not being followed, and the thought that Basville is quite capable of avoiding execution of the royal *arrêt* for the reason he's already given. Desmarets says that he thinks it is better to let Basville act than to constrain him against his preference, since it is always dangerous to risk a popular uprising in a city so close to the Cévennes.

Very interesting: Basville envisioned as *not* executing a royal *arrêt*, when everything I had so far followed concerning him had enhanced my appreciation for the *intendant* system as the strength of Louis XIV's absolutism at the local level. And why this intransigence over the regulations for making and selling silk hose, of all things? All that Boislisle could suggest in publishing this letter one hundred and eighty-six years later was that Basville had asked (in

his letter of 5 May 1711) for the same regulations in the city of Alais as those which Nîmes had received. Somehow this didn't add up. I made a note to look at that letter of 5 May 1711 when I got to Paris. And I looked at Louis H. Monin's chapter on silk manufacture in Languedoc—nothing there to explain this puzzle.

Five "handles," five possible starting points. Of course, I hoped for serendipitous surprises, too. But I hoped for something else as well. I wanted to acquire more in the way of a basic grasp on the principles which underlay Basville's intendency. There had existed his genuine concern over the commercial and financial health of the province; such concern was obviously in his own self-interest, if nothing more. He had consistently supported the authority of the King in the province; such support was the very fabric of the tradition of royal service among the families of the *noblesse de robe*. There was the matter of Basville's blindness to the values underlying rural culture and to the Protestant religion in the Cévennes. These factors of his administration had emerged for me quite clearly from my previous study. But in regard to a long-standing claim made about his intendency I was not so sure. Had he really acted with the purpose of undermining local institutions and authority, as Monin charged long ago in his treatment of Basville's administration? The further I had studied into that long intendency, the more complicated the answer to that question became.

There was another general angle, as well. Absolutism, as practiced by French kings during the *ancien régime*, is very difficult to describe. Yes, the King was the lawmaker for France; yes, he was the chief executive; yes, he represented a "court of last resort" in judicial matters, combining in his person all three branches of government as we have come to describe them. But absolutism had very real limits, and the attention of historians in recent years has been turned to the ways in which those limits (practical and theoretical) affected the carrying out of the monarch's intentions by the administrative apparatus. Louis XIV possessed the authority to abolish the legal standing of Protestantism in France, but as the Cévennes revolt early in the eighteenth century demonstrated, that was far from the end of the matter. Financial pressures during the War of the League of Augsburg (1688-1697) and during the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713) constrained his authority as well. On these matters historians are seeking out "chapter and verse" in an attempt to understand what was "really" happening in that realm ruled by an absolute King. The glories of Versailles dazzled many of Louis's contemporaries, and they can dazzle students of the period as well. What someone like Basville was doing day in and day out shows us the practices of absolutism.

I knew from the start of my sabbatical planning that I needed to see that Languedoc countryside, so the first part of my time in France was devoted to traveling in the Midi. There was much in the old province of Languedoc to see; let me here allow one day to stand for that whole experience as it relates to Basville.

Monday, September 21

What an absolutely splendid day! Weather cleared. We set out a little before nine to travel the road into the Cévennes, expecting to get at least to Ganges. We came first to Uzès, and discovered a spectacularly “medieval” small town containing a ducal palace, a Romanesque church tower from the twelfth century, a crypt dating back to early Christian times (third and fourth centuries—the oldest such monument discovered so far in France), and a park with an overlook (*promenade*) named for the playwright Jean Racine because he had lived in Uzès briefly as a young man. At the *château* the ducal flag was flying since the duke was in residence. We toured several rooms of the *palais*—splendid furniture, especially a sixteenth-century trestle table. The Renaissance facade onto the courtyard was especially pleasing. Later, we looked into the cathedral; it is of the seventeenth century because the older one had been destroyed during the wars of religion. In front of the door was a book on a small table, which people were coming up to and signing, but we discovered that it was to register condolences to the family for a recent death, so we didn’t sign!

We drove on to Alais, and after cashing some travelers’ checks we went into the tourist bureau and asked directions to the *Musée du Désert*. It’s off the beaten track, but I’m certainly glad we didn’t miss it, for it turned out to be a fascinating place with an accumulation of visible reminders of the Cévennes revolt, of the way of life in these hills, and of the perilous existence of the outlawed Huguenot church in the wilderness during the eighteenth century. The museum is located in the rebel chief Rolland’s house, as a starting point, much added onto inside, but on the outside just looking like the other houses in the hamlet he came from, Le Mas Soubeyran. There were household furnishings of the period, the Abbé Chayla’s “persecution bench,” mementos of Cavalier and—and!—a print showing Cavalier’s meeting with the general sent to put down the rebellion (Villars) and the *intendant* Basville in 1704! Incredibly,

that print was the first picture I had even seen of “my” *intendant*. I looked at it a long time, memorizing the face—an experienced, questioning, not quite cynical regard appraising Cavalier, the young man who had been causing so much trouble. Basville was portrayed wearing the medium-length, white wig of the times. He was fifty-six years old then, and I found I could understand that face. We went through rooms exhibiting torture instruments used on Huguenots, and recalling the life on galleys (to which some of the Huguenot men were sentenced) and in the Tower of Constance at Aigues-Mortes, where the women were imprisoned. Then in the room near the museum exit, we looked over some printed materials and bought a few slides and a *méreau* (token for admittance to wilderness worship) to bring home. Today alone makes this whole excursion into southern France worthwhile.

We went on to St.-Jean-du-Gard, on a hilly, winding road in beautiful country—lavendar growing on hillsides, some rocky escarpements, some green slopes of which a few were terraced for vine growing, much “wilderness”. We decided to stay all night in St.-Jean-du-Gard, and found a delightful hotel which has a fine restaurant attached called l’Oronge. Dinner was melon, trout, cheese and *vacherin*, the latter recommended by a most considerate waiter. The meringue layers with whipped cream and chocolate sauce melted on the tongue . . .

On September 29 I wrote of this day again, looking back on it, as I began archive searching in Paris:

Just having seen the physical setting of all those hundreds of administrative letters I had already read was illuminating. Especially so the time in the Cévennes mountains, and equally so the time at Uzès, by way of contrast. In the Cévennes, the *Musée du Désert* commemorates the “outlaw” years when the Huguenots had to worship secretly in the hills, fearing the dragoons—Basville’s enforcers, who were seeking out illegal worship. One gets a sense of the communities from which the Cevenol Protestants came, the tiny hamlets scattered in the rugged hill country, the rural nature of the life, the intensity of the prophetism which could grow there among a relatively isolated people. Even now in the year 1981, driving in our rented Renault 5 on a foggy, misty morning, Waid and I met a

shepherd and his flock of forty or so sheep on the road-way. Life has never been easy in that rugged landscape.

And visiting the impressive ducal castle at Uzès, one can imagine the pride of the nobility in that region—their sense of the qualitative difference between themselves and the culture of the hill country, their interest in business and finance, so readily apparent in the actions of the Estates of Languedoc to which their representatives came each year.

These days of travel were in the back of my mind as I came to Paris to work. Especially, perhaps, the time spent in the Montpellier archives, because while these hours had been immensely helpful in a sense of inventory acquaintance, they had been disappointing, too. I had looked at the manuscript of Basville's memoir to his successor, and he had not said anything new. (Should I really have expected him to?) Two aspects of the *intendant's* position were emphasized there. First is the point that up to twenty-five hundred letters a year come to the *intendant* from communities in the province because "not one community can do anything that is not by order of the *intendant*." The expense involved must be in proportion to the usefulness of the project, in the *intendant's* judgment. He is "like a tutor . . . who refuses or grants [proposals] according to the utility the communities receive [from them]." (Cote 4674, Hérault: "Mémoire sur l'Etat présent des affaires de Languedoc," April 1718) I remember thinking, now in Paris, that it struck me while reading that passage that one has to look no further than this to understand the habit of French local governments to look to Paris for the solutions to their problems, even today.

The second major concern which Basville, leaving Languedoc, stressed to his successor had to do with religion. Had I hoped that he would here demonstrate a better understanding of Huguenot, Cevenol culture than was revealed in the 1698 memoir? There was nothing to indicate such a development. Basville warned against thinking that the resistance had died down, and warned against giving an inch; the "new converts" (Protestants) are continually sustained, he says, by the Huguenot cabal, still in existence thanks to foreign support. "The only way to stop this evil is not to allow that any [Huguenot] assembly, of an nature, *not* be punished when discovered." Communities where Huguenots gather must be themselves held responsible and pay the expenses involved in punishing guilty individuals. That is the best way to prevent assemblies. "The new converts love their religion, but they love their worldly goods more." If a preacher is taken prisoner, no quarter must be given; they must be judged according to the law condemning them to death, for death is the only punishment that stops them.

I remembered, planning my first requests for the Paris archives, the sense of chill that had crept over me as I read that memoir in Montpellier. It had only confirmed what I already strongly suspected; after thirty-three years in Languedoc Basville had only become more intransigent in regard to Huguenot disobedience. To him, the question was one of control, of law and of order. I reviewed my remaining "handles." The first thing I had to do was to find out in which ways groups of unpublished administrative letters could add to my understanding. When the archives of the old regime's finance ministry had been organized after the Revolution, many hundreds of these letters from the province of Languedoc had been sorted by chronological sequence; others had been grouped by topics, like "grain" or "counterfeiting," and letters from many provinces were combined into a carton or a series of cartons all relating to one administrative problem. I asked for one of these which contained correspondence relative to grain supplies from 1708-1710, knowing already the nature of what I would find. The bitter winter and spring freezes of 1709 had not only wiped out the grain crop of that year (no grain was coming up from the late autumn sowing), but had killed off olive trees and decimated vineyards as well, destroying the livelihood of the majority of the inhabitants of several of Languedoc's twenty-three dioceses. The immensity of the resulting human misery emerges bit by bit in this correspondence; the ensuing fiscal difficulties mark all the remaining years of Basville's intendency, testing to the limit his ability to find expedients. ("Je tascherai de trouver un expédient," he has said so many times; I'll try to find an expedient, a way around this difficulty.) The 1709 crisis built inevitably from the war and the weather.

15 March 1709: Basville writes, "This last cold spell has greatly increased fears of having no grain this coming year and [increased also] the restlessness of the countryside. I am very busy furnishing to communities the help needed to get those who had [previously stored grain] supplies to open their barns and sell what they have . . ." Basville was reluctant to attempt to fix prices by *ordonnance* or to demand public declaration of quantities held in storage, fearing that the result would be the hiding of grain so greatly needed. In the Vivarais district along the Rhone river, grain intended for the hungry inhabitants of the city of Lyon had been illegally seized by the *commandant* and distributed to the people of Tournon. Basville was reporting less than two weeks supply for the cities of Nimes and Montpellier.

7 April 1709: "I have never seen anything like this complete cessation of grain sales, everyone wanting to hang on to any he might have . . ." Basville goes on to state his lingering hope: "I believe I

am the last man in Languedoc hoping that the grain will still sprout.”

9 April: “Everyone is so alarmed seeing the poor prospects for any harvest that people become furious when there is any question of moving [any stored] grain out of this canton, wanting to keep it there either to subsist on during the year, or to attempt to resow fields.” Basville mentions an attack on the drivers of a mule train at Pradelles, when they were attempting to move grain into the Vivarais region whose usual sources had none to sell.

Basville’s fellow *intendant* Lebret at Marseilles had written asking for help, but Basville’s reply is negative (9 April): “I am in despair not to be able to give him any aid, being myself in the same state as he is . . . Up to now I have pushed aid to Provence [Lebret’s province] beyond the dictates of prudence, knowing it was necessary for the service of the King, but it is no longer possible for a countryside starving as this one is to give any more . . .”

Grain provisions for troops were part of Basville’s responsibility, but even previously purchased supplies could not be transported. Monsieur Dangervilliers had written to him to let pass two thousand *quintaux* of grain bought in the Velay region. Impossible, says Basville’s letter of 12 April 1709. “I am convinced that this transport is not practicable short of having an escort of three thousand armed men in the Velay and in the Vivarais.”

Reading these letters, carefully hand-written by Basville’s secretaries in brown ink on folded sheets of paper, I began to sense just what the pursuit of the totality of such correspondence could give me. There was here a sense of the immediacy of each problem as it is stated, a sense of not knowing the outcome which restores to Basville’s situation the reality which the perspective of “historical knowledge” somehow diminishes. Reading the letters, I knew something of what came next, *but when he wrote them Basville did not*. Here, in these day-by-day letters (if anywhere) would be found the true dimensions of the paradox of absolutism. The context in which Basville acted could only be revealed by the patient reading of pages, one letter after another. My perspective consisted no longer in hindsight, with reproaches to Basville for not having understood the people of the Cévennes, but rather in the appraisal of what he was thinking as he made decisions. I still was searching for the principles underlying what he did, but only as these emerged in the day-to-day of accumulating practices. Halfway through that first carton I knew how I needed to proceed. To understand this man’s administration I had to look at all the correspondence I could find for whatever period of his stay in Languedoc I could manage to cover. There weren’t any shortcuts to fullness of understanding.

Just which year I chose was not—at that point—particularly im-

portant. I requested of the *président de la salle* and the *huissiers* the first of the chronologically arranged cartons of 1711, which held as much promise as any of being fruitful for two of the “handles” I had chosen. The carton included not only the letters from Basville but also other letters coming from Languedoc to the *contrôleur général*. There was, for example, correspondence from the Archbishop of Narbonne, presiding officer of the Languedoc Estates, relating to a variety of general concerns for the welfare of the province as well as to the details of the Estates’ financial arrangements with the Crown. There were letters from Joubert, the most active of the syndics (business agents) of that provincial body. Bishops wrote on behalf of communities hard hit by hail or floods, seeking tax relief. *Officiers* of sovereign courts or lesser judicial bodies wrote, usually (in 1711) to set forth their dire financial straits because no wages had been paid them since 1708. Private individuals wrote to present their tax problems; financiers wrote, and I was especially interested in the *sieur* Bonnier, who became treasurer of the Estates in 1711. An occasional anonymous letter sought to inform the *contrôleur général* of abuses or graft somewhere in the province. Because the finance minister had responsibility in so many aspects of provincial administration, these chronologically arranged cartons of letters offer one great advantage to the researcher: one comes to appreciate, reading the many letters, the multitude of concerns which weighed on an *intendant* at any given time. He seldom had the administrative luxury of concentrating simply on one major problem at once.

But it was the war (that of the Spanish Succession) which struck me so forcibly as I read the first carton of 1711 letters. 1 January 1711: Basville reports to the *contrôleur général* some indirect news from the Duc de Noailles, campaigning across the border in Spain against the troops of the Austrian Archduke. 5 January: a report from Basville regarding the financial losses resulting from the English occupation of the port of Cette (present-day Sète) for five days the previous July. 7 January: Basville encloses with his own communication a letter from the Chevalier de Lordat; the Duc de Noailles has been master of Fortrouge since 29 December; the Austrian Archduke has entered Barcelona, accompanied by a small group of attendants. 13 January: Basville forwards another letter from the Chevalier de Lordat; also, he reports that he had learned from the city of Agde that one small ship carrying five hundred sacks of *farine* and six hundred twenty-eight of *avoine* (two types of southern grain) had been taken by the enemy, and another one sunk just as it was about to enter the port. This was the first misfortune to a convoy; the enemy seems to be wanting to make things more difficult.

14 January: Basville sends on a letter from a *subdélégué* of Mon-

sieur de Barrillon, the *intendant* of Perpignan; this brief report is the only news at this time from the Duc de Noailles, who is doubtless waiting to write until he takes the city of Gironne. 24 January: no news from the Duc de Noailles recently; Basville has learned from an officer who left Gironne the night of January 19-20 that the breaching of the wall was not yet accomplished. The weather is getting very cold, and the sea winds have been very strong. Several convoy ships had to return to port, but Basville has received no word that the army lacks provisions. 28 January: Basville encloses a letter from the *intendant* in Perpignan, reporting on Noailles' siege of Gironne; the second attempt to breach the walls had been successful, about twenty men having been lost in the process. If the city wants to surrender, little time is left; the French troops will soon be in a position to take it by assault. 30 January: Basville reports the taking of Gironne, with all its strongholds; news had arrived in Montpellier at eleven o'clock the evening before. Doubtless that news will reach the Court before his own letter, but in case of accident to Noailles' courier on the way, Basville is sending the word. (And I ponder, reading this, that the French have had few victories, however minor, to celebrate in this generally disastrous war.)

During the same month of January 1709, the Estates had been in session. In the early days of its meetings the *sieur* Bonnier had become the Estates' treasurer. He was a candidate not altogether pleasing to *contrôleur général* Desmarets, who let Basville know that he had had word of excessive profits accumulating to Bonnier from his earlier tax farm dealings with the Crown. It is obvious that Basville favored him to succeed the aged and infirm Monsieur de Pennautier, who had served the Estates as treasurer since 1654. Basville's position in regard to the controversial Bonnier had been made clear in a letter of 14 April 1709 to Desmarets: "I don't know if he [Bonnier] deserves the poor opinion you have of him; he has great enemies in this province . . . All I can tell you is that I have seen him accomplish many financial matters in this land, from which the King has drawn much aid, which would never have been done if he [Bonnier] had not known how to attract the confidence of a group of wealthy men. They have entered into and accomplished successfully several contracts which would have failed due to the intrigues and private interests of the principal officials of this province if there had not been a man of the character of the *sieur* Bonnier who could proceed without being stopped by all the obstacles people wanted to create in his path. This observation is a justice I owe him, with no other view than to report the truth to you. I have, in regard to him, no bias; he is a young man who has risen to prominence by his own labors, and whom I am acquainted with only

through the capacity he has shown to accomplish what was desired of me."

I reflected, reading this letter, on the multitude of requests, financial and otherwise, the monarchy was making on its *intendants* in these difficult years. Expedients were indeed called for; with no money to pay troops (Basville's responsibility), no money to purchase grain for them (Basville's responsibility), inevitably the *intendant*, representative of an "absolute" King, came to depend on financiers who could accomplish the impossible and generate credit for the Crown. I recall the almost shocking (and plaintive) boast of Basville, 8 February 1711, as he pleads for the financial assignments he had been promised by the *contrôleur général* to secure credit for grain purchases: "With promptness on your part to send me the promised assignments, there is nothing that I cannot execute in this province." The problem was, of course, that the government was running out of funds on which to assign future payment. In 1711 it was committing those of 1712 and 1713; by the end of Louis XIV's reign (1715) the Regent would inherit the problem that projected income for three years ahead was already pledged to debts of the past.

Reflecting back over the earlier years of Basville's intendency which I had explored previously, and reading now the documentation for the later years, I was asking myself where Basville drew the strength to endure these constant administrative demands over thirty-three years, through warfare, rebellion, financial crises compounding on each other at all levels of government, through the constant drain of contraband salt carriers, counterfeiters, illegal Huguenot church gatherings, and the meddling of influential and self-serving nobility. When I moved from reading Basville's letters to the examination of the cartons of letters from the *contrôleur général* sent out to *intendants* and other officials (especially, of course, I turned to those sent to Basville), I confirmed that he was routinely consulted by the ministry at Versailles before actions regarding Languedoc were taken; his advice was obviously respected. I discovered further, however, that even he, who had acquired a reputation as "King of Languedoc," even he could receive a royal reprimand, veiled though it was in those marvelous imperfect subjunctives of classical French. This occasion is so rare that I mention it as indicative of the strains on the whole administrative system in the spring of 1709, that time when the problems of severe food shortages piled on top of a series of war disasters for the French. 14 May 1709: the *contrôleur général* Desmarets writes to Basville that the Parlement (high court) of Toulouse had sent him a courier with a letter from *président* Riquet and a memoir from the whole court in regard to the amount of grain seen as necessary for the subsistence of the city of Toulouse,

and especially concerning the grain Basville had had taken from this area to benefit Nîmes and Montpellier. Desmarets says that he reported on this communication to the King, and read him Basville's letter of 5 May on the same subject. "The King ordered me to tell you," the *contrôleur général's* letter continues, "that he would wish you to accommodate this matter with the Parlement of Toulouse, and that he will take no action on the demands of this court." Desmarets suggests that Basville can easily quiet the Parlement's fears in regard to lack of grain by consulting with its members on the best ways to obtain needed provisions. The *contrôleur général* also wrote to *président* Riquet of the high court, urging him to consult with Basville.

Matters were not so easily appeased, however, in the climate of the time. On 22 May 1709 Desmarets wrote again to Basville, having received a second courier from Toulouse; he had been forced once again to take up the matter of grain supplies for that city with the King. The Parlement claimed that Basville and Le Gendre (*intendant* in Montauban) had together settled on the distribution of available grain in terms of their own appraisal of the needs of upper and lower Languedoc. Says Desmarets to Basville, "His Majesty would have wished that such conspicuous procedures as those the court complains of might have been avoided; you could do nothing better to please him than to act in this occasion as I pointed out to you through His Majesty's orders of the fourteenth of this month, in such a way as to calm everyone and bring them back to the viewpoint of the common welfare, which is so urgent as to require at this point the undivided and united attention of everyone concerned."

This is the only instance in any of the several hundred letters I have read from the ministers at Versailles to Basville where there is any shade of reprimand. It was interesting to me to note that at the same time this letter was dictated Desmarets wrote also to Monsieur Morant, first president of the Toulouse Parlement, and to Monsieur de Montbrun, a *président à mortier* of that same body. Their letters fairly sizzle on the paper; the Parlement is to consult with Basville rather than commandeer grain as it had just done, no matter what the provocation or the perceived circumstances.

In the summer of 1711 Basville was anticipating another invasion of the province by the allied forces, coming north from Barcelona or landing on the coast. I asked myself again, Where does the strength come from to keep dealing with the proliferating problems, year after year? The tradition of public service is indeed strong in such *noblesse de robe* families as that of the Lamoignon—that we know. But as I read through the letters of the months of 1711 I kept hoping to see some clue to the nature of

Basville's strength of will. I found it in an unlikely place; my journal records the occasion:

October 17

Today was special, on this project. On Saturdays you work only in the Salle Soubise at the archives building, having requested your materials in advance. So it was in a different location that I was working. I had the Languedoc letters for the second half of 1711. It was interesting material—more war news, more on the contraband salt carriers, more on the calling in of the *louis d'or* coins to take out of circulation those under the legal weight. More letters of *officiers* in financial distress for not having received their wages. And then, in the letters of early August, I came upon a very long one from Basville, with a summary of its contents (drawn up by the *contrôleur général's* staff) filed with it. It had to do with a request by the deputies of the Estates for a delay in the application within Languedoc of the recent royal law requiring prompt registration of any substitutions in wills, which they said went contrary to the Roman law which had always governed Languedoc. I didn't understand all the legal terminology at first; I almost noted the subject and passed on to the next letter. But I read over the memoir, where Basville's opinion was summarized. He pointed out that not registering promptly such substitutions is not only contrary to a law of the Kingdom, but also encourages frauds over inheritances. Substitutions need to be registered to be binding, and to avoid the chicanery all too frequent in the handling of wills in Languedoc. And then this: "If one compares this argument with those by which the deputies of Languedoc oppose it, one will find that the Roman laws ought not be cited as a privilege of the province when the issue is one of establishing among men the good faith (*bonne foy*) which is the foundation of civil life." These last words jumped up off the page to me, and I copied them, drawing two vertical lines in the margin of my notes opposite them, as I do to mark something important. Then I realized that I had copied from the Versailles memoir, not Basville's letter, so I sought out the place where this idea was expressed in Basville's long brief on the matter, and found the words again. Someone of the *contrôleur général's* people or the *contrôleur général* himself had drawn vertical lines beside them in the margin of the letter. It gave me an eerie feeling, because usually in such

letters underlinings served to mark important passages—but there were those vertical marks just like mine. And then I went through and read the whole brief. The best of Basville was there—the orderly, clear-as-a-bell presentation, the summation point by point to the conclusion stating that this request must be rejected.

I sat and pondered what I'd read for a while, and realized that I had something I'd been looking for—a basic principle of the public man. Basville was sixty-three years old at the time, had never achieved (perhaps because of Court politics) the High Council ministry which he was capable of filling, had weathered a major rebellion, enforced law for twenty-six years in Languedoc, riding herd on lawbreakers constantly. He had seen in the past two and a half years the most severe economic blows to his province, from the weather and the war, that anyone could remember, and had—four days earlier—noted in a letter to the *contrôleur général* that enemy troop movements strongly suggested an invasion of Languedoc. He had stated that if an invasion occurred they would do their best, even though they no longer had Noailles' five squadrons for defense, and even though he had had to send four companies of dragoons into the Vivarais, that perpetual trouble spot of Huguenot rebellion. After all that, he can take time to dictate an eleven page brief to support an aspect of legislation serving to help guarantee the good faith which is the "foundation of civil life." There, obviously, is a source of strength in the man—strength that never capitulated to irony, that never denied the essential rightness of what the King's law stood for. His letter had begun with the statement that this issue of law in regard to wills is important; at the end he states that the request of the deputies of the Estates seeking to bypass this legislation in Languedoc must be denied.

I wrote down a few thoughts on the kind of explanation and documentation which would need to accompany any formal presentation of this insight into Basville's "basics"—and there's a great deal to be researched here. Too much for just now. But it makes the pursuit worthwhile to find this sort of thing, which Boisliste for all his archival finds and Monin for all his reporting of administrative detail never remarked. Finding such a statement spurs me on; there *is* a Basville that hasn't yet received the telling he deserves. And it is right to question Monin in regard to Basville's intent to

suppress local institutions in Languedoc. There is a principle guiding his policy which is larger than those terms.

But this discovery was not an ending; it was another beginning, if anything, and I keep reading. More of the rough drafts on the *contrôleur général's* letters—devilishly hard to decipher sometimes, written as they are in the hasty hand of Desmarets' secretary as he took dictation. Whole sentences are crossed out, asterisks indicate insertions. The changes of phraseology are fascinating, but the near-illegibility slows me down. I begin planning my use of the final days at the Archives. Checking back over that list of "handles" I had proposed, I'm aware that I have not dipped into the kind of background that would let me write on the missions to the Huguenot "new converts." That must wait. The question of abandoned lands is a massive one; I've accumulated chapter and verse on why there was so much abandoned agricultural land, but I have not been able to construct a coherent story of proposals to remedy the situation; they involve too many people, too much detail of tax assessment, too much knowledge of seigneurial law and Court politics to deal with for the time being. In regard to Basville's relationship with other authorities and local institutions, I have a much clearer picture of his practices than I had before, but I have not had enough time to study fully more than a few of Basville's many years in Languedoc. I cannot yet be decisive here. I am simply more convinced than ever—on the basis of what I have done—that Monin's conclusions need correction in this regard.

There remains the last "handle" and it's still a puzzle. I check back over what I've read. Yes, in the letter of 5 May 1711 Basville did ask that the silk hose industry of the city of Alais be granted the same regulations that Nimes had. Basville added that the deliberations of the Alais petitioners had been approved by the *juges de police* and that he himself saw only advantage to the public in this arrangement. A summary memoir is filed with Basville's letter of 5 May, prepared by someone on the *contrôleur général's* staff for the presentation of this matter in Council. The *controleur général* wrote in the margin of this memoir "Bon: ("good": approved), when discussion there was favorable, and an *arrêt* for the Alais regulations was duly issued in June (the margin of the memoir carries this indication), based on the Nimes statutes. Information on these statutes is included with the memoir: on 14 October 1710 there had been an *arrêt de conseil* for the Nimes regulations; on 21 October 1710 *lettres patentes* were drawn up based on it; these *lettres patentes* were registered in the Parlement of Toulouse 24 November 1710.

Thus the letter of 3 November 1711 from Desmarets to Caumartin de Boissy of the Council of Commerce remains puzzling, even

more so than before I came to Paris. If the regulations had been made binding in the autumn of 1710 why was Desmarets saying he was hesitating about signing the letter and the *arrêt* for this matter in November of 1711? Could the date be wrong? I had found several misfiled items in one carton or another; I'd better check that date again. My journal tells the tale:

October 30

Last day at the Archives, and it all ended on a very upbeat note. Yesterday afternoon I had really been puzzled about the timing (November 1711) of that letter from Desmarets to Caumartin de Boissy, saying that he didn't think Basville would like having his advice ignored. There were obviously regulations for the hose industry of Nîmes registered in late 1710. Boislesle's printing of the later letter was no help; I went to it and looked again. And I knew Monin hadn't discussed this episode. But there was that big question mark. I decided to recheck the date on the letter (the original rough draft) today, having found earlier in the 1711 set one definitely from 1710 that was there by error. Then I had another thought also, to try to locate the Council of Commerce regulations for Nîmes in the index or the detailed *inventaire* of that portion of the finance minister's correspondence which has been inventoried. (Such description is far from complete, but sometimes it helps.) Bonanza! Two letters were listed in a carton of commercial matters which I wouldn't otherwise have thought of using—letters from Caumartin de Boissy to the *contrôleur général* concerning Nîmes.

I asked for that carton this morning, and—sure enough—the two letters filled in the missing facts. And what illuminating facts! Illustrative, indeed, of why Basville acquired the sobriquet of King of Languedoc. (And also more evidence that not all the letters for any one year are in any one place, or even still existent, for reference is made to letters both from Basville, and from the *contrôleur général* that I had not found in those chronologically arranged cartons.) From the two letters I had just located, I learned that after the regulations for the *communauté de marchands et fabriquans de bas de la ville de Nîmes* had been negotiated, revised, signed by those concerned with this industry in the local area, confirmed by *arrêt* of the royal Council and then by its *lettres patentes*, subsequently registered by the Parlement of Toulouse, and finally read officially in

public audience in the city of origin (August through November 1710), *Basville had totally wiped them out simply by his own ordonnance in July of 1711*. This overturning of the royal statutes followed a meeting of some city officials and representatives of local merchants who had protested the original regulations and drawn up a new version.

Basville's unilateral action came to the attention of Caumartin de Boissy through a petition to the Council of Commerce from some silk hose manufacturers and merchants of Nîmes who wanted the original regulations restored—regulations which were (according to Caumartin de Boissy) more in line with the efforts of the Council of Commerce to keep production standards high. One can just imagine, from the carefully worded but explicit prose of the two letters what the young lawyer must have said in private! He explains the matters at length to the *contrôleur général*, revealing in the second letter that Basville had himself encouraged the meeting that changed the regulations which he had specifically approved eleven months earlier.

Why had Basville acted in this manner? According to Caumartin de Boissy's summary of the *intendant's* letter, the originally negotiated regulations were contrary to the traditional guild practices of the city of Nîmes, and had been greatly resented for this reason—so much so that they could have become the issue igniting a new episode of rebellion in this city so close to the Cévennes. Basville chose *not* to request changes through the Council at the time, but rather to assemble people at the local level, seeking to establish the basis for an agreement as satisfactory as possible. The changes they proposed did not strike Basville as violating the essential nature of the original statutes, so he promptly approved them in order to satisfy the substantial number of important people who were upset. In Basville's opinion, the manufacturers who had subsequently protested to the Council of Commerce were not the most important representatives of the local industry. Better to satisfy the city collectively than a small number of guildsmen. Besides that, Basville considered that the inhabitants of Nîmes were "not capable of a more perfect law" at present. That is why he had not sought royal authorization for the changes made locally, considering them a temporary expedient.

Basville may well not have considered the changes

major ones but Caumartin de Boissy disagreed, envisioning that they would lower the quality of the French stockings then in competition with English ones in the European market. What was even more upsetting to this young lawyer was that Basville permitted “on his own authority without an order from the King” the levying of a tax on each dozen pairs of hose to benefit the community. (Caumartin de Boissy’s word for Basville’s action is “inconceivable.”)

Such is the background for the renewal of the question of regulations for the silk hose industry of Nîmes, and the reason for Desmarests’ letter of 3 November 1711 to Caumartin de Boissy, with its realistic appraisal that Basville would probably manage to avoid enforcing any restitution of the original regulations by Council action. Better to let him act than to risk revolt, says Desmarests.

I couldn’t locate in letters from 1712 (either Basville’s or those of the *contrôleur général*), up through May of that year, any follow-up, but I’m guessing that if Desmarests said that there was not much point in crossing Basville unless Daguesseau in the Council of Commerce raised a real fuss, that’s how things stood. I would like to *know* that—but one always leaves (and has to leave) something for next time. In this whole situation I can’t help feeling that Basville had somehow played fast and loose with that concept of good faith in public life. Paradox indeed!

I now—back at Otterbein—have the answer to my basic sabbatical question: a major project on Nicolas de Lamoignon de Basville is well worth doing. I know what would need to be researched—and it is a huge undertaking, a major commitment of time. I know how it would need to be done. I have some other benefits, too. Those letters I studied, when translated and arranged by topics, will make excellent study materials on how what we call absolutism was practiced under Louis XIV. The matter of the Nîmes regulations, combined with further research on the silk industry, would constitute a worthwhile article. And I enjoyed working in the Archives; you never know what you’ll find in the next letter, or the one after that.

But most of all, I sense more compellingly than ever the paradox of Basville himself, exemplified now for me specifically in such contrasts as his principle of good faith necessarily underlying civil life *versus* his casual overturning of royal law when local expediency made it seem desirable to do so. Absolutism itself is for me now also a paradox in clearer focus. Robert Mandrou says in his recent

Europe “Absolutiste” that the exigencies of perpetual warfare ruined the ambitions of absolutism under Louis XIV, just as the maintaining of seigneurial structures limited severely the development and the efficiency of the statist bureaucratic apparatus. True indeed; Mandrou’s generalities are fleshed out in Basville’s increasing dependence on financiers such as Bonnier and on the “banking house” of the provincial Estates to keep the wheels of government turning. French absolutism in practice compromised by necessity its own theoretical nature. It is remarkable, and thanks to such men as Lamoignon de Basville, that it worked as well as it did.

Postscript:

While I was in Paris, Dean of the Faculty William Hamilton sent me a short article, “How to Cope with Inevitable Ignorance: the Humanities Can Give Some Answers,” which John H. Marburger III had published in the September 9 issue of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. The author noted that academic communities form the habit of assuming that things can be explained, and he continues, “We do not, in fact, know enough about society to compute exactly the consequences of any action or to discover by rational means a strategy guaranteed to achieve social improvement. To behave as if we did know is irrational . . . A vehicle programmed to run a course will eventually veer from its predicted path because of unavoidable errors in the initial program.” The article continues with comment on the necessity of granting those close to the operations which are the objective of the organization the freedom to adjust the behavior of their part of the system.

Living as I was at that time in Basville’s world for days on end, the point of the article struck home to me very forcibly: the humanities are valuable “because they deal openly with the inevitability of ignorance and the consequences thereof . . . They tune the instrument [the human mind] that enables us to grapple with the question of how to act without sufficient knowledge.” They provide “exposure to the quandaries of the real world and how real people have responded to them in the past.”

In Basville’s experience, a price was paid for his inevitable ignorance of the culture of the people of the Cévennes and of their spiritual values. In our experience we may well profit from the awareness, through Basville’s story, of how *bonne foy*, his “good faith” that was seen to lie at the basis of civil life, comes to be pushed to the wall and compromised. We can escape from history only by understanding it, even while realizing that it never exactly repeats, but over and over again plays variations on the theme of human nature interacting with institutional nature. There is still a fascination for me in those administrative letters out of the past; for the rest of my life, Basville stands—so to speak—at my elbow.

He is still a paradox, but I have come to describe the dimensions more clearly, They are as old as human societies, and as new as tomorrow. They have taken on flesh and blood, for me, in the Languedoc of the early eighteenth century. And I know that there is no "end" to this story. It is the human condition that we must act on insufficient evidence. I think that human beings need to be aware of the consequences of this essential attribute. To be effective, to serve what is perceived to be good, and yet remain open to what is new and different—no one ever found it easy.

CONTRIBUTORS

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